International Business

National Qualifications Framework 2023
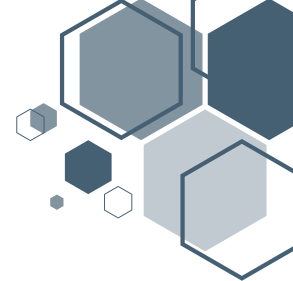
Prepared by:
S. Reeb-Gruber
P.C. van Gulik

Supported by:
P.H. Bulthuis
N.N. Kwanjai
B.J. Jonkergouw
J.W.M. Gregersen-Hermans
C.R. Pereboom

Profile, Programme Learning Outcomes and Process Background of the Bachelor of Business Administration Programme International Business
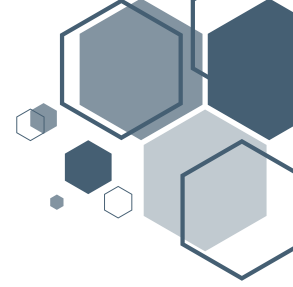
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Visual design by: A. Diedrichs

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2. Preface

Due to changes in the outside world, due to the request of the sector Hoger Economisch Onderwijs (HEO) and due to the end of the 6-year period of approval of the former National Qualifications Framework (abbreviated as Framework from now on), this new Framework was developed. This Framework for the International Business programme was developed by the National Platform of International Business programmes. This Framework is the successor of the first IB Framework that was established in 2017.

International Business is part of the domain Management. Currently around 16,900 students are studying International Business (IB) taught by over a thousand lecturers. No Associate Degree programme is directly related to IB. The Master International Business and Management is most closely aligned with the bachelor IB. IB has no specific majors registered.

We created this new framework for the IB programme with input from many international companies, lecturers and students from 13 partner universities (15 IB programmes). Through this process, we have developed a framework that aligns the programme with current international business practices and recent research insights. The new national IB programme framework serves three purposes. The framework:

1. provides a standardised structure for each individual University of Applied Sciences to ensure the quality of every IB graduate. The national IB platform has agreed that a programme that successfully achieves the described end qualifications will meet the required quality standards and produce graduates who can contribute to international business and society. At the same time, the framework allows each University of Applied Sciences to differentiate itself from other Universities of Applied Sciences that offer the same programme,

2. outlines what prospective employers can expect from an IB graduate,

3. provides prospective students with an overview of what they can expect when enrolling in an IB programme: a modern, English-taught business programme with an international classroom, ample opportunities for international experiences, and a strong focus on intercultural development and ethical values.

Developing this framework has been a truly collaborative effort, and we would like to express our gratitude to everyone involved. We are confident that this framework will inspire individual IB programmes to develop their curricula in a spirit of co-creation with their main stakeholders: professional practice, students, and staff.

National Platform International Business,

October 2023

3. Global Context

Global developments in the 21st century present a unique mixture of opportunities and challenges. While prosperity is on the rise, ecological, social, and economic issues are also escalating, leading to increasingly complex (international) business environments.
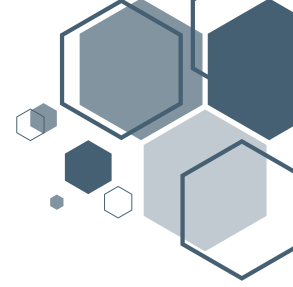In the current hyper-connected world, potential competitors are always present, and businesses must deliver with speed and accuracy to retain customers due to the ever-increasing purchasing power of consumers. However, this pressure can lead to blurred ethics, which is fuel for additional social, ecological, and economic challenges.

Given the role of corporations and governments in these challenges, distrust among consumers and the public towards them is increasing, particularly in the developed world. The result is economic instability, more bubbles and crashes, greater inequality, growing political instability, and more disruption in a globalised world, which only exacerbates the feelings of distrust.

Although the outlook may seem bleak, the phenomenon of globalisation, coupled with technological advancements presents ample opportunities for both individuals and businesses. The possibility for any connected business to access any market in the world provides for a much larger market and allows for hyper-differentiation. A niche that may not have allowed much growth in a national market now consists of many more potential consumers, users, and buyers in a globalised world. Businesses can develop more distinctive personalities, brands, and labels, and choose their target market more specifically than ever before. With the availability of vast amounts of data from anywhere in the world, businesses have a unique opportunity to understand and cater to their audiences better. Additionally, businesses can collaborate with partners more readily, creating network organisations that understand many local markets and bring diverse problem-solving to the table. Businesses can connect to a much larger pool of talent, giving them access to the best potential employees from anywhere around the world.

3.1 Digitalisation & technologisation

The fourth industrial revolution is upon us; technology is substantially changing our reality –economically, ecologically, culturally and socially. New technologies, such as robotics, virtual and augmented reality, cloud computing, artificial intelligence and the internet of things are blurring the boundaries between the physical, digital and biological spheres, and between sectors and industries. They make it possible for businesses to achieve a high degree of efficiency and to focus more on creating economic, ecological and social value simultaneously.

In every industry, digitalisation and technologisation are no longer optional or limited to frontrunners. They have become essential for businesses and enterprises across the entire value chain. Driven by the principles of people, planet, prosperity and profit, technology and digitalisation are transforming every aspect of business.

Apps, chatbots, virtual and smart applications, and 3D technology are enriching both the virtual and physical marketplaces. Furthermore, alongside the familiar analogue world, a larger and more immersive virtual world is emerging, known as the Metaverse. This opens opportunities for virtual products and services that do not rely on physical materials or production processes and physical boundaries, allowing new players to easily enter the market.

The technological and digital developments require new hybrid business and revenue models, continuous investment in innovation and datafication, and additional knowledge and skills from all employees. "One of the relevant skills crucial for future career success is the ability to work side by side with AI, machine learning and robotics. The future workplaces, regardless of which industry they are in, will eventually settle into intimate working relationships with AI technology.". The key to success lies not in the technologies themselves, but in innovating the business model using technology; it is the business model that creates value for the customer, the business and society, not the technology. It's expected that companies that embrace technology across processes will have the greatest impact improving sustainability.
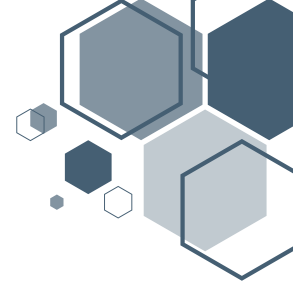
3.1.1 Data driven world
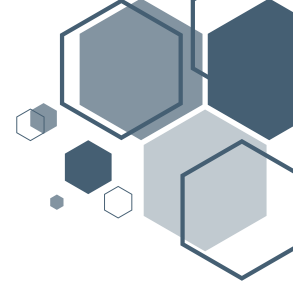
We have entered a world of collective diversity, or diverse collectivity; consumers (people) simultaneously want to be unique and part of a community of like-minded peoples. They do not want to be seen or approached as a 'group', do not want to be labelled by others, but create and look for labels to identify with. Customers now also expect companies to understand them in their full complexity, see them as unique individuals who can change their minds, and approach them seamlessly across all channels. Customers expect personalised experiences wherever and whenever they want them. However, this presents significant challenges for enterprises. Hyper-personalisation cannot be standardised and is therefore inefficient. Standardisation and efficiency are necessary for scalability and continuity.

In the dynamic 21st century, real-time market information, planning, budgeting, and on-demand reporting are crucial. Risks must be mitigated immediately, and opportunities must be seized without delay to ensure continuity. Companies strive to anticipate changes and take immediate action. Collecting, analysing, combining, and integrating the right data is essential for real-time market responsiveness and decision-making.

To effectively and efficiently meet consumer needs, companies must embrace the smart use of big data and digitalisation. Data analytics allows companies to gain deeper insights into their customers' behaviour and needs, enabling them to align products, concepts, and experiences at an almost individual level and reduce waste as a result of overproduction. This can even happen before the consumer is aware of a new need. Data analytics also facilitates more efficient and sustainable production, procurement, inventory management, distribution, and the prediction of market risks and turbulence. However, data has become so vast that it can no longer be collected and analysed solely by humans. Smart technologies, artificial intelligence, and machine learning applications are needed to handle this volume of data.

3.2 Environmental and social issues

The energy crisis and climate change have a considerable impact on international businesses. The depletion of natural resources is leading to soaring energy costs that could reduce transportation of goods and people globally. This may lead to more competition rather than cooperation. The dichotomy between short-term choices and actions, focused on maintaining current levels of happiness, prosperity, and possessions, versus long-term choices, aimed at preserving the environment, is already apparent.

Investors and consumers, having become more aware of the environmental and social impact of products, services and business operations, increasingly give preference to businesses with the right environmental and social credentials. They are demanding that businesses take real action to address environmental and social issues beyond the minimum requirements (for example fair remuneration and equality). Legislation is also increasingly demanding environmentally responsible business, with laws regarding the use of disposable plastics (e.g. packaging), recycling and reuse, waste management, CO_2 emissions and costs and reduction of energy use, among others. Before 2030, the EU will require companies to be more transparent about the reporting and accountability of their environmental footprint (CSRD). This requires that companies update their sustainability plans with clearer goals and actionable items with deadlines.
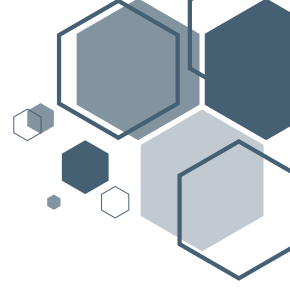
3.3 Geopolitical shifts

