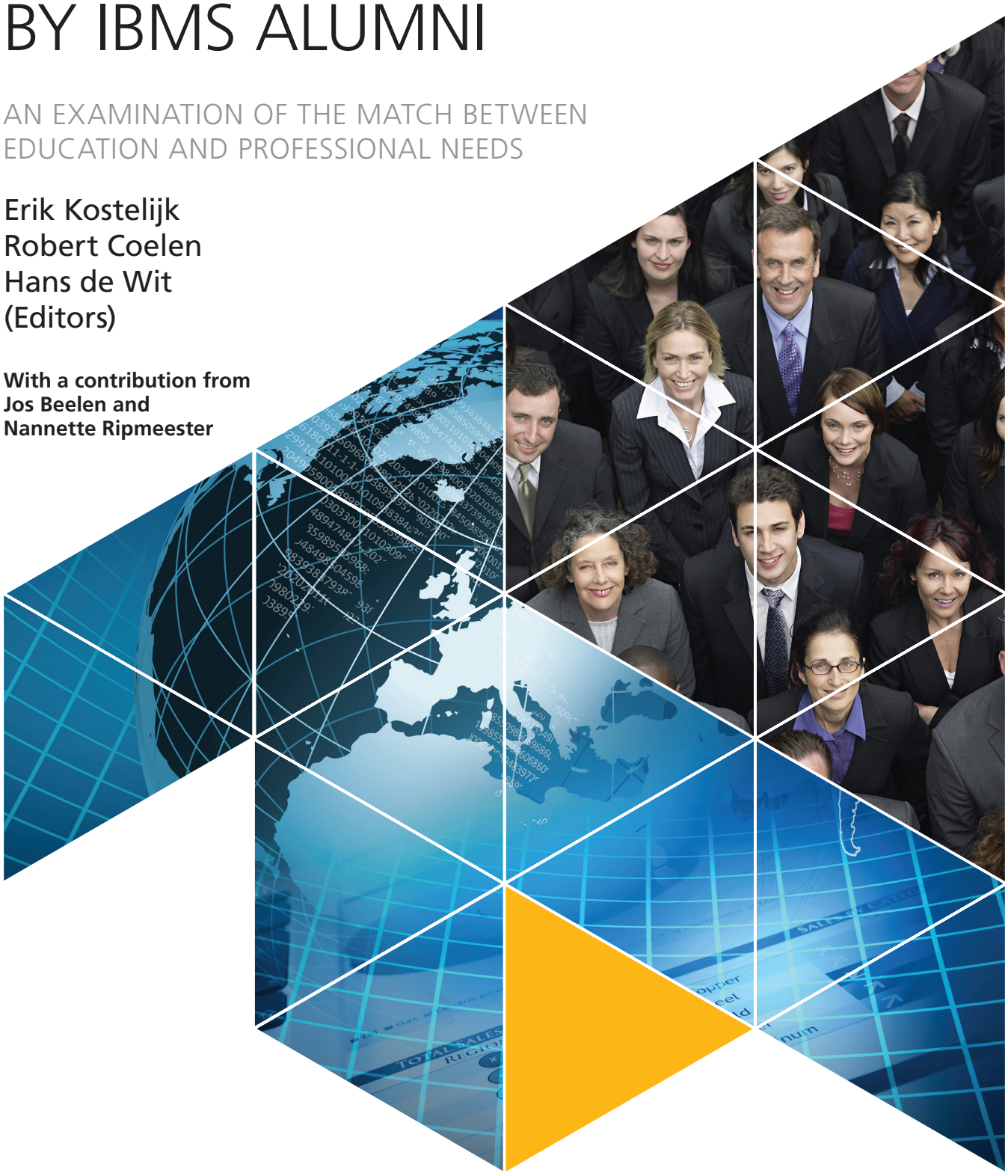
Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences

THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL COMPETENCES BY IBMS ALUMNI

AN EXAMINATION OF THE MATCH BETWEEN EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL NEEDS

Erik Kostelijk
Robert Coelen
Hans de Wit
(Editors)

With a contribution from Jos Beelen and Nannette Ripmeester



CREATING TOMORROW

The development of international competences by IBMS Alumni:
An examination of the match between education and professional needs

Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences

THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL COMPETENCES BY IBMS ALUMNI

An examination of the match between education and professional needs

The Report on a study into international competences of alumni of 'International Business and Management Studies (IBMS) Programmes at six Dutch Universities of Applied Sciences and a control group of alumni from the bachelor programmes International Business Administration and International Economics & Finance of a Dutch Research University.

Erik Kostelijk, Robert Coelen, Hans de Wit (Editors)
With a contribution from Jos Beelen and Nannette Ripmeester

COLOPHON

Coordinating Project Team
Erik Kostelijk (Project Coordinator, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences)
Robert Coelen (Project Leader, Stenden University of Applied Sciences)
Hans de Wit (Project Leader, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences)
Jos Beelen (Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences)
Annemarie Haanstra (HAN University of Applied Sciences)
Marcel van der Poel (Groningen University of Applied Sciences)
Sandra Rincon (Tilburg University)
Nannette Ripmeester (Expertise in Labour Mobility)
Raymond Ruijten (Avans University of Applied Sciences)
Jos Walenkamp (The Hague University of Applied Sciences)

The development of international competences by IBMS Alumni: An examination of the match between education and professional needs.

A Report on a study into international competences of alumni of International Business and Management Studies (IBMS) Programmes at six Dutch Universities of Applied Sciences and a control group of alumni from the bachelor programmes International Business Administration and International Economics & Finance of a Dutch Research University.

By Erik Kostelijk, Robert Coelen, Hans de Wit (Editors)

Amsterdam, 2015
©2015, Centre for Applied Research on Economics & Management, School of Economics and Management of the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, and Erik Kostelijk, Robert Coelen and Hans de Wit (Eds.)

Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences
School of Economics and Management
Wibautstraat 3B, 1091GH Amsterdam, www.hva.nl/carem, carem@hva.nl.

Niets uit deze uitgave mag worden verveelvoudigd en/of openbaar gemaakt door middel van druk, fotografie, microfilm of op welke andere wijze dan ook zonder voorafgaande schriftelijke toestemming van de uitgever en de auteur.

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in other form or by other means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, microfilming, recording or otherwise, without written permission from the Publisher, with the exception of any material supplied specifically for the purpose of being entered and executed on a computer system, for exclusive use by the purchaser of the work.

ISBN 978-90-5972-986-5

Data obtained from alumni from the following Higher Education Institutions

avans hogeschool
Hanzehogeschool Groningen University of Applied Sciences
Hogeschool van Arnhem en Nijmegen HAN University of Applied Sciences
Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences
Stenden
THE HAGUE UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES
TILBURG UNIVERSITY

CONTENTS

List of Tables 7
List of Figures 9
Executive Summary 11
Preface 15
Introduction 17
- Skills and Knowledge Development 17
- Relevance of International Experience 18
- Transversal Skills 19
- Development of International Competences by IBMS alumni 19

The IBMS Competence Framework of 2004 21

Methods 25
- Research Questions 25
- Participating Higher Education Institutes in this Study 26
- Choice of Respondents 27
- Response 27
- National Background of Respondents 28

Continuation with a Master's Programme After the BBA IBMS 31

Participation in Study Activities with an International Orientation 33
- Outcomes of the IBMS Study Programme 39

Network and Language Development 39

Development of Competences Associated with the BBA IBMS National Profile 43
- Introduction 43
- Development of Professional Competences 44
- Development of Generic Competences 51

Employability 57

A Comparative Analysis of the Employability Related Outcomes of the IBMS Study with Those from Other Recent Employability Studies 69
- Introduction 69
- Seven Recent Employability Studies 70
- A Comparative Analysis 73

Analysis of the Employability Related Outcomes of the IBMS Survey 74
Conclusions on Employability 75

Discussion 77
Mobility 77
International Orientation and Networking 78
English and Other Languages Learning and Use 78
International Competences 79
Employability 80
Comparison with the Control Group 80
Limitations of the Study 81

Concluding Remarks 83

References 87

Appendix I. The Survey Used in this Study 89

Appendix II. Calculation of the International Employability Index 105

Appendix III. Competences & Employability: IBMS Alumni Versus Control Group 107

Appendix IV. International and Intercultural Competences of the BBA IBMS 2004 Framework 111

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Competences by level in the 2004 IBMS framework 23
Table 2. Share of the response per institute 27
Table 3. Country of origin and number of respondents 28
Table 4. Most popular study abroad destinations 34
Table 5. Distribution of nationalities in the BBA IBMS programme, perception of alumni 36
Table 6. Competences of the IBMS Framework (2004) 43
Table 7. Indicators of intercultural competence 45
Table 8. Comparison of trends in agreement with existence of competences and extent of match between education and professional needs. * shown where measured 56
Table 9. Distribution of BBA IBMS alumni according to country (n=398) 62
Table 10. Employment conditions for BBA IBMS graduates and control group 68
Table 11. Characteristics of the studies discussed 71
Table 12. The competence International Business Awareness at the three levels for the IBMS framework (2004) 111
Table 13. The competence Intercultural Adaptability at the three levels of the IBMS framework (2004) 112

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	Nationality of parents and partner (if present)	29
Figure 2.	Proportion of BBA IBMS alumni who continued their studies with a Master's degree (n=582)	32
Figure 3.	Location of the subsequent study programme	32
Figure 4.	Participation in educational activities abroad during the programme (n=541)	33
Figure 5.	Language training during the BBA IBMS programme (n=539)	35
Figure 6.	Average composition of the cohort as determined by alumni perception (n = 531)	36
Figure 7.	Cohort composition as determined by alumni perception	37
Figure 8.	Use of the English language in various settings (n=550)	37
Figure 9.	International Network: Comparison of BBA IBMS alumni with control group (n=488)	38
Figure 10.	English Language proficiency (n=465-482)	39
Figure 11.	Percentage of Dutch BBA IBMS students with at least professional working proficiency (IRL level 3 or higher) after graduating	40
Figure 12.	International business awareness: self-assessment by IBMS alumni (n = 435-438)	44
Figure 13.	Intercultural competences: self-assessment by IBMS alumni (n = 393-396)	46
Figure 14.	Intercultural competences: IBMS alumni versus control group (large differences are indicated with an asterisk (*), other differences are medium-sized; size of differences tested with Cohen's d)	47
Figure 15.	International strategic vision development: self-assessment by IBMS alumni (n=439)	47
Figure 16.	Business processes & change management: self-assessment by IBMS alumni (n=441)	48
Figure 17.	Entrepreneurial management: self-assessment by IBMS alumni (n=433-440)	48
Figure 18.	International marketing and sales management: self-assessment by IBMS alumni (n=428-438)	49
Figure 19.	International marketing and sales management: match between education and professional needs (n=412)	49
Figure 20.	International supply chain management: self-assessment by IBMS alumni (n=435)	50
Figure 21.	IT skills: match between education and professional needs (n=411)	50
Figure 22.	International finance & accounting: self-assessment by IBMS alumni (n=430)	50
Figure 23.	(International) finance & accounting: match between education and professional needs (n=411-413)	50
Figure 24.	International HRM: self-assessment by IBMS alumni (n=428)	51
Figure 25.	International HRM: match between education and professional needs (n=410-411)	51
Figure 26.	Leadership: self-assessment by IBMS alumni (n=441)	52
Figure 27.	(International) leadership skills: match between education and professional needs (n=409-411)	52
Figure 28.	Cooperation: self-assessment by IBMS alumni (n=433)	52
Figure 29.	Cooperation: match between education and professional needs (n=408-412)	52
Figure 30.	Business communication: match between education and professional needs (n=405-412)	53
Figure 31.	Business research methods: self-assessment by IBMS alumni (n=439)	53

Figure 32. Business research methods and problem solving: match between education and professional needs (n=410-411) 54
Figure 33. Planning and organising: self-assessment by IBMS alumni 54
Figure 34. (International) Planning and organising: match between education and professional needs (n=410-413) 54
Figure 35. Learning and self-development: self-assessment by IBMS alumni (n=439) 55
Figure 36. Ethical and corporate responsibility: self-assessment by IBMS alumni (n=435) 55
Figure 37. Ability to function as an employee as a result of the BBA IBMS programme (n=433) 57
Figure 38. Employability: Match between skills acquired during BBA IBMS programme and professional needs (n=409-412) 57
Figure 39. Time that BBA IBMS alumni need after graduation to find a job (n=407) 58
Figure 40. BBA IBMS alumni monthly income before tax (n=399) 59
Figure 41. Number of subordinates of BBA IBMS alumni in their first employment and at the time of the survey (n=399) 59
Figure 42. Employment: Expectation before versus experience in the job (n=399) 60
Figure 43. Distribution of the sector of employers of BBA IBMS alumni (n=398) 60
Figure 44. Size of the employer's organisation of BBA IBMS alumni (n=398) 60
Figure 45. International Work Environment: In how many countries is your employing organisation active? (n=389) 61
Figure 46. The global distribution of BBA IBMS alumni (n=398) (white = none, from light yellow to dark red = increasing number of alumni per country) 61
Figure 47. Country of employment for all BBA IBMS alumni and the Dutch alumni 63
Figure 48. Annual frequency of international business missions (n=392) 63
Figure 49. International Work Environment: Percentage of co-workers with a different nationality (n=381) 64
Figure 50. The use of English in various settings at the place of employment (n=382-385) 64
Figure 51. Impact of gender on employment conditions 65
Figure 52. Socio-economic background of the alumnus and employment 66
Figure 53. Extracurricular activities and international employability 67
Figure 54. Relative importance of skill domains across recent employability studies, including the present research 74

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this study of alumni graduated from six International Business and Management (IBMS) programmes at Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS), we have listened to those who have studied in an international programme, often supplemented by a study and/or work placement abroad, and who after graduation, have experienced the requirements of the professional field.
This study included a control group of bachelor students from International Business Administration and from International Economics and Finance at Tilburg University. This was done to explore possible relevant differences between a three-year bachelor study in this field at a Research University and the IBMS Bachelor programmes of four years at a UAS. Thus, the responses of 547 alumni (42% female respondents) from UAS programmes and 186 alumni in the control group (37% female) were examined.
The national representation among the respondents was diverse, though the majority consisted of Dutch and German citizens. This finding was comparable to Dutch higher education in general, where German students constitute 43% of all international students (40% in this study).
The large majority of alumni were subject to the 2004 National Competence Framework and were at most seven years in employment. To enhance comparability with future studies it was felt worthwhile to include the competences that were added to the Competence framework in 2011 as separate element in this study.
IBMS alumni were asked if they continued studying after their Bachelor's degree. Almost half of the BBA IBMS graduates did, and of these 77.6% obtained a Master's degree.
Comparison of the international aspects of the social (Facebook™) and professional (LinkedIn™) networks of the IBMS alumni and the control group showed that the BBA IBMS alumni had more substantial international networks than the alumni of the control group.

STUDY PROGRAMMES

Around 90% of the responding BBA IBMS alumni went abroad during their study programme: mainly for study purposes. Almost two thirds of the IBMS alumni also did an internship abroad, and nearly 30% completed their thesis project in a foreign country. A little less than two thirds of the control group went abroad. The most popular destinations were the United States, United Kingdom, France, Spain, Germany, and China, both for study and internships.
The languages that were most popular (or obligatory in the programmes) were English and Spanish (similar to the control group). German and French received less attention, while nearly 10% of the alumni received some training in Chinese.
On average, alumni perceived that they participated in international classrooms with a maximum of 60% Dutch students, and consequently a minimum of 40% students with another national background, mainly German and Chinese. The average perceived composition of the classroom of the control group was also comprised of the same groups but in different proportions.

The progress in language proficiency during the IBMS programme was measured by means of the Interagency Language Roundtable scale (ILR, 2014). English language proficiency had increased significantly during the IBMS programmes, while the average level of Spanish language proficiency

showed an important increase and proficiency French or German at most a small increase. Internship or study abroad in France, Germany, or Spain resulted in a substantial increase in French, German, or Spanish proficiency respectively, among the IBMS alumni in our sample. The reduced development of Spanish language proficiency in the control group might be explained by their reduced mobility to Spanish speaking countries.

DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES

Almost three quarters of the alumni concluded that their IBMS education provided them with the required international business awareness. A slightly smaller proportion (2/3^{rds}) felt they knew enough about the key stakeholders in international business.

The majority of alumni agreed that their IBMS programme supported them in developing intercultural competence across all the indicators in the survey with the lowest level of agreement at 66% and the highest level at 87%. Results for cultural knowledge, emotional stability, and tolerance of ambiguity (66% - 71%) were somewhat lower than those for the other competences (76% - 87%). For each indicator, the level of intercultural competence acquired during the education programme was significantly higher for the IBMS alumni than for the control group. The differences between IBMS alumni and the control group were found to be especially large for social initiative, empathy, and communicative awareness. The focus on outward mobility in the BBA IBMS programmes might explain this difference.

The majority (almost 80%) of the alumni considered that the IBMS programme provided them with the ability to contribute to the development and evaluation of an internationalisation strategy of a company. Similarly, 80% of alumni indicated that their study programme prepared them to understand business processes within a company.

Whilst the cognitive aspect of entrepreneurial management (writing a business plan) was considered to be well taken care of in the IBMS programmes, the alumni indicated that the skills to be an entrepreneur were not well addressed.

The scores on international marketing management confirmed the findings of the entrepreneurial management competence in the sense that education had provided alumni with the skills to write a plan, but the skills related to the specific professional role - in this case the sales person -could have been developed more. A remarkable difference was found between sales and marketing skills. The amount of marketing training during the IBMS programme provided a good match with the professional requirements, but alumni experienced too little attention for sales skills during their education.

In comparison with the previous competences, a comparatively higher proportion of alumni gave a neutral opinion regarding their preparation to the logistics and supply chain aspects of the international business environment; about 15% considered the preparation insufficient.

Around 50% of the IBMS alumni considered that the attention for finance and accounting during their education matched their professional needs but almost 40% of the alumni consider that they did not learn enough finance and accounting skills. The relatively low percentage of 'good matches' (around 40% cf. 55 – 60% in other competences) indicates that the required amount of finance and accounting skills might differ considerably depending on the place of work.

One of the competences added to the IBMS Competence profile in 2011 was international human resource management. The results for HR skills were comparable to those for the previous competence: there seemed to be a varying need for these skills, depending on the professional context (an even lower proportion felt that the match was good – about 30%;). About 65% of the alumni felt that they learned enough skills to stimulate or motivate other employees or co-workers.

DEVELOPMENT OF GENERIC COMPETENCES

Most alumni indicated that, during their IBMS education, they received the leadership skills needed for their profession. However, nearly 30% of the alumni indicated that the programme did not give enough attention to these skills.

About 90% of the alumni indicated that their programme had given them the skills to be a team player. 'Analysing and information processing' and 'creative problem solving' were combined in the 2011 profile as 'Business research methods'. Again to enhance comparability with future studies, they were combined in this report. More than 80% of the alumni indicated that their programme gave at least enough attention to problem solving skills. In terms of research skills the proportion who thought it was just right was somewhat less (about 50%).

The IBMS education seems to prepare students effectively to the planning and organisation and the management skills needed in the profession. In general, there is a good balance between the attention in the IBMS programme and the professional needs, although around one third of the respondents would have preferred more attention for project management skills.

During their IBMS programme, alumni have learned to critically reflect on their work. They also learned how to work independently in a professional environment.

Most alumni indicated that their education gave enough attention to ethical and social responsible behaviour in a professional context.

EMPLOYABILITY

According to alumni's perception, their employability is high. With respect to both functioning as an employee (in general) and functioning as an employee in an international organisation, nearly 70% of alumni indicated a good fit between the skills needed and the skills acquired during the Bachelor IBMS. More than 85% of alumni believe that their Bachelor's programme IBMS provided them with the skills to work in an international organisation.

EMPLOYMENT OF IBMS ALUMNI

IBMS alumni did not seem to have trouble with finding a job. Almost half of the responding alumni already found a job at the moment of graduation, and more than 80% of the alumni obtained employment within 6 months after graduation. It should be borne in mind that these results reflect the employability of alumni who graduated between 2008 and 2014 at a time of an economic slowdown.

The average alumnus started employment with a gross income of about € 2.200 (median value in the distribution); the balance of monthly starting salaries was between €1.800 and € 2.600. An average annual increase in monthly salary of € 178 was reported: more than 40% of alumni earned more than € 3.600 at the time of the survey.

Most alumni did not manage other employees when they started working, and at the time of the survey the majority of alumni still hadn't advanced to an executive position. At the time of the survey however, almost 10% of the responding alumni had at least 10 subordinates.

Most alumni seemed fairly satisfied with what they achieved, as compared to their expectations. However, between 30% and 40% achieved less than they had expected. Overall, the international aspect of the job seemed to be better than expected, and generally the development of a career was less than expected.

Most alumni worked in the private sector, and in bigger organisations. Around 15% of the IBMS alumni were employed in a governmental organisation, and less than 5% in an NGO. Of the alumni working in

the private sector, 28.2% found employment in a Small to Medium Sized Enterprise (SME), a company with less than 250 employees.

INTERNATIONAL EMPLOYMENT OF IBMS ALUMNI

Most alumni worked in multinational companies, active in several countries. Although alumni were distributed globally, most IBMS alumni could be found in Germany, Belgium, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland. The majority of alumni became employed in their home country. Of the Dutch IBMS alumni, more than 75% worked in The Netherlands at the time of this study.

A BACKGROUND CHECK OF EMPLOYABILITY

Background factors can have an impact on the extent to which an alumnus is able to find (international) employment. Gender did not have an impact on the time required to find a job and the average start salary. There was a large spread in salary increase. The difference in average salary increase between male and female alumni was indicative, but not statistically significant. There was a statistically significant difference in international employability, although it was relatively small. The results demonstrated therefore that male alumni were more often associated with a more internationally oriented organisation. Socio-economic background did not significantly impact the time to find employment. The analysis indicated that alumni from a lower educated background achieved a somewhat higher starting salary. Over the years, alumni with academically qualified parents experienced a significantly higher increase in salary.
A relation between the international background of the BBA IBMS alumnus and international employability was not found.

MATCH BETWEEN LEARNED COMPETENCES AND REQUIRED COMPETENCES

IBMS alumni perceived an overall good match between crucial employability skills that they learned and those that were required in the workplace. Since employers increasingly attach importance to employability skills in addition to employment skills, it could be concluded that the IBMS programmes fulfilled their key role. The deficiencies in employment skills did not prevent graduates from being hired. Comparison with the control group showed that BBA IBMS alumni scored significantly higher on employability and intercultural skills as well as on employment skills. Despite the significance, the extent of this difference was relatively small because, on average, for both groups the international employability was already relatively high.

This study found that BBA IBMS alumni agreed their study programme developed most of the competences listed in the National Competence Profile (2004) for BBA IBMS programmes. The majority did not agree that this was the case for entrepreneurial management and for the sales aspect of international marketing management. Less than 75% were satisfied that this was the case for leadership, international business awareness, international HRM, international business and management accounting and financial management, planning and organising, and international operations management. In particular, for four of these six competences less than 50% of the alumni felt there was a good match between education and professional needs (leadership, international HRM, international business and management accounting and financial management, international operations management – IT component).

PREFACE

This study is the result of a joint initiative of three professors of internationalisation of higher education: Hans de Wit (Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences), Robert Coelen (Stenden University of Applied Sciences) and Jos Walenkamp (The Hague University of Applied Sciences) and their research groups, in cooperation with International Business and Management Studies (IBMS) in six Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) and two similar bachelor programmes at one Research University in The Netherlands.
There is still too little we know about how study programmes prepare students for their future profession and career. What knowledge and skills do they need to learn to be able to work effectively? In a globalised world, where work and life is more than ever taking place in an international and intercultural context, also little is known about what international competences graduates need. We even do not know if programmes that are specifically designed to prepare students for such an international career, address those international as well as other competences that they need in their daily work. In this study we have chosen for a different approach than commonly is taken. We have listened to those who have studied in an international programme, including in most cases a study and/or work placement abroad, and who after their study have experienced the requirements of the professional field: the alumni of IBMS programmes. These alumni are best suited to knowing to which extent development of competences during their study matched with their professional needs.
We have addressed three major research questions:

- What is the contribution of international study activities in the IBMS curriculum to competence development?
- To what extent does the IBMS education provide students with the competences necessary to function in the international professional field?
- What is the employability of IBMS students?

We also included a group of bachelor students from the International Business Administration and from the International Economics and Finance programmes of Tilburg University, to explore possible relevant differences between a three year bachelor study in this field at a Research University and the IBMS Bachelor programmes of four years at UAS, and if there is a difference in the obligatory study and/or work placement abroad at IBMS and the voluntary option in the case of Tilburg University. Where relevant these differences will be addressed.
The study has been done by a research team, supported by a coordinating group of representatives of the six IBMS programmes and from Tilburg University.

PROJECT COORDINATION AND LEADERSHIP

Erik Kostelijk (Project Coordinator, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences)
Robert Coelen (Project Leader, Stenden University of Applied Sciences)
Hans de Wit (Project Leader, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences)

COORDINATING PROJECT TEAM

Jos Beelen (Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences)
Annemarie Haanstra (HAN University of Applied Sciences)
Marcel van der Poel (Groningen University of Applied Sciences)
Sandra Rincon (Tilburg University)
Nannette Ripmeester (Expertise in Labour Mobility)
Raymond Ruijten (Avans University of Applied Sciences)
Jos Walenkamp (The Hague University of Applied Sciences)

This report provides the collective results for the six IBMS programmes. When relevant, a reference is made to the group of alumni from Tilburg University. In addition, each institution has received a report with the results for their own programme, information that can help them to enhance the quality of their programme.

We are grateful to the seven HEIs for their participation in the study and for the access they gave us to their alumni databases. We also appreciate the positive reactions of the National Platform of IBMS Programmes on the draft results of the study.

We are aware that the sample of programmes and of alumni is not fully representative for all Dutch IBMS programmes and that of the control group not for all International Business and Finance programmes at Dutch Research Universities. However, we believe that the responses by over 500 alumni give an indication on the strengths and weaknesses of the current relationship between education and professional needs in the IBMS programmes and that the comparison with the control group will help us understand the differences and similarities between the two groups and provide some directions for the future. We hope that this pilot study will result in further research in this area, in the first place an extension to all 13 IBMS Programmes in The Netherlands, as well as a comparative study with programmes without an international focus in the field of economics and/or other studies in universities of applied sciences and research universities.

In our opinion, this study increases our understanding of the relationship between education and professional needs, by making use of the opinions and experiences of alumni. Further studies in this direction will improve this understanding. We express the hope that this document assists those who are charged with the further development of curricula that prepare our young adults to take charge of the world we have left them.

Erik Kostelijk
Robert Coelen
Hans de Wit

INTRODUCTION

There is still too little that is known about how study programmes prepare students for their future profession and career. What knowledge and skills do they need to learn to be able to work effectively? In a globalised world, where work and life is more than ever taking place in an international and intercultural context, also little is known about what international competences graduates need. We even do not know if programmes that are specifically designed to prepare students for such an international career, address those international as well as other competences that they need in their daily work. This study aims to explore these competences using an approach different from what has been common practice. It is a pilot study among alumni of six separate IBMS programmes, in combination with a control group consisting of alumni of two comparable programmes at Tilburg University.

SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT

Globalisation is forcing organisations to change dramatically. Increasingly, the work environment is experiencing changes that relate to this development, from a change in the composition of the work force, to changes in how organisations conduct their activities and with whom. Universities are often accused of being disconnected from the realities of organisations that accept their graduates. Should this be true, then this would be especially worrisome for professionally focused programmes.
Bachelor programmes at Universities of Applied Sciences have a professional focus and therefore address the employment needs of relevant receiving work fields. A range of structures and procedures has been created to assist in developing curricula. These include national forums (generally limited to a particular type of programme) to develop domain-specific and generic competences, advisory boards of programmes that include key members of the professional field, the inclusion of academics with substantial experience in the field in teams that develop the curriculum, and the use of extra-mural activities such as case competitions to prepare students for their work situation, just to name a few. Whilst this should alleviate the concerns about a lack of connection between education and the work place, these may not be enough.
The inclusion of a number of mechanisms that are meant to ameliorate the gap between what is taught and what is needed in the work place are in themselves not a guarantee that this indeed happens. Thus, additional activities have to be put in place to investigate this.
Employers are increasingly vocal about what they would like to see in the way of competences of graduates. A number of surveys have attempted to shed light on the shifting requirements of the work place. A report of the American Association of Colleges and Universities (Hart research Associates, 2013) showed that 2/3rds of the employers believe most graduates have the skills and knowledge to succeed in entry level positions, but only 44% expressed that they thought this was enough for advancement and promotion to higher levels. Virtually all employers (93%) agreed that a candidate's demonstrated capacity to think critically, communicate clearly, and solve complex problems was more important than their undergraduate major. More than 75% of the employers felt that curricula need to be adjusted to include more emphasis on helping students develop five key learning outcomes, including: critical thinking,

complex problem solving, written and oral communication, and applied knowledge in real-world settings. They endorsed educational practices that placed students into learning situations that prepared them for workplace success.

It is also clear that the development of competences is influenced by the environment of the student, beyond that of the educational institute. The Council for Aid to Education (CAE) examined the results of the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA+) from 169 institutes and 31,652 students obtained during the 2013/2014 academic year. This test measures a student's ability to analyse, solve complex problems, communicate in writing, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical reading and evaluating, and producing critique and argument. It has been shown that students who excel in the areas measured by the CLA+ experience greater success in their immediate post graduation careers (Arum and Roksa, 2014). The CAE study showed that the educational background of the parents had considerable impact on the attainment of students in the CLA+. Thus, the educational attainment of the parents showed good covariance with the CLA+ test result. Higher educational background of the parents resulted in higher attainment in the test (CAE, 2014). This study presents a clear example of the impact of the student's environment beyond the HEI.

And an analytical study commissioned by the European Commission (2010) demonstrated that, although in general a large majority (89%) of employers agreed that graduates they had recruited in the last five years had the skills required to work in their company, there was considerable variation in employers' appreciation for this aspect, ranging from 98% in Sweden to 65% in Lithuania.

RELEVANCE OF INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Whilst almost 9 out of 10 graduate recruiters in this last study agreed that work experience was a crucial asset for new employees, they did not agree, however, that it was very important that new recruits had studied or worked abroad before joining their company. There was some variation in the stance about this last point. Graduate recruiters with international contacts and employers in the industry sector were more likely to value international mobility. Recruiters from Turkey (65%) and Cyprus (81%) were more appreciative of international mobility than their counterparts in the UK, Sweden, Norway, Croatia, and Hungary (variously 6% to 9%).

Leppanen et al., 2014, also demonstrated the lack of appreciation by employers in Finland for international expertise in recruitment in a recent study. In comparing the attitude of employers towards international expertise in 2005 with that in 2007 there was an increase in those who were not interested; from 14.7% to 22.3%. Equally, the proportion of employers who said it gave some additional points for candidates with international experience although it is not decisive, decreased to a similar degree from 37.0% in 2005 to 28.7% in 2012. Other categories on the Likert scale (interested, but not significant; gives advantage; required) were less than 1% different.

The recent Erasmus Impact Study (EIS - Brandenburg *et al.*, 2014), on the contrary, claimed almost a doubling of employer appreciation of graduates with international mobility experience from 2006 to 2013 from 37% to 64%. This result is not in agreement with the findings of the Flash Eurobarometer 304 in which study or an internship abroad was only appreciated by 29% or less of the employers. Unless between 2010 and 2013 there was a major shift in this attitude, this discrepancy is difficult to explain. The results from the EIS also do not agree in this respect with the Finnish data.

TRANSVERSAL SKILLS

Where the EIS and the Finnish studies do agree, however, is on the positive impact of international mobility on the so-called transversal skills. These skills were grouped under productivity, resilience, and curiosity, by the Finnish study. This finding was also in agreement what was found in the AAC&U survey and the Flash Eurobarometer in terms of what employers asked of graduates. The Finnish Study and the EIS report, for the first time, on results obtained not by self-assessment, but by psychometric tests that show significant increases in the competences that employers appreciate and that they think will become more important in the future. These results, often observed anecdotally previously, might well stimulate the importance of international mobility in terms of development of desirable employee traits. At the same time, it will pressure curriculum developers to cope with the development of the same traits for the majority of non-mobile students at the home campus.

DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL COMPETENCES BY IBMS ALUMNI

The lack of interest by employers in international experience seems to be based primarily on the mobility factor: a study and/or work placement abroad. Less is known about the impact of international programmes in which this abroad experience is embedded in a curriculum and teaching and learning environment at home. In other words, there are three factors to take into account:

- The obligatory mobility factor;
- The international curriculum;
- And the international teaching and learning environment.

All these three factors apply to the IBMS programmes, but the obligatory mobility factor does not apply to the control group.

The basis for the IBMS curricula as implemented by Dutch BBA IBMS programmes is a nationally agreed competence profile. This was first developed in 2004, and then revised in 2011. The version of 2004 was relevant to our study, as all alumni in our sample studied under the regime of this profile. For this study we examined the competence profile of 2004; the outcomes of this examination can be found in the next section. We also looked at the profile of 2011, but concluded that with respect to international competences, no substantial changes were made.

The following research questions were designed for this study:

- What is the contribution of international study activities in the IBMS curriculum to competence development?
- To what extent does the IBMS education provide students with the competences necessary to function in the international professional field?
- What is the employability of IBMS students?

In this report we address the methodology used, the results of the survey, as well as a comparative analysis of these results to other recent employability studies. At the end of the study we will discuss the findings and its limitations and come to conclusions and suggestions for further research.

THE IBMS COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK OF 2004

The alumni who graduated since 2008 were part of this study. This was determined by the desirability to have at least 5 sequential years of work experience after graduation to be able to determine the extent of early career progression. The early phase of career progression is more likely to be influenced by the study period than later advancement. The assumption that was made here is that the impact of study wanes over time.

It follows therefore that the competences as listed in the national Competence framework of 2004 needed to be subject of the study. The result of this examination was used to investigate the implementation of curricula at the pilot UAS. This was done in order to get a clear picture of the extent of internationalisation related competences and the execution in the various programmes in the period from 2004 onwards.

In this document reference will be made to 'intercultural and/or international competences'. This is meant to be a catch all for the purpose of this discussion for any competence that can be construed as having a relation with the competences that are widely associated with the type of outcomes that are envisaged for international activities. This is an imprecise description only for convenience. It is not meant to introduce this term as a firm description.

The comments about the national competence framework relate to version 10 dated 17 September 2004. This framework was built, in part, on a report by Hobéon that listed no less than 58 competences. In that report (of 1999) the following intercultural and international competences were listed:

IBMS core competences:

- Is aware of the most recent social and political developments with principal trade partners;
- Can identify the similarities and differences between cultures (e.g. east-west, south-north) and effectively adjust himself to these.

Personal Competences:
– Is internationally oriented;
– Acts in an international context according to the prevailing written and unwritten codes of conduct.

Job-related Competences:
– Can set up and maintain an international network and regularly extend it;
– Can negotiate in an international context, taking cultural differences into account;
– Is an international team leader;
– Shows a clear interest in international developments beyond his immediate scope of activities;
– Knows the national and international dress codes and etiquette.

Language skills:
– Is able to express himself fluently and correctly in English, both in speech and in writing, at near-native level;
– Can express himself at an intermediate level in a second foreign language (in addition to English and his native language);
– Can read a text in this second foreign language without any problems and is able to make a summary and give relevant comment.

General competences:
– Assess the implications of cross-border activities and review these with regard to the relevant cultural and ethical principles and the political context of that particular country.

In the 2004 framework two profession-related competences were mentioned that specifically related to international and intercultural, namely: 'International Business Awareness' and 'Intercultural Adaptability'. These competences were listed as International Business Competences. Other profession-related competences that were listed as international, include 'International Strategic Vision Development', 'International Marketing Management', 'International Operations Management', and 'International Accounting and Financial Management'. It is worth noting that the general definition of a competence in the IBMS framework was listed as:

> *'The ability to combine knowledge, skills, and attitude to show expected behaviour when performing a professional task in an intercultural business context.'*

Three levels of execution were defined for each competence within the Bachelor's level and the approximate timing for this competence to be achieved. A fourth level was reserved for the Master's level. Table 1 provides the input for these levels.

TABLE 1. COMPETENCES BY LEVEL IN THE 2004 IBMS FRAMEWORK

Level 1	The ability to execute a simple task. The student has the basic knowledge and skills to apply the competence with guidance in a limited context	In most educational situations this will be learned in the first year.
Level 2	The student can apply the competence independently in a relatively clearly arranged situation	This will normally be at the end of year 2 or the work placement period.
Level 3	The student can apply the competence independently in a complex situation with complete control of the required skills	Bachelor-level
Level 4	Flexible application of the competence in complex situations. The student can evaluate his competence and can support others when applying their competences.	Master-level

The levels replaced the previously coined terms of operational, tactical, and strategic.
The generic core qualifications (competences) for graduates of UAS in 2004 did not mention anything about international or intercultural, except for the social-communication skills: '*ability to communicate, cooperate with others and meet the requirements of a* ***multicultural***, ***international*** *and/or multidisciplinary work environment.*' The relevant Dublin descriptors made no reference to international and/or intercultural competences.
The IBMS programmes (or related Bachelor's of Commerce or Bachelor's of Economics at UAS) are part of the Business Administration domain. The BBA programme's broad description was given as (in bold the elements relating to internationalisation):

> *'The BBA programme focuses on preparing students for their challenging roles in a global environment, specifically for management roles in the public or private sector organisations. The goal is to provide students with a clear understanding of developments in the international business environment and the ability to translate these developments to a business strategy and goals.'*

The professional and generic competences of the BBA domain that were distilled from this statement did not include specific reference to any international and/or intercultural competence. The only slight reference was made to the use of English in terms of communication. From this it could be inferred that some of the communication was to be done to foreign nationals.
The BBA IBMS programme needed to exist within the boundaries of the BBA framework as presented above. The IBMS mission and profile statement focused the attention immediately on the international aspects and the global nature of the trade and industry for which its graduates were destined.
Some of the most striking features of an IBMS programme as outlined in 2004 were:

- It is international, both as to the educational contents and student population
- It is taught entirely in English
- It focuses on international trade and commerce
- It offers practical training in international companies
- Structural participation of foreign students leads to a high degree of international exposure

The general characteristics of the IBMS professional field included a passage that specifically relates to international and/or intercultural competences:

> *'The professional field of the IBMS graduate is both broad and international. In practice, this means that his activities will constantly involve international contacts, demanding special knowledge and skills in various fields, such as* ***intercultural relations*** *and international trade…'*

In the professional profile there was mention of international and intercultural competences:

> *An IBMS graduate is **aware** of the most **recent social and political developments of the principal trade partners** of the Netherlands. He makes use of all the relevant national and international media, such as the Internet. Moreover, the basic toolkit of the IBMS graduate will contain the key features of international legislation and regulation and of management and organisation. In addition, he has a good insight into international relations. Whatever his specialisation: finance, marketing or management; he can hold his own at an international level. He is able to make balanced decisions within his specialisation on the basis of knowledge, skills, discussions and **a certain amount of diplomacy**. He **has ample knowledge and experience of cultural differences among countries in general and intercultural management in particular**, enabling him to be a good negotiator at an international level. His knowledge and experience are reflected in his customer-oriented thinking and actions.*

All the above was translated into competences, generally described as:
*An IBMS graduate should be able to execute or direct different integrated international business operations in the fields of international marketing, finance and management. He himself fulfils these tasks at operational level and should be able to direct the tasks on middle management or tactical level. Performing these tasks in an international setting, the IBMS-graduate will be truly aware of the changing international business environment and he will have **an excellent command of intercultural communication**.*

*With these abilities he will be able to use his visionary and entrepreneurial abilities to contribute to the **development of the corporate internationalisation strategy** and the organisational policy, taking into account the goals and constraints of the organisation and with respect for the ethical and moral codes of his profession. He is able to indicate the interdependence between marketing, finance, business operations and human resource processes, and advise management on organisational policy development.*

The general description was subsequently distilled into eight profession-related competences and eight generic competences. Two of these dealt specifically with international and intercultural competences:
- International Business Awareness
- Intercultural Adaptability

These two competences were further described and worked out to three levels of competence, as provided in Table 12 and Table 13 in Appendix IV.
Many of the other competences have elements that are related to or draw on these two core competences. In addition, the competence of communication requires the graduate to have the ability to express himself at an intermediate level in a second foreign language. The ability in a second foreign language ultimately needs to be at level B2. This allows the graduate to make a contribution to discussions on practical matters.
In essence nothing has changed between the 2004 framework and that of 2011. In the task and context of the International Business Competences only the role was changed slightly from an ambassador for the company to an advisor and visionary.

METHODS

This research project investigated the international dimension of the Bachelor of Business Administration International Business and Management Studies (BBA IBMS) curriculum. The focus of this study was to examine the demand-side: the point of view of the professional practice as voiced through the insights that alumni had gained during the initial phase of their career. The central question we posed was:

To what extent does the IBMS curriculum prepare students for the international professional field?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This objective resulted in the following research questions:

To what extent did the BBA IBMS education provide students with the competences necessary to function in the international professional field?

Employability is related, in part, with the individual's professional knowledge and skills. Education plays an important role in their development. However, employability depends on more than just profession-specific competences. The recent Erasmus Impact Study (European Union, 2014) emphasised the importance of transversal skills, a broad set of competences and skills with a critical impact on employability. In our research, both profession-related and transversal skills were taken into account. We examined the following study programme outcomes:

Language proficiency. Progress in language proficiency during the BBA IBMS programme was measured by means of the Interagency Language Roundtable scale (ILR, 2014). Language proficiency was measured for English and a number of other languages (French, German, and Spanish).

Network development. We looked at the extent to which the BBA IBMS programme had assisted alumni to develop an international network.

Profession-related competences. The Framework Competences IBMS specifies the professional competences that the IBMS programme aims to develop. This framework was used to measure profession-related competences.
Intercultural competences. These were measured, through self-assessment, by using a combination of indicators originating from a number of other sources (European Union, 2014; European Commission, 2009; Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2002). The following indicators were used: tolerance of ambiguity, flexibility, open-mindedness, social initiative, emotional stability, empathy, knowledge discovery, communicative awareness, and cultural knowledge.

What was the contribution of international study activities in the BBA IBMS curriculum to competence development?
The IBMS curriculum offers students a wide variety of study activities. Although the present study did not aim to be an evaluation of individual elements of the curriculum, we did investigate the participation of students in a number of study activities with an international orientation, and the resulting impact on competence development and employability. The following study activities were included: activities related to student mobility (e.g., study or internship abroad), language training, training in intercultural competence, and minors or other courses with an international orientation.
What is the employability of BBA IBMS graduates?
Two elements of employability were measured: employability in general and international employability. General employability was measured by looking at indicators such as the time it took to find a job and the salary earned. International employability, the extent to which the student managed to obtain a job with an international dimension, was measured through an index based on a number of aspects of the international work environment (Wiers-Jenssen, 2008).
Which background factors influence competence development and employability of BBA IBMS graduates?
Competence development and employability is not only related to the educational programme, but other factors also play a role. Background factors related to, for instance, previous international experiences or the individual's socio-cultural background also have a potential influence. Therefore, the impact of background factors was included in this study.

PARTICIPATING HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTES IN THIS STUDY

The participating institutes of higher education were:
- Avans Hogeschool / Avans University of Applied Sciences
- De Haagse Hogeschool / The Hague University of Applied Sciences
- Hanzehogeschool Groningen / Groningen University of Applied Sciences
- Hogeschool van Arnhem en Nijmegen / HAN University of Applied Sciences
- Hogeschool van Amsterdam / Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences
- Stenden Hogeschool / Stenden University of Applied Sciences
- Universiteit van Tilburg/Tilburg University

CHOICE OF RESPONDENTS

The choice of respondents was crucial for this study. Respondents needed to have insight in both the BBA IBMS learning experience and the requirements of the international profession. One of the options considered was to ask representatives of the professional field, for instance, HR managers, about the match between competence development in education and competence requirements in the professional practice. There was, however, a risk that such interviews would focus more on desired knowledge and skills than on a comparison of acquired and required competences. Therefore, it was decided to focus the research project on people who experienced both the IBMS education and the demands placed on the employee in the international profession: the BBA IBMS alumni. Alumni experienced the education, in their role as a student, and the demands of the international profession, as an employee. Alumni were eligible for participation if they graduated from the BBA IBMS bachelor programme in 2008 or later. This was so that only those alumni that studied under the 'regime' of the current or the previous national profile[1] of IBMS were included in the study.
Questions and statements were administered in the form of a survey. The survey was accessible from June 1, 2014, to July 21, 2014. The alumni databases of the participating IBMS programmes were used to select respondents. Selected students received an email, followed by two reminders, with a request to fill out the survey online. Respondents could access the online survey by clicking on a link in the email. Surveymonkey[2] was used to create the online survey, to collect, and partially analyse the responses.

RESPONSE

The survey resulted in a response of 547 alumni, out of which 42.0% female and 58.0% male respondents. Table 2 presents an overview of the response per institute.

TABLE 2. SHARE OF THE RESPONSE PER INSTITUTE

Institute	**Response (%)**
Avans Hogeschool / Avans University of Applied Sciences	11.5%
De Haagse Hogeschool / The Hague University of Applied Sciences	2.9%
Hanzehogeschool Groningen / Groningen University of Applied Sciences	20.8%
Hogeschool Arnhem Nijmegen / HAN University of Applied Sciences	45.2%
Hogeschool van Amsterdam / Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences	12.8%
Stenden Hogeschool / Stenden University of Applied Sciences	6.6%
Total number of respondents	**547**

There were differences in response between participating universities. This was mainly related to the size of the respective alumni databases. In this report, only the combined results of all participating institutes

1 The previous national profile of IBMS was in place in the period 2004 – 2010.
2 Surveymonkey is a tool that can be used to conduct surveys online. This tool can be accessed through www.surveymonkey.com

were reported. No reference to outcomes of individual institutes was included, unless they were of general interest. Institute-specific outcomes were made available to the participating universities.
For the purpose of comparison, a control group was included in this research. This group consisted of alumni of the Bachelor programmes of International Business and International Economics & Finance at Tilburg University. These programmes in terms of content delivered an international curriculum and encouraged students to study abroad, however a study period or internship abroad was not mandatory. The normal study duration of these programmes differs from that of the BBA programmes, in that it is 1 year shorter. The response of the control group consisted of 186 alumni.
It is difficult to control for all variables with control groups. Unless specifically mentioned, the results in this report exclude the response from the control group. In the discussion chapter we will address some distinguishing features in comparing the results for the IBMS alumni with the Tilburg alumni.

NATIONAL BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS

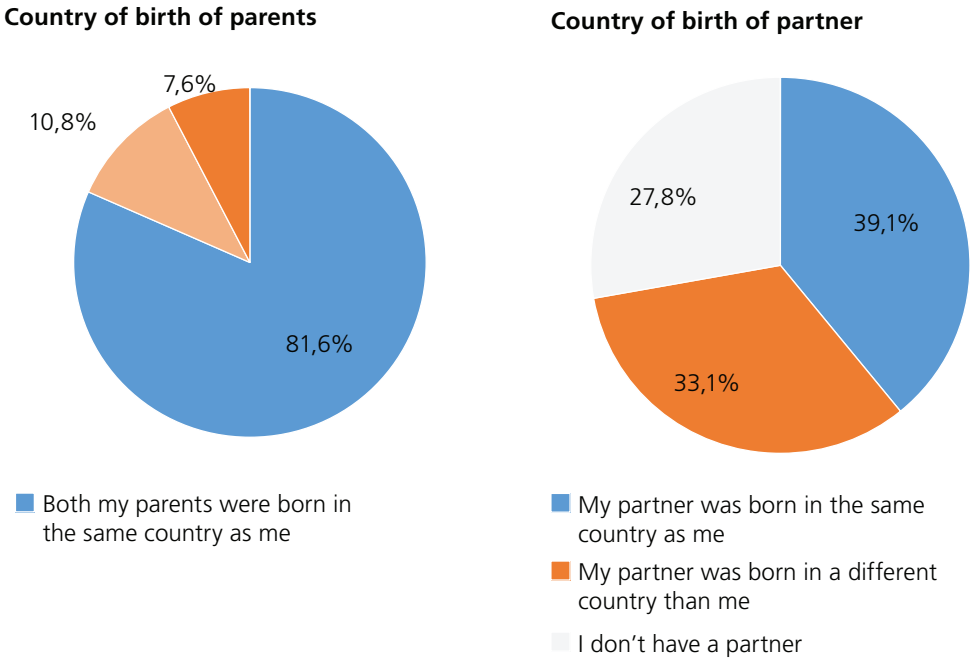
IBMS offers an international study environment. The programme hosts students from Dutch origins as well as students from other nationalities. Table 3 lists the countries represented among the respondents of this study.

TABLE 3. COUNTRY OF ORIGIN AND NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS

Country	**Number**
Netherlands	149
Germany	99
Native to more than 1 country	34
China	14
Bulgaria	11
France	9
Russia	9
Indonesia	6
Hungary	6
(Former)Dutch Antilles, Aruba, Curacao	5
Poland	5
Finland	4
Mexico	4
United States	4
Ghana	3
Norway	3
Other	42
Number of alumni that answered this question	**407**

Two nationalities had significant higher representation: The Netherlands and Germany. This is an effect of the geography of the participating programmes (Germany is a neighbouring country). A striking finding is also that 8.3% of the respondents indicated they can not be pinned down to a specific nationality: they consider themselves native to more than one country. A number of countries were represented by two respondents, including: the Baltic States, Belarus, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Malaysia, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, and United Kingdom. Countries mentioned once: Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Brazil, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Guinea, India, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Macedonia, Nigeria, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Vietnam, and Zambia.
These numbers are comparable to those for incoming mobility to the Netherlands in general. While 6.9% of the total student body in UAS are international students, Economics is the field of study of most of these students (81.1%) and one can assume that most students in this field are studying in an IBMS programme. German students make up 43% of all international students in The Netherlands, for IBMS alumni this is about 40%, the other countries are represented, in both cases, by much lower numbers and are rather diverse. IBMS alumni are, as far as country of origin is concerned, representative for the overall international student population. (http://www.nuffic.nl/bibliotheek/internationalisering-in-beeld-2013.pdf / retrieved 25/3/2015)
It can be seen from Figure 1 that in their private life, IBMS alumni have a more international orientation than the generation of their parents. The majority of alumni have parents with the same national background as themselves, and only 10% of alumni were born from parents with different nationalities. However, the partners of 45.8% of alumni were from a different country. This is much higher than what has been reported in the Erasmus Impact Study for non-mobile alumni (13%), and it is also higher than reported in this study for mobile alumni (32.8%).

FIGURE 1. NATIONALITY OF PARENTS AND PARTNER (IF PRESENT)

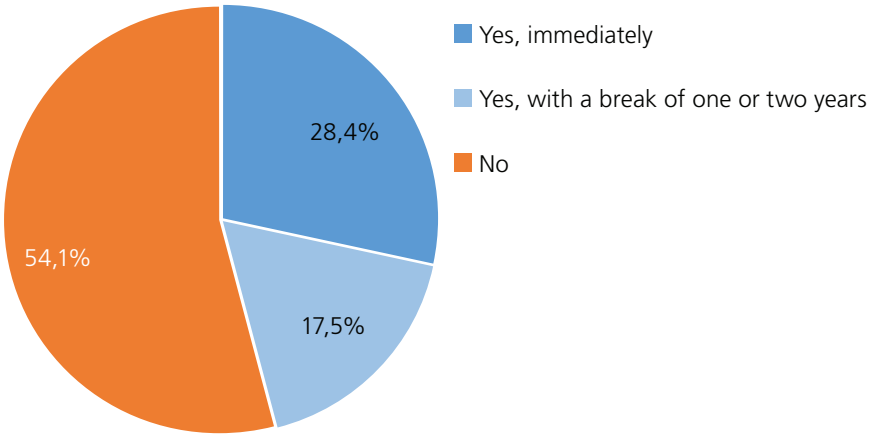


Compared with the control group, there is no significant difference in country of birth of parents. There is a significant difference in partner choice: more partners with the same nationality in the control group (47.4%), and less partners with a different nationality (25.2%).

CONTINUATION WITH A MASTER'S PROGRAMME AFTER THE BBA IBMS

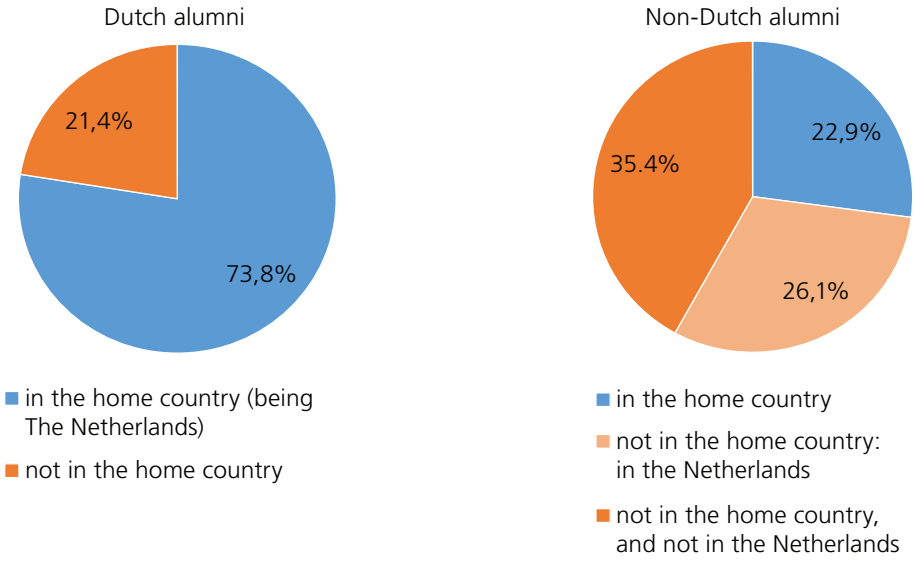
We asked the IBMS alumni if they continued studying after their Bachelor's degree. Almost half of the BBA IBMS graduates did (see Figure 2). Of the alumni who continued studying, 77.6% obtained a Master's degree, 2% got another Bachelor's degree, and 20.5% did not yet graduate with a second degree. Although this percentage is understandably lower than those of Tilburg alumni (97.1%), it seems far higher than that of all students who compelte their bachelor in a University of Applied Sciences. According to information about 2011, 6,2% follow a UAS master, 8,9% a WO master at a research university, and 12,7% follow a WO bachelor, of whom many will continue with a master. So, at maxium 27.8% will do a master, compared to the 77.6% of IBMS alumni who did obtain a master (http://recruitmentmatters.nl/2011/11/11/hbowo-afgestudeerden-hoe-groot-is-de-doelgroep/ retrieved 9-3-2015).
Almost two per cent (1.9%) of the responding BBA IBMS alumni obtained a PhD. Since our respondents graduated from the BBA IBMS in 2008 or later, it is likely that, even if some respondents started a PhD, most of them would not have finished their doctoral programme. It is expected therefore that the percentage of graduates with a PhD degree is likely to rise in the coming years.

FIGURE 2. PROPORTION OF BBA IBMS ALUMNI WHO CONTINUED THEIR STUDIES WITH A MASTER'S DEGREE (N=582)



We did not find a significant difference between Dutch and non-Dutch alumni: 45.3% of the Dutch alumni continued studying, versus 46.3% of the foreign graduates of the BBA IBMS programme. However, there is an important difference in destination choice. While the large majority of Dutch alumni (73.8%) continued their studies in The Netherlands, only 26.9% of the non-Dutch alumni continued in the Netherlands. Another 22.9% of the non-Dutch alumni continued in their country of origin, and 35.4% of non-Dutch alumni continued in a third country. This is shown in Figure 3.