The congestion in the Suez Canal, the coronavirus pandemic, and the war in Ukraine have made it clear what the disadvantages are of a completely interconnected, globalised world. Supply chains can be completely disrupted by an event on the other side of the world, with significant negative consequences for production, distribution, and costs. These kinds of problems have direct implications for the profitability of companies. This leads to attention being paid to establishing regional supply chains (also in the context of climate issues), decentralised production centres, and diversifying suppliers. However, it also leads to a form of national protectionism and deglobalisation resulting in more domestic spending and a decrease in the market or market share of international companies without a physical presence in different countries.
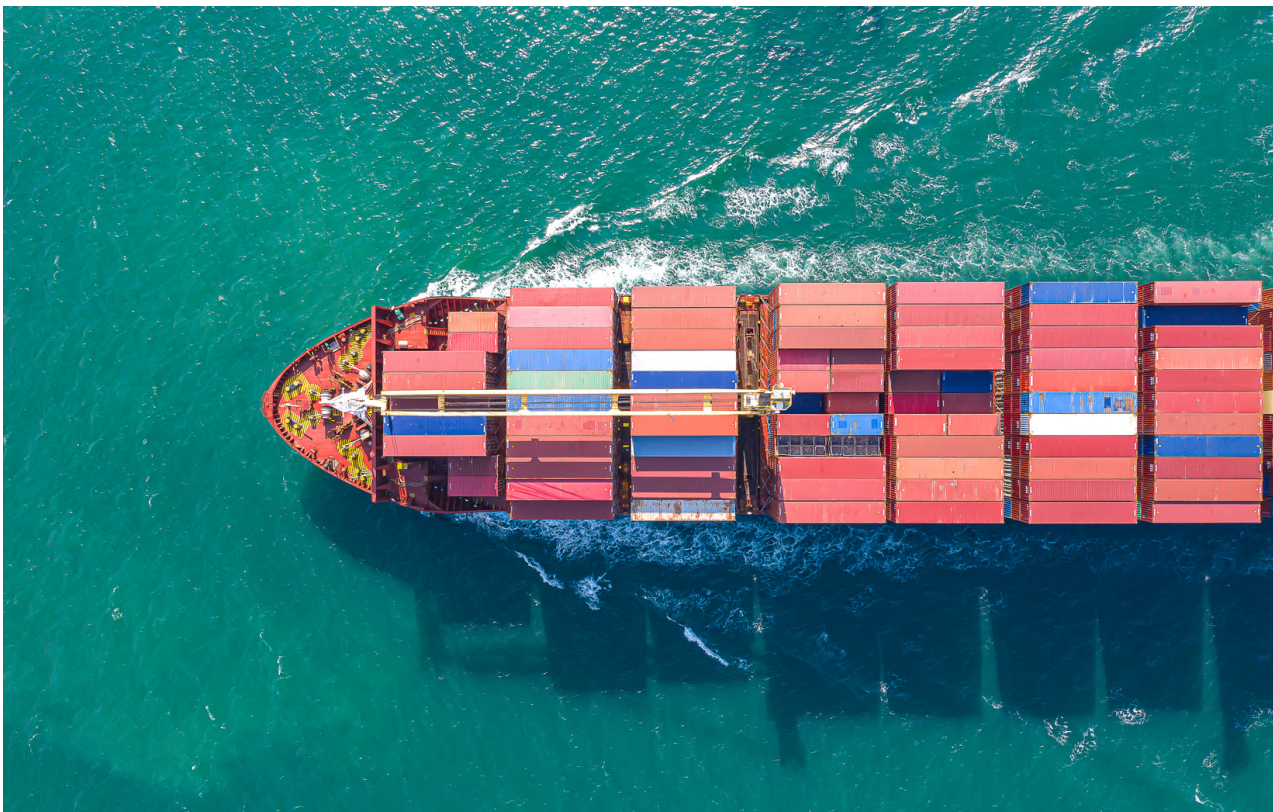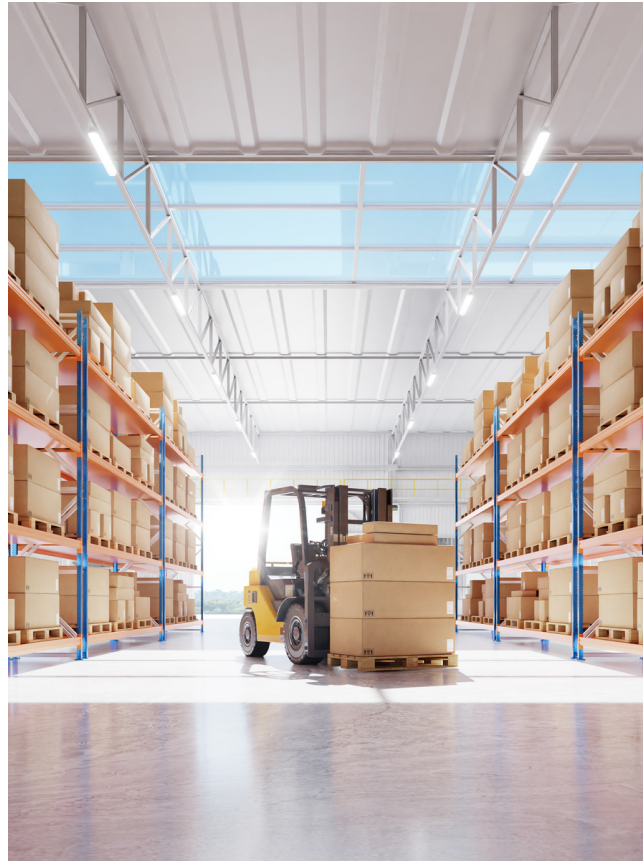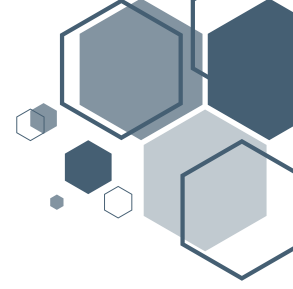
3.4 Conclusion

Changes in today's world are accelerating due to geopolitical developments, the climate crisis, digitalisation, technological developments, multi- and trans culturalism, demographic shifts and increasing global volatility and uncertainty. These factors have a major impact on regional and worldwide business and customers. Developing international business opportunities is both easier and more complex than ever before. In this light, it is important to develop and strengthen the relationship between international business practice, research, and education for the benefit of all stakeholders involved.

The international business arena IB graduates will enter in the next ten years is quite different from the one we've known in the past decades. Businesses will need to redefine and redesign themselves and their strategies to:

- truly work with a triple bottom line and take social, ecological and economic consequences into consideration in everything they do;
- create a new framework that integrates local, regional and global networks into a new international architecture of sustainability;
- acknowledge and have a profound understanding of the broader context;
- continuously innovate and refresh market offerings;
- disconnect from the frame of the old;
- deeply understand local contexts;
- utilise and create value from the vast amounts of available data;
- vastly shorten their decision-making cycles without compromising ethics and social responsibility.

In order to do this, businesses will need a new breed of international business professionals; individuals who are able to help organisations internationalise (more sustainably and responsibly) and thus cope with and flourish in a rapidly changing international business environment at a tactical and strategic level, with intercultural sensitivity.
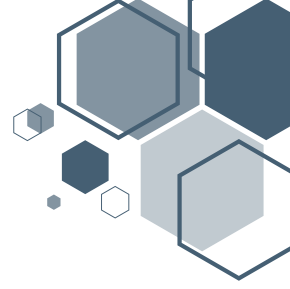
4. Perspective
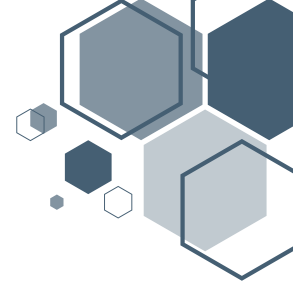
4.1 The IB Professional

> " It is not the strongest of the species that survives but the most adaptable. (Darwin) "

IB Professionals are experts in sustainable and responsible business internationalisation. They help businesses and organisations develop and conduct sustainable and responsible international activities, and thus cope with and flourish in a rapidly changing international business environment, with intercultural sensitivity.

In essence IB Professionals are responsible change consultants/managers regarding business internationalisation. They facilitate sustainable international (global) business development by identifying viable opportunities, recommending internationalisation strategies to utilise these opportunities (sustainably and responsibly) to create multi-sided value and contribute to the execution of these measures. In doing so, they are acutely aware of their global influence and the impact they can create regarding sustainable and socially responsible business.

Their strength is in fully immersing themselves in different local contexts, cultures and ecosystems, interacting locally, which allows them to add valuable in-depth local insights to the mix for good decision making in an international or other-national context. Their grasp of the impact of the characteristics of the local context on the business –be it strategy, marketing, HRM, finance, operations, supply chain management or ethics– provides decision makers with crucial information to do business in foreign markets in a responsive and responsible manner.

4.1 The IB Professional (cont.)
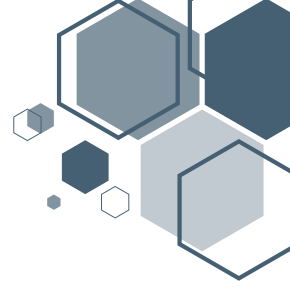
An important part of the IB Professional's job is to forge international partnerships and create bridges between cultures and contexts. They have an uncanny ability to understand and profile businesses (organisations), markets and cultures, approaching every situation from the perspective of the specific context. They can make creative combinations of their vast contextual knowledge –acquired through constant study and analysis of large amounts international data and local contexts– to solve issues or identify opportunities. 'People' and 'planet', regarded from the point of view of the specific context, are top of mind in everything they propose, without losing track of 'prosperity' and 'profit'.

Obviously, IB Professionals are travellers; they understand that in order to fully grasp a local context they have to become part of it, not study it from afar. They feel comfortable with an internationally mobile lifestyle, being cross-cultural individuals. IB Professionals have developed an identity that is rooted in people rather than places, which –together with their broad world view, deep cultural, ethical and moral awareness, and adaptive communication skills– allows them to adapt to and comprehend any environment fairly quickly and deal with changing dynamics.
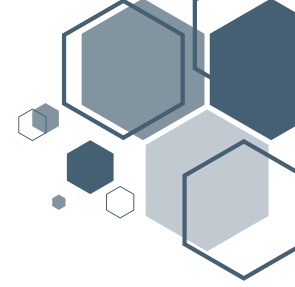
4.2 Characteristics of the IB Professional

Adaptive thinker	Curious and inquisitive	Global citizen	Open minded	Sensitive (to context)
Adventurous	Communicative ability across borders	Grit	Pragmatic	Strategic thinker
Agile	Creative	Gutsy	Pro-active	Team player
Analytical	Digitally (and device) savvy	Independent	Reflective	Third culture citizen
Appreciative of otherness	Empathetic	Intercultural intelligence	Resilient	Well-grounded
Confident	Entrepreneurial	Intrapreneurial	Responsible	World perspective
Connector and networker	Flexible	Investigative	Self-aware	…

5. Programme learning outcomes

The International Business Professional facilitates sustainable international (global) business development. They do so by:

1. defining international business opportunities and recommending possible strategies for the organisation to create sustainable multi-sided value for stakeholders (PLO1);
2. contributing to business (systems) transitions and transformations in order to optimise sustainable international business practices (PLO2);
3. cultivating and managing internal and external relationship with culturally diverse stakeholders in a responsible manner to achieve (mutual) business goals (PLO3).

To do this successfully, they need to:

4. manage themselves in a complex surrounding and develop their professionalism for the benefit of the organisation, the field of international business and themselves (PLO4).

What these PLOs entail in terms of what the IB Professional does and accomplishes (at the bachelor level, i.e. NLQF 6) is described below, including examples of professional deliverables they might produce.

The PLO descriptions consist of three inseparable components:

1. The title; a two- or three-word summary of the essence of the PLO (to facilitate referring to the PLO).
2. The core professional action / activity in one sentence (following the Tuning methodology).
3. The narrative describing what the PLO entails –in terms of tasks and activities– in more detail.

The three components should be seen as one whole; they make up the PLO together, the components have no meaning or value on their own.

5.1 PLO 1: International business opportunities

The IB professional defines international business opportunities and recommends possible strategies for the organisation to create sustainable multi-sided value for stakeholders.