FIGURE 3. LOCATION OF THE SUBSEQUENT STUDY PROGRAMME



PARTICIPATION IN STUDY ACTIVITIES WITH AN INTERNATIONAL ORIENTATION

Internationalisation of education in terms of location can be divided in: internationalisation by participating in educational activities abroad, all activities that require a study or work placement abroad, and internationalisation at home (IaH).

INTERNATIONALISATION ABROAD

Around 90% of the responding BBA IBMS alumni went abroad during their study programme; most of them studied abroad during their study programme (see Figure 7). The high percentage is not surprising, since the study abroad is (generally) an obligatory part of the IBMS programme. Almost two third of the IBMS alumni also did their internship abroad, and nearly 30% did their thesis project abroad. A comparison of this result with UAS outward mobility in general (21,4%) and for Economics (29,5%), shows that this proportion of outwardly mobile IBMS students is very high. The BBA IBMS programme is part of the Economics domain and thus enhances the proportion of students that undertake foreign study compared to the overall UAS population (ww.nuffic.nl/bibliotheek/internationalisering-in-beeld-2013.pdf). In the control group at Tilburg University, where study abroad is not obligatory, the percentage was lower: 62.6% of the students in that group studied abroad. For work placements, this percentage was even lower still; it was only 5.0 %. This finding very clearly demonstrated the difference in this aspect between universities of applied sciences, where work placements are an essential part of the study, and a research university where this is not the case. The lower mobility in the control group might explain differences in further outcomes.

Participation in shorter study trips, for instance for specific projects, was low among BBA IBMS alumni (6.1%) and in the control group (10.0%).

FIGURE 4. PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES ABROAD DURING THE PROGRAMME (N=541)

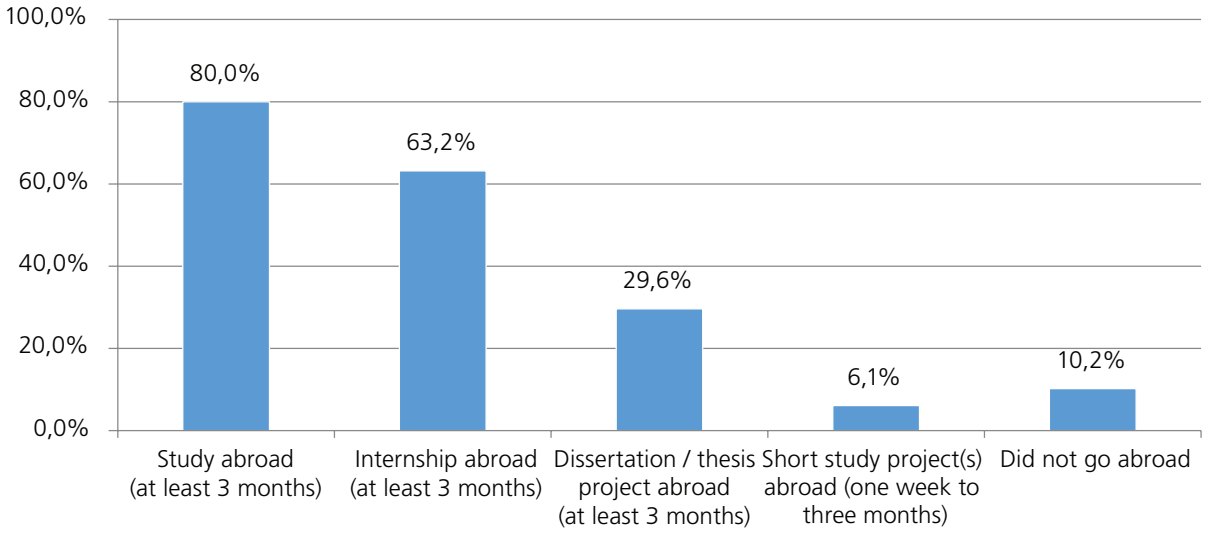


Table 4 lists the most popular study abroad destinations. United States, United Kingdom, France, Spain, Germany, and China were popular countries for both study and internship abroad. Of the surrounding countries, Belgium was popular as internship destination, but not for study abroad. Australia and Canada were more popular study abroad destinations. Good comparable data on outward mobility for study and work placement in general within UAS are not available. Though only an impression, it appears that relatively more IBMS students went abroad for study and work placement outside of the Erasmus programmes than UAS students in other programmes do.

TABLE 4. MOST POPULAR STUDY ABROAD DESTINATIONS

Study abroad	**Internship abroad**
United States (51 respondents)	Germany (76 respondents)
France (48)	United Kingdom (57)
United Kingdom (46)	Spain (39)
Spain (43)	United States (31)
Germany (31)	Belgium (24)
China (30)	China (23)
Australia (27)	France (23)
Canada (21)	Australia (14)
Mexico (21)	Malaysia (12)
Taiwan (15)	Mexico (10)
Sweden (12)	Switzerland (8)
Hong Kong, South Korea (11)	Netherlands Antilles, Ireland (7)

Despite the high participation in activities abroad, the majority of students did not prepare themselves for their stay in the country or region of their choice during their education: only 19.7% of the alumni had followed courses or a minor programme with a specific geographic focus. Most of these alumni followed a programme with a European or Asian focus.

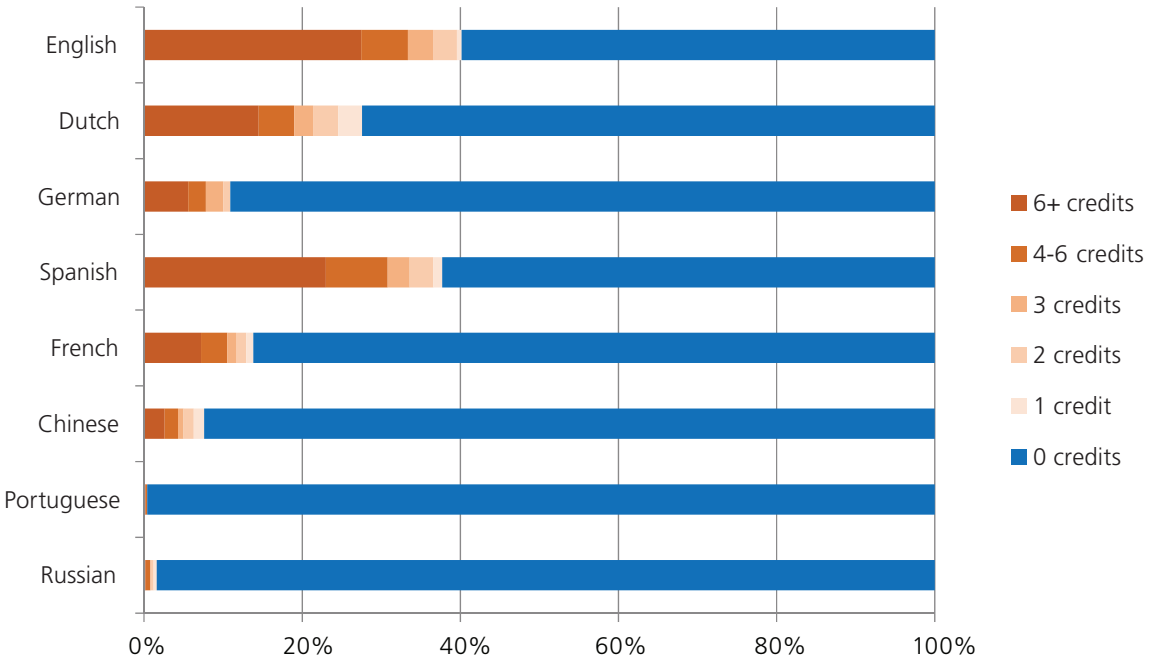
INTERNATIONALISATION AT HOME

Internationalisation at Home aims to equip all students, also the non mobile ones, with the international and intercultural competences they will need in their future profession. Beelen and Jones (2015, in print) define it as follows: "Internationalisation at Home is the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments". Around ninety percent of BBA IBMS alumni added internationalisation abroad to their learning experience. This implies that the overwhelming majority of BBA IBMS students acquired international competences both at home and abroad. Since the present research looks at the BBA IBMS programmes as a whole, it is not possible to distinguish to what extent alumni acquired competences at home or abroad, or both. At home, students learn both in international classrooms and through the informal curriculum. While it is possible to elaborate on the composition of international classrooms (see below), it is not possible to provide insights into teaching and learning processes on the basis of quantitative research.

LANGUAGE TRAINING

With respect to language training, the languages that were most popular (or obligatory in the programme) were English and Spanish: see Figure 5. German and French received a lot less attention; nearly 10% of the alumni received some training in Chinese. 27.5% of the students also participated in a Dutch language class.

FIGURE 5. LANGUAGE TRAINING DURING THE BBA IBMS PROGRAMME (N=539)



In the control group, a similar percentage of alumni had followed Spanish language class (40.5%, almost all of them at least 4 credits), and 26% of the control group had received English language classes (mainly 4 or more credits). For each of the other languages, less than 5% of the alumni of the control group had followed language training.

INTERNATIONAL CLASSROOM

One method for providing students an international experience at home is by offering them an international classroom. We were unable to ascertain to what extent this was achieved, other than by examining the perception of alumni in respect of the presence of international students and some other characteristics (e.g. such as language usage). Table 5 illustrates that this international environment was partly fulfilled: on average, alumni reported a classroom with a maximum of 60% Dutch students, and consequently 40% students with another national background. The diversity in origins of these other students is to a certain extent limited: a rather large proportion of German students were present, a somewhat smaller proportion of Chinese students, and a rest group consisting of a diversity of nationalities.

TABLE 5. DISTRIBUTION OF NATIONALITIES IN THE BBA IBMS PROGRAMME, PERCEPTION OF ALUMNI

	<20%	20 - 40%	40 - 60%	60 - 80%	>80%	Responses
Average percentage of Dutch students	17.0%	44.4%	26.7%	10.0%	1.9%	540
Average percentage of German students	26.4%	50.4%	18.2%	4.1%	0.9%	534
Average percentage of Chinese students	55.6%	35.6%	7.3%	1.3%	0.2%	531
Average percentage of students from other nationalities	36.7%	41.0%	16.5%	4.1%	1.7%	534

The average classroom composition for the entire response as based on the perception of alumni is shown in Figure 6.

FIGURE 6. AVERAGE COMPOSITION OF THE COHORT AS DETERMINED BY ALUMNI PERCEPTION (N = 531)

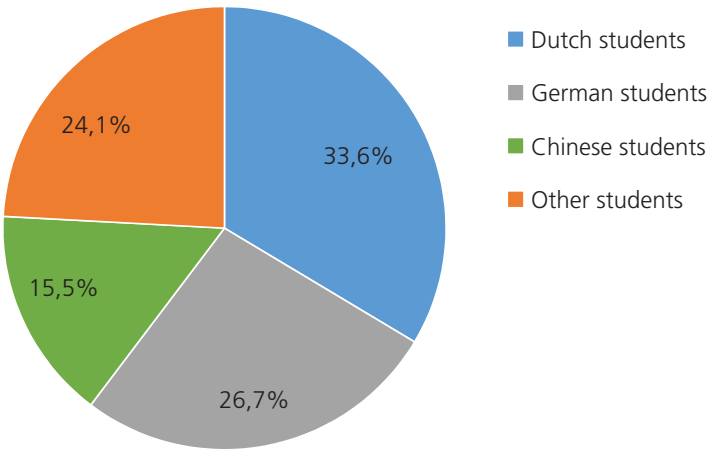
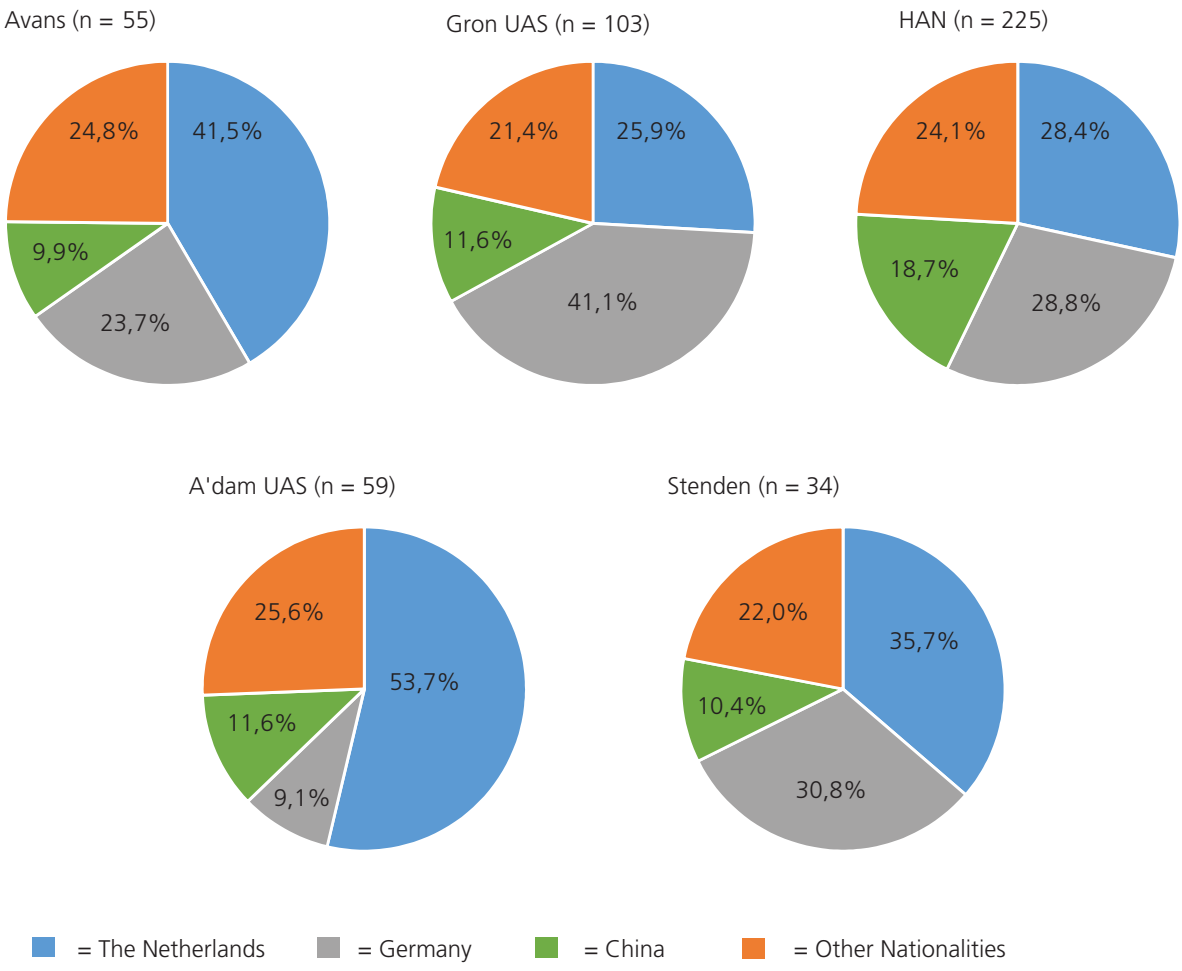


Figure 7 highlights the differences in classroom composition between the participating institutes. Differences are quite substantial: the international composition of the student group varied from a predominantly Dutch-German community at Groningen UAS (67%) containing more German students than Dutch; to a mostly Dutch classroom (54%) with a larger Chinese population than Germans at Amsterdam UAS. The comparison also illustrates that the proximity to the Dutch-German border (Groningen University of Applied Sciences and HAN University of Applied Sciences) has a positive effect on the proportion of German students[3]. It should be stressed that this is the classroom composition based on alumni's perceptions; the actual composition based on administrative data might have been different, but we were unable to obtain these data with a high degree of reliability.

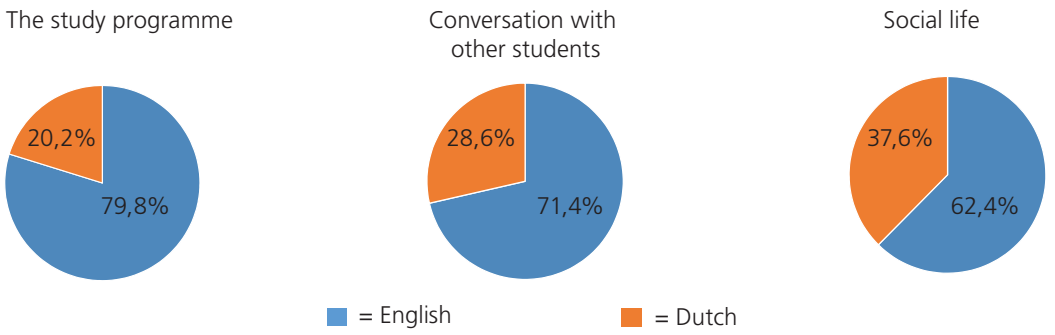
FIGURE 7. COHORT COMPOSITION AS DETERMINED BY ALUMNI PERCEPTION



Although an international environment does not by definition equal an English-speaking environment, the BBA IBMS programme did create an environment where English was the dominant language. This was true for the study programme itself, but the social life of IBMS students also incorporated English as its main language: see Figure 8.

3 For comparisons between IBMS programmes, only institutes with an n ≥ 30 were included.

FIGURE 8. USE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN VARIOUS SETTINGS (N=550)



The overall picture for the Tilburg alumni was largely similar. No significant differences in the use of English during the study programme were detected, and in conversations with other students and social life, the alumni of that group used English more frequently than the IBMS alumni: 80% of conversations with fellow students and 67% of the conversations in social life were in the English language. The average composition of the classroom of the control group was more or less similar to the average composition of the IBMS classroom: 35% Dutch students, 19% German students, 25% Chinese students, and around 20% students of other national background.

It is interesting to observe that where the assumption was that classrooms were mainly Dutch with a high proportion of German students according to the perception of the IBMS and Tilburg alumni, there was a more diverse classroom environment, consisting four categories: Dutch, German, Chinese and other international students in more or less equal proportions.

NETWORK AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

OUTCOMES OF THE IBMS STUDY PROGRAMME

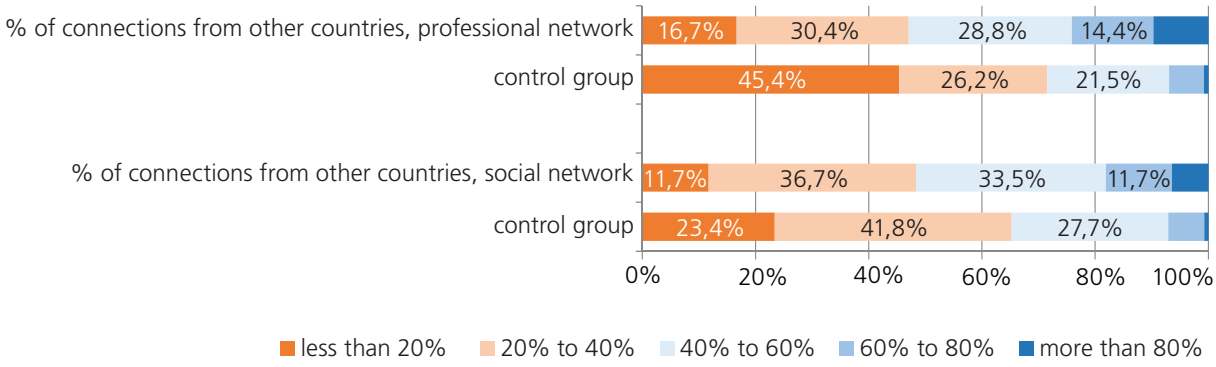
INTERNATIONAL NETWORK DEVELOPMENT

One of the indicators to measure outcomes of international education is the development of an international network. In the study this was measured by comparing the international aspects of the social and professional network of the IBMS alumni and the control group. For the social network, this was measured by asking the alumni to estimate the percentage of Facebook™ friends with a different nationality than their own. The international degree of the professional network was defined as the percentage of LinkedIn™ connections with a nationality different from that of the alumnus.

Figure 9 demonstrates that the BBA IBMS alumni have a more substantial international network than the alumni of the control group. This holds true for both the social (Facebook™) and the professional relations (LinkedIn™) network. It should be noted that the difference with the control group was shown to be especially substantial for the professional network.

Whilst to a certain degree, it seems self-evident that an international education environment results in a more international network. The results presented in this study at least confirm this by virtue of contact distribution of the alumni in two social network platforms. The statistical analysis of the results showed that a stronger international network correlates with a higher extent of international employability. It is not known however whether this is a cause or effect situation. This would require further detailed studies. The chapter on employability presents a detailed overview of the aspects of international employability of IBMS alumni.

FIGURE 9. INTERNATIONAL NETWORK: COMPARISON OF BBA IBMS ALUMNI WITH CONTROL GROUP (N=488)



The absence of an obligatory foreign period of study for the alumni of Tilburg University (TU) might explain a reduced international network as evidenced by Facebook™ and Linkedin™ contacts. Such a reduced international network could also be explained by the extent to which the TU alumnus works in an international professional environment. This study demonstrated that on average BBA IBMS alumni work in a more international setting compared to the control group. A third and possibly related explanation could be that Tilburg alumni continued more often with their master and PhD studies than IBMS alumni and did this mostly in the Netherlands.

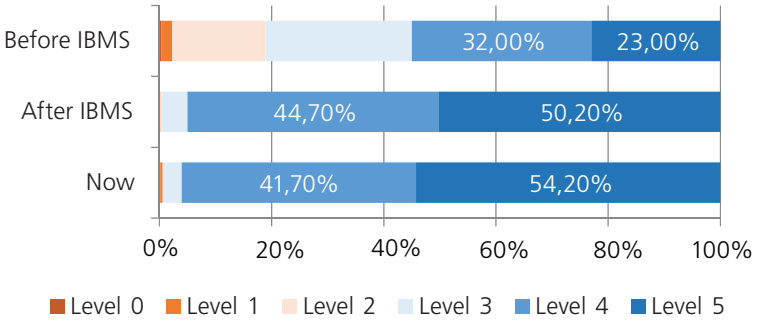
LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

The progress in language proficiency during the IBMS programme was measured by means of the Interagency Language Roundtable scale (ILR, 2014). This scale consists of 6 levels:
level 0: no proficiency;
level 1: elementary proficiency - basic speech, basic answers to basic questions;
level 2: limited working proficiency - routine communication, casual conversation;
level 3: professional working proficiency - effective participation in most conversations;
level 4: full professional proficiency - fluent language use;
level 5: native / bilingual proficiency.

Alumni had to rate their language proficiency for English and a number of other languages (French, German, Spanish). Figure XXX illustrates that the English language proficiency has increased during the IBMS programme. This increase is significant ($t(758) = 15.362$; $p < 0.001$); according to statistical standards, it can be called a strong increase (Cohen's $d = 0.99$)[4].

4 With respect to Cohen's d, the following rules of thumb apply (Cohen, 1992): $d < 0.20$: difference is hardly noticeable; $0.20 < d < 0.50$: difference is small; $0.50 < d < 0.80$: medium-sized difference; $d > 0.80$: large difference.

FIGURE 10. ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY (N=465-482)



With respect to the other tested languages, there is an important increase in the average level of Spanish language proficiency during the IBMS programme, but at most a small increase in French or German proficiency[5]:

- French: no significant increase: $t(334) = 1.277$; $p = 0.101$;
- German: significant but small increase: $t(361) = 3.164$; $p < 0.001$; Cohen's $d = 0.33$;
- Spanish: significant and large increase: $t(326) = 8.796$; $p < 0.001$; Cohen's $d = 0.91$.

Increase in language proficiency is related to language training. If we look at the effectiveness of language training in these three languages, then we see that language training results in a significant increase in language proficiency for all three languages (tested with one-way ANOVA for only Dutch IBMS alumni)[6]:

- Effectiveness of Spanish language training: $F(5,99) = 6.356$, $p < 0.001$;
- Effectiveness of French language training: $F(4,46) = 4.892$, $p = 0.002$;
- Effectiveness of German language training: $F(4,59) = 3.990$, $p = 0.006$.

The degree of language training participation partly explains the stronger improvement of Spanish proficiency as compared to French or German proficiency: far more alumni had followed Spanish classes than German or French classes.

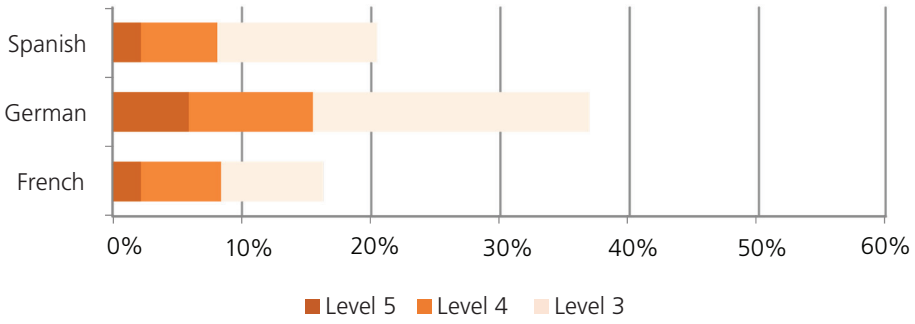
Next to language training, another way to improve language proficiency is to do an internship or study semester in the country where people speak the respective language. Our results demonstrate this: an internship or study semester in France, Germany, or Spain resulted in a significant and substantial increase in French, German, or Spanish proficiency, respectively, among the alumni in our sample.

Despite the previous observations, the comparison in Figure 11 highlights that for French, German, and Spanish, the average language proficiency is still quite low after finishing IBMS: only around 15% of the graduating students have, to a certain extent, a professional language proficiency in French, around 20% in Spanish, and around 38% in German. It is noteworthy that, out of these three languages, the professional working proficiency of German is highest, whereas this is the least popular language in terms of language training during the IBMS programme.

5 Only the language proficiency of Dutch native speakers was compared here, to avoid contamination of results by, for instance, German students rating their progress in German proficiency during their IBMS programme.

6 A similar effect of English language training on English language proficiency could not be detected, because nearly all participating alumni had received substantial training in English during their education. Consequently, no useful comparison could be made with students who did not follow English language training.

FIGURE 11. PERCENTAGE OF DUTCH BBA IBMS STUDENTS WITH AT LEAST PROFESSIONAL WORKING PROFICIENCY (IRL LEVEL 3 OR HIGHER) AFTER GRADUATING



It was noticed that the Tilburg students also created an English-speaking environment. In terms of language proficiency, there was no significant difference in progress of English language proficiency between the control group and the BBA IBMS alumni (tested with independent samples t-test, $t(275) = 0.964$, $p = 0.336$).

The progress in Spanish language proficiency among Dutch IBMS alumni was significantly higher than among Dutch alumni in the control group, despite the similar extent of Spanish language training in both groups: $t(295) = 2.077$, $p = 0.039$. Test with Cohen's d shows that this difference was small, but noticeable: $d = 0.27$. A possible cause was the increased mobility of the BBA IBMS students to Spanish speaking countries. The development of German and French proficiency also showed some differences between Dutch IBMS alumni and control group; the lack of language training in these languages resulted in an absence of language progress in German, and a slight decrease of French language proficiency during the study programme of the control group alumni.

DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETENCES ASSOCIATED WITH THE BBA IBMS NATIONAL PROFILE

INTRODUCTION

The Framework Competences IBMS (2004) gives a general description of the professional profile of the IBMS graduate. This framework specifies the competences that an IBMS graduate is expected to posses after successful completion of the Bachelor of Business Administration IBMS programme. The framework comprises 8 professional and 8 generic competences. These are specified in Table 6 below.

TABLE 6. COMPETENCES OF THE IBMS FRAMEWORK (2004)

Professional competences	**Generic competences**
International business awareness	Leadership
Intercultural adaptability	Co-operation
International strategic vision development	Communication
Organisational policy development	Analysing and information processing
Entrepreneurial management	Creative problem solving
International marketing management	Planning and organizing
International operations management	Learning and self-development
International accounting and Financial Management	Ethical responsibility

Each competence was represented in our study by a number of statements. The alumnus was expected to respond to these statements with an answer on a 5-point Likert scale (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree). The answer indicated the extent to which an alumnus agreed or disagreed with the statement. The resultant collective score gave an indication of the average extent to which respondents could find themselves agreeing or disagreeing with the statement. Respondents were also asked for each competence with one or more statements to what extent they felt the IBMS programme met their professional needs. The results of this assessment provide a global evaluation of the competences acquired during the IBMS programme. It also showed to what extent there was a match between the educational delivery on each competence and what was needed in professional context of the alumnus.
The same analysis was also executed for the alumni of the control group. For the results we refer to Appendix III.

DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES

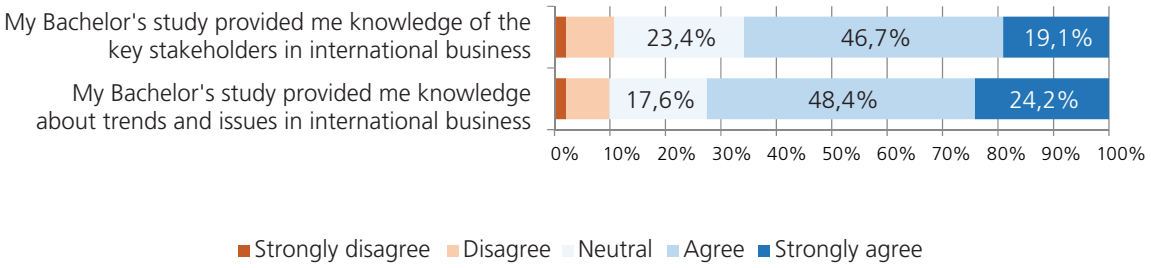
INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AWARENESS

Two statements were used to test competence development with respect to international business awareness:

- My Bachelor's study provided me knowledge about trends and issues in international business
- My Bachelor's study provided me knowledge of the key stakeholders in international business

Figure 12 highlights that almost three quarters of the alumni considered that their IBMS education provided them with the necessary international business awareness. A slightly smaller proportion (2/3rds) felt they knew enough about the key stakeholder in international business. This left 1/3rd who considered that their knowledge of key stakeholders could have been better developed or did not know whether it was enough.

FIGURE 12. INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AWARENESS: SELF-ASSESSMENT BY IBMS ALUMNI (N = 435-438)



INTERCULTURAL ADAPTABILITY

Intercultural competences comprise an important aspect of the IBMS profile. The framework competences IBMS lists intercultural competences as one of the 8 domain competences, specifying them as "*The ability to explain the differences between national, organisational and occupational cultures and to outline strategies for adapting to these differences in e.g. human resources management, marketing and intercultural communication. The student can identify the relevant dimensions of cultures and has*

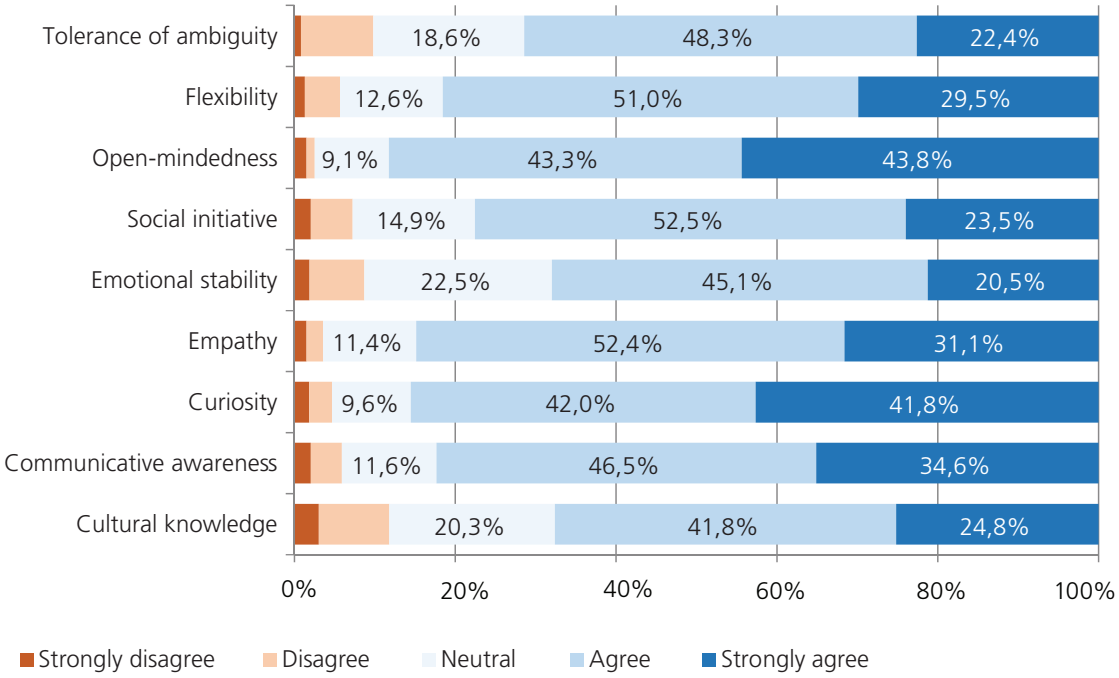
developed self-awareness of his own cultural background. He is able to adapt his behaviour to the standards in other cultures and can maintain an international network essential to his tasks" (Framework Competences IBMS, 2004, p. 10). This study devoted special attention to these competences because of their importance in intercultural settings.

Intercultural competence was measured using a combination of indicators originating from a number of other sources (European Union, 2014; European Commission, 2009; Van Oudenhoven & Van der Zee, 2002). Each of these indicators was represented in the survey by a statement, to which the respondent was asked react. Table 7 presents the complete overview of the indicators used in this study to measure intercultural competence. Each indicator is listed with the relevant statement that was used in the survey.

TABLE 7. INDICATORS OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

Indicator	Statement in survey
Tolerance of ambiguity	My Bachelor's study gave me the skills to deal with the uncertainty associated with unexpected or unfamiliar situations
Flexibility	My Bachelor's study gave me the skills to be flexible and adapt my behaviour to the demands of new or unknown situations
Open-mindedness	My Bachelor's study gave me the skills to be open-minded, respectful and unprejudiced toward other cultural norms and values
Social initiative	My Bachelor's study gave me the skills to take initiative in new or unknown situations
Emotional stability	My Bachelor's study gave me the skills to remain calm in new, unknown, or even stressful situations
Empathy	My Bachelor's study gave me the skills to understand the feelings, thoughts and behaviours of individuals from another cultural background
Curiosity	My Bachelor's study gave me the skills to be curious and learn from other cultures
Communicative awareness	My Bachelor's study gave me the skills to be aware of the influence my cultural background has on my feelings and behaviour
Cultural knowledge	My Bachelor's study gave me the skills to know and understand the history and world views of other cultures

FIGURE 13. INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES: SELF-ASSESSMENT BY IBMS ALUMNI (N = 393-396)

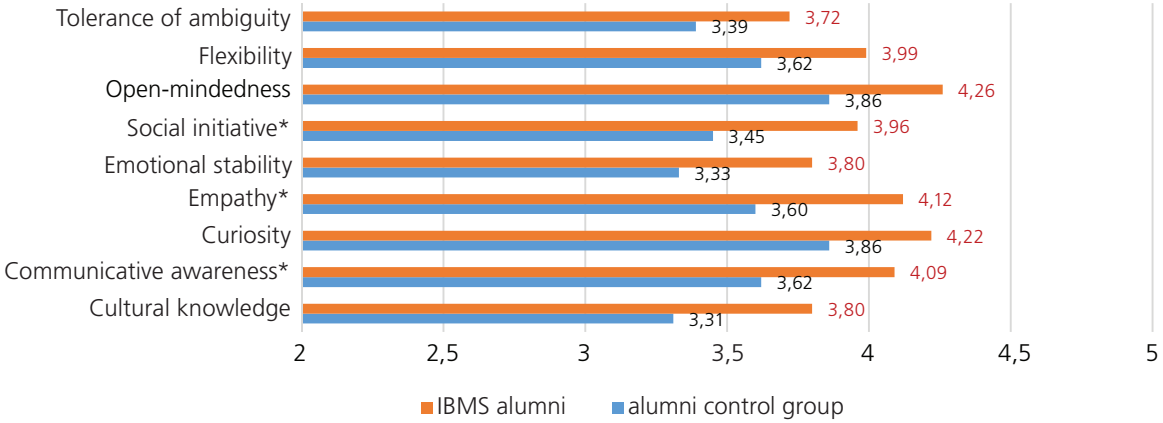


The extent to which respondents agreed with the statements is shown in Figure 13. These outcomes illustrate that the majority of alumni considered that their IBMS programme supported them in developing intercultural competence. This applies to all of the indicators measured in the survey; the lowest level of agreement was 66% and the highest level 87%. There seemed to be two groups in terms of the response when combining the strongly agree and agree answers. Results for cultural knowledge, emotional stability, and tolerance of ambiguity (66% - 71%) were somewhat lower than for the other competences (76% - 87%). It may just be that the extent to which students have experienced disorienting dilemmas (Mezirow) during their education may have left them less tolerant of unexpected situations, which they felt would have in part been supported by better knowledge of other cultures. The slightly lower score on social initiative compared to flexibility, open-mindedness, empathy and curiosity points may be in the same direction.

We compared the intercultural competences of the Dutch IBMS alumni with the Dutch alumni in the control group (see also the Appendix)[7]. Figure 14 illustrates that, for each indicator, the level of intercultural competence acquired during the education programme is higher for the IBMS alumni than for the control group. All differences were found to be significant (independent samples t-test; with $p < 0.01$); the differences between IBMS alumni and the control group were found to be especially large for social initiative, empathy, and communicative awareness. The focus on outward mobility by study and work placements in the BBA IBMS programmes compared to the Tilburg programmes might explain this difference.

7 The proportion of respondents with a Dutch national background is higher in the IBMS group than in the control group. To avoid contamination of results due to differences in national background, only the results for Dutch nationals were compared.

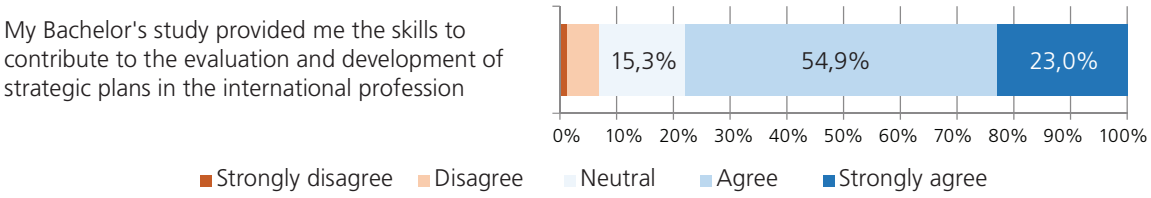
FIGURE 14. INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES: IBMS ALUMNI VERSUS CONTROL GROUP (LARGE DIFFERENCES ARE INDICATED WITH AN ASTERISK (*), OTHER DIFFERENCES ARE MEDIUM-SIZED; SIZE OF DIFFERENCES TESTED WITH COHEN'S D)



INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC VISION DEVELOPMENT

The IBMS programme aims to provide alumni with the ability to contribute to the development and evaluation of an internationalisation strategy of a company. Figure 15 on page 8 highlights that the majority (almost 80%) of the alumni considered that the IBMS programme has done so.

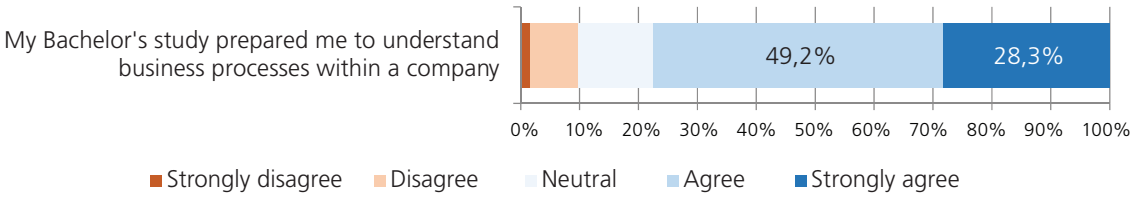
FIGURE 15. INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC VISION DEVELOPMENT: SELF-ASSESSMENT BY IBMS ALUMNI (N=439)



ORGANISATIONAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT

This competence was defined as "The ability to research and analyse relevant international business problems, to propose policy goals and objectives and to prepare alternative solutions in order to optimise business and human resources processes in order to strengthen the synergy between strategic, structural and cultural aspects of the organisation" Again about 80% of alumni indicated that their study programme prepared them to understand business processes within a company. This can be seen in Figure 16.

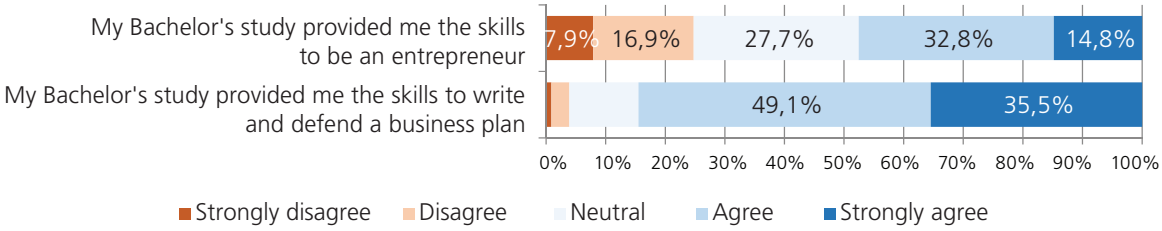
FIGURE 16. BUSINESS PROCESSES & CHANGE MANAGEMENT: SELF-ASSESSMENT BY IBMS ALUMNI (N=441)



ENTREPRENEURIAL MANAGEMENT

A difference in outcomes was observed between the ability to write or defend a business plan (which achieved agreement to a level of 85%), and the skills to be an entrepreneur (48% agreement). In addition, nearly 25% of alumni considered that they were not educated enough to be an entrepreneur (see Figure 17). This was the highest level of disagreement of all competences examined in this study. The next closest level of disagreement of almost 20% was in terms of the skills developed to be a manager.

FIGURE 17. ENTREPRENEURIAL MANAGEMENT: SELF-ASSESSMENT BY IBMS ALUMNI (N=433-440)



It is interesting that the cognitive aspect of this competence (writing a business plan) was considered to be well taken care of in the programme. The skills to be an entrepreneur were according to the alumni not well addressed. The average age of alumni upon graduation is well below the time when the functions that relate to entrepreneurship are developed in full in terms of brain maturity (Simpson, 2008).

INTERNATIONAL MARKETING MANAGEMENT

This competence was defined as *"The ability to perform a country-analysis on macro, industry and micro level, to conduct an international market survey in order to assess foreign market opportunities and competition. The ability to formulate market-entry strategies, to draft an international marketing plan and to implement, co-ordinate and control the international marketing (and sales) programme"*. The findings of the entrepreneurial management competence in respect of the international marketing management aspect were confirmed: education had provided alumni with the skills to write a plan (see Figure 18 lower bar), but the skills related to the specific professional role – in this case the sales person – could have been developed more (see Figure 18 upper bar).

Alumni were also asked about the match between what they had learned during their education and what they need as a professional. Figure 19 presents a remarkable difference between sales and marketing skills. The amount of marketing training during the IBMS programme provides a good match

with the professional requirements, but alumni experienced too little attention for sales skills during their education.

FIGURE 18. INTERNATIONAL MARKETING AND SALES MANAGEMENT: SELF-ASSESSMENT BY IBMS ALUMNI (N=428-438)

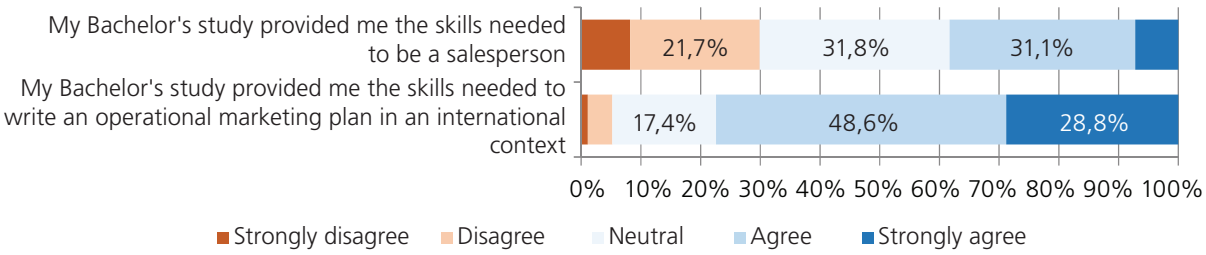
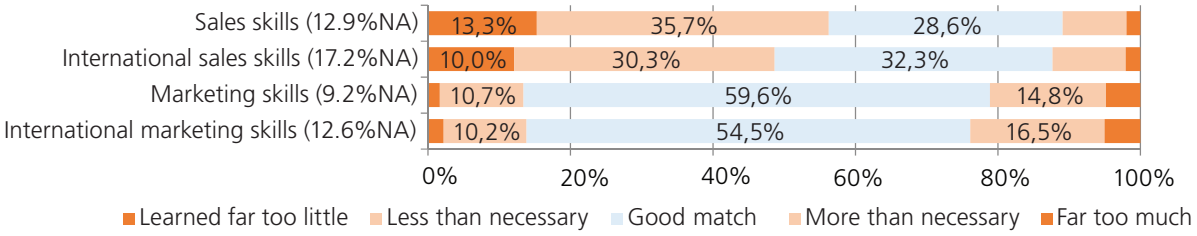


FIGURE 19. INTERNATIONAL MARKETING AND SALES MANAGEMENT: MATCH BETWEEN EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL NEEDS (N=412)



INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT

In comparison with the previous competences, a relatively speaking significantly higher proportion of alumni gave a neutral opinion regarding their preparation to the logistics and supply chain aspects of the international business environment (see Figure 20); about 15% considered themselves not sufficiently prepared.

An important aspect of supply chain management is the strong prevalence of IT: IT tooling plays a significant role in the coordination and management of the logistical processes between the various stakeholders in a value chain, but also customer relationship management, or enterprise resource planning for example. Figure 21 highlights that, on average, more attention could have been paid to IT skills during the IBMS programme.

FIGURE 20. INTERNATIONAL SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT: SELF-ASSESSMENT BY IBMS ALUMNI (N=435)

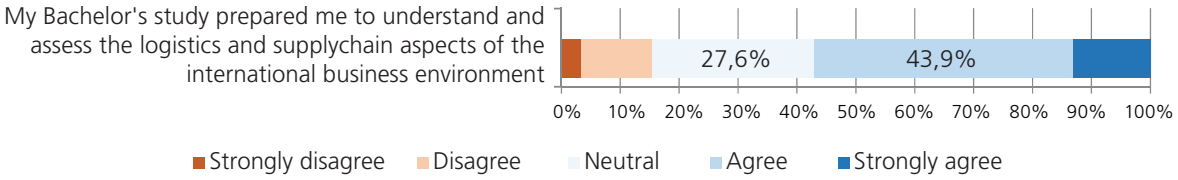
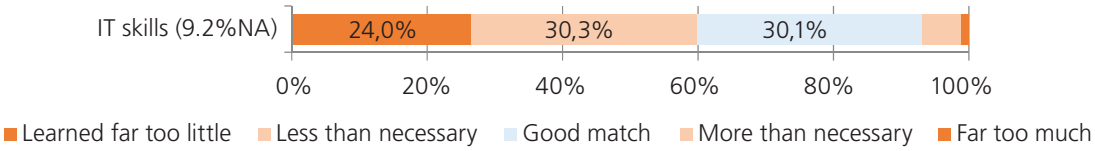


FIGURE 21. IT SKILLS: MATCH BETWEEN EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL NEEDS (N=411)



INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Around 50% of the alumni considered that the attention for finance and accounting during their education matched with their professional needs; around 15% did not feel well prepared for the professional budgeting and accounting tasks. However, almost 40% of the alumni consider that they did not learn enough finance and accounting skills during their education (see Figure 22). The relatively low percentage of 'good matches' (around 40% cf. 55 – 60% seen with other competences) in Figure 23 indicates that the required amount of finance and accounting skills might differ a lot depending on the needs of the role of the alumnus in their place of work.

FIGURE 22. INTERNATIONAL FINANCE & ACCOUNTING: SELF-ASSESSMENT BY IBMS ALUMNI (N=430)

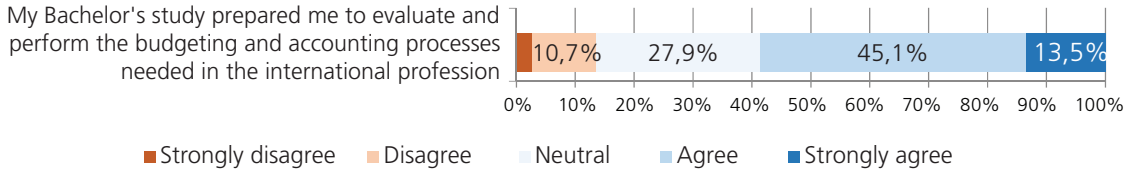
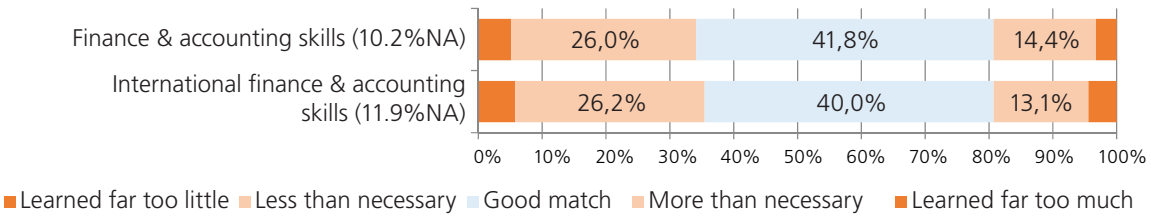


FIGURE 23. (INTERNATIONAL) FINANCE & ACCOUNTING: MATCH BETWEEN EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL NEEDS (N=411-413)



INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The national Competence profile of 2004 was revised in 2011. One of the competences added specifically in 2011 was that of international human resource management. To enhance comparability with future studies it was felt worthwhile to include this as a separate aspect in this study. The results with respect to HR skills were comparable to those for the previous competence: there seemed to be a varying need for these skills, depending on the professional context (an even lower proportion felt that the match was good – about 30%; see Figure 25). About 65% of the alumni felt that they learned enough skills to stimulate or motivate other employees or co-workers.

FIGURE 24. INTERNATIONAL HRM: SELF-ASSESSMENT BY IBMS ALUMNI (N=428)

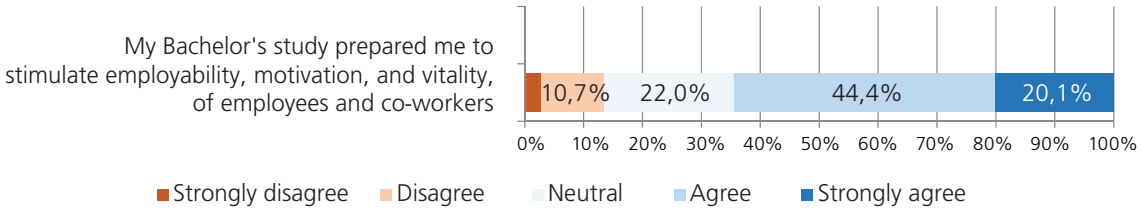
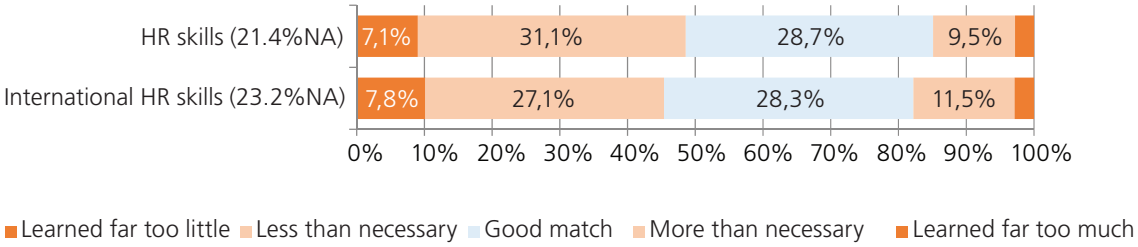


FIGURE 25. INTERNATIONAL HRM: MATCH BETWEEN EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL NEEDS (N=410-411)



DEVELOPMENT OF GENERIC COMPETENCES

LEADERSHIP

Most alumni indicated that, during their IBMS education, they received the leadership skills needed for their profession (see Figure 26). However, nearly 30% of the alumni indicated that the programme did not give enough attention to these skills (see Figure 27). With respect to the attention in the programme, there was no noticeable difference between *'leadership skills'* and *'international leadership skills'*.

FIGURE 26. LEADERSHIP: SELF-ASSESSMENT BY IBMS ALUMNI (N=441)

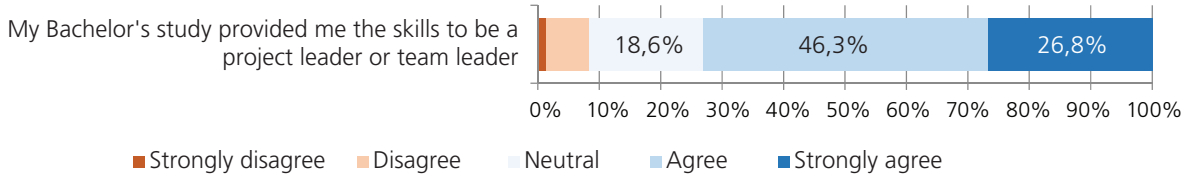
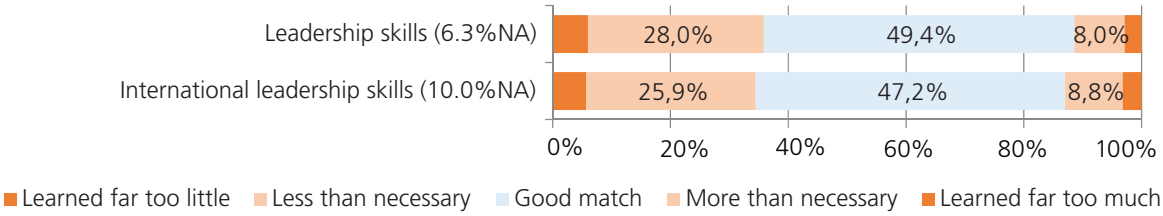


FIGURE 27. (INTERNATIONAL) LEADERSHIP SKILLS: MATCH BETWEEN EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL NEEDS (N=409-411)



COOPERATION

The IBMS education provided enough attention to teamwork. About 90% of the alumni indicated that their programme had given them the skills to be a team player. Most alumni also indicated a good fit between education and profession. Contrary to the previous skills, the balance was more towards too much than too little attention to team working skills.