IB professionals thoroughly investigate the internal and external environment of the organisation on an international scale. They actively look for and apply multiple perspectives and empathic skills to their research, observations, questionings, investigations and analyses, continuously postponing judgment. They collect data regarding trends and developments, the context, the market and the customer on an international scale, using appropriate current tools, including digital and technological ones. They translate these data into opportunities and threats for the organisation based on its characteristics, and leverage these with the organisation's strengths and weaknesses to determine possible strategies that create multi-sided value, in consultation and collaboration with experts from various disciplines. As IB professionals always consider social, ecological, ethical, economic and cultural aspects, they conduct impact analyses of the possible strategies both on the local (foreign) society and the organisation itself in order to determine which are viable, desirable and sustainable.

Examples[1] of professional deliverables related to PLO 1:
- Analysis[2]: market analysis, competitor analysis, trend analysis, (wicked) problem analysis, SWOT analysis, country/region analysis, cultural analysis, geopolitical analysis, macro-economic analysis.
- Evaluation: scenarios, impact analysis.
- Advice: business case, feasibility study, export plan, market entry recommendation, merger & acquisition recommendation, rebranding / extended branding recommendation, market strategy plan.

[1] The examples represent a variety of possibilities (for various levels of mastery), without assuming to be exhaustive.
[2] n.b.: 'analysis', 'evaluation' and 'advice' represent the purpose for which the deliverable is created and provide a possible scaffolding for the programmes (i.e.: analysis usually comes before advice, although analyses can be complex too and advices can be relatively simple/basic, depending on the situation and content involved.
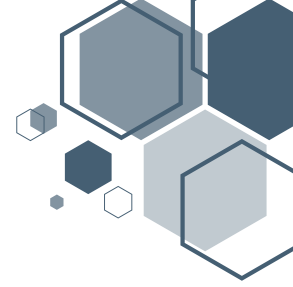
5.2 PLO 2: Business transformation

The IB professional contributes to business (systems) transitions and transformations in order to optimise sustainable international business practices.

IB professionals make recommendations as to how the organisation should be redesigned to successfully do business on an international scale in a responsible manner. They analyse operational / tactical processes and determine which organisational elements are incompatible with doing business on an international scale in a sustainable, responsible, efficient and effective manner. They formulate viable, feasible and compliant recommendations for organisational change in consultation and collaboration with experts from various disciplines, considering appropriate current digital and technological solutions. After identifying the necessary changes and getting approval from decision makers, IB professionals design, plan, coordinate and/or monitor the operational implementation process of these changes, in terms of people, processes and information, making effective use of current digital and technological tools.

Examples[3] of professional deliverables related to PLO 2:
- Analysis[4]: financial analysis, supply / value chain analysis, organisational scan, capabilities analysis.
- Advice: business case, business process redesign, project plan, risk management plan, organisational change plan, feasibility study.
- Execution: coordinate projects, monitor progress (and carry out interventions).

[3] The examples represent a variety of possibilities (for various levels of mastery), without assuming to be exhaustive.
[4] n.b.: 'analysis', 'advice' and 'execution' represent the purpose for which the deliverable is created and provide a possible scaffolding for the programmes (i.e.: analysis usually comes before advice, although analyses can be complex too and advices can be relatively simple/basic, depending on the situation and content involved.

5.3 PLO 3: Relationship management

The IB professional cultivates and manages internal and external relationships with culturally diverse stakeholders in a responsible manner in order to achieve (mutual) business goals.

IB professionals build and maintain bridges, and closely collaborate with stakeholders from diverse cultural and professional backgrounds using appropriate strategies. They create trust and rapport with stakeholders being inclusive and empathic, taking multiple (cultural) perspectives and interests into consideration and by applying context-appropriate intercultural and interpersonal communication skills. They conduct (research) activities and initiatives to identify and select internal and external (networks of) stakeholders, such as partners, suppliers, distributors, team members, experts, customers, for their organisation on an international scale. They profile stakeholders to determine the appropriate approach, relationship management, communication and/or negotiation strategy for them based on the context.

Their operational responsibilities include negotiating, bargaining, connecting, lobbying, networking and collaborating with stakeholders from different cultures and disciplines, and representing their organisation / team in internal and external networks, events and meetings. IB professionals coordinate implementation processes, collaborating and communicating with and managing diverse stakeholders effectively, using appropriate current digital and technological tools. When needed, they manage conflicts in a constructive and respectful way.

Examples of professional deliverables related to PLO 3:
- Analysis[5]: account analysis, stakeholder analysis, critical incident analysis, business culture analysis, (international) network analysis.
- Advice: account management plan, business development road map, stakeholder interest map, communication strategy/plan, event planning, strategic alliance proposal, sales proposal, collaboration proposal, partner strategy, relationship management strategy, negotiation strategy, approach strategy for culturally diverse (potential) partners/stakeholders.
- Execution: choose and apply context-appropriate intercultural and interpersonal communication approach, build and manage international relationships, dealing / collaborating with / manage diverse stakeholders (including customers / clients), dealing with conflicts of interest, negotiation, represent organisation, e-mails, presentations, conversations.

[5] n.b.: 'analysis', 'advice' and 'execution' represent the purpose for which the deliverable is created and provide a possible scaffolding for the programmes (i.e.: analysis usually comes before advice, although analyses can be complex too and advices can be relatively simple/basic, depending on the situation and content involved.
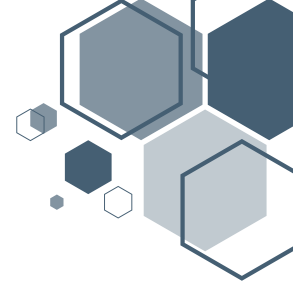
5.4 PLO 4: Self-management

The IB professional manages themselves in complex surroundings and continuously develop their professionalism for the benefit of the organisation, the field of international business and themselves.

IB professionals have a clear view of what they want to achieve –personally and professionally– and why. They understand their own needs, characteristics, values, strengths and weaknesses, and circle of influence. They set a clear path for themselves to utilise these effectively and responsibly to achieve their goals and ambitions in a rapidly changing world. IB professionals continuously monitor their (learning) actions, activities and results. They regularly ask the people around them for feedback and feedforward. They reflect on the moral, ethical and social appropriateness and efficiency and effectiveness of their actions, activities and results before, during and after performing them. They use these reflections to systematically improve their performance and develop themselves further. They are aware of their surroundings –how they are influenced by them and vice versa– and make responsible and effective choices regarding when and how to (not) adapt to the context or circumstances.

IB professionals are capable of taking on different roles in –multicultural and multidisciplinary– teams; leading in some and being lead in other instances, actively taking part in different stages of the process. They embrace the unknown and have the stamina and resilience to deal with uncertainty, discomfort, failure, resistance, delays and changing dynamics of the international arena. They monitor and maintain their mental and physical fitness and adopt stress-reduction strategies to cope with the pressures of their job.

Examples of professional deliverables related to PLO 4:
- Analysis[6]: insights (reflection) own capabilities / personal values / motivation / preferred styles / strengths and weaknesses, report on successes and mistakes and how to learn from them, analysing received feedback.
- Execution: dealing with setbacks, giving and receiving feedback, asking for help (formulating help/support questions), cross own boundaries / step out of comfort zone, take responsibility, take on different roles in teams (lead / follow).
- Creation: personal branding report, personal development plan.

[6] n.b.: 'analysis', 'execution' and 'creation' represent the purpose for which the deliverable is created and provide a possible scaffolding for the programmes (i.e.: analysis usually comes before advice, although analyses can be complex too and advices can be relatively simple/basic, depending on the situation and content involved.

5.5 Robust & purposeful - from 24 to 4 PLOs
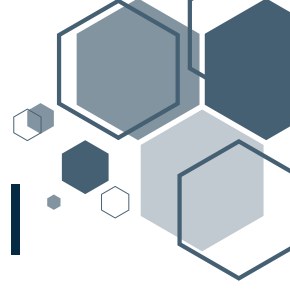
In the new PLOs, rather than focusing first on the tools and skills an International Business Professional uses, we set out to define what distinguishes IB professionals in what they do, in how they add value to the businesses that employ them. This resulted in four integrated, multidisciplinary, PLOs representing the specific professional activities an IB professional performs that are equal in aggregate level and distinctive from each other (limited interdependence). These activities are distinctive from those of other business professionals and require specific knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. These are not necessarily unique to IB professionals, but their purpose and specific ways in which they are integrated are.

The result of this approach is a more robust framework. What IB professionals do –their specific added value to businesses– is not subject to change as much over the years as the tools they use to perform their professional activities or even the context in which they do so. As a result, we believe we created a new framework that is durable and will not need to be completely overhauled in four (or less) years' time.

The feedback of the work field and the lecturers is that the new framework resonates well with academic mandates and professional needs, with the reduced number and more holistic definition. This allows more room for programmes to create their own "couleur locale". It is up to the programmes to choose if they want to specify sub-PLOs.

A cross reference between the former 24 PLOs and the current 4 PLOs is present in "Appendix A - Confrontation matrix IB National Framework 2017".

6. Educational context of IB
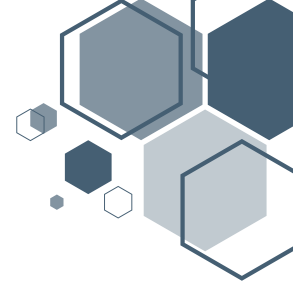
International Business looks at the Netherlands from a global perspective instead of the other way around. Netherlands is a small country that is strongly influenced by international developments. Therefore, it is important that it maintains good international contacts. The Netherlands are not isolated but are intertwined nationally and internationally to a great extent. That is why:

- we purposefully recruit a diverse group of national and international students, a heterogeneous group. The compulsory reflection of this diversity in the classroom creates an international learning community (**international classroom**). This is actively supported by a **cultural and national diverse staff**. Inclusion due to this diversity is very important.
- **English is the lingua franca** for our programmes.
- an important 21st-century skill for our IB students is **intercultural competence**.
- learning activities are strongly focused on internationalisation at home and abroad. Students are required to spend **30 EC** (or more) **of the programme abroad**, to support the immersion.

The International Business Programme offers students the opportunity to gain knowledge and experience in a real-life international classroom setting, engaging with students and staff from various cultural backgrounds, but also in real-life practice settings, through student exchanges with partner universities and placements at international companies and organisations.

By cultivating a strong focus on topics within the economic domain in the curriculum, as well as on sustainability and personal (inner) development, the programme challenges IB students to look at international business and themselves from multiple perspectives simultaneously. Crossovers with other programmes within or outside the economic sector, are required by PLO 3 and can be executed in the professional contexts of PLOs 1 and 2.

The end levels are in line with NLQF6. The relation between these NLFQ6 levels, the Dublin Descriptors and the four PLOs is presented in the confrontation matrix in "Appendix B - Confrontation matrix NLQF 6 and Dublin Descriptors". The integration of the 21st century skills in the PLOs is visualised in "Appendix C - 21st Century Skills".

# 6.1 How to prepare IB-students for the jobs of 2030

In line with the opinion of the work field the programmes stress the importance of a comprehensive approach to education in international business that prepares students for a complex and ever-changing business environment. One of the main themes is the significance of cultural awareness and intercultural communication in international business settings. The key takeaways include:
- approach cultural differences with curiosity and a willingness to learn;
- develop relationships and trust with colleagues and clients from diverse cultural backgrounds;
- intercultural and interpersonal communication skills and comprehension of communication styles and norms in different cultures are critical;
- cultural awareness must be an ongoing process, given that cultures are continuously evolving and transforming.