FIGURE 28. COOPERATION: SELF-ASSESSMENT BY IBMS ALUMNI (N=433)

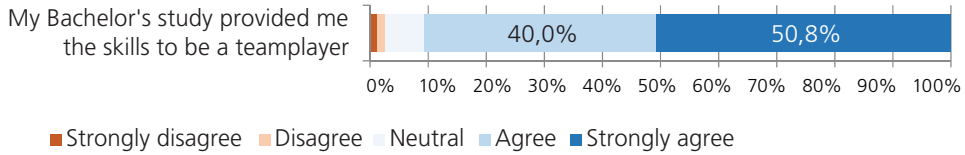
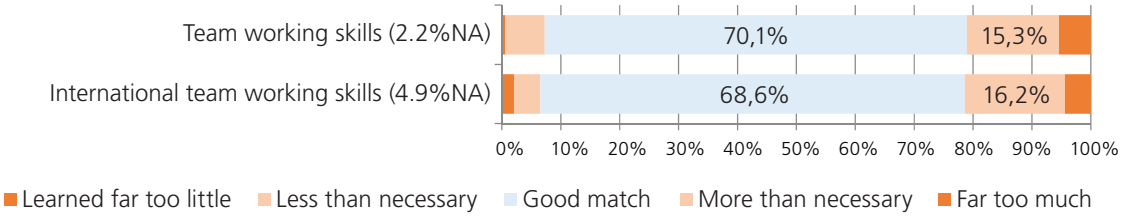


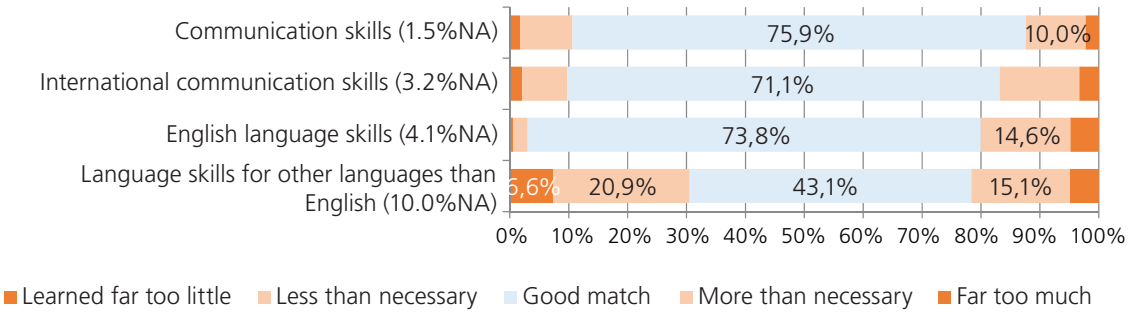
FIGURE 29. COOPERATION: MATCH BETWEEN EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL NEEDS (N=408-412)



BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

According to the alumni in the survey, the IBMS education also provided enough attention to communication skills (graph not shown). Most alumni also indicated a good fit between education and profession. The same holds true for the English language skills. A different picture emerged in respect of languages other than English. The large spread in answers could point to various requirements depending on the employment context of the alumnus. It appeared however that there seemed to be a demand for more attention to languages other than English.

FIGURE 30. BUSINESS COMMUNICATION: MATCH BETWEEN EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL NEEDS (N=405-412)



ANALYSING AND INFORMATION PROCESSING AND CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

These two competences were combined in the 2011 profile as 'Business research methods'. Again to enhance comparability with future studies, they were combined in this report. Most alumni indicated that their programme gave at least enough attention to problem solving skills (more than 80% - see Figure 32), with about 10% indicating it was actually too much. In terms of research skills the proportion who thought it was just right was somewhat less (about 50%) and slightly more thought it was too much (about 20%). Only a very small proportion of the alumni thought that their programme did not prepare them well in business research methods (less than 5% - see Figure 31).

FIGURE 31. BUSINESS RESEARCH METHODS: SELF-ASSESSMENT BY IBMS ALUMNI (N=439)

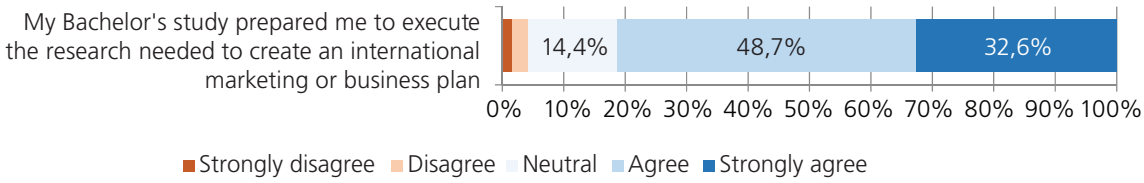
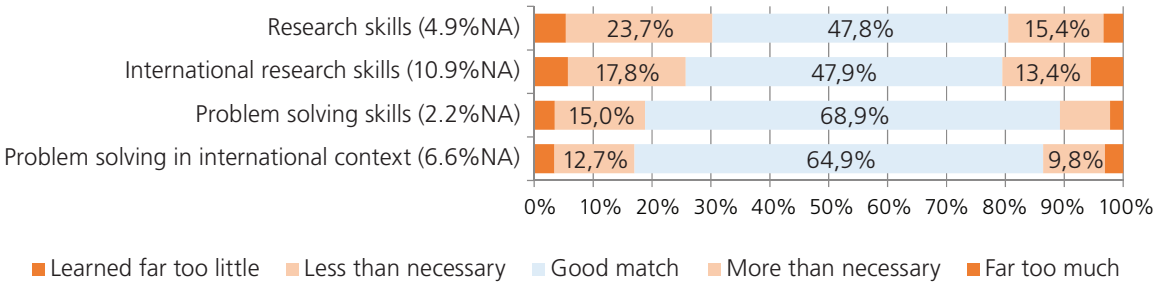


FIGURE 32. BUSINESS RESEARCH METHODS AND PROBLEM SOLVING: MATCH BETWEEN EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL NEEDS (N=410-411)



PLANNING AND ORGANISING

Figure 15 illustrates that the IBMS education seems to prepare students effectively to the planning and organisation and the management skills needed in the profession. In general, there is a good balance between the attention in the IBMS programme and the professional needs, although around one third of the respondents would have preferred more attention for project management skills.

FIGURE 33. PLANNING AND ORGANISING: SELF-ASSESSMENT BY IBMS ALUMNI

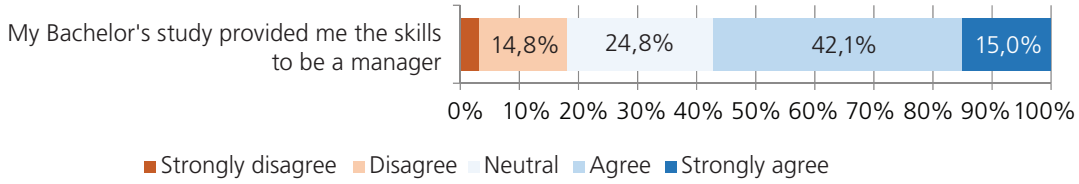
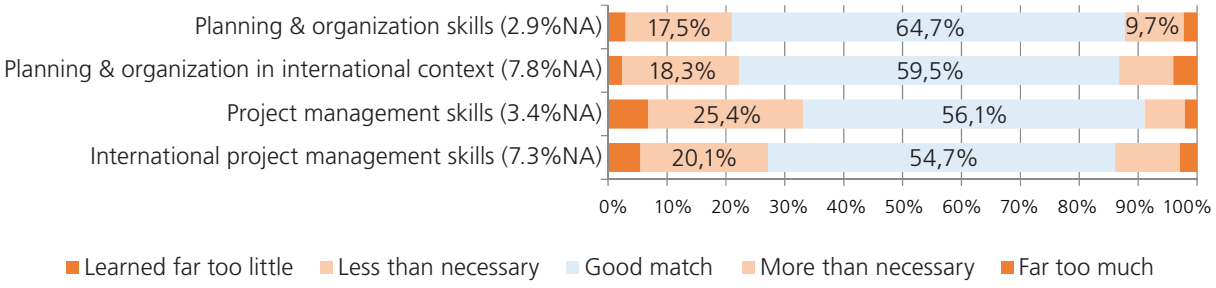


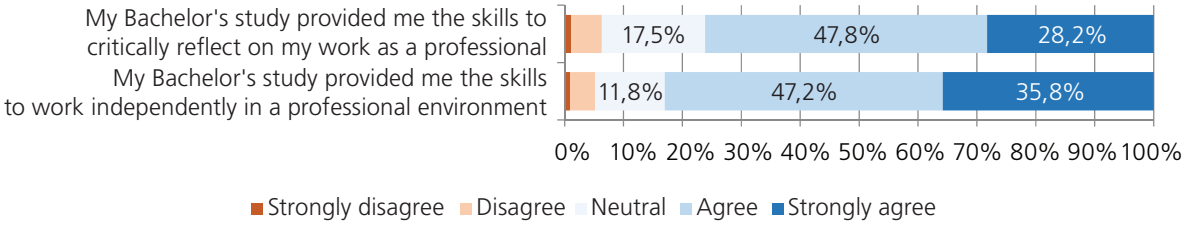
FIGURE 34. (INTERNATIONAL) PLANNING AND ORGANISING: MATCH BETWEEN EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL NEEDS (N=410-413)



LEARNING AND SELF-DEVELOPMENT

During their IBMS programme, alumni have learned to critically reflect on their work. They also learned how to work independently in a professional environment (see Figure 35).

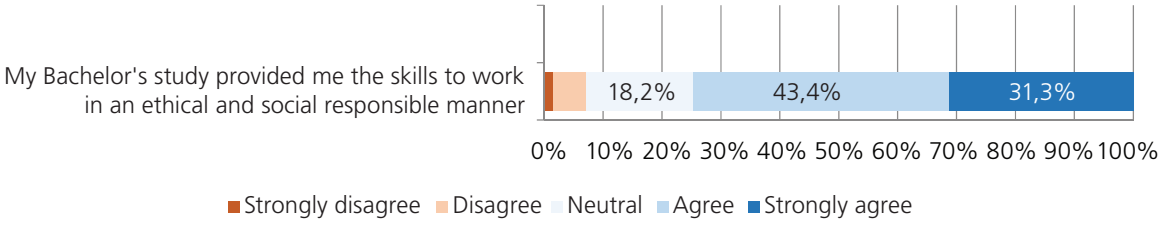
FIGURE 35. LEARNING AND SELF-DEVELOPMENT: SELF-ASSESSMENT BY IBMS ALUMNI (N=439)



ETHICAL AND CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

Most alumni indicate that their education gave enough attention to ethical and social responsible behaviour in a professional context: see Figure 36.

FIGURE 36. ETHICAL AND CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY: SELF-ASSESSMENT BY IBMS ALUMNI (N=435)



In summary, 14 of the 16 competences (other than intercultural adaptability and communication) with some aspects can be listed from the highest level of agreement to the lowest as shown in Table 8.

TABLE 8. COMPARISON OF TRENDS IN AGREEMENT WITH EXISTENCE OF COMPETENCES AND EXTENT OF MATCH BETWEEN EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL NEEDS. * SHOWN WHERE MEASURED

Competence - aspect	Agreement %	Uncertain %	Disagreement%	Good Match%*
Cooperation	91%	7%	2%	69 – 70%
Entrepreneurial Management – business plan	85%	11%	4%	
Learning & Self development – work independently	83%	12%	5%	
Analysing & info processing, creative problem solving	81%	15%	4%	48 – 69%
International strategic vision development	78%	15%	7%	
Organisational policy development	78%	12%	10%	
International marketing management – marketing	77%	17%	6%	55 – 60%
Learning & Self development – Critically reflect	76%	12%	10%	
Ethical responsibility	75%	18%	7%	
Leadership	73%	19%	8%	47 – 49%
International business awareness – trends & issues	73%	18%	9%	
International business awareness – stakeholder knowledge	66%	23%	11%	
International HRM	65%	22%	13%	28 – 29%
Int'l business and mgmt. accounting & financial mgmt.	59%	28%	13%	40 – 42%
Planning and organising	57%	25%	18%	55 – 65%
International operations management	57%	28%	15%	30% (IT aspect)
Entrepreneurial management – entrepreneur	47%	28%	25%	
International marketing management – sales	38%	32%	30%	29 – 32%

In the comparison to the control group, presented in the Appendix III, we found that the IBMS alumni reported a higher learning of professional competences. Professional competences in the survey had been derived from the IBMS Competence framework; hence, the education of the IBMS alumni was specifically geared towards these competences. The findings reflect the differences in approach between an UAS with a strong focus on professional education and a Research University with a more academic approach.

EMPLOYABILITY

According to alumni's perception, their employability is high. With respect to both functioning as an employee (in general) and functioning as an employee in an international organisation, nearly 70% of alumni indicated a good fit between the skills needed and the skills acquired during the Bachelor IBMS (see Figure 38). More than 85% of alumni believe that their Bachelor programme IBMS provided them with the skills to work in an international organisation (see Figure 37).

FIGURE 37. ABILITY TO FUNCTION AS AN EMPLOYEE AS A RESULT OF THE BBA IBMS PROGRAMME (N=433)

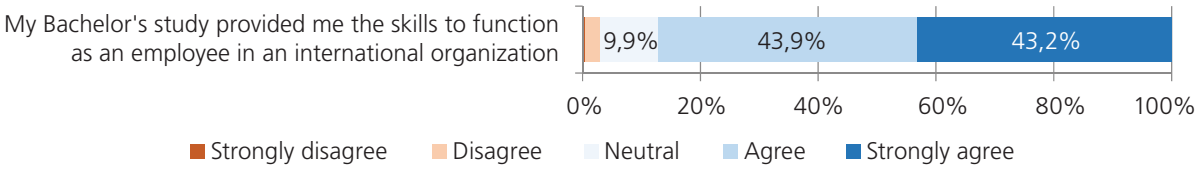
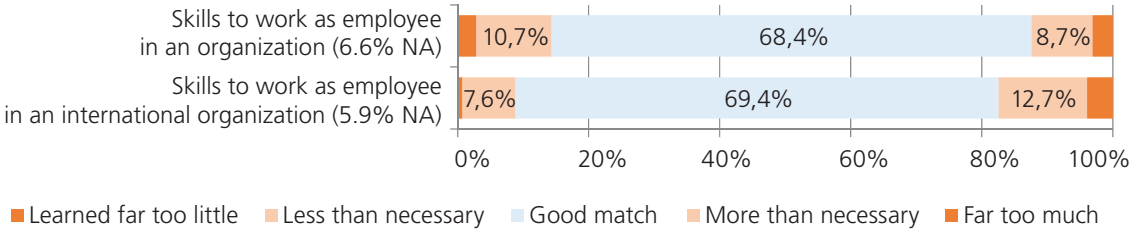


FIGURE 38. EMPLOYABILITY: MATCH BETWEEN SKILLS ACQUIRED DURING BBA IBMS PROGRAMME AND PROFESSIONAL NEEDS (N=409-412)



The alumni's perception was supplemented by a number of indicators about employability. First, this report shall present the 'general' employability of IBMS alumni, then the results of the analysis of their international employability.

EMPLOYMENT OF IBMS ALUMNI

Figure 39 highlights that IBMS alumni did not seem to have trouble with finding a job. Almost half of the responding alumni already found a job at the moment of graduation, and more than 80% of the alumni obtained employment within 6 months after his or her graduation. It should be borne in mind that these results reflect the employability of alumni who graduated between 2008 and 2014 at a time of an economic slowdown.

FIGURE 39. TIME THAT BBA IBMS ALUMNI NEED AFTER GRADUATION TO FIND A JOB (N=407)

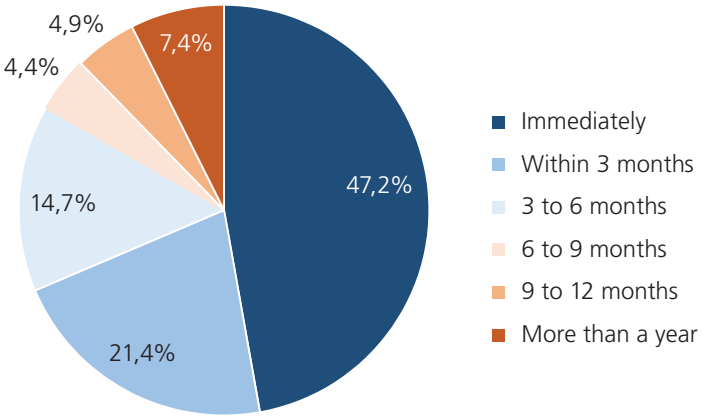
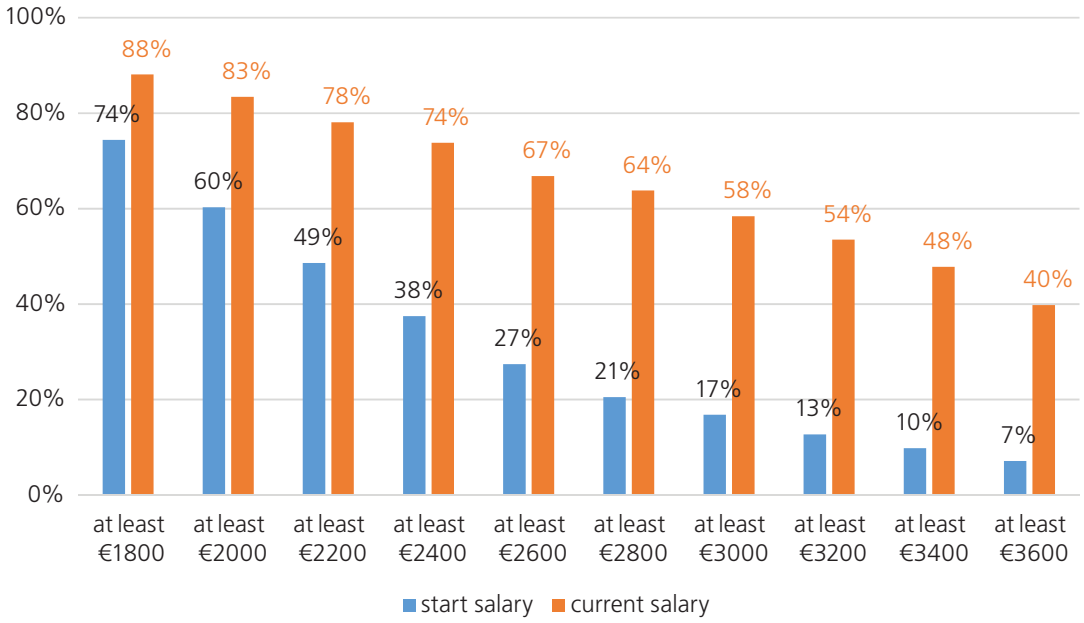


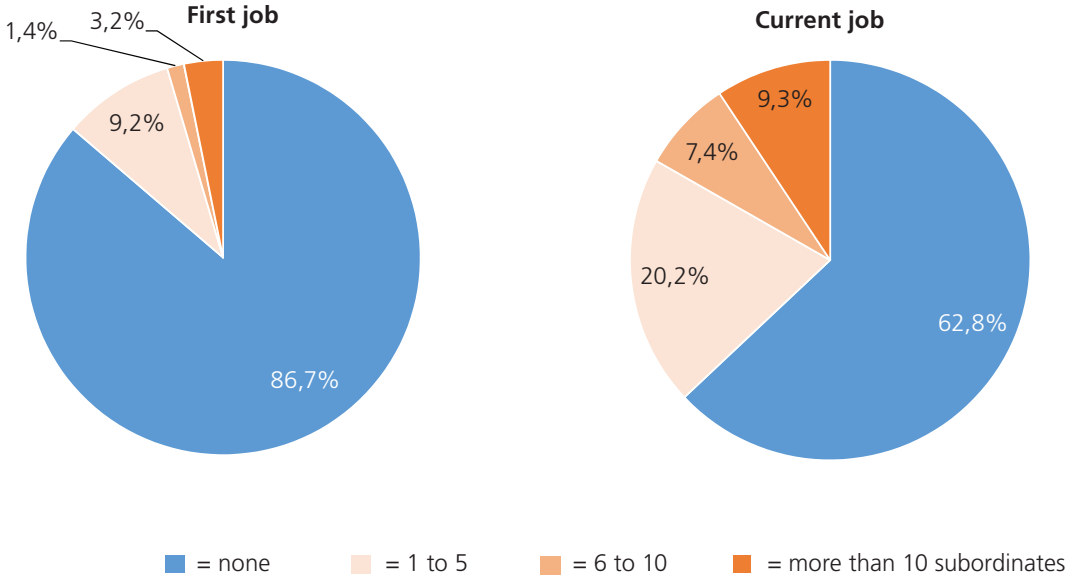
Figure 40 illustrates that the average alumnus started employment with a gross income of about € 2.200 (median value in the distribution); the balance of monthly starting salaries was between € 1.800 and € 2.600. An average annual increase in monthly salary of € 178 was reported: more than 40% of alumni earned more than € 3.600 at the time of the survey.

FIGURE 40. BBA IBMS ALUMNI MONTHLY INCOME BEFORE TAX (N=399)



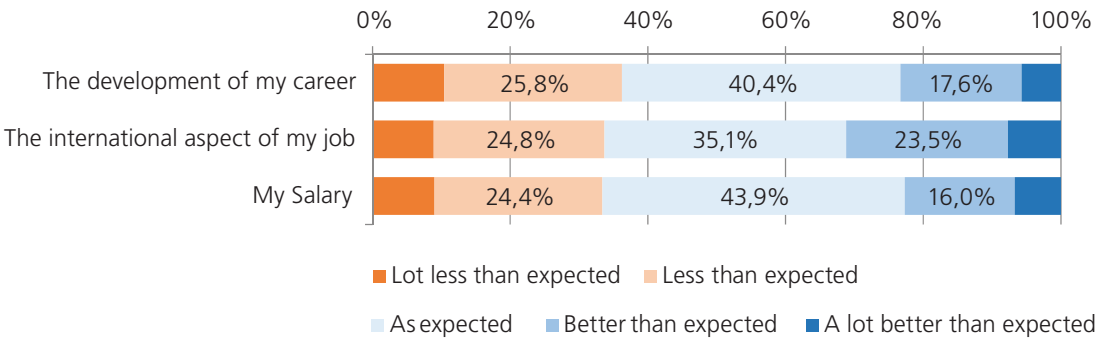
Most alumni did not manage other employees when they started working, and at the time of the survey the majority of alumni still hadn't advanced to an executive position. At the time of the survey however, almost 10% of the responding alumni had at least 10 subordinates (see Figure 41).

FIGURE 41. NUMBER OF SUBORDINATES OF BBA IBMS ALUMNI IN THEIR FIRST EMPLOYMENT AND AT THE TIME OF THE SURVEY (N=399)



Most alumni seemed fairly satisfied with what they achieved, as compared to their expectations: see Figure 42. However, between 30% and 40% achieved less than they had expected while they were studying. Overall, the international aspect of the job seemed to be better than expected, and generally the development of a career was a little less than expected.

FIGURE 42. EMPLOYMENT: EXPECTATION BEFORE VERSUS EXPERIENCE IN THE JOB (N=399)



Most alumni work in the private sector (see Figure 43), and in bigger organisations (see Figure 44). Around 15% of the IBMS alumni was employed in a governmental organisation, and less than 5% in an NGO. Of the alumni working in the private sector, 28.2% found employment in an Small to Medium sized Enterprise (SME), a company with less than 250 employees. The rest worked in larger organisations.

FIGURE 43. DISTRIBUTION OF THE SECTOR OF EMPLOYERS OF BBA IBMS ALUMNI (N=398)

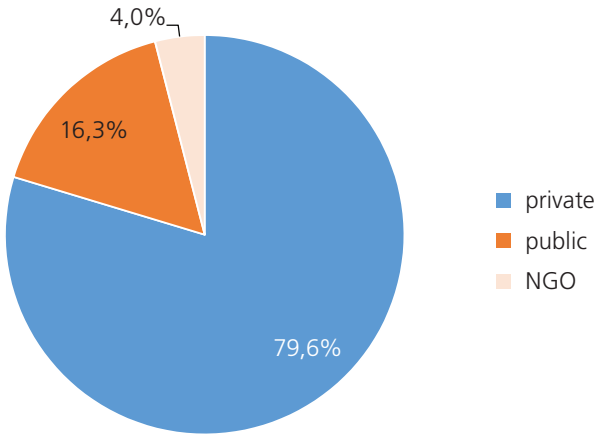
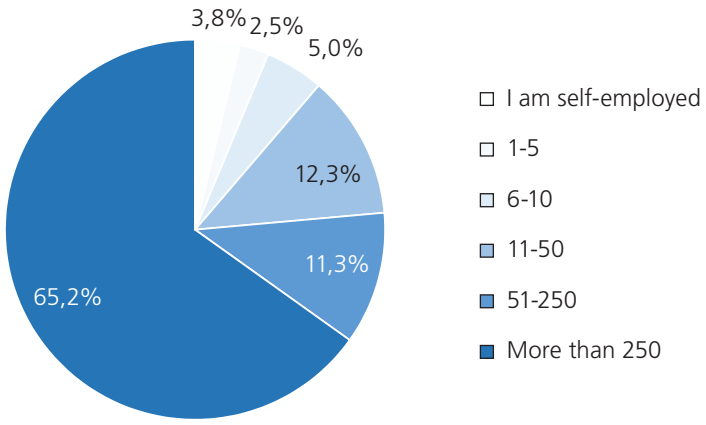


FIGURE 44. SIZE OF THE EMPLOYER'S ORGANISATION OF BBA IBMS ALUMNI (N=398)

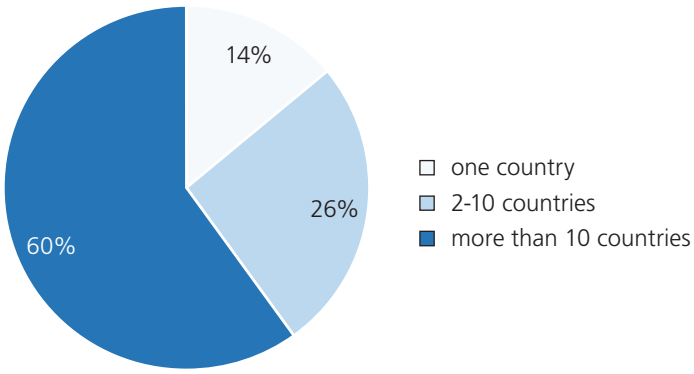


INTERNATIONAL EMPLOYABILITY OF IBMS ALUMNI

IBMS is an educational programme with an international orientation. The programme prepares students to work in an international context. In the study, a number of questions were included to measure the international dimension of the job situation of alumni.

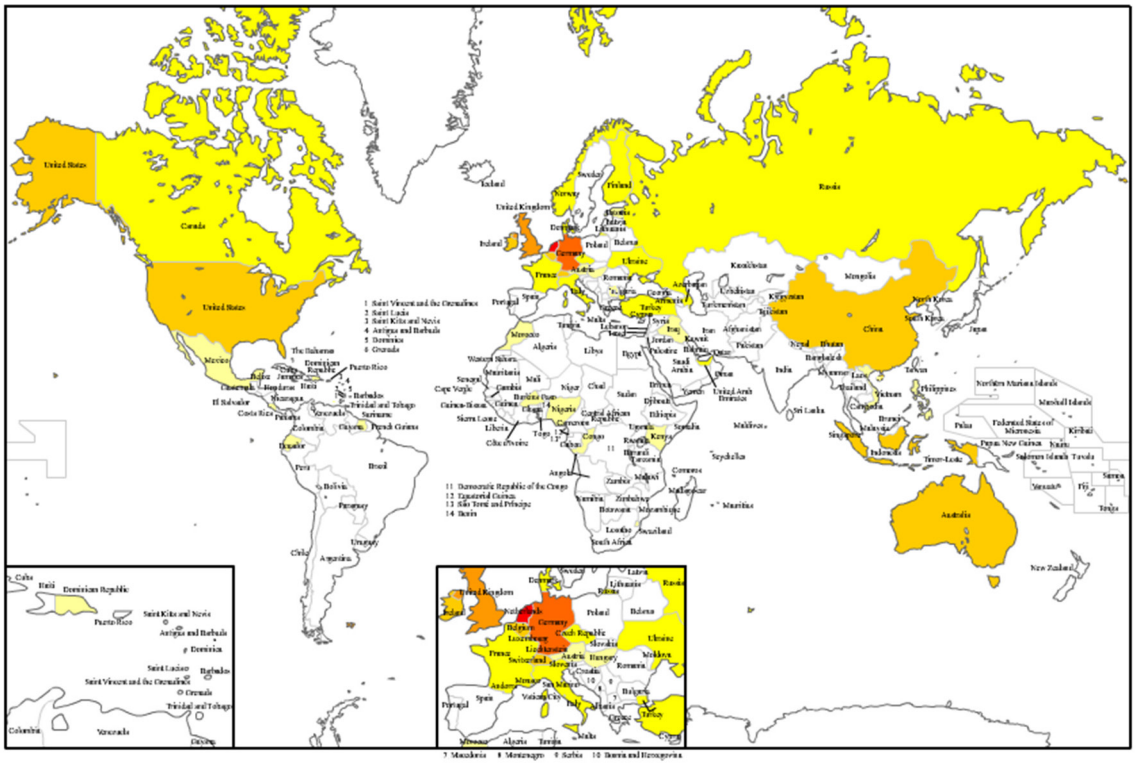
Figure 45 illustrates that most alumni worked in multinational companies, active in several countries.

FIGURE 45. INTERNATIONAL WORK ENVIRONMENT: IN HOW MANY COUNTRIES IS YOUR EMPLOYING ORGANISATION ACTIVE? (N=389)



The world map in Figure 46 presents the countries in which the responding IBMS alumni were working at the time of the study.

FIGURE 46. THE GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION OF BBA IBMS ALUMNI (N=398) (WHITE = NONE, FROM LIGHT YELLOW TO DARK RED = INCREASING NUMBER OF ALUMNI PER COUNTRY)



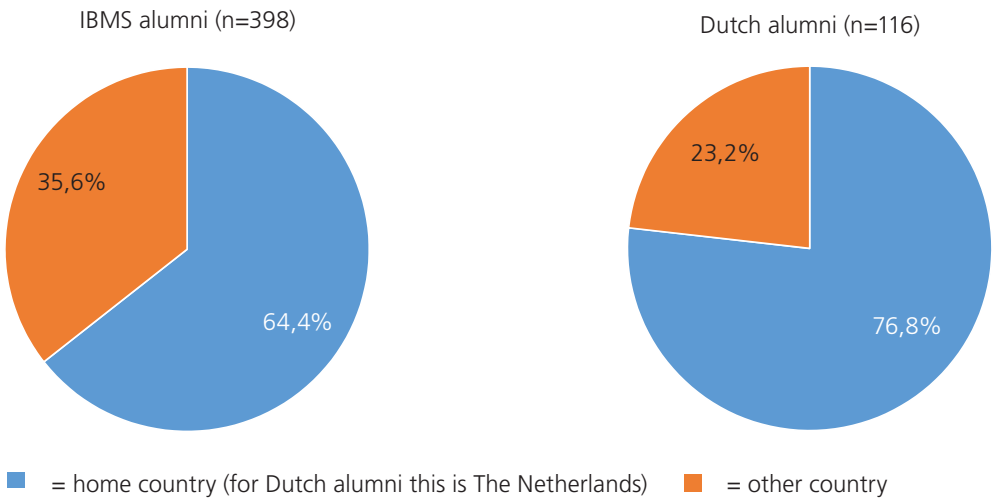
The map illustrates that, although alumni are distributed globally, most IBMS alumni can be found in a concentration around the Netherlands and surrounding countries: Germany, Belgium, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland. Table 9 shows this outcome in greater detail: the alumni that participated in this study were working in a total of 47 countries, but the majority of alumni found a job in The Netherlands or in Germany. Other well-represented countries include the United Kingdom, Switzerland, China, and Bulgaria.

TABLE 9. DISTRIBUTION OF BBA IBMS ALUMNI ACCORDING TO COUNTRY (N=398)

Country	Response
Netherlands	186
Germany	81
United Kingdom	18
Bulgaria	9
China	9
Switzerland	9
Australia	8
Belgium	7
Indonesia	7
Ireland	6
United States	6
France	4
Finland	3
Italy	3
Norway	3
Russia	3
Singapore	3
Spain	3
Turkey	3
Other	27

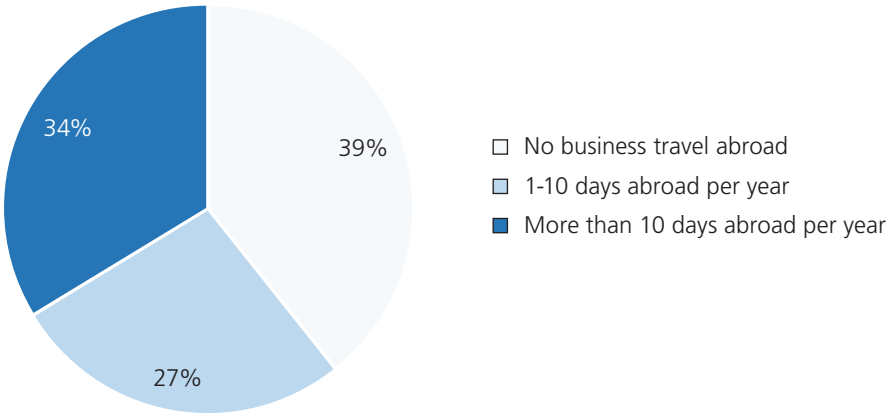
Azerbaijan, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, (former) Dutch Antilles, Luxembourg, Malaysia, UAE and Ukraine all hosted 2 alumni, whilst Austria, Barbados, Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, DR Congo, Ecuador, Estonia, Haiti, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iraq, Kenya, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Philippines, Surinam, Swaziland, and Vietnam all had one BBA IBMS alumnus.
Figure 47 below illustrates that the majority of alumni became employed in their home country. Of the Dutch IBMS alumni, more than 75% worked in The Netherlands at the time of this study.

FIGURE 47. COUNTRY OF EMPLOYMENT FOR ALL BBA IBMS ALUMNI AND THE DUTCH ALUMNI



International employment constitutes more than working in a foreign country (relative to nationality). This report examined therefore a number of other indicators to assess the international character of the work environment. This included the number of international business trips annually, the number of co-workers from a nation other than the alumnus, and the extent to which English was used in a professional context. One indication for the international nature of a function is the number of international business trips that are undertaken. Figure 48 illustrates mixed results. Thirty nine per cent (39%) of the alumni did not travel abroad for their job, as opposed to a group of 34% of alumni with more than ten days of business travel abroad annually. This may of course be a function of the extent to which an organisation is internationally connected.

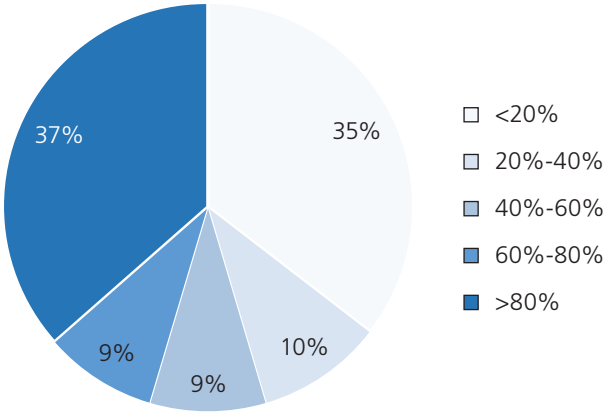
FIGURE 48. ANNUAL FREQUENCY OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MISSIONS (N=392)



It is evident from examining the professional environment of the BBA IBMS alumni that it is substantially international. Figure 49 highlights that the majority of alumni work in a department with several foreign co-workers. More than one third of the alumni work in a department with more than 80% of the

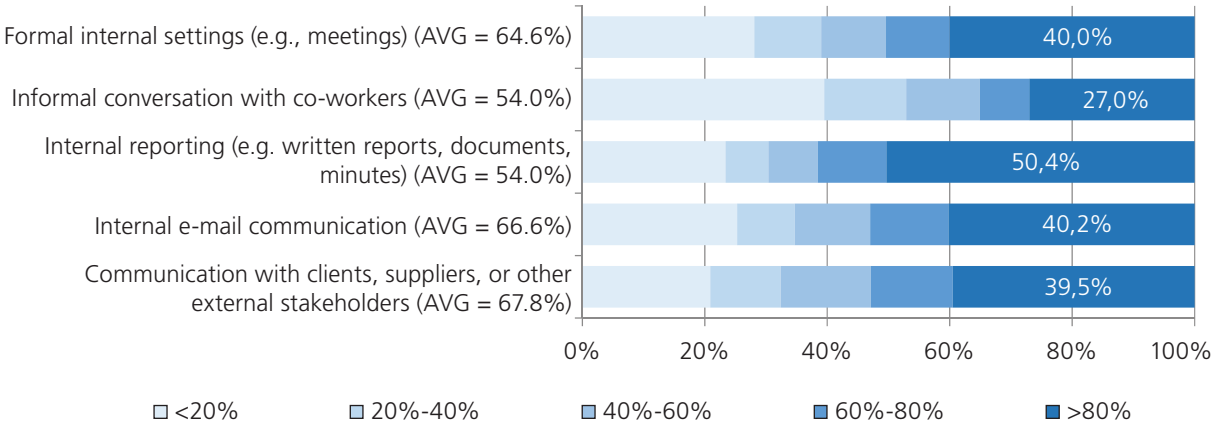
co-workers having a different nationality. A group of 35% of alumni worked in a department with at most a small percentage of people from a different national background. Thus two thirds of the alumni worked in organisations where more than 20% of the co-workers were of foreign nationality.

FIGURE 49. INTERNATIONAL WORK ENVIRONMENT: PERCENTAGE OF CO-WORKERS WITH A DIFFERENT NATIONALITY (N=381)



The international orientation of the work setting is also reflected in the language used. Most alumni needed to communicate in English in the professional setting. This included a group of about 40% of the alumni who used English virtually all the time. Even for informal conversation with co-workers, around 50% of the alumni reported using English in the majority of situations. For more than 25% of the alumni, English was more or less the only language used during office hours, for both formal and informal communication. This result underlines the importance of English language training and the use of English as a medium of instruction in programmes that purport to educate for international professional careers.

FIGURE 50. THE USE OF ENGLISH IN VARIOUS SETTINGS AT THE PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT (N=382-385)



A BACKGROUND CHECK OF EMPLOYABILITY

Employability is related to education, but a number of background factors can also have an impact on the extent to which an alumnus is able to find (international) employment. In this study, we looked at the impact of gender, socio-economic background, the extent to which the background of the alumnus was international and the effect of extracurricular activities.

These factors were analysed with respect to employability by examining the effect on the time taken to find achieve initial employment, the starting remuneration, the annual salary increase, and on the international employability of the alumnus. Since international employability in this survey was determined from a number of indicators, it was decided to combine these indicators into an index representing the international employability. The index combined:

- The location of employment of the alumnus (home country or abroad);
- The number of countries in which the employing organisation is active;
- Frequency of international business travel;
- The number of foreign co-workers;
- The extent of the use of English in the workplace.

The index score can range from 1 to 100; a higher index score implies a more international job. Appendix II gives a detailed overview of how the international employability index was calculated.

The impact of gender

Figure 51 highlights the employability data for both male and female BBA IBMS alumni. Of the data that were reported, there was no (significant) difference in the time to find a job and the average start salary. There was a large spread in salary increase. Thus, the difference in average salary increase between male and female alumni was indicative, but not statistically significant: $t(343) = 1.70$, $p = 0.09$. There was a significant difference in international employability, although the difference is relatively small: $t(361) = 2.722$, $p = 0.007$; Cohen's $d = 0.29$. The results demonstrated therefore that male alumni were more often associated with a more internationally oriented organisation.

FIGURE 51. IMPACT OF GENDER ON EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS

70.7% Job within 3 months after graduation

€ 2.349 Avg. monthly start salary

€ 195 Avg. increase in monthly salary, per year

57.8 International employability index

65.4% Job within 3 months after graduation

€ 2.295 Avg. monthly start salary

€ 157 Avg. increase in monthly salary, per year

52.5 International employability index

Socio-economic influence

The educational level of alumni's parents was used as an indicator for socio-economic background. Two groups of alumni were compared in the analysis: alumni whose parents were both academically qualified, versus alumni of whom neither parent had an academic degree. More than one third of the IBMS alumni belonged to the first group. A little less than one third of the alumni had a background in which neither parent possessed academic qualifications.

FIGURE 52. SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF THE ALUMNUS AND EMPLOYMENT

34.7% Alumni with both parents with academic degree (Bachelor, Master, or PhD)

71.7% Job within 3 months after graduation

€ 2.278 Avg. monthly start salary

€ 200 Avg. increase in monthly salary, per year

54.8 International employability index

32.9% Alumni with both parents without academic degree

66.7% Job within 3 months after graduation

€ 2.477 Avg. monthly start salary

€ 125 Avg. increase in monthly salary, per year

54.9 International employability index

Socio-economic background did not significantly impact the time to find employment. The analysis indicated that alumni from a lower educated background achieved a somewhat higher starting salary. However, this difference was indicative, and not statistically significant: $t(177) = 1.850$, $p = 0.066$. Figure 52 shows that there was an important difference in career perspective: over the years, alumni with academically qualified parents experienced a significantly higher increase in salary. Analysis with independent-samples t-test demonstrated that this difference was significant: $t(172) = 2.083$, $p = 0.039$. The educational background of the parents does not influence the international employability of the alumnus.

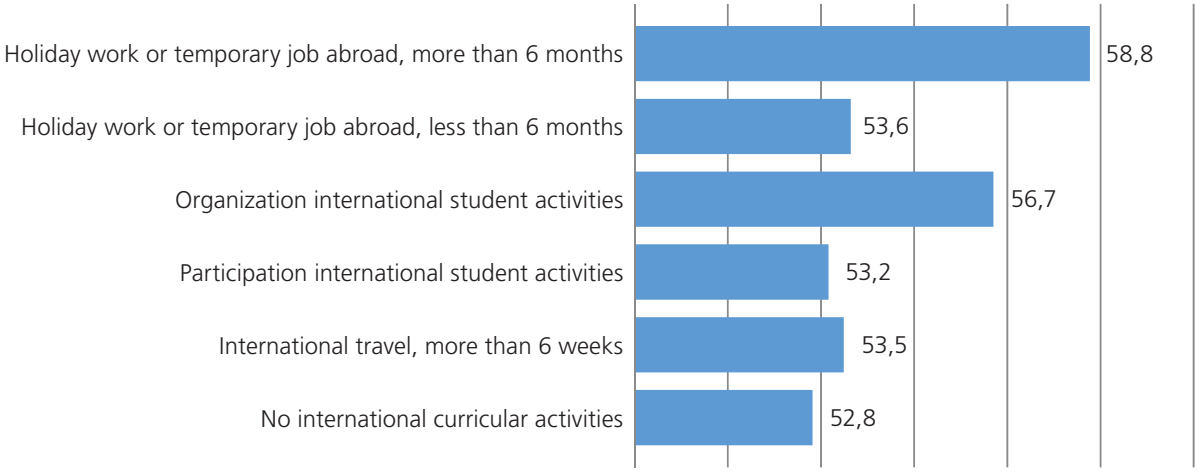
International background

A relation could be expected between the international background of the alumnus and international employability. However, this relationship was not demonstrated in this study. An international family background (one or two parents having a different national background than the alumnus) also did not significantly influence the international employability of the BBA IBMS alumni. Similarly, we could not detect a relation between having lived abroad for a significant amount of time prior to the study period (more than 6 months) and the international employability.

Importance of extracurricular activities

Figure 53 presents the consequences for international employability of a number of extracurricular activities expressed with the index. It illustrates that international extracurricular activities contribute in a significant way to international employability ($t(362) = 2.307$, $p = 0.022$), even though the difference is relatively small (Cohen's $d = 0.25$). Particularly working for a longer period abroad or, to a somewhat lesser extent, organising international student activities contributed to the international employability.

FIGURE 53. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND INTERNATIONAL EMPLOYABILITY



International extracurricular activities were not found to impact the other investigated aspects of employability (time to find a job, start salary, or salary increase).

This analysis suggested a rather limited impact of international extracurricular activities or international background on employability. However, it should be pointed out that the study population consisted of alumni with an international education. From the point of view of an employer therefore, all alumni in the study have an international background. This is either due to their study programme or due to their study programme in combination with extracurricular activities. It was not possible to isolate the effect of international background or international activities. It is possible that extracurricular international activities or international background make a difference for students from an otherwise non-internationalised environment, but this study was not designed to analyse this possibility. It was possible to compare the impact of the IBMS programme in this respect with that of the programme of the control group. As pointed out previously, the control group consisted of a study programme that contained an international orientation, but with less focus on international study activities or international competences. This comparison is shown in the following section

Employability: IBMS programme versus control group

The international employability index of IBMS alumni was significantly higher than the international employability of alumni in the control group: $t(460) = 2.518$, $p = 0.012$. Despite the significance, the size of this difference is relatively small (Cohen's $d = 0.28$) because, on average, for both groups the international employability is already relatively high (see Table 10).

TABLE 10. EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS FOR BBA IBMS GRADUATES AND CONTROL GROUP

BBA IBMS alumni	Control Group Alumni
68.3% in a job within 3 months after graduation	63.8% in a job within 3 months after graduation
€2,326 average monthly start salary	€2,509 average monthly start salary
€178 average increase in monthly salary per year	€104 average increase in monthly salary per year
55.5 International employability index	50.2 International employability index

With respect to the other indicators of employability, there were a couple of differences between IBMS alumni and the Tilburg group. Although the majority of alumni in both groups found their first job within 3 months after graduation, the starting salary of BBA IBMS alumni was lower than the alumni in the control group. The annual increase in salary of the IBMS alumni was substantially higher. Both the difference in starting salary ($t(184) = 2.780$, $p = 0.006$) and the difference in salary increase were statistically significant ($t(452) = 2.832$, $p = 0.005$).

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE EMPLOYABILITY RELATED OUTCOMES OF THE IBMS STUDY WITH THOSE FROM OTHER RECENT EMPLOYABILITY STUDIES

Jos Beelen and Nannette Ripmeester

INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to place the employability related outcomes of this study in the context of other current employability studies. For this purpose, seven recently published employability studies were selected from a range of contexts and with different methodological approaches.
Within the literature there is a distinction made between employment skills and employability skills. The former are limited to a specific profession or discipline (sector skills) while the latter are 'transversal' and apply to all professions. These skills go by other names such as 'soft', 'generic' or 'transferable' (Jones, forthcoming). The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) defines employability skills as follows: "The transferable core skills that represent functional and enabling knowledge, skills, and attitudes required in today's workplace. They are necessary for career success at all levels of employment and for all levels of education". (http://www.hefce.ac.uk/glossary/).

SEVEN RECENT EMPLOYABILITY STUDIES

Over the past few years a number of employability studies have appeared. Based on the common assumption that there is a relation between acquired skills and international (study) experiences, some of the studies address the relation between internationalisation and employability. However, this remains on the whole a poorly researched area (Jones, forthcoming). This applies equally to the Dutch context, where only recently studies into employability and internationalisation have started to appear (e.g. Funk, Den Heijer, Schuurmans-Brouwer & Walenkamp, 2014).

The outcomes of the current research into the employability of BBA IBMS alumni were compared with those of the seven employability studies published in 2013 and 2014. Two of those are from the Dutch context (Funk et al., 2014; Vereniging Hogescholen, 2014), while a third covers nine European countries (Humburg, Van der Velden & Verhagen, 2013), including the Netherlands. A fourth covers Finland (Centre for International Mobility, 2014). One study is focused on the entire European Union (European Commission, 2014). Another study is from Australia and is included here since it connected global citizenship with employability (Lilley, 2014). It was also the only study of seven that was entirely based on a literature assessment.

Finally, a list of employability skills was included based on extensive practical experiences in working with multinational employers (Expertise in Labour Mobility, 2014). The list was also supported by the outcomes of an article that included five in-depth interviews with global employers (Ripmeester, 2014).

The studies reported on in this document differ in a number of ways. Some studies limited their scope to the mobility component of the curriculum, while others looked at skills achieved throughout the entire programme. Some studies represented employers' perspective while others focused on the student or alumni perspectives, or a combination thereof. Some studies focused on a particular country, while others looked at a range of countries or Europe in general. Another difference that was observed between the studies was the extent to which they focused on academic domains. Some studies concentrated on one specific discipline, whilst others reported an a few or on all academic disciplines.

The data collection methods used in the studies also differed considerably. Some used quantitative, others qualitative or mixed methods. Data collection methods ranged from surveys to semi-structured interviews and interviews or a combination of those. Despite the differences, all surveys shared the need for, and acquisition of, employability skills as a common denominator and all were published recently (see Table 11).

TABLE 11. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDIES DISCUSSED

Author	Title	Year	Countries	Scope	Perspective(s)	Method	Discipline(s)
Centre for International Mobility (CIMO)	*Hidden competences*	2014	Finland	mobility	employers students	mixed	all
European Union	*The employability of higher education graduates: The employers' perspective*	2013	Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom	entire programme	employers		all
European Union	*Erasmus Impact Study*	2014	Europe	mobility	students alumni employers	quantitative	all
Griffith University	*Educating global citizens: Translating the 'idea' into university organisational practice*	2014	Australia	entire programme	employers	literature	business
The Hague University of Applied Sciences	*Internationalizing curricula; Needs and wishes of employers with regard to international competences*	2014	Netherlands	entire programme	alumni employers	mixed	all
Expertise in Labour Mobility	*Expat skills test*	2014	Globe	entire programme	employers	qualitative	all
Vereniging Hogescholen	*Wendbaar in een duurzame economie*	2014	Netherlands	entire programme	employers	qualitative	finance, hospitality, communication, journalism, law, commerce, management

HIDDEN COMPETENCES. CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY (2014)

The research consisted of workshops, interviews with employers and a survey with 283 responses from employers and 1.770 from students. This study indicated that students acquired more competences during study abroad than those that employers traditionally have associated with study abroad. In addition to language skills, intercultural competence, tolerance and broad-mindedness, all of which employers expect students to acquire, students also developed 'hidden competences' in the fields of productivity, resilience and curiosity. These are competences that employers increasingly value.

THE EMPLOYABILITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION GRADUATES: THE EMPLOYERS' PERSPECTIVE. EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2013)

This survey was carried out on behalf of the European Commission in nine countries (Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy The Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom). The study consisted of a conjoint study to determine employer preferences when recruiting HE graduates and ten in-depth employer interviews per country following a literature review and desk-research. Based on the

literature review and 903 online questionnaires, six skill domains where chosen for the 120 interviews with employers.
There was little overlap in the skills labels between the European Commission and this research (IBMS study), apart from the EC skill 'international orientation' and the IBMS skill 'cultural knowledge'. In the EC study, international orientation was seen as a 'feather in the cap', and certainly a skill domain that could tip the balance if otherwise relatively equal candidates were to be compared.
The authors of the EC study made it clear that THE European employer does not exist and that creation of THE ideal graduate should not be a goal in itself. Their reason for conducting the study based on employer consultations was because this group was seen as best positioned to forecast future employment skills.

THE ERASMUS IMPACT STUDY. EFFECTS OF MOBILITY ON THE SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY OF STUDENTS AND THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS. EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2014)

This quantitative European Commission survey focused in part on the effects of mobility on the employability of students. The study analysed the effects of mobility on the employability and competences of students and also the internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).
Both qualitative and a quantitative studies were conducted. The quantitative survey was based on 78.891 responses (56.733 students, 18.618 alumni, 4.986 HE staff, 964 HEIs and 652 employers from 34 countries).
The main conclusions of the study were that international mobility enhanced students' employability through the development of their transversal skills. It was also found that mobility broadened the student's horizons and social links. Particularly, those students that did an Erasmus work placement, did well; more than one in three was offered a job and almost one in ten started their own company. Whether this success can be attributed to 'doing a placement' or to 'being abroad' was not able to be determined. However, 'doing a placement abroad' was seen as a good career booster. This observation aligned well with what was found in the Flash Eurobarometer 304 (European Commission, 2010), where employers indicated that work placement was one of the most effective preparations for employment.

EDUCATING GLOBAL CITIZENS: TRANSLATING THE 'IDEA' INTO UNIVERSITY ORGANISATIONAL PRACTICE, GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY (2014)

This study explored literature with regard to global citizenship and reframed the global citizen as the 'employee in demand'. Lilley listed the top ten skills and attributes that Graduate Careers Australia had identified. The study did not include surveys or interviews.

INTERNATIONALIZING CURRICULA: NEEDS AND WISHES OF EMPLOYERS WITH REGARD TO INTERNATIONAL COMPETENCES. THE HAGUE UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES (2014)

The research involved semi structured interviews with 21 employers and 44 alumni, as well as an on-line survey with responses from 54 alumni and 49 employers. In addition, focus group meetings were conducted. The respondents came from a wide range of disciplines. This limited the relevance of the comparison of the study in The Hague with the present study, which only investigated a single programme.
The study focused on international competences, which were defined as entailing: intercultural competences, international academic and professional competences, foreign language competences, world and country knowledge and international interpersonal competences.

The interviews with alumni indicated that, during their studies, they mainly developed foreign language skills, international interpersonal skills and intercultural competences. The survey results indicated that 87% of alumni felt that they acquired sufficient international interpersonal competences. The authors noted however, that there were indications that employers were less positive about the acquired competences compared to the alumni (Funk et al., p. 40).

SUCCESSFUL EXPAT SKILLS. EXPERTISE FOR LABOUR MOBILITY (2013-2014)

Expertise in Labour Mobility (ELM) created a list of successful expatriate skills based on consultations with its corporate clients across the globe. Over a period of 2 years employers were asked to mention which skills they valued in a job seeker and those that made them hire a candidate for an international position. The principal purpose was to gain an understanding as to what skills were required for graduates to get hired internationally. To provide some more solid evidence, a small-scale research project was undertaken among five multinational employers (Ripmeester, 2014).
The employers interviewed in this project underlined the importance they attached to international experience but perceived it as 'icing on the cake'. Instead they stressed the importance of the ability to communicate effectively with others (social and communication skills), the adaptability to situations (flexibility) and the ability to deal with change (tolerance of ambiguity). These results align well with what was found in the present study.

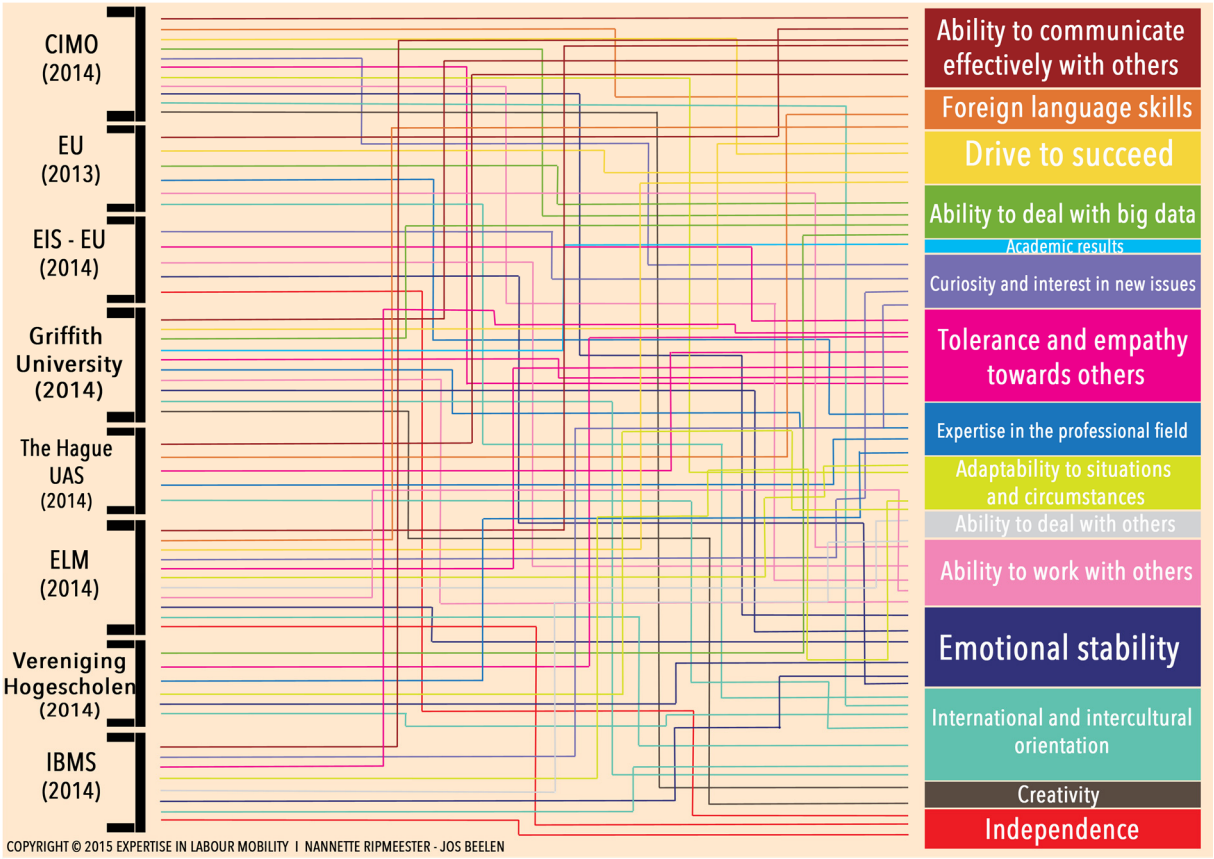
WENDBAAR IN EEN DUURZAME ECONOMIE [VERSATILE IN A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY], VERENIGING HOGESCHOLEN (2014)

The survey was designed to look at the quality of programmes at Dutch UAS and their relevance for the various related professions. Six domains within the job market were selected and the study provided a list of seven skills that future graduates needed to acquire to be(come) successful professionals in each of those domains. The data for this study were collected through document analysis and interviews with employers.