The international business programmes focus on developing students' soft skills, such as communication and collaboration, in addition to technical and business knowledge. Practical experience –through internships, projects and direct contact with businesses (mentoring, master classes/guest lectures)– and professional development are embedded in the programme. We embrace the importance of diversity and inclusion in the workplace and the need for international business professionals to be adaptive and resilient in the face of uncertainty and change.

International Business highlights the importance of international business professionals' proficiency in intercultural and interpersonal communication skills and cultural sensitivity. Intercultural and interpersonal communication skills and cultural understanding are critical for effective communication, building relationships, avoiding misunderstandings and capitalising on diversity. The IB programmes provide cross-cultural training and opportunities to study abroad and gain practical and personal experiences in different cultural contexts.

The programmes ensure that IB graduates can take business decisions and actions that are ethical, responsible and sustainable, while considering the wider international and intercultural context in our fast-changing and increasingly volatile world. They provide a coherent learning experience and ensure IB graduates can solve business problems in an integrated way. To enable this **the professional context is leading in education** resulting in integration of subjects within courses.
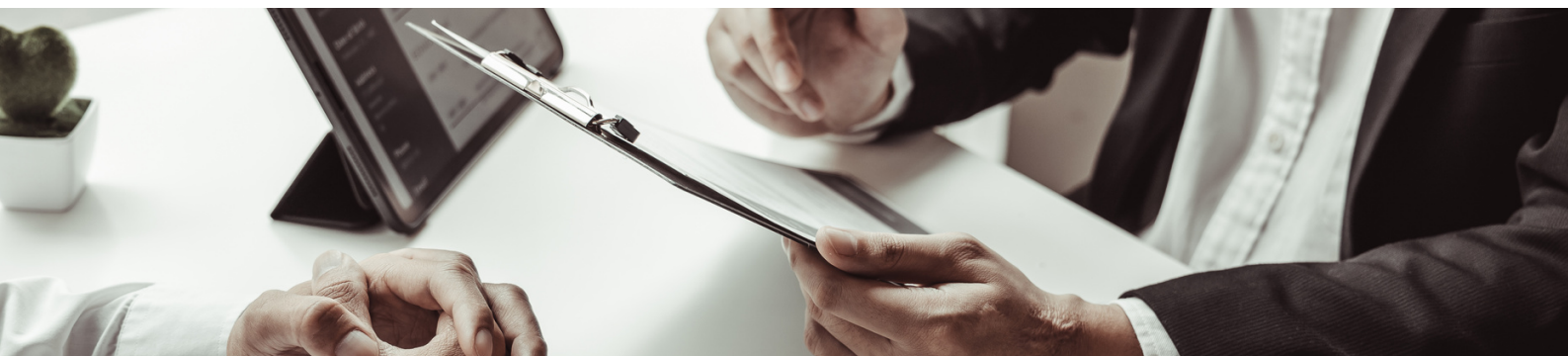
6.1.1 Internationalisation

This framework states that the IB professional is an expert in sustainable and responsible business internationalisation. The Cambridge dictionary defines internationalisation as "the action of becoming or making something become international" and that is exactly how the term should be interpreted in this framework, with the 'something' in the definition being an organisation.

This means that the IB professional helps organisations create business between parties across borders and cultures. 'Business' does not necessarily imply commerce; NGO's, governments and other types of organisations also (have a need to) do business on an international scale. 'Business' should therefore be interpreted widely as in, 'having mutually beneficial relationships', whether these are for commercial (profit) purposes or more social ones.

6.1.2 Intercultural & interpersonal communication skills

In this framework we refrain from using the term 'foreign language skills' and instead refer to 'intercultural and interpersonal communication skills'. The reason is that the term 'language' has a strong connotation towards 'foreign vocabulary and grammar' for many people. Even though having foreign language proficiency in terms of vocabulary and grammar is a necessary tool for an IB professional, as it makes it easier to truly connect to people, create trust and rapport with people, it is not enough. Intercultural and interpersonal communication for the IB professional refers to something broader than 'language': understanding unexpected and unfamiliar behaviour of others and responding effectively and appropriately. This is not just about words, but also (and perhaps more so) about culture, tonality, meaning, habits/traditions, stance and expression (i.e. non-verbal communication) and way of communicating (e.g. sign language), styles, etc.. Therefore, to prevent too narrow interpretations, we decided to forego the use of the term 'foreign language skills' and use 'intercultural and interpersonal communication skills' instead, in an attempt to be more all-encompassing.
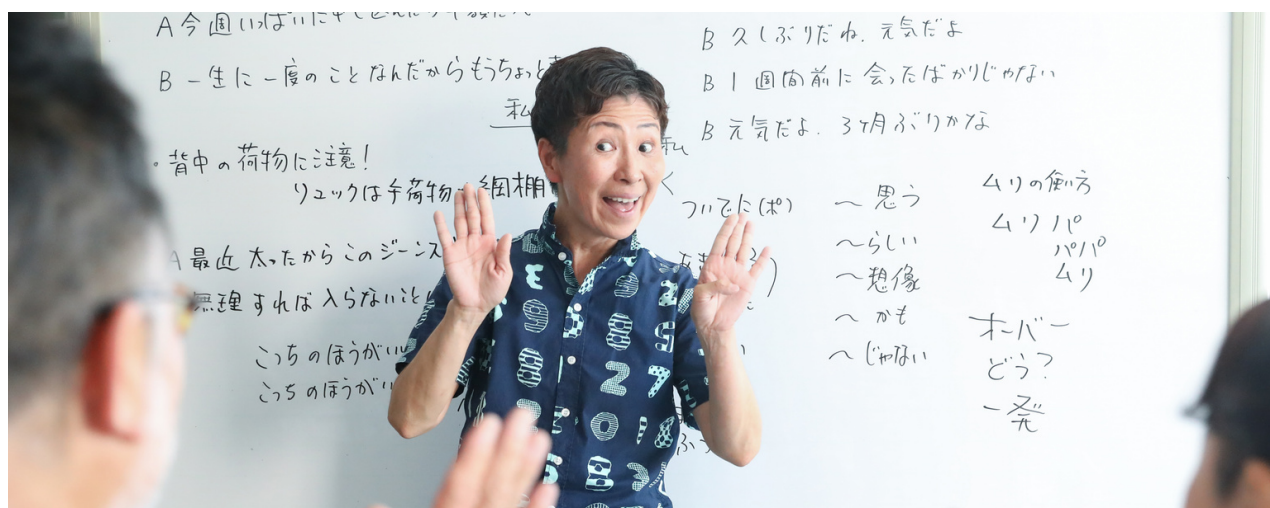
6.1.3 Sustainable

The term 'sustainable' is used several times in this framework. We use this term in its two meanings[7]:

1. able to continue over a period.
2. working with nature rather than against to repair and regenerate the environment (people, community, society, economy and the planet).

The first definition implies that the IB professional proposes solutions and strategies that are durable, i.e. that consider the longer term, rather than just 'quick wins'. The second definition implies that the IB professional considers the impact of their solutions and strategies on people, communities, economies and ecology in the markets involved, society and the planet. That they select those solutions and strategies that create a positive impact (i.e. multi-sided value creation) or those solutions and strategies that have the least negative impact.

'Sustainable' in this framework therefore refers to environmental, social and governance metrics (ESG, related to SDGs), and includes corporate social responsibility, ethical practices, regenerative and restorative practices, contributing positively, durability and transformation skills for sustainable development (Inner Development Goals (IDGs)).

[7] Both taken from the Cambridge dictionary

6.1.4 Research

The 'HEO wendbare professional' profile states that the recently graduated heo-professional has investigative abilities to achieve innovation in products, services and processes (both in the private and public sector) through reflection and evidence-based practice. To this end the heo-professional should have acquired knowledge of and experience with methodologies of practice-oriented research. A recently graduated heo-professional should be capable of reflecting on research and research results.

This implies that the IB professional can use existing research (evidence-informed); scrutinising, interpreting and analysing results and formulating conclusions as to how this affect or can be utilised in their organisation (regarding internationalisation). It also implies the IB professional can conduct practice-oriented research themselves, to "collect and analyse data, identify and analyse complex and unpredictable problems in professional practice and solve these in a tactical, strategic and creative way by selecting and using data" (NLQF 6 problem-solving skills and information skills). Research, for the IB professional, is a means, not and end. The research they conduct and information or data they collect is meant to find answers for their organisation, not to create new general (scientific) knowledge.
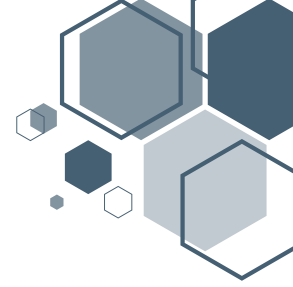
6.1.4 Research (cont.)

From this we deduce that the crucial research skills an IB professional needs to possess are:

- formulating the right questions (also the questions and assumptions behind the questions);
- looking for and selecting the right sources to find existing data / information;
- selecting the appropriate (basic) tools, methods and sources to collect primary data;
- applying basic primary data collection tools;
- selecting the appropriate (basic) tools and methods to analyse the data collected;
- clustering, analysing and synthesising data and information and drawing conclusions through sound reasoning;
- briefing researchers and/or data analysts for more advanced data collection and analysis;
- presenting research findings to audiences of laymen and knowledgeable people (in written and oral form);
- distinguishing between facts and opinions;
- Reflecting on the process and results of research activities.

The IB professional engages in research(-related) activities to:

- identify internationalisation opportunities (PLO1)
- identify necessary (tactical / operational) organisational change for internationalisation (PLO2)
- identify suitable stakeholders for internationalisation (PLO3)
- determine appropriate relationship management, communication and/or negotiation strategies with (potential) stakeholders from diverse backgrounds (PLO3)
- get to know and improve themselves (PLO4)

7. Body of knowledge, skills and attitude

The Body of Knowledge, Skills and Attitude (BoKSA) is derived from the PLOs; what knowledge, skills and attitudes does the IB professional need to perform the activities and tasks described in the PLO and achieve the intended outcome? After careful consideration it was decided to separate the BoKSA from the framework itself. The rationale to do so originates in the fact that a BoKSA is an instrument that should:

- stay aligned with changing circumstances (which might be more often than a national framework cycle of six years),
- give space to programmes to define their own set of knowledge, skills and attitude based on the PLOs and their own 'couleur locale',
- not be a "tick the box" instrument.

The need for a BoKSA is apparent. But the need to avoid a fixed set of knowledge, skills and attitudes for the period this Framework is valid, is also apparent.

The Framework is rigid and static and therefore only elements that are robust enough should be part of it. The National Platform will be in charge of the "fluid" BoKSA and will adjust it whenever necessary.