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The labels used in the employment studies show considerable variation. At times skills that are treated separately in some studies are combined in others. This complicates the comparison. Given the diversity and the occasional contradictory nature of labels, we regrouped the labels from all studies including this one, into broad skills domains. The result, shown in Figure 54, should be considered a snapshot.
It shows that across the eight studies, tolerance and empathy towards others and international and intercultural orientation are the most prominent topics. These represent the traditional skills that are associated with a stay abroad for study or internship. These were considered the 'visible' skills in the CIMO study. (Transversal) employability skills are less prominent. This is also true for sector knowledge, which can be considered as basic employment skills for the related domain. The studies combined do however show an increased relevance of transversal skills for employment.

FIGURE 54. RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF SKILL DOMAINS ACROSS RECENT EMPLOYABILITY STUDIES, INCLUDING THE PRESENT RESEARCH



ANALYSIS OF THE EMPLOYABILITY RELATED OUTCOMES OF THE IBMS SURVEY

This section consists of an analysis of employability outcomes of the IBMS survey in the light of the employability studies described above. Both employment and employability skills were included in this analysis since a comparison could shed more light on the employability skills.

For a number of employment skills, a relatively low percentage of respondents perceived a good match between the skills levels they acquired and those that they require in their current jobs. This was the case with sales skills (28,6%), Human Resource Management (HRM) skills (28,7%), Information Technology (IT) skills (30,1%) and finance and accounting skills (41,8%). This low score is partly explained by the fact that some skills were not considered relevant by a section of the respondents. In case of the HR skills that percentage was as high as 21,4%. Even with almost one quarter of respondents indicating that HR skills were not relevant for them in their current jobs, over a third of IBMS alumni indicated that they did not acquire enough HR skills. The most striking outcomes were those for IT skills, which were considered relevant by 90,8% of respondents while 54,3% indicated that they did not receive enough training.

Of the employment skills, marketing skills scored highest, being considered a good match by 65,3% of respondents. A mere 12,2% considered their marketing skills underdeveloped. The explanation may be

found in the association of marketing skills with intercultural communication, an employability skill that scored significantly higher than any of the other employment skills.
Within employability skills, IBMS alumni perceived a good match in their problem solving skills (68,9%), team working skills (70,1%), communication skills (75,9%), flexibility (80,5%), curiosity (83,8%), with open mindedness scoring highest with 87,1%. IBMS alumni therefore perceived that their programme enabled them to acquire the 'hidden competences' of curiosity and resilience as observed in the CIMO study. Remarkably, the skills to identify and understand other cultures scored considerably lower with 66,6%. The reasons for this could lie in the fact that a cognitive element is involved, while the other items were principally skills based. Among the employability skills, leadership skills score lowest with 49,9%. A third of the alumni indicated that they did not acquire enough skills in this field.

CONCLUSIONS ON EMPLOYABILITY

IBMS alumni perceived a good match between crucial employability skills that they learned and those that were required in the workplace. The high matching scores indicated this for skills in the field of problem solving, team working and communication. In contrast, leadership skills were less developed.
The alumni observed a less than ideal match for employment skills. A relatively larger number of respondents indicated that they perceived gaps. Some alumni considered sales skills, HR skills, and finance and accounting skills as not relevant to their professional practice. The same cannot be said for IT skills, they were considered relevant by virtually all respondents. They found themselves lacking in this department. One of the employment skills, marketing, was considered the best match. This might be explained by the fact that marketing skills contain components of communication and culture.
Since employers increasingly attach importance to employability skills in addition to employment skills, it could be concluded that the IBMS programmes fulfilled their key role. Some of the employment skills could be learned on the job and some of them could be specific for certain types of jobs. The deficiencies in employment skills did not prevent graduates from being hired. This was demonstrated by the fact that more than two thirds of graduates were employed within three months of graduation.
Comparison with the control group shows that BBA IBMS alumni scored considerably higher on employability and intercultural skills as well as on employment skills (see Appendix III).

DISCUSSION

This project set out to investigate the extent to which the BBA IBMS curriculum prepares students for the international professional field. It addressed this major question by attempting to answer three more specific questions:

- What was the contribution of international student activities of the BBA IBMS curriculum to the development of relevant competences?
- To what extent did the BBA IBMS programmes provide students with the competences necessary to function in the international professional field?
- What was the employability of BBA IBMS graduates?

The people significantly able to address these questions are the alumni of these programmes who graduated between 2008 and 2014. This meant that these alumni had been subject to the 2004 IBMS National Competence Profile, and some fast students might have been to the 2011 profile. However their responses were not thought to be significantly different as to have an effect on the competence profile of a successful graduate.

MOBILITY

The compulsory mobility (presumably only waived for foreign students in the Netherlands) saw around 90% of the BBA IBMS students go abroad during their programme. The two most popular reasons for going abroad were studying in another country and conducting the internship across the border, although nearly one third also went abroad for their thesis project (see Figure 4 on page 8). According to a number of employer surveys, the appreciation for studying abroad is not high (EC, 2010; Leppanen, Saarinen, Nupponen & Airas, 2014), although in the same studies, employers extol the virtues of internships and

work experience during study in general, and they appreciate graduates having good transversal skills (Brandenburg, Berghoff & Taboadela, 2014; EC, 2010; Leppanen et al., 2014). These transversal skills have been shown to be positively influenced by international mobility (Brandenburg et al., 2014) and thought to be associated with it (Leppanen et al., 2014). Indeed, international mobility has also been associated with development of creative thinking ability (Lee, Therriault & Linderholm, 2012), something that is also valued by employers.

INTERNATIONAL ORIENTATION AND NETWORKING

The data show that the alumni were significantly more internationally oriented insofar as their relationships demonstrated compared to the previous generation. They were at least 2.5 times more often in a partnership with a foreign partner than their parents. This figure could be as high as more than 4 times, but the data could not demonstrate that without ambiguity (see Figure 1 on page 8). It could be that the international composition of their study cohort may have had an impact. Overall only one third of their cohort was Dutch; the remainder were students of different nationalities (see Figure 6 on page 8). There was significant variation, with the Dutch cohort comprising about as little as 28% to a maximum of almost 54% of all students. It should be noted that in case of the maximum proportion of Dutch students, this occurred in a region of the Netherlands with significant participation of 1st or 2nd generation non-Dutch borne students, who in effect present another form of international diversity. The study environment was therefore significantly international in terms of nationality or background culture.
The impact of the international study environment (both at home and abroad) on social and professional networks was investigated by studying the perception of alumni of their Facebook™ and Linkedin™ networks in terms of composition. In this project a comparison was made between the BBA IBMS test and the control group. Whilst BBA IBMS alumni possessed more international contacts in both the social and professional networks, the difference was particularly substantial for the professional network.

ENGLISH AND OTHER LANGUAGES LEARNING AND USE

This was further strengthened by the observation that English, as the dominant medium of instruction (see Figure 8 on page 8), was also spoken in conversation with other students and in social settings (see Figure 8). It is likely that when members of the three dominant nationalities are in conversation with one another; they will use their mother tongue. Nevertheless for the majority of the cohorts English will be the main language of conversation and daily life. The same will be true for Dutch students during their study period overseas (except for when they went to a country for which they had learned the language). Indeed, in terms of formal training, English and Spanish are the two most popular languages, with French, German, and Chinese (in order) receiving a lot less attention (see Figure 5 on page 8). The popularity of the Anglophone countries (US, UK) and some of the other top selections in terms of studying or internship abroad align well with cohort composition (in terms of nationality), language study, and the medium of instruction (see Table 4 on page 8). The significant exposure to English resulted in a statistically significant increase in the English language ability (see Figure 10 on page 8). The combination of language study and periods abroad in countries with the same language did result in increased language ability, although only small percentages of students speak French and Spanish at a professional level. The percentage is higher

for German (see Figure 11 on page 8) than the other two languages. This may be related to the similarity of Dutch and German.
It may be concluded that the provision of a significantly international environment for study, consisting of the use of English as the medium of instruction, the presence of significant proportions of the study cohort from a different nationality or cultural background, and the compulsory nature of studying abroad has given Dutch BBA IBS alumni substantial capability in English and some capability in other languages most notably German. The cohort as a whole developed during the course of the programme significantly enhanced English language abilities. The international environment may have had an impact beyond the professional sphere and demonstrated itself by more social contact in terms of partnerships and international social contact. The inference from this would be that the alumni feel quite at home in a setting with foreign challenges.

INTERNATIONAL COMPETENCES

The core of the survey examined the impact of the BBA IBMS programme on the development of all nine professional competences and the seven generic competences. The view of 75% or more of the alumni was that in terms of cooperation, writing a business plan (entrepreneurship aspect), learning and self-development, business research methods, international strategic vision development, business processes and change management, international marketing management, ethical and corporate responsibility, the programme delivered enough skills for these aspects in a professional setting.
However uncertainty and disagreement with the sufficiency of the programme increased for competences including leadership, international business awareness, international human resource management, international finance and accounting, planning and organising, international supply chain management, entrepreneurial management and international sales management, from 27% to 62% (combined). The last two competences scored no higher than less than 50% of alumni who thought the programme was sufficient in these components.
The lower score or the poor match between what was learned and what was required in the work place (see Table 8 on page 8) in some of the competences may be explained by recent research on the development of the brain during early adulthood (18-25 years of age). Despite almost three quarters of the alumni perceiving their education to be sufficient for the competence of leadership, only about half thought of this as a good match for what they required in the work place. The work described by the Young Adult Development Project (Simpson, 2008) has demonstrated that enhanced leadership capacity develops in later adulthood (after about 25 years of age). It may just be that the perception of the alumni of how they were when graduating (at about 22 years of age) was changed substantially by the time they matured through this developmental stage (after 25). Planning and organising were equally found to be left wanting in terms of both the sufficiency (57%) and the match between what was taught and what was required (55-65%). These functions require significant forward planning and thinking ahead, something that is thought to develop along with the so-called “executive suite”, a cluster of functions that centre in the prefrontal cortex that develop significantly during late adulthood. These functions include calibration of risk and reward, problem solving, prioritising, thinking ahead, self-evaluation, long-term planning and regulation of emotion (Simpson, 2008). Interestingly, one could argue that the same set of functions is required for entrepreneurial functioning. In that case, the match between what was taught and what was perceived to be necessary scored very poorly.

EMPLOYABILITY

The perception of the alumni in terms of their employment was that they were very employable in general and in international organisations in particular. This could be an overestimation (Funk et al., 2014), although other data obtained in this study seemed to support their position. This was borne out for example by the generally rapid employment in a period of economic downturn; more than 80% of the graduates who set out to become employed, found work in less than six months. Even more telling was that in excess of 50% of the graduates who found work within six months were already employed upon graduation. More than one third of the alumni worked in situations where more than 80% of the co-workers were of a different nationality and where English was the only, or the dominant language, of communication. The conclusion from this work is that the majority of BBA IBMS alumni became employed in organisations that were substantially international. There was some impact of gender on the employment of alumni; males were more likely to work with a more internationally oriented organisation. The socio-economic background, as evidenced by parental academic qualifications, did impact on the salary increase over time; alumni of more highly educated parents achieved statistically significant higher salary increases.

COMPARISON WITH THE CONTROL GROUP

On most aspects the results of the alumni of the BBA IBMS were compared with the control group from Tilburg University. Three factors distinguished the control group from the others. In the first place, the alumni from the control group were students in a three-year Bachelor's programme at a research university. Secondly, their programme was not based on the national Competence framework of the BBA IBMS. Thirdly, the control group was not subject to compulsory study and/or internship abroad. What lessons could be drawn from the comparison between the two groups of alumni, keeping these three factors in mind?

The following relevant observations and conclusions could be drawn from this comparison:

1. A higher proportion of students from Tilburg University participated in a subsequent Master's degree programme, compared to the BBA IBMS alumni. Nevertheless, the latter group displayed a higher propensity in this regard than the general population of UAS students.
2. Work placement was more prevalent among the BBA IBMS students compared to the control group. This might be explained by the compulsory nature of this in the BBA IBMS programmes and because of the increased focus on professional development of these programmes.
3. Whilst there was no difference between the two groups in terms of English usage and further language proficiency, the effect of foreign study on other the further development of ability in other languages was noticeable; BBA IBMS alumni showed greater development.
4. The Tilburg University alumni, as evidenced by proportion of foreign contacts in social Internet media, had less developed international networks. This study proposed that the absence of compulsory foreign study was a significant factor in this.
5. The same factor might explain the enhanced perception of intercultural competence by IBMS alumni compared to Tilburg University alumni.

6. The professional skills perception of BBA IBMS alumni was higher than of the control group. This might be explained by the enhanced professional orientation of the BBA IBMS programmes compared to the more academic focus of the Tilburg University programmes.
7. Overall, the Tilburg University alumni felt they possessed the competences referred to in this study to a lesser extent than the BBA IBMS graduates. Given that the BBA IBMS profile was not the basis for the Tilburg University programmes this was not so surprising.

In general, the observed differences might be explained by the enhanced professional focus of the BBA IBMS programmes and the compulsory nature of study (and/or work placement) abroad. Further analysis of the control group demonstrated that there was a difference between the mobile and non-mobile Tilburg University alumni. In particular, the international composition of their social and business networks and the further enhancement of non-English foreign languages showed differences. The sample size and the extent of the differences were too small to draw significant conclusions, nevertheless the results certainly were indicative of an additional positive effect of international mobility.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study attempted to give an answer to the question to which extent BBA IBMS curriculum was capable of preparing students for the international professional field. It is important to consider the result of this study in the light of its limitations. Firstly, we only surveyed alumni of 6 of the 13 BBA IBMS programmes. Secondly, our control group was limited to two programmes from one research-intensive university. The nature and the length of these programmes was different (3 versus 4 years and less professional focus for the control group). In the third place, the number of alumni overall, and per institute, was limited (the observed variation was high). This presented the limitation that the representativeness of the sample could be called into question. This might particularly apply to institutes with a small sample size. This study might have gained more from a comparison with a Dutch-taught programme in business and management in which students with a non-Dutch cultural background could be accounted for. This may become possible through appropriate expansion of the research project. The limitations, as presented here are acknowledged, nevertheless the authors adhere to the opinion that the results of this study provide indications and food for thought about the way BBA IBMS programmes prepare their students for the professional field. The outcomes also provide information on how BBA IBMS programmes could be enhanced to remedy the shortcomings as identified by the alumni. The authors welcome further opportunities to enhance this research.

The present study has a number of other limitations. It is not clear if deficiencies in the employability skills were a consequence of the educational programmes or that they were related to cultural backgrounds or the personality of students. The IBMS study indicated that alumni considered their employability skills on the whole as sufficient, but this was of course on the basis of self-reported data. The survey therefore represents a single perspective, that of the alumni which limits its validity (see Deardorff, 2015, p. 137). The study of The Hague UAS (Funk et al., 2014) similarly suggested that employers might be less positive about the acquired competences compared to the graduates.

Future research should focus on 'unpacking' the labels for employability skills within specific disciplines and within specific cultures and country settings. This research should be qualitative. Interviews with employers could shed light on the question to what extent the relatively weakly developed employment skills impact

on graduates in the workplace. Qualitative research could also clarify if IT skills should be strengthened in the IBMS programmes or that these are so specific for certain jobs that it might be better to learn them in-company. Another area of research could be to what extent the skills of international graduates of IBMS programmes match the expectations of Dutch employers, given that mismatches have been found in the United Kingdom and Australia (Jones, forthcoming).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

We have addressed three major research questions:

- What is the contribution of international study activities in the IBMS curriculum to competence development?
- To what extent does the IBMS education provide students with the competences necessary to function in the international professional field?
- What is the employability of IBMS students?

This study found that BBA IBMS alumni agreed that their study programme developed most of the competences listed in the National Competence Profile (2004) for BBA IBMS programmes. The majority did not agree that this was the case for entrepreneurial management and for the sales aspect of international marketing management. Less than 75% were satisfied that this was the case for leadership, international business awareness, international HRM, international business and management accounting and financial management, planning and organising, and international operations management. In particular, for four of these six competences less than 50% of the alumni felt there was a good match between education and professional needs (leadership, international HRM, international business and management accounting and financial management, international operations management – IT component).
It should be noted that in the revised national Competence profile of 2011 (relevant for alumni after the period of graduation of the alumni in this study) specific additional attention is paid to international HRM and the sales component of international marketing management. These changes might be discoverable in later cohorts of alumni that were beyond the scope of this study. A study of those cohorts might explain the low level of match and the extent to which alumni felt they possessed the competence in this study.
It should also be noted that the extent of the match between education and professional needs for individual alumni might be affected by their particular function. This study did not examine whether the alumni were employed in functions for which the programme was particularly intended. This problem

will only exacerbate with the increased speed with which professions are expected to change as a result of global developments. A pointer in this direction might be the poor match between education and professional needs in terms of IT. Five years or more represents a very significant developmental period in terms of the fast moving changes in IT. The thinking behind further curricular development of the BBA IBMS programme might take this aspect into account. How can programmes be better future proofed, even though they should only be designed to cope with at most a nine to ten year span (the period of study plus a five year post graduation period)?

The BBA IBMS graduates scored none of the competences, for which the match between professional needs and education were measured in this study, better than 70%. Given that there is no basis for comparison, it is difficult to estimate whether this is the best we could expect, or whether this could be improved upon. Three reasons that could be advanced for this include, that the alumni occupied a position not aligned with the prior education, a change in the work field beyond the scope of the established programme (rapid changes in the work place), and the extent to which the young adult development was sufficient for certain high level cognitive functioning (though graduates might have attributed this to short-comings in the programme).

The various employer surveys referred to in this study by and large agreed that graduates were suitable for the functions for which they were recruited. This may in part be explained by employer organisations not willing to admit that their recruitment processes were not optimal. A more likely explanation would be that the graduates indeed were more or less suitable for the position in which they were employed. Indeed, the survey by Hart Research Associates (2013) showed that employers thought graduates were suitable for employment, but lacked the level of competence to progress to more senior positions. Without wishing to belabour the point, it could just be that the new (in this case US college) graduate employees were also still undergoing high-level cognitive functioning maturation (Simpson, 2008).

There are a number of potential areas that could be subject for further study. One such area is a better articulation between programme and the day-to-day usage of competences in the work place. This would require an in-depth study of the professional deployment in respect of each of the relevant competences as identified by line-managers of new graduate recruits. The line managers should be approached in semi-structured interviews how the day-to-day tasks map onto the various competences. Such an approach could identify gaps in, or poor matches between what graduates learn and what is needed in the work place. Such an approach might also be used to prioritise the various competences to ensure that they receive the appropriate amount of attention during the educational programme.

It must be clear from the discussion on the limitations of this study that it would be good to expand the number of alumni involved, but also that an expansion into cognate disciplines might assist in identifying particular strengths in various aspects of the business and management domain for each of the programmes studied. Indeed, from a careful and extensive study of this kind, the flexibility that is aspired to in Dutch higher education may become evident and students may select parts of various programmes to create for them as individuals a profile that best matches their perceived needs and talents. Equally, the in-depth study of employer needs as outlined above may reveal the use of particular combinations of programmes to better match the needs of the work place now or in the future. A further condition to enhance this could be the change from competence-based profiles to teaching and learning for learning outcomes (Lokhoff et al., 2010). The latter approach presents a more transparent and direct connection to what can be achieved as a result of a learning experience.

The identification of a large cohort of alumni in a cognate programme that has a strong focus on local or national, rather than international, might provide a more ideal control group to elucidate the impact of

international experiences. This would most likely require a translation of the survey instrument, with some attendant limitations, but the authors believe that this would also substantial benefit the understanding of what has been found thus far.

A number of areas of the curriculum have been defined for which alumni indicate that their education falls short of what they need in the work place. These aspects require further study in collaboration with the employers to elucidate what needs to be done to enhance these aspects. This exercise needs to take into account the ever-increasing pace with which the work place is undergoing change as a consequence of general technological advances and enhanced globalisation.

REFERENCES

Arum, R. and Roksa, J. (2014). *Aspiring Adults adrift: Tentative transitions of college graduates*. Chicago, IL, The University of Chicago Press.

Beelen, J. and Jones, E. (2015). Redefining Internationalization at Home. Proceedings of the 2nd Conference of Bologna Process Researchers. Springer, Dordrecht. Forthcoming.

Brandenburg, U., Berghoff, S. & Taboadela, O. (2014). *The Erasmus Impact Study - Effects of mobility on the skills and employability of students and the internationalisation of higher education institutions.* Luxemburg: European Union.

Council for Aid to Education (2014). *CLA+, National Results, 2013-14*. Retrieved from http://cae.org/images/uploads/pdf/CLA_National_Results_2013-14.pdf on 16 february 2015.

Deardorff, D. (2015). *Demystifying outcomes assessment for international educators; A practical approach*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

De Wit, H. & Jones, E. (2014, 14 November). We need to change the language of internationalisation. *University World News, Issue 343*.

European Commission. (2010). *Employer's perception of graduate employability.* Flash Eurobarometer 304, Gallup Organisation) (pp. 194). Brussels: EC.

Expertise for Labour Mobility (2014). *Successful expatriate skills*. Rotterdam: Nannette Ripmeester and Selene Siregar.

Funk, A., Den Heijer, J., Schuurmans-Brouwer, A. & Walenkamp, J. (2014). *Internationalizing curricula; Needs and wishes of employers with regard to international competences*. The Hague: The Hague University of Applied Sciences.

Hart Research Associates (2013). *It takes more than a major: Employer priorities for college learning and student success*. American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U).

Humburg, M., Van der Velden, R. & Verhagen, A. (2013). *The employability of higher education graduates: The employers' perspective*. Brussels: European Union.

Jones, E. (forthcoming). *Literature review: Transnational education and employability*.

Lee, C.S., Therriault, D. J. & Linderholm, T. (2012). On the cognitive benefits of cultural experience: Exploring the relationship between studying abroad and creative thinking. *Applied Cognitive Psychology, 26*(5), 768-778. doi: 10.1002/acp.2857

Leppanen, J., Saarinen, M, Nupponen, M. & Airas, M. (2014). Hidden Competences *Faktaa. Facts and Figures*. Helsinki: CIMO.

Lilley, K. (2014). *Educating global citizens: Translating the 'idea' into university organisational practice*. Brisbane: Griffith University.

Lokhoff, J., Wegewijs, B., Durkin, K., Wagenaar, R., Gonzalez, J., Isaacs, A.K., Dona dalle Rose, L.F. & Gobbi, M. (2010). *A tuning guide to formulating degree programme profiles. Including programme cmpetences and programme learning outcomes*. Nuffic/TUNING Association, Universidad de Deusto, Bilbao, Spain.

Ripmeester, N. (2014). International Businesses: Consumers of Global Talent? In *Handbook internationalisation, 2014* (1), pp. 21-32. Berlin: Dr. Josef Raabe Verlag.

Simpson, R. (2008). *Young Adult Development Project*. Boston: MIT. Retrieved from http://hrweb.mit.edu/worklife/youngadult/brain.html on 13/3/2015.

Vereniging Hogescholen (2014). *Wendbaar in een duurzame economie; Een externe analyse van het economisch domein ten behoeve van de verkenning hoger economisch onderwijs*. The Hague: Verkenningscommisie voor het hoger economisch onderwijs.

APPENDIX I
THE SURVEY USED IN THIS STUDY

SURVEY ALUMNI IBMS

A. GENERAL

7. Where did you study?

- o Haagse Hogeschool / The Hague University of Applied Sciences
- o Hanzehogeschool Groningen / Groningen University of Applied Sciences
- o Hogeschool van Amsterdam / Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences
- o Stenden Hogeschool / Stenden University of Applied Sciences
- o Tilburg University

8. When did you graduate from your bachelor programme?

- o 2007
- o 2008
- o 2009
- o 2010
- o 2011
- o 2012
- o 2013

9. What was your grade average for your bachelor degree?

- o Below average
- o Average
- o Above average

10. How long did you study for your bachelor programme?

- o Less than 3 year
- o 3 year
- o 4 year
- o 5 year
- o 6 year
- o More than 6 year

11. Did you continue studying after this programme?

- o Yes, immediately
- o Yes, but with one or two years break in between
- o No

12. If yes, where did you continue studying?

Dutch Students

- o In the Netherlands, Master degree with a Dutch focus
- o In the Netherlands, Master degree with an international focus
- o Master degree in another country than the Netherlands
- o In the Netherlands, Phd degree
- o Phd degree in another country than the Netherlands
- o Other

Non-Dutch students:

- o In the Netherlands, Master degree with a Dutch focus
- o In the Netherlands, Master degree with an international focus
- o Master degree in my home country
- o Master degree in another country
- o In the Netherlands, PhD degree
- o PhD degree in my home country
- o PhD degree in another country than the Netherlands
- o Other

13. What is your highest degree?

- o Bachelor IBMS
- o Other international Bachelor: please specify
- o Master
- o PhD
- o None
- o Other: specify

14. What is your age?

…… years

15. I am …

- o Male
- o Female

B. INTERNATIONAL STUDY EXPERIENCE

1. What is your native language? (For students with more than one native language, chose the language that is most natural for you)

- o Dutch
- o English
- o Other, namely ….

2. Below you find a number of communication settings related to your bachelor study period. Can you please indicate to which extent your native language was used in these settings? ***[only for students with another native language than Dutch or English at Q B1]***

	Less than 20% of situations	20% to 40%	40% to 60%	60% to 80%	80% to 100%
A The study programme (instruction language during classes and projects)	1	2	3	4	5
B Conversation with other students, in university	1	2	3	4	5
C Social life	1	2	3	4	5

3. Below you find a number of communication settings related to your bachelor study period. Can you please indicate to which extent English was used in these settings?

	Less than 20% of situations	20% to 40%	40% to 60%	60% to 80%	80% to 100%
A The study programme (instruction language during classes and projects)	1	2	3	4	5
B Conversation with other students, in university	1	2	3	4	5
C Social life	1	2	3	4	5

4. Below you find a number of communication settings related to your bachelor study period. Can you please indicate to which extent Dutch was used in these settings?

	Less than 20% of situations	20% to 40%	40% to 60%	60% to 80%	80% to 100%
A The study programme (instruction language during classes and projects)	1	2	3	4	5
B Conversation with other students, in university	1	2	3	4	5
C Social life	1	2	3	4	5

5. Can you please indicate the average international composition of your class, during your bachelor studies?

	Less than 20%	20% to 40%	40% to 60%	60% to 80%	80% to 100%
A Average percentage of Dutch students	1	2	3	4	5
B Average percentage of German students	1	2	3	4	5
C Average percentage of Chinese students	1	2	3	4	5
D Average percentage of students from other nationalities	1	2	3	4	5

6. **Did you go abroad during your bachelor study period? (more than 1 answer possible)**
   - o Yes, study abroad (at least 3 months)
   - o Yes, internship abroad (at least 3 months)
   - o Yes, I did my dissertation / thesis project abroad (at least 3 months)
   - o Yes, short study project(s) abroad (one week to three months)
   - o No *[skip next question]*

7. **To which country/countries did you go?**
   Roll down menu with countries

8. **Did you, during your bachelor studies, engage in distance learning projects (e.g., virtual classroom) with students from universities in other countries?**
   - o Yes, on several occasions
   - o Yes, once
   - o No

9. **Within the framework of your bachelor studies, did you do additional language training? (more than 1 answer possible)**
   - o Yes, English
   - o Yes, Dutch
   - o Yes, German
   - o Yes, Spanish
   - o Yes, French
   - o Yes, Chinese
   - o Yes, Portuguese
   - o Yes, other, namely
   - o No

10. **Did you have classes in intercultural communication, International competence, intercultural awareness, or something similar, during your bachelor studies?**
    - o Year one, number of credits:
    - o Year two, number of credits:
    - o Year three, number of credits:
    - o Year four, number of credits:
    - o No

11. **During your bachelor studies, did you follow a minor with a specific geographic focus?**
    - o Europe, number of credits:
    - o Asia, number of credits:
    - o Africa, number of credits:
    - o Middle East, number of credits:
    - o Latin America, number of credits:
    - o North America, number of credits:
    - o Australia, number of credits:
    - o No

12. **During your bachelor studies, did you follow regular courses (not part of a minor) with a specific geographic focus?**
    - o Europe, number of credits:
    - o Asia, number of credits:
    - o Africa, number of credits:
    - o Middle East, number of credits:
    - o Latin America, number of credits:
    - o North America, number of credits:
    - o Australia, number of credits:
    - o No

C. INTERNATIONAL BACKGROUND AND EXTRACURRICULAR EXPERIENCE

1. **Which country do you consider your native country?**
   Roll-down menu with countries, with as first option 'I feel native in more than 1 country'

2. **For students who indicated to feel native in more than 1 country, please specify these countries**

3. **Before you started studying for your bachelor degree, did you spend more than 6 months in a row in another country than your native country? *(for people who have indicated to feel native in more than 1 country, please answer the following questions from the point of view of the country in which you have lived the most)***
    - o Yes
    - o No

4. **In which country / countries? (Same roll-down menu as was used previously)**

5. **For how many months in total did you live outside of your native country?**
   …… months (roll-down menu)

6. **What was the main reason?**
    - o Work of my parents
    - o My own education
    - o Gap year (year travel abroad)
    - o I am a refugee
    - o I was adopted
    - o Other

7. **Where do you currently live?**
    - o In my native country *[skip next question]*
    - o In another country: namely ….

8. **What is the primary reason that you live there?**
   - o Work
   - o Study
   - o Partner
   - o Other, specify ….

9. **From which country did you receive your secondary (high school) diploma?**
   - o From a school in my native country
   - o From a school in another country: namely ….

7. **Before your bachelor studies, did you attend any kind of international education? (more than 1 answer possible)**
   - o No
   - o Language course
   - o Summer Programme
   - o International School
   - o Bilingual Education
   - o Other, specify:

9. **During your studies, have you been active in an international student organisation? (more than 1 answer possible)**
   - o No
   - o Yes, I organised international activities
   - o Yes, I participated in international activities
   - o Yes, but I only went to meetings organised by them

10. **Which international student organisation was this? (more than 1 answer possible)**
    - o Roll down menu with international student organisations: AEGEE, AIESEC, SIB, ESN, study-specific organisation, other specify

11. **Did you engage in other, not study-related, international activities before you started working? (more than 1 answer possible)**
    - o Holiday work or a temporary job abroad, less than 6 weeks
    - o Holiday work or a temporary job abroad, more than 6 weeks
    - o International travel, longer than 6 weeks
    - o International business activity (e.g., webshop, international trade, or something similar)
    - o Other, specify:
    - o No

12. **What is the country of birth of your parents?**
    - o Both my parents were born in the same country as me
    - o One of my parents was born in a different country than me
    - o Both my parents were born in a different country than me

13. What is the highest degree of your father?

- o Secondary education or equivalent
- o Vocational education or equivalent (examples: MBO (Netherlands), Berufsausbildung (Germany), community college (USA))
- o Bachelor level or equivalent
- o Master level or equivalent
- o PhD level or equivalent

14. What is the highest degree of your mother?

- o Secondary education or equivalent
- o Vocational education or equivalent (examples: MBO (Netherlands), Berufsausbildung (Germany), community college (USA))
- o Bachelor level or equivalent
- o Master level or equivalent
- o PhD level or equivalent

15. What is the country of birth of your partner?

- o My partner was born in the same country than me
- o My partner was born in a different country than me
- o I don't have a partner

D1. INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

1. Do you have an account at a personal social network (e.g., Facebook, Weibo, QZone, V Kontakte)?

- o Yes
- o No *[skip next 2 questions]*

2. Can you please indicate the average international profile of your social network connections?

	Less than 20%	20% to 40%	40% to 60%	60% to 80%	80% to 100%
A Percentage of Dutch connections	1	2	3	4	5
B Percentage of connections from my native country [IF APPLICABLE]	1	2	3	4	5
C Percentage of connections from other countries	1	2	3	4	5

3. How many different nationalities do you have among your social network connections?

Approximately …. different nationalities

4. Do you have an account at a professional online network (e.g., LinkedIn)?

- o Yes
- o No *[skip next 2 questions]*

5. Can you please indicate the average international profile of your LinkedIn connections?

	Less than 20%	20% to 40%	40% to 60%	60% to 80%	80% to 100%
A Percentage of Dutch connections	1	2	3	4	5
B Percentage of connections from my native country [IF APPLICABLE]	1	2	3	4	5
C Percentage of connections from other countries	1	2	3	4	5

6. How many different nationalities do you have among your LinkedIn connections?

7. Based on your personal judgment, can you react to the following statement?

	strongly disagree	not agree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
A My study period increased the international character of my social network	1	2	3	4	5
B My study period increased the international character of my professional network	1	2	3	4	5

D2. LANGUAGE SKILLS

1. Below you will find a number of statements about your language proficiency. Can you please indicate your proficiency of these languages, before you started studying at IBMS? For your indication, you can use the following levels:

Level 0: no proficiency
Level 1: elementary proficiency (basic speech, basic answers to basic questions)
Level 2: limited working proficiency (routine communication, casual conversation)
Level 3: professional working proficiency (effective participation in most conversations)
Level 4: full professional proficiency (fluent language use)
Level 5: native / bilingual proficiency

	Level 0	level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
A Dutch	1	2	3	4	5	6
B English	1	2	3	4	5	6
C French	1	2	3	4	5	6
D German	1	2	3	4	5	6
E Spanish	1	2	3	4	5	6
F Chinese	1	2	3	4	5	6
G Other: …	1	2	3	4	5	6

2. Below you will find a number of statements about your language proficiency. Can you please indicate your proficiency of these languages, when you graduated from IBMS?

	Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
A Dutch	1	2	3	4	5	6
B English	1	2	3	4	5	6
C French	1	2	3	4	5	6
D German	1	2	3	4	5	6
E Spanish	1	2	3	4	5	6
F Chinese	1	2	3	4	5	6
G Other: …	1	2	3	4	5	6

3. Below you will find a number of statements about your language proficiency. Can you please indicate your current proficiency of these languages?

	Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
A Dutch	1	2	3	4	5	6
B English	1	2	3	4	5	6
C French	1	2	3	4	5	6
D German	1	2	3	4	5	6
E Spanish	1	2	3	4	5	6
F Chinese	1	2	3	4	5	6
G Other: …	1	2	3	4	5	6

D3. PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES

1. Below you will find a number of statements about the extent to which your education at IBMS prepared you for the professional field. Please circle the number which matches most with you personal opinion, with 1 being strongly disagree, and 5 being strongly agree. Circle NA (Not Applicable) if you don't understand the sentence, or if you consider the statement not applicable.

	strongly disagree	Not agree	neutral	agree	strongly agree	NA
A My study at IBMS provided me knowledge about trends and issues in international business [I,1]	1	2	3	4	5	NA
B My study at IBMS provided me knowledge of the key stakeholders in international business [I,1]	1	2	3	4	5	NA
C My study at IBMS provided me the skills to contribute to the evaluation and development of strategic plans in the international profession [II,3]	1	2	3	4	5	NA

		strongly disagree	Not agree	neutral	agree	strongly agree	NA
D	My study at IBMS prepared me to understand business processes within a company [II,4]	1	2	3	4	5	NA
E	My study at IBMS prepared me to analyse and prepare solutions to optimise business processes within a company [II,4]						
F	My study at IBMS provided me the skills to write and defend a business plan [II,5]	1	2	3	4	5	NA
G	My study at IBMS provided me the skills to be an entrepreneur [II,5]	1	2	3	4	5	NA
H	My study at IBMS prepared me to execute the research needed to create an international marketing or business plan [III,6]	1	2	3	4	5	NA
I	My study at IBMS provided me the skills needed to write an operational marketing plan in an international context [III,6]	1	2	3	4	5	NA
J	My study at IBMS provided me the skills needed to be a sales person [III,6]	1	2	3	4	5	NA
K	My study at IBMS prepared me to understand and assess the logistics and supply chain aspects of the international business environment [III,7]	1	2	3	4	5	NA
L	My study at IBMS prepared me to evaluate and perform the budgeting and accounting processes needed in the international profession [III,8]	1	2	3	4	5	NA
M	My study at IBMS prepared me to stimulate employability, motivation, and vitality, of employees and co-workers [III,9]	1	2	3	4	5	NA
N	My study at IBMS provided me the skills to function as an employee in an international organisation [III.,9]	1	2	3	4	5	NA
O	My study at IBMS provided me the skills to be a project leader or team leader [IV,1]	1	2	3	4	5	NA
P	My study at IBMS provided me the skills to be a team player [IV,2]	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Q	My study at IBMS provided me the skills to be a manager [IV,5]	1	2	3	4	5	NA
R	My study at IBMS provided me the skills to work independently in a professional environment [IV,6]	1	2	3	4	5	NA
S	My study at IBMS provided me the skills to critically reflect on my work as a professional [IV,6]	1	2	3	4	5	NA
T	My study at IBMS provided me the skills to work in an ethical and social responsible manner [IV,7]	1	2	3	4	5	NA
U	My study at IBMS provided me the skills to co-operate with others [IV,2]						

2. Based on your personal judgment, can you react to the following statement?

		strongly disagree	Not agree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
A	There is a good match between the requirements of my current job and the skills I learned in my study programme	1	2	3	4	5
B	There is a good match between the international / intercultural skills needed in my current job and the skills I learned in my study programme	1	2	3	4	5

3. Can you please indicate to what extent there is a match between what you learned during your study at IBMS and the skills you need in your current job?

		Learned far too little	Learned less than neccessary	Good match	Learned more than necessary	Learned far too much
A	Marketing skills	1	2	3	4	5
B	International marketing skills	1	2	3	4	5
C	Sales skills	1	2	3	4	5
D	International Sales skills	1	2	3	4	5
E	IT skills	1	2	3	4	5
F	Finance & accounting skills	1	2	3	4	5
G	International finance & accounting skills	1	2	3	4	5
H	HR skills	1	2	3	4	5
I	International HR skills	1	2	3	4	5
J	Problem solving skills	1	2	3	4	5
K	Problem solving in international context	1	2	3	4	5
L	Project management skills	1	2	3	4	5
M	International project management skills	1	2	3	4	5
N	Planning & organisation skills	1	2	3	4	5
O	Planning & organisation in international context	1	2	3	4	5
P	Team working skills	1	2	3	4	5
Q	International team working skills	1	2	3	4	5
R	Leadership skills	1	2	3	4	5
S	International leadership skills	1	2	3	4	5
T	Communication skills	1	2	3	4	5
U	International communication skills	1	2	3	4	5
V	Research skills	1	2	3	4	5
W	International research skills	1	2	3	4	5

		Learned far too little	Learned less than neccessary	Good match	Learned more than necessary	Learned far too much
X	Skills to work as employee in an organisation	1	2	3	4	5
Y	Skills to work as employee in an international organisation	1	2	3	4	5
Z	English language skills	1	2	3	4	5
AA	Other foreign language skills	1	2	3	4	5

D4. INTERNATIONAL COMPETENCES

1. Below you will find a number of statements about the extent to which your education at IBMS helped you to realise important intercultural competences. Please circle the number which fits most to your personal opinion, with 1 being strongly disagree, and 5 being strongly agree.

		strongly disagree	Not agree	neutral	agree	strongly agree	Not relevant
A	My study at IBMS gave me the skills to deal with the uncertainty associated with unexpected or unfamiliar situations	1	2	3	4	5	6
B	My study at IBMS gave me the skills to be flexible and adapt my behaviour to the demands of new or unknown situations	1	2	3	4	5	
C	My study at IBMS gave me the skills to be open-minded, respectful and unprejudiced toward other cultural norms and values	1	2	3	4	5	
D	My study at IBMS gave me the skills to take initiative in new or unknown situations	1	2	3	4	5	
E	My study at IBMS gave me the skills to remain calm in new, unknown, or even stressful situations						
F	My study at IBMS gave me the skills to understand the feelings, thoughts and behaviours of individuals from another cultural background	1	2	3	4	5	
G	My study at IBMS gave me the skills to be curious and learn from other cultures	1	2	3	4	5	
H	My study at IBMS gave me the skills to be aware of the influence my cultural background has on my feelings and behaviour	1	2	3	4	5	
I	My study at IBMS gave me the skills to know and understand the history and world views of other cultures	1	2	3	4	5	

E1. EMPLOYABILITY (GENERAL)

1. After graduation, when did you find a job?

- o Immediately
- o Within 3 months
- o 3 to 6 months
- o 6 to 9 months
- o 9 to 12 months
- o More than a year

2. Which was the salary in your first job after graduation, approximately?

(based on full time, gross income per month)

- o roll down menu: lower than 2000, 2000-2200, etc. until 3600 and higher

3. Compared to this first salary, how did your monthly income develop?

- o roll down menu: lower than start salary, same, + 10%, + 20%, +30%, + 40%, + 50%, + 75%, + 100% (double), triple, more than triple

4. How many people did you manage when you started working?

- o roll down menu: none, 1, 2, 3, …, 10, 11-15, 16-20, 21-50, more than 50, and don't tell

5. How many people do you manage now?

- o roll down menu: none, 1, 2, 3, …, 10, 11-15, 16-20, 21-50, more than 50, and don't tell

6. In the following statements we compare your career with your expectations during your study. Can you please answer to each statement?

	A lot less than expected	Less than expected	As expected	Better than expected	A lot better than expected
A My career development	1	2	3	4	5
B The international aspect of my job	1	2	3	4	5
C My salary	1	2	3	4	5

E2. INTERNATIONAL EMPLOYABILITY

1. In which sector do you work?

- o Public
- o Private
- o NGO

2. How many employees work for the organisation where you are employed?

- o I am self-employed
- o 1-5
- o 6-10
- o 11-50
- o 51-250
- o More than 250

3. In which country do you work?

Roll-down menu with countries identical to the one used before

4. Is this your home country?

o Yes o No

5. Where is the head office located of the organisation where you work?

o In my home country o Abroad, specify country ….

6. In how many countries is your organisation active?

o roll-down menu with 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 to 10, more than 10

7. How often did you travel abroad for your job, over the past 12 months?

o No business travel abroad
o 1-10 days abroad per year
o More than 10 days abroad per year

8. Can you please indicate the average international composition of the site (location) where you work?

	Less than 20%	20% to 40%	40% to 60%	60% to 80%	80% to 100%
A Percentage of employees with the nationality of the country where your office is located	1	2	3	4	5
B Percentage of employees with the same nationality as your own nationality (can be same as in previous statement)	1	2	3	4	5

9. How many employees (co-workers) work in your department?

10. How many nationalities are represented in your department?

11. Can you please indicate the international composition of the employees (co-workers) in your department? [only for alumni with 5 or more direct co-workers]

	Less than 20%	20% to 40%	40% to 60%	60% to 80%	80% to 100%
A Percentage of co-workers with the nationality of the country where the office is located	1	2	3	4	5
B Percentage of co-workers with the same nationality as your nationality	1	2	3	4	5

12. Below you find a number of communication settings. Can you please indicate to which extent you use English in these settings?

	Less than 20% of situations	20% to 40%	40% to 60%	60% to 80%	80% to 100%
A Formal internal settings (e.g., meetings)	1	2	3	4	5
B Informal conversation with co-workers	1	2	3	4	5
C Internal reporting (e.g. written reports, documents, minutes)	1	2	3	4	5
D Internal e-mail communication	1	2	3	4	5
E Communication with clients, suppliers, or other external stakeholders	1	2	3	4	5

13. Below you find a number of communication settings. Can you please indicate to which extent you use Dutch in these settings?

	Less than 20% of situations	20% to 40%	40% to 60%	60% to 80%	80% to 100%
A Formal internal settings (e.g., meetings)	1	2	3	4	5
B Informal conversation with co-workers	1	2	3	4	5
C Internal reporting (e.g. written reports, documents, minutes)	1	2	3	4	5
D Internal e-mail communication	1	2	3	4	5
E Communication with clients, suppliers, or other external stakeholders	1	2	3	4	5

14. Do you regularly use another language than English or your own native language in your work?

o Yes o No

15. Which language is this? *(If more, than answer this question for the most frequently used other language)*

Roll-down menu with languages identical to the one used before

16. Below you find a number of communication settings. Can you please indicate to which extent you use this other language in these settings?

	Less than 20% of situations	20% to 40%	40% to 60%	60% to 80%	80% to 100%
A Formal internal settings (e.g., meetings)	1	2	3	4	5
B Informal conversation with co-workers	1	2	3	4	5
C Internal reporting (e.g. written reports, documents, minutes)	1	2	3	4	5
D Internal e-mail communication	1	2	3	4	5
E Communication with clients, suppliers, or other external stakeholders	1	2	3	4	5

17. Which international aspect did you miss during your bachelor studies?

APPENDIX II
CALCULATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL EMPLOYABILITY INDEX

A number of survey questions are indicator of the international employability of the alumnus. To facilitate analysis, the answers of these questions were combined into an index.
In this index, each respondent is rated on a scale from absolutely not internationally employed (0 points) to completely internationally employed (100 points). Points are divided according to the following weights

Q #	Variable	Weight
Q80	Do you work in your home country?	Yes = 0 No = 30
Q82	Where is the head office located?	Country where I work = 0 Another country, my home country = 2.5 Another country, not my home country = 5
Q83	In how many countries is your company active?	1 = 0.5, 2 = 1, 3 = 1.5, …, 9 = 4.5, 10 or more = 5
Q84	How often do you travel abroad?	Not = 0 1-10 days = 10 More than 10 days = 20
Q87	International composition of department: percentage of employees with same nationality as you	→ More than 80% = 0 → 60-80% = 5 → 40-60% = 10 → 20-40% = 15 → Less than 20% = 20
Q89	Use of English (English native speakers excluded from the calculation), for 5 different settings	< 20% = 0 20-40% = 1 40-60% = 2 60-80% = 3 80-100% = 4

APPENDIX III
COMPETENCES & EMPLOYABILITY: IBMS ALUMNI VERSUS CONTROL GROUP

The proportion of respondents with a Dutch national background was higher in the IBMS group than in the control group. To avoid contamination of comparison results due to differences in national background, only the results for Dutch nationals were compared.

TEST GROUP VERSUS CONTROL GROUP: INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES (ICC)

The survey included 9 statements with respect to ICC (Q70). For each statement, differences were tested with independent-samples t-test. The table below presents the results of this analysis. (Significant influences are printed in bold, indicative influences in normal font, and relations with $p > 0.10$ are not entered in these tables).

Test Group ↔ Control Group: significance of differences (t-test)	
My Bachelor gave me the skills to deal with the uncertainty associated with unexpected or unfamiliar situations [TOLERANCE OF AMBIGUITY]	t(223)=2.529, p = 0.012
My Bachelor gave me the skills to be flexible and adapt my behaviour to the demands of new or unknown situations [FLEXIBILITY]	t(223)=2.723, p = 0.007
My Bachelor gave me the skills to be open-minded, respectful and unprejudiced toward other cultural norms and values [OPEN-MINDEDNESS]	t(223)=3.812, p < 0.001
My Bachelor gave me the skills to take initiative in new or unknown situations [SOCIAL INITIATIVE]	t(224)=4.50, p < 0.001
My Bachelor gave me the skills to remain calm in new, unknown, or even stressful situations [EMOTIONAL STABILITY]	t(223)=3.447, p = 0.001
My Bachelor gave me the skills to understand the feelings, thoughts and behaviours of individuals from another cultural background [EMPATHY]	t(223)=3.730, p < 0.001
My Bachelor gave me the skills to be curious and learn from other cultures [KNOWLEDGE DISCOVERY]	t(224)=2.678, p = 0.012
My Bachelor gave me the skills to be aware of the influence my cultural background has on my feelings and behaviour [COMMUNICATIVE AWARENESS]	t(224)=4.369, p < 0.001
My Bachelor gave me the skills to know and understand the history and world views of other cultures [CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE]	t(224)=3.696, p < 0.001

The results show a significantly higher learning of intercultural competences in the test group, as compared to the control group. This result is reported for each of the tested ICC statements.
Overall conclusion: IBS alumni have learned significantly more ICC's during their Bachelor studies than alumni of Tilburg University.

TEST GROUP VERSUS CONTROL GROUP: PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES

The survey included a number of statements with respect to professional competences. Statements were derived from the framework Competences IBMS. For each statement, differences were tested with independent-samples t-test. The table below presents the results of this analysis. (Significant influences are printed in bold, indicative influences in normal font, and relations with $p > 0.10$ are not entered in these tables).

Test Group ↔ Control Group: significance of change (t-test) My Bachelor study …	
… provided me knowledge about trends and issues in international business	-
… provided me knowledge of the key stakeholders in international business	-
… provided me the skills to contribute to the evaluation and development of strategic plans in the international profession	-
… prepared me to understand business processes within a company	-
… prepared me to analyse and prepare solutions to optimise business processes within a company	-
… provided me the skills to write and defend a business plan	t(253)=4.343, p < 0.001
… provided me the skills to be an entrepreneur	t(254)=3.992, p < 0.001
… prepared me to execute the research needed to create an international marketing or business plan	t(255)=2.954, p = 0.006
… provided me the skills needed to write an operational marketing plan in an international context	t(254)=3.812, p < 0.001
… provided me the skills needed to be a sales person	t(255)=3.717, p < 0.001
… prepared me to understand and assess the logistics and supply chain aspects of the international business environment	-
… prepared me to evaluate and perform the budgeting and accounting processes needed in the international profession	-
… prepared me to stimulate employability, motivation, and vitality, of employees and co-workers	t(255)=2.223, p = 0.027
… provided me the skills to function as an employee in an international organisation	t(253)=2.492, p = 0.013
… provided me the skills to be a project leader or team leader	t(255)=4.853, p < 0.001
… provided me the skills to be a team player	t(255)=3.381, p = 0.001
… provided me the skills to be a manager	t(255)=3.379, p = 0.001
… provided me the skills to work independently in a professional environment	-
… provided me the skills to critically reflect on my work as a professional	-
… provided me the skills to work in an ethical and social responsible manner	-

The results show a significantly higher learning of professional competences in the test group, as compared to the control group. This result is reported for 10 out of 20 statements, for these statements the difference was highly significant. For the other statements, no significant or indicative differences were found.

Overall conclusion: The results show a significantly higher learning of professional competences in the IBS alumni. This result is reported for 10 out of 20 statements, for these statements the difference is highly significant. For the other statements, no significant or indicative differences were found between IBS alumni and alumni of Tilburg University.

APPENDIX IV
INTERNATIONAL AND INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES OF THE BBA IBMS 2004 FRAMEWORK

TABLE 12. THE COMPETENCE INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AWARENESS AT THE THREE LEVELS FOR THE IBMS FRAMEWORK (2004)

International Business Competences	*International Business Awareness*	The ability to outline and evaluate the key patterns and trends in international business activity, the different approaches to internationalisation, the influence of increasing globalisation, international trade systems and financial relations and the role of several principal institutions (e.g. WTO, EU, IMF, World Bank) on international business. He can assess the impact of these trends on his own activities as well on the business policy.
	Task and Context	The IBMS graduate should be a true generalist in the theory of international business. He needs to have a great awareness of the universal aspects of international business trends and the role of principal institutions. The IBMS-graduate is internationally oriented, shows a clear interest in international developments beyond the immediate scope of his own activities, reads specialist literature and is able to make a transparent synopsis of an international study. This should be combined with a broad application of knowledge, insight and skills and a multidisciplinary integration. With this knowledge and insight he will be able to attune his own activities and the business policy to the opportunities and threats in the international developments. His role will be that of an advisor.

Level	*Level 1*	The ability to research, describe and understand the key patterns and trends in international business, to identify the role and importance of MNEs and to explain the role of globalisation. The ability to examine the impact of governmental policies and practices on international trade and the role of the EU and other principal international institutions like WTO, IMF and World bank. The student has the legal knowledge to understand legal terminology and basic legal arguments. The student shows interest in international developments.
	Level 2	The ability to evaluate patterns and trends in international business, elaborate further on the theory and practice of international trade and financial markets. The ability to explain various methods to enter foreign markets, outline the arguments to support free trade, identify the sources of comparative and competitive advantage among nations. The student can research and assess political risks, economic variables and legal systems of foreign markets. The ability to make legal statements and support those statements with legal arguments. The student is aware of recent international developments in specific regions.
	Level 3	The ability to do an extensive research and to make a transparent synopsis of an international study. On this basis he can advise management on the opportunities and threats in the international legal and business environment. The student shows a clear interest in international developments beyond the immediate scope of his own activities and reads specialist literature on this topic. The ability to attune his own activities and those of the company to international trends.

TABLE 13. THE COMPETENCE INTERCULTURAL ADAPTABILITY AT THE THREE LEVELS OF THE IBMS FRAMEWORK (2004)

International Business Competences	*Intercultural adaptability*	The ability to explain the differences between national, organisational and occupational cultures and to outline strategies for adapting to these differences in e.g. human resources management, marketing and intercultural communication. The student can identify the relevant dimensions of cultures and has developed self-awareness of his own cultural background. He is able to adapt his behaviour to the standards in other cultures and can maintain an international network essential to his tasks.
	Task and context	The IBMS graduate should be aware of cultural differences, be able to identify relevant dimensions of culture, to develop a self-awareness of his own cultural background and be able to adapt his behaviour to a variety of situations. The IBMS-graduate will often work abroad or he will work with people from another cultural background. His tasks, whether those will be in general management or in key functional areas like marketing and finance, require a high degree of awareness of cultural differences and an ability to adapt his behaviour to the standards of another culture. His role will often be that of an ambassador for his company. He can maintain an international network essential to his tasks and to the company he works for.

Level	*Level 1*	The student is aware of cultural differences, can indicate if different behaviour could be based on difference in cultural background, shows interest in the cultural background of others and is aware of basic elements of his own cultural background He is aware of the role of an international network for himself and for the company.
	Level 2	The student can identify dimensions of culture (communication, time perspective, power, individualism etc.) within context. He has self-awareness of his own norms, values and behaviour and shows tact and understanding for others. He adapts his behaviour to the standards of the prevailing culture. He can indicate the importance of the viable international relations of a company within the total value chain.
	Level 3	The student can recognise and appreciate cultural differences in behaviour and values. He has developed an open attitude and is motivated to work abroad. He can make effective use of empathy, or 'frame of reference shifting', to understand and be understood across cultural boundaries. He can maintain an international network essential to his tasks and to the company.

An increasing number of degree programmes in Research Universities and Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) have an international focus. However, we know little about the effect of these programmes on the employment and employability of their graduates, whilst the demand for globally competent professionals is large.

This project sets out to investigate the extent to which the BBA International Business and Management (IBMS) curriculum prepares students for the international professional field. It addresses this major issue by attempting to answer three specific questions:

– What was the contribution of international student activities of the BBA IBMS curriculum to the development of relevant competences?
– To what extent did the BBA IBMS programmes provide students with the competences necessary to function in the international professional field?
– What was the employability of BBA IBMS graduates?

The people able to best address these questions are the alumni of these programmes. In this study we interviewed alumni who graduated between 2008 and 2014 from six IBMS programmes at UAS. Their qualification to be able to address these questions stemmed from their participation in an international programme, often supplemented by a study and/or work placement abroad, and their experience of the early career requirements of the professional field.

The study provides interesting and relevant outcomes for the IBMS curriculum and can serve as a pilot for a broader study on the BBA IBMS as well as for other programmes with an international focus.

© 2015, Centre for Applied Research on Economics and Management (CAREM)

Hogeschool van Amsterdam
Wibautstraat 3B
1091GH Amsterdam
www.hva.nl/carem
carem@hva.nl

ISBN 9789059729865

Recycled