8. AuCom model

In order to make a justified distinction between competence levels, a model was developed in which the dimensions complexity and autonomy are related: the AuCom model (2011, Revised 2021). The AuCom model distinguishes five competence levels. The level is determined by the combination of:

- the degree of autonomy of the student or professional while performing tasks
- the complexity of the tasks and context

In the former Framework this model was already implemented and therefore the programmes have experience using it in their curricula.

The cohesion between the dimensions complexity and autonomy determines the competence level, after all: the more complex tasks a person can carry out, and the more autonomous he/she is when doing so, the higher the competence level.

The combination of the level of autonomy and complexity results in the five competence levels mentioned above. Level A represents the lowest level and level E the highest level.

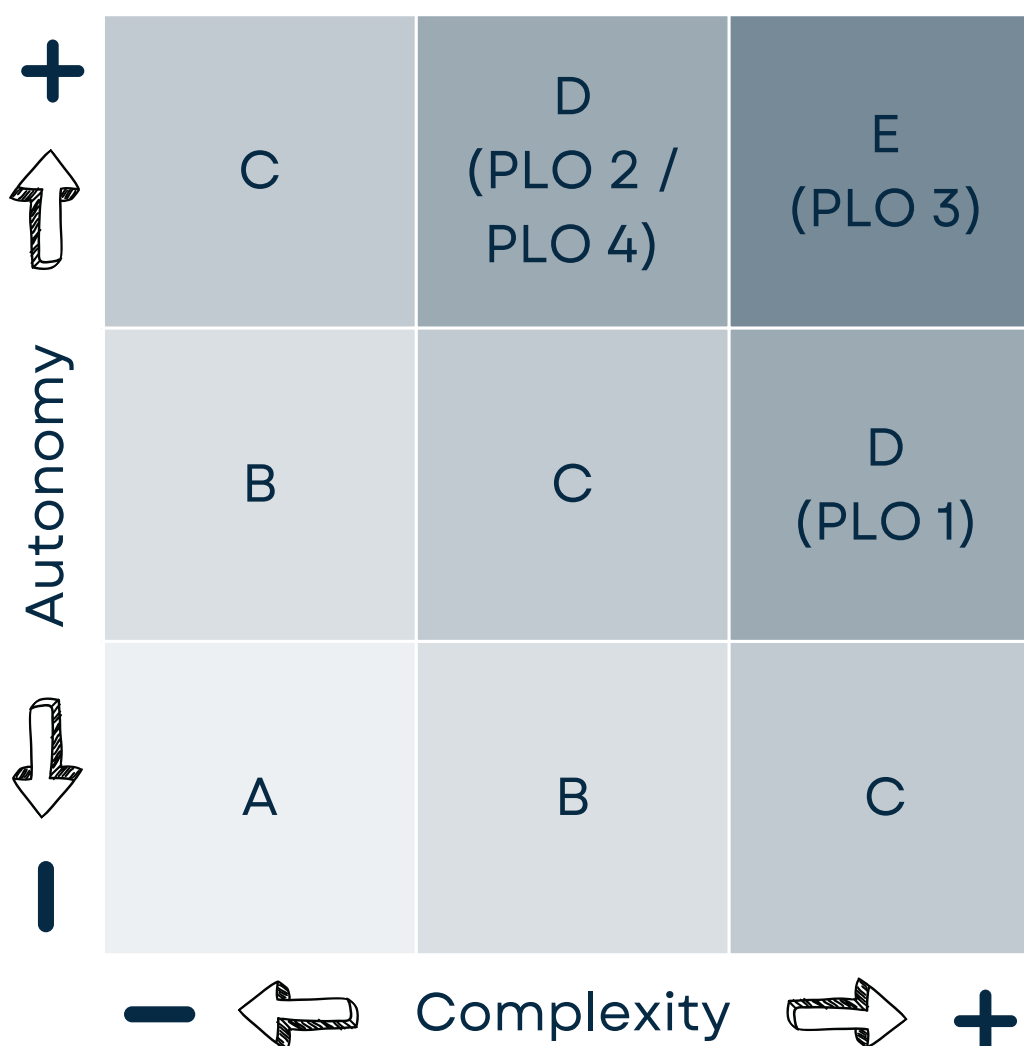|		
C	D (PLO 2 / PLO 4)	E (PLO 3)
B	C	D (PLO 1)
A	B	C

Figure 1: Level of PLO's plotted in the AuCom model

8. AuCom model (cont.)

The competence levels of the IB PLOs are D and E:

- **PLO 1** (end level D)
  - Complexity HIGH: large amounts of data regarding unknown, non-transparent and dynamic topics that needs to be analysed and compiled into unpredictable answers, unstructured tasks that have no standard procedures / approaches that can be followed, advanced specialist and interdisciplinary knowledge required, impact of (the result of the) task is big (future of the organisation), several parties as well as political sensitivities need to be taken into account.
  - Autonomy AVERAGE: the IB professional does not manage/lead people (leadership is not the same as leading people), which is a characteristic of high autonomy.

- **PLO 2** (end level D)
  - Complexity AVERAGE: part of the problem is known, part of it needs to be analysed, standard approaches/procedures available that may need to be tweaked, specialist knowledge and skills required, but not at advanced (expert) level, situation is transparent (own organisation), multidisciplinary.
  - Autonomy HIGH: coordinating implementation processes involves managing/leading people, strategic, advisory, organisational, managerial or policy defining role.

- **PLO 3** (end level E)
  - Complexity HIGH: dealing with people, building and maintaining relationships is dynamic, unpredictable and non-transparent, standard approaches/procedures do not apply, impact of (results of the) task is big, advanced (expert) knowledge necessary.
  - Autonomy HIGH: coordinating implementation processes involves managing/leading people, strategic, advisory, organisational, managerial or policy defining role.

PLO 3 is the PLO that is most distinctive in knowledge and skills for an IB Professional, compared to other business professionals (marketing, business administration, supply chain management etc.), so it stands to reason that this PLO would need to be developed at the highest level of complexity and autonomy, making the IB Professional a true expert.

- **PLO 4** (end level D)
  - Complexity AVERAGE: assignments/tasks related to one topic (self), tasks are structured, 'problems' are partially known and need to be analysed, standard procedures/approaches apply, but need tweaking to suit 'self', impact of the tasks is reasonably significant.
  - Autonomy HIGH: manages self fully autonomously.

Appendix D: "IB PLOs 2023 and AuCom" shows the level indicators of each IB PLO at the end level and suggestions for intermediate levels building up to that end level. Further explanation about the AuCom model itself can be found in Appendix E: "The AuCom model".
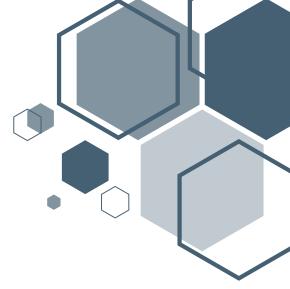
9. Accountability

9.1 The overall set-up

Criteria for the set-up of this new IB National Framework were derived from the National Platform, the exploration and sector plan HEO and formed the boundaries of the designing process of new Framework. The Framework is the foundation of the curricula of all International Business programmes. It is up to the programmes to develop a curriculum that enables the student to obtain the end level requirements.

Criteria

- Professional business context
- Change agent
- Programme specific branding
- International classroom
- 21st century skills
- Cross-over
- Digital thinking
- Integration
- Robust
- Flexible learning paths
- Cross reference former PLOs

Framework (diploma)
4 - 6 years

- 4 PLOs
- AuCom / NLQF6
- Integrated International classroom
- Half a year abroad
- Immersion

IB Programme
Yearly

Course (how /what)

- PLO and sub-PLOs
- Actual IB work field situation
- Actual IB professional product

Non-compulsory advisory BoKSA
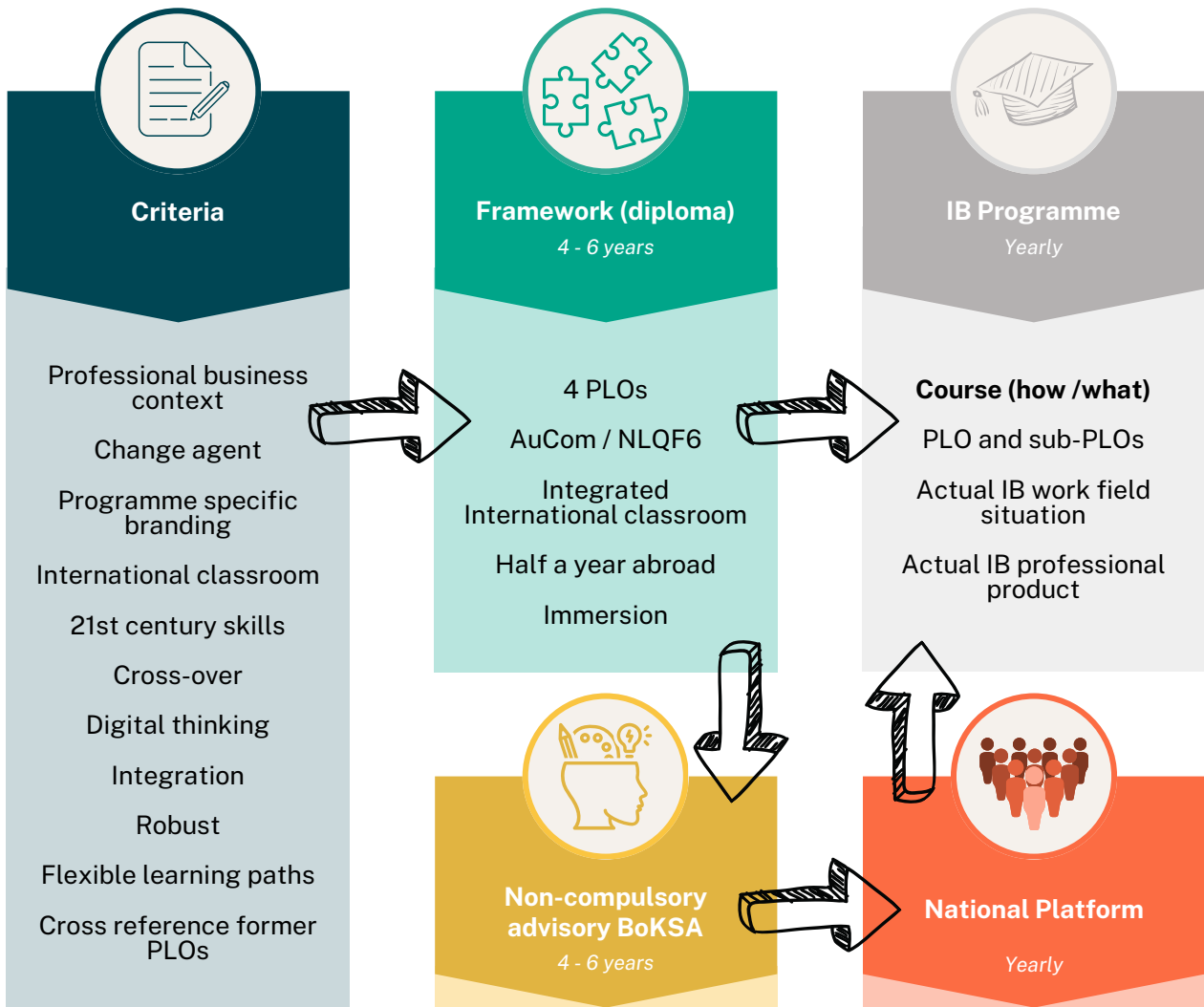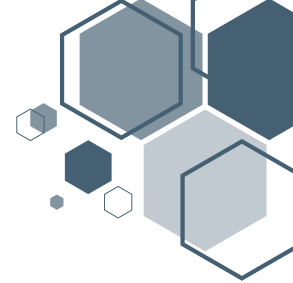*4 - 6 years*

National Platform
Yearly

Figure 2: The overall set-up of creating the new framework

9.2 The process of the re-evaluation

In 2016 The National Platform, with the help of the members, developed the first IB national framework. By law, national frameworks have to be re-evaluated every six years. But not only the law urges for a re-evaluation. The changes we experienced due to Covid-19 and other global developments ask for a re-evaluation. The National Platform therefore initiated the process of re-evaluation of the International Business Profile including the PLOs in 2022.

During this re-evaluation the following aspects were taken into account:
- The use of PLOs is still a foundation principle of the IB education, but:
  - with more integration,
  - and less in number.

- The assignment was to create a robust and futureproof framework via a more holistic approach that:
  - keeps a balance between (transferable) generic learning outcomes with professional learning outcomes,
  - formulates learning outcomes in such manner that individual programmes can make programme-specific choices based on specialisations,
  - allows for the possibility of having flexible paths to obtain the PLOs as requested by the Ministry of Education,
  - emphasises learning outcomes related to cultural diversity,
  - positions the IB student as business maker/developer and change agent,
  - allows for crossovers between the economic domains as well as with programmes outside the economic sector,
  - clarifies the position of IB in relation to the other programmes within the upcoming domain Management by emphasising the IB programme's international orientation.

The overall process of the re-evaluation to ensure that the data are collected and analysed in a systematic, reliable and valid way is shown in the figure beneath.

9.2 The process of the re-evaluation (cont.)

Step One

Desk research (section 9.2.1)

Step Two

Focus group meetings (students, lecturers, alumni & work field - section 9.2.2)

Step Three

Development of PLOs by experts (section 9.2.3)

Step Four

Academic consideration (section 9.2.4)

Step Five

Feedback work field (section 9.2.5)

Step Six

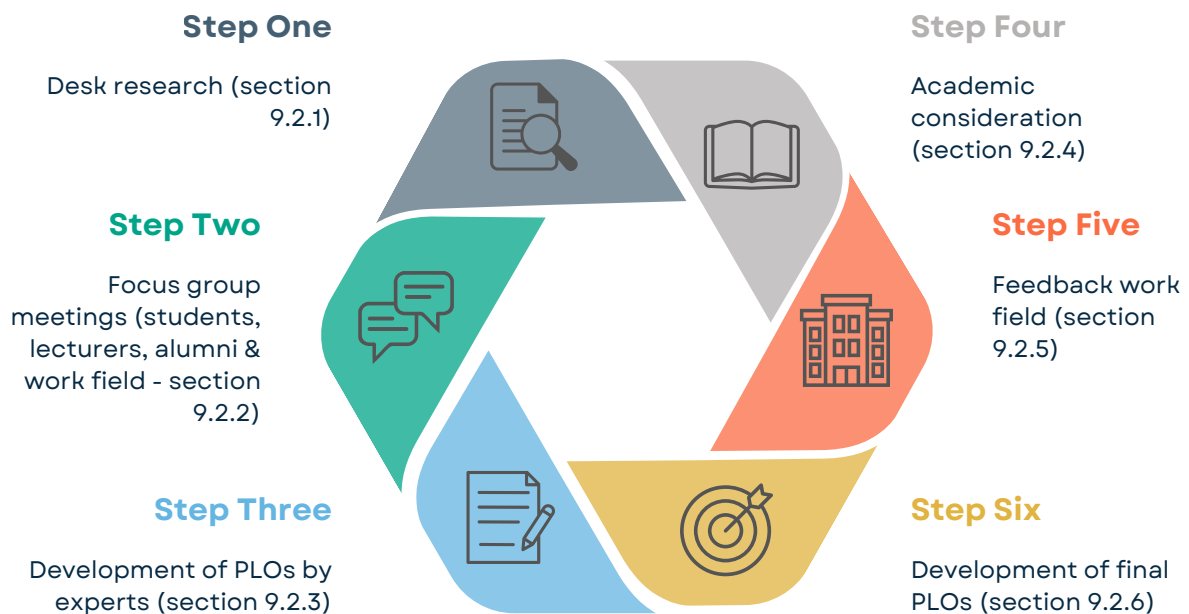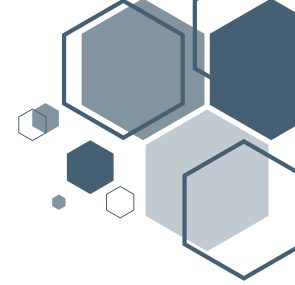Development of final PLOs (section 9.2.6)

Figure 3: Showing the re-evaluation process of the IB Framework

In short: Involved were 12 universities with in total 14 IB-programmes representing around 17.500 students.

1. We determined what an IB graduate is able to do (knowledge skills attitude) and we create an overview how IB programmes stay attuned to the developments in the external (business world).
2. We gathered feedback from stakeholders – students, alumni, employers leading to a desired IB graduate profile and opportunities to improve alignment with external developments.

After that we develop the intended programme learning outcomes grounded in the IB graduate profile(s), which we validate by the work field.

9.2.1 Desk research

The purpose of the desk research was to collect background information to strengthen the rationale behind the new PLOs. Papers, articles, researches and overviews on national, regional economics, alumni characteristics and vision on pedagogy are processed, analysed and summarised per university. In total 74 documents are processed.

Overview number of processed documents per category:

Category	Number
Economics	26
Partners	9
Pedagogy	28
Alumni	11

The results formed one of the four sources used by the developers of the PLOs.

9.2.2 Focus group meetings with stakeholders

Via Focus group meetings, in-depth interviews are conducted with four groups of stakeholders: students, lecturers, alumni and companies. The purpose of the interviews was to:

1. identify leading trends and developments in the field of international business as experienced and envisioned by the stakeholder;
2. investigate the views of the stakeholder regarding the professional contexts, tasks and responsibilities of IB professionals;
3. determine what characteristics, knowledge, skills, attitudes, capabilities stakeholder believe to be crucial for IB graduates to thrive in and add value to international businesses.

The interviews all had the same set-up and set of questions asked. For each of the stakeholders a profile was given. Each of the programmes choose between 5 to 10 representatives per stakeholder they found suitable.

For example for the work field the following criteria were in place.

Inclusion criteria:
- SMEs, large enterprises in NL or abroad conducting international business, employing IB (IBMS/IBL/TMA) bachelor graduates from the UAS (job, internship)
- multinationals in NL or abroad, employing IB (IBMS/IBL/TMA) bachelor graduates from the UAS (job, internship)
- ≥3 years' experience with international business
- supervisors/managers of IB professionals

Exclusion criteria:
- no recent (3 years) experience with IB bachelor graduates from the UAS
- less than 3 years experience with international business
- not supervising/managing IB professionals
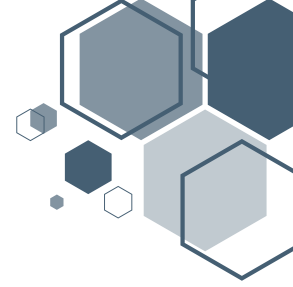
9.2.2 Focus group meetings with stakeholders (cont.)

Overview of held interviews and number of participants:

Stakeholder	Number of interviews	Number of participants
Lecturers	11	62
Work field	8	50
Alumni	8	37
Students	9	39

In total 36 interviews are held. The interviews are all recorded. The recordings are transcribed which led to the amount of 800 pages interview. Each interview is processed, analysed and summarized. Thereafter all summaries of the interviews per stakeholder group are processed, analysed and summarised into one overall document per stakeholder group. The detailed and overall summaries formed one of the four sources used by the developers of the PLOs.

Extra input is given via a seminar held in Amsterdam on April 13th attended by 100 people being a mix of lecturers, lectors, managers and educational experts. In 10 groups they gave input, made minutes which minutes are summarised into one overall document. The minutes and the overall summary formed one of the four sources used by the developers of the PLOs.

9.2.3 Development of the PLOs

The set-up

The actual design of the PLOs was done by educational experts, lecturers and lectors chosen by the programmes, under the supervision of an expert in creating PLOs and profiles. To make things work, the 11 experts were split into two groups:

- The working group: This group consisted of five participants. This group laid the foundation for PLOs, wrote the rationale and developed additional matrices for cross-references such as the former PLOs, the NLQF 6 and the 21st century skills.
- The advisory group: This group consisted of six participants. This group reviewed work done by the working group. The working group processed this feedback.

To have sufficient back-ground information, both groups made use of the same for four sources:
1. The outcomes of the desk research (74 documents)
2. The outcomes of the interviews with the focus groups (36 interviews / 800 pages)
3. The themes from the sector plan HEO and Verkenning
4. The requirements and wishes from the National Platform IB (April 13th)

During the whole process it was made very clear that the starting point is the information revealed in the four sources. The working group held 11 meetings, the advisory group 2 meetings.
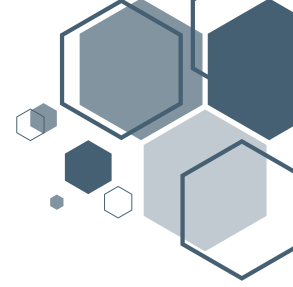
9.2.4 Academic consideration

The results of the working and advisory group has been topic of two session with lecturers and lectors. An instruction and additional documents were send upfront to study.

During the meeting first an explanation was given about the process followed and the before the participants discussed the new PLOs in groups of 10 to 12. During the last part the groups presented their findings and a plenarily discussion was held.

An estimate of 90 lecturers and lectors participated. The findings are processed by the developers of the PLOs.
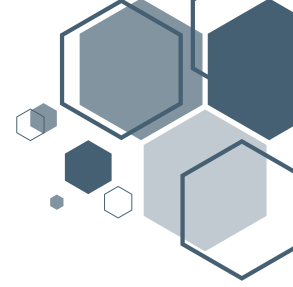
9.2.5 Feedback work field

The last feedback was given by the members of the work field. Representatives of a mixture of 16 mostly large companies reflected on the definition of the IB-er and the 4 PLOs:

- Does the definition describes enough in depth what an IB-er is and does?
- Does the definition distinguishes enough?
- Do the PLOs sufficiently cover the mean features of the professional context of the IB-er?

On all three questions the work field was in approval. Some had additional comments which have been processed. The fact that the BoKSA is present but not as a compulsory part of this Framework is asked and approved.
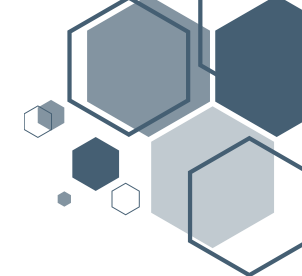
9.2.6 Development of final PLOs

The members of the working group finalised the PLOs after the last feedback of the work field. The set-up of the Framework is based upon the structure mentioned in the sector plan Heo. The National Platform has approved the International Business Framework.

Appendix A - Confrontation matrix IB National Framework 2017

The overview below shows the evolution of the 2017 IB PLOs into the 2023 IB PLOS. The purpose of this overview is to facilitate programmes in replacing the PLOs in their existing curricula, without necessarily redesigning these curricula to fit the IB PLOs 2023. The purpose is NOT to interpret the 2023 IB PLOs in terms of the 2018 IB PLOs. The meaning and 'content' of the 2023 IB PLOs is described in the narratives in chapter 5 of this document; these describe hoe the 2023 PLOs should be interpreted.
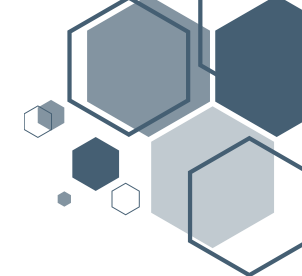
IB PLOs 2018	Place in IB PLOs 2023
WT1 Critical thinking Use the process of thoughtful evaluation to deliberately formulate a reasonable conclusion	**PLO1**: collect relevant data and translate into opportunities and threats, leverage these with organisation's strengths and weaknesses to determine possible strategies, determine viability, desirability and sustainability of strategies. **PLO2**: analyse processes to determine incompatibilities with doing business on an international scale, formulate viable, feasible and compliant recommendations for change. **PLO3**: identify and select (networks of) (potential) stakeholders, determine appropriate relationship management and/or negotiation strategy. **PLO4**: reflect on effectiveness of their actions, activities and results.
WT2 Innovation & Creativity Create innovative ideas in a changing business environment in a systematic fashion	**PLO1**: determine possible strategies. **PLO2**: formulate viable, feasible and compliant recommendations for change. **PLO3**: determine appropriate relationship management and/or negotiation strategy. **PLO4**: utilise own needs, characteristics, values, strengths and weaknesses, and circle of influence effectively and responsibly to achieve their goals and ambitions in a rapidly changing world
WT3 International Business Awareness Analyse patterns in global macro-economic factors and policies that drive international trade and business development	**PLO1**: investigate the internal and external environment of the organisation on an international scale.

Appendix A - Confrontation matrix IB National Framework 2017 (cont.)

IB PLOs 2018	Place in IB PLOs 2023
WW4 International Business Communication Communicate (business) messages effectively and persuasively using advanced English to an (un)informed audience	**PLO1**: consult and collaborate with experts. **PLO2**: consult and collaborate with experts. **PLO3**: negotiate, bargain, lobby, network with stakeholders from different cultures and disciplines, communicate with diverse stakeholders, create trust and rapport by applying context-appropriate intercultural and interpersonal communication skills.
WW5 Foreign language Optional: use one or two additional languages to facilitate international business	**PLO3**: create trust and rapport by applying context-appropriate intercultural and interpersonal communication skills.
WW6 Collaboration Collaborate effectively with different kinds of stakeholders in different cultural, organisational and political landscapes to contribute to achieving agreed goals	**PLO1**: consult and collaborate with experts. **PLO2**: consult and collaborate with experts. **PLO3**: build and maintain bridges, and closely collaborate with stakeholders from diverse cultural and professional backgrounds, manage conflicts in a constructive and respectful way. **PLO4**: capable of taking on different roles in a (multicultural and multidisciplinary) team.
WW7 Management of information as digital citizen Produce management information from various data sources in an international business environment	**PLO1**: collect data regarding trends and developments, the context, the market and the customer on an international scale. **PLO2**: analyse (operational / tactical) processes and determine which organisational elements are incompatible with doing business on an international scale responsibly, efficiently and effectively, monitor the implementation process. **PLO3**: conduct (research) activities to identify and select potential stakeholders on an international scale, profile stakeholders. **PLO4**: regularly ask the people around them for feedback and feedforward.

Appendix A - Confrontation matrix IB National Framework 2017 (cont.)

IB PLOs 2018	Place in IB PLOs 2023
LW8 Personal & Professional Development – reflection Express reflections on one's personal development with the aim of personal growth	**PLO4**: reflect on the appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness of their actions, activities and results before, during and after performing them, use these reflections to systematically improve their performance and develop themselves further.
LW9 Personal & Professional Development – unfamiliar context Respond appropriately to an unfamiliar, or unexpectedly changing, business environment	**PLO4**: are aware of their surroundings –how they are influenced by them and vice versa– and make responsible and effective choices regarding when to (not) adapt to the context or circumstances, embrace the unknown and have the stamina and resilience to deal with uncertainty, discomfort, failure, resistance, delays and changing dynamics of the international arena, adopt stress-reduction strategies to cope with the pressures of their job.
LW10 Ethical responsibility Formulate one's own position concerning ethical and social responsibility in a professional environment	N.B.: not just own position concerning ethical and social responsibility, but making ethical and responsible recommendations and acting ethically and responsibly. **PLO1**: always consider social, ecological and economic aspects in order to determine which strategies are viable, desirable and sustainable. **PLO2**: make recommendations as to how the organisation should be redesigned to successfully do business on an international scale in a responsible manner, determine which organisational elements are incompatible with doing business on an international scale responsibly, formulate compliant recommendations for change. **PLO4**: utilise own needs, characteristics, values, strengths and weaknesses, and circle of influence responsibly, make responsible and effective choices regarding when to (not) adapt to the context or circumstances.

Appendix A - Confrontation matrix IB National Framework 2017 (cont.)

IB PLOs 2018	Place in IB PLOs 2023
LW11 Intercultural Proficiency – mitigate cultural differences Mitigate the pitfalls of cultural differences in business and social contexts	**PLO1**: apply multiple perspectives and empathic skills to their research, observations, questionings, investigations and analyses, continuously postponing judgment. **PLO2**: analyse (operational / tactical) processes and determine which organisational elements are incompatible with doing business on an international scale responsibly, efficiently and effectively. **PLO3**: build and maintain bridges, and closely collaborate with stakeholders from diverse cultural and professional backgrounds using appropriate strategies, profile stakeholders to determine the appropriate approach, relationship management and/or negotiation strategy for them based on the context, create trust and rapport by being sensitive to 'the other', taking multiple (cultural) perspectives and interests into consideration, being inclusive and empathic, manage conflicts in a constructive and respectful way. **PLO4**: understand own values and utilise these effectively and responsibly, are aware of their surroundings –how they are influenced by them and vice versa– and make responsible and effective choices regarding when to (not) adapt to the context or circumstances.
LW12 Intercultural Proficiency – willingness to work with other cultures Display willingness to work with people from other cultures and to work in countries with different cultural backgrounds	**PLO1**: determine possible strategies in consultation with experts from various disciplines. **PLO2**: formulate recommendations for change in collaboration with experts from various disciplines. **PLO3**: build and maintain bridges, and closely collaborate with stakeholders from diverse cultural and professional backgrounds using appropriate strategies, networking with stakeholders from different cultures and disciplines, coordinate the implementation process, collaborating and communicating with and managing diverse stakeholders. **PLO4**: are capable of taking on different roles in a (multicultural and multidisciplinary) team.
LW13 Intercultural Proficiency – intercultural communication Use appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication in an intercultural setting	**PLO1**: actively look for and apply multiple perspectives and empathic skills to their research, observations, questionings, investigations and analyses. **PLO3**: create trust and rapport by being sensitive to 'the other', taking multiple (cultural) perspectives and interests into consideration, being inclusive and empathic and by applying their intercultural and interpersonal communication skills.

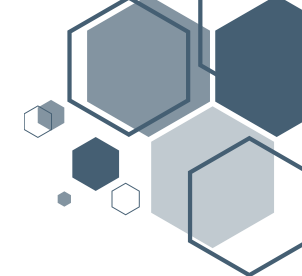# Appendix A - Confrontation matrix IB National Framework 2017 (cont.)

IB PLOs 2018	Place in IB PLOs 2023
LW14 Intercultural Proficiency – effect of culture on business Assess the effect of cultural differences on organisational behaviour and strategic choices	**PLO1**: actively look for and apply multiple perspectives to their research, observations, questionings, investigations and analyses, conduct impact analyses of the possible strategies both on the local (foreign) context and the organisation itself in order to determine which are viable, desirable and sustainable. **PLO2**: analyse (operational / tactical) processes and determine which organisational elements are incompatible with doing business on an international scale responsibly, efficiently and effectively. **PLO3**: determine necessary and desired characteristics of potential stakeholders and identify parties that meet these, profile stakeholders to determine the appropriate approach, relationship management and/or negotiation strategy for them based on the context, taking multiple (cultural) perspectives and interests into consideration, being inclusive and empathic.
TWM15 Marketing – marketing plan Develop a well-founded marketing plan to support the creation of value for international customers	N.B.: not a marketing plan, but (possibly) marketing, (re)branding and entry strategies. **PLO1**: translate data regarding trends and developments, the context, the market and the customer on an international scale into opportunities and threats for the organisation based on its characteristics, and leverage these with the organisation's strengths and weaknesses to determine possible strategies that create multi-sided value.
TWM16 Marketing – sales Use appropriate sales techniques in support of durable customer relationships	**PLO3**: negotiating, bargaining, lobbying and networking with stakeholders from different cultures and disciplines, and representing their organisation / team in internal and external networks, events and meetings.

Appendix A - Confrontation matrix IB National Framework 2017 (cont.)

IB PLOs 2018	Place in IB PLOs 2023
TWM 17 Marketing – digital marketing Incorporate developments of the digital landscape in a marketing strategy	N.B.: incorporate developments of the digital landscape not just in a marketing strategy, nut all solutions and activities. **PLO1**: collect data on an international scale using appropriate current (digital) tools. **PLO2**: formulate viable, feasible and compliant recommendations for change considering appropriate current digital and technological solutions, design, plan, coordinate and monitor the implementation process of these changes, in terms of people, processes and information, making effective use of current digital tools. **PLO3**: coordinate the implementation process, collaborating and communicating with and managing diverse stakeholders, effectively using appropriate current digital tools
TWM 18 Finance – evaluate financial performance Evaluate financial performance or the organisation from different stakeholders' perspectives	N.B.: not the general financial performance of the organisation, but financial implications and feasibility of recommendations. **PLO1**: conduct impact analyses of the possible strategies both on the local (foreign) context and the organisation itself in order to determine which are viable, desirable and sustainable. **PLO2**: formulate viable, feasible and compliant recommendations for change.
TWM 19 Finance – financing possibilities Recommend financing possibilities in a dynamic international environment	N.B.: not financing possibilities, but financial implications and feasibility of recommendations. **PLO1**: conduct impact analyses of the possible strategies both on the local (foreign) context and the organisation itself in order to determine which are viable, desirable and sustainable. **PLO2**: formulate viable, feasible and compliant recommendations for change.
TWM 20 Operations & SCM – evaluate processes Evaluate operations processes within and between organisations	**PLO2**: analyse (operational / tactical) processes and determine which organisational elements are incompatible with doing business on an international scale responsibly, efficiently and effectively.

Appendix A - Confrontation matrix IB National Framework 2017 (cont.)

IB PLOs 2018	Place in IB PLOs 2023
TWM 21 Operations & SCM – manage processes Manage operations processes within and between organisations	N.B.: not general operations processes, but project processes. **PLO2**: design, plan, coordinate and monitor the implementation process of these changes, in terms of people, processes and information. **PLO3**: coordinate the implementation process, collaborating and communicating with and managing diverse stakeholders effectively. **PLO4**: taking on different roles in a (multicultural and multidisciplinary) team; leading in some and being lead in other instances, actively taking part in different stages of the process
TWM 22 Organisation & People – draft strategic cycle Draft the strategic cycle of (part(s)) of the organisation (process and content)	**PLO2**: make recommendations as to how the organisation should be redesigned to successfully do business on an international scale in a responsible manner, formulate viable, feasible and compliant recommendations for change.
TWM 23 Organisation & People – assess impact of change Assess the impact of change on the organisation	N.B.: not just on the organisation, also on the (local) environment. **PLO1**: always considering social, ecological and economic aspects, they conduct impact analyses of the possible strategies both on the local (foreign) context and the organisation itself in order to determine which strategies are viable, desirable and sustainable. **PLO2**: formulate viable, feasible and compliant recommendations for change.
TWM 24 Business Research Analyse a complex business problem in an international business setting with use of adequate research design, resulting in evidence-based feasible solutions	**PLO1**: thoroughly investigate the internal and external environment of the organisation on an international scale, collect data regarding trends and developments, the context, the market and the customer on an international scale, conduct impact analyses of the possible strategies both on the local (foreign) context and the organisation itself in order to determine which are viable, desirable and sustainable. **PLO2**: analyse (operational / tactical) processes and determine which organisational elements are incompatible with doing business on an international scale responsibly, efficiently and effectively. **PLO3**: conduct (research) activities and initiatives to identify and select (potential) internal and external (networks of) stakeholders on an international scale, profile stakeholders.

Appendix B - Confrontation matrix NLQF 6 and Dublin Descriptors

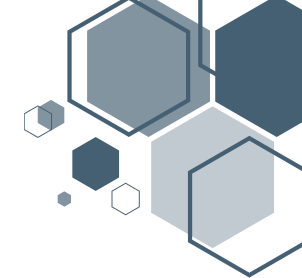| NLQF 6 descriptors[8]	Dublin Descriptors[9]	PLO 1: International business opportunities	PLO 2: Business transformation	PLO 3: Relationship management	PLO 4: Self-management
Context: An unknown but changeable living **and/or** working environment, also international.		X	X	X	X
Knowledge: • Possesses advanced, specialised knowledge of, and critical insight into, theories and principles of an occupation, knowledge domain and/or broad field of science. • Possesses broad, integrated knowledge and understanding of the scope of the most important fields and boundaries of an occupation, knowledge domain and/or broad field of science. • Possesses knowledge and understanding of some important present-day issues, topics and specialties related to an occupation, knowledge domain and/or broad field of science.	**Knowledge and understanding**: • Possesses demonstrable knowledge of, and insight into, a subject area, building on and exceeding the level achieved in secondary education. • Generally, functions at a level that includes aspects for which knowledge of the latest developments in the subject area – supported by specialised handbooks– is required.	X	X	X	X

Appendix B - Confrontation matrix NLQF 6 and Dublin Descriptors (cont.)

NLQF 6 descriptors	Dublin Descriptors	PLO 1: International business opportunities	PLO 2: Business transformation	PLO 3: Relationship management	PLO 4: Self-management
Skills:					
Application of knowledge: • Reproduces, analyses and applies the knowledge, also in different contexts in a way that demonstrates a professional and or scientific approach to the occupation and or knowledge domain. • Applies specialised skills, among which critical analytical skills, to the results of applied research. • Completes with guidance successfully applied research based on methodological knowledge. • Develops and deepens arguments. • Evaluates and combines knowledge and insights of a specific domain critically. • Signals the limitations of his or her knowledge of the professional practice **and/or** of the existing knowledge in the knowledge domain, and takes action to address this. • Analyses critically and carries out complex professional **and/or** scientific tasks.	**Applying knowledge and understanding**: • Is able to apply his/her knowledge and insights in such a way that it demonstrates a professional approach to his/her work or profession. • Possesses competencies regarding the construction and elaboration of arguments and for solving problems in the subject area. **Making judgments**: Is able to collect and interpret relevant information (mostly regarding the subject area) in order to form / make judgments that also includes considerations regarding relevant social, societal, academic or ethical aspects.	X	X	X	X

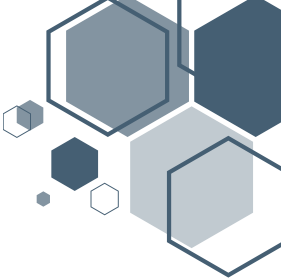# Appendix B - Confrontation matrix NLQF 6 and Dublin Descriptors (cont.)

NLQF 6 descriptors	Dublin Descriptors	PLO 1: International business opportunities	PLO 2: Business transformation	PLO 3: Relationship management	PLO 4: Self-management
	Skills:				
Problem solving skills: Identifies and analyses complex and unpredictable problems in professional practice and/or in the knowledge domain and solves these problems in a tactical, strategic and creative way by selecting and using data.	**Applying knowledge and understanding**: • Is able to apply his/her knowledge and insights in such a way that it demonstrates a professional approach to his/her work or profession. • Possesses competencies regarding the construction and elaboration of arguments and for solving problems in the subject area. **Making judgments**: Is able to collect and interpret relevant information (mostly regarding the subject area) in order to form / make judgments that also includes considerations regarding relevant social, societal, academic or ethical aspects.	X	X	X	

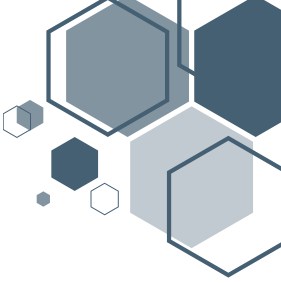# Appendix B - Confrontation matrix NLQF 6 and Dublin Descriptors (cont.)

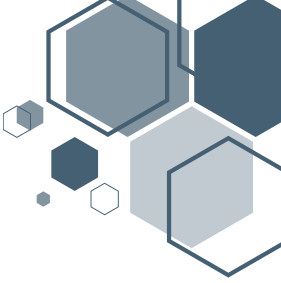| NLQF 6 descriptors	Dublin Descriptors	PLO 1: International business opportunities	PLO 2: Business transformation	PLO 3: Relationship management	PLO 4: Self-management
Skills:					
Learning and development skills: Realises personal development on one's own initiative, by reflecting on and evaluating personal (learning) results.	**Learning skills:** Possesses that learning skills necessary to embark on continuing education that assumes a high level of autonomy.				X
Information skills: Critically collects and analyses in a responsible way broad, in-depth and detailed professional and/or scientific information on a limited range of basic theories, principles and concepts of and related to the occupation and or knowledge domain, as well as limited information on some important current issues, topics and specialties related to the occupation and/or knowledge domain and presents this information.	**Making judgments:** Is able to collect and interpret relevant information (mostly regarding the subject area) in order to form /make judgments that also includes considerations regarding relevant social, societal, academic or ethical aspects.	X	X	X	

Appendix B - Confrontation matrix NLQF 6 and Dublin Descriptors (cont.)

NLQF 6 descriptors	Dublin Descriptors	PLO 1: International business opportunities	PLO 2: Business transformation	PLO 3: Relationship management	PLO 4: Self-management
Skills:					
Communication skills: • Communicates in a targeted way with peers, colleagues, supervisors and/or relevant others, specialists and non- specialists, supervisors and clients, appropriately to the scientific and professional community, using conventions which are relevant. • Applies communication to the objective and the target group.	**Communication skills**: Is able to convey information, ideas and solutions to an audience consisting of specialists and non-specialists.	X	X	X	

# Appendix B - Confrontation matrix NLQF 6 and Dublin Descriptors (cont.)

NLQF 6 descriptors	Dublin Descriptors	PLO 1: International business opportunities	PLO 2: Business transformation	PLO 3: Relationship management	PLO 4: Self-management
Responsibility and independence: • Works with peers, colleagues, specialists and non-specialists, supervisors and/or relevant others, in an unknown but changeable living and or working environment, also international. • Carries responsibility for the results of own activities, work and/or study and for the work results of others. • Shares responsibility for the management of unpredictable processes and professional development of people and groups. • Collects and interprets relevant data with the objective of forming an opinion based on considerations of relevant social, professional, scientific and ethical aspects.	**Making judgments**: Is able to collect and interpret relevant information (mostly regarding the subject area) in order to form / make judgments that also includes considerations regarding relevant social, societal, academic or ethical aspects.	X	X	X	X

Appendix C - Confrontation matrix 21st century skills

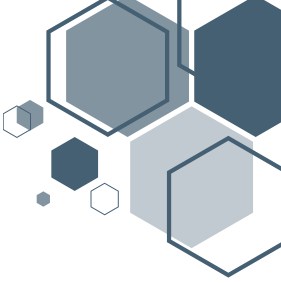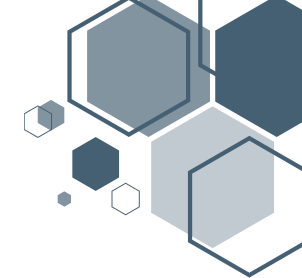| 21st century skills	PLO 1: International business opportunities	PLO 2: Business transformation	PLO 3: Relationship management	PLO 4: Self-management
Creativity and innovation	X	X	X	X
Critical thinking, problem solving, decision making	X	X	X	X
Communication	X	X	X	
Collaboration (teamwork)	X	X	X	X
Information literacy	X	X		
ICT literacy	X	X	X	
Citizenship – local and global			X	X
Life and career				X
Personal & social responsibility – including cultural awareness and competence	X	X	X	X
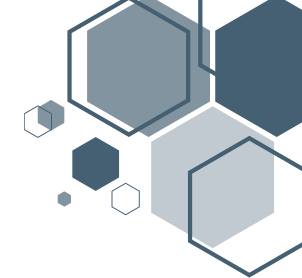
Appendix D –
IB PLOs 2023 and AuCom

The table below shows the end level in terms of complexity and autonomy for the IB PLOs and suggestions for the intermediate and lowest level. Below the table we provide a rationale for these levels based on the PLO descriptions. The selection of the levels is based on the descriptions in the general AuCom model (see appendix E – The AuCom model).

PLO	End level (graduation) – fixed	Intermediate level – suggestion	Lowest level – suggestion
PLO 1: International business opportunities	**Complexity high, autonomy average (D):** • Collects data regarding future trends and developments (forecasting) • Investigates the internal organisation environment and determines strengths and weaknesses • Collects data about multiple new and unknown contexts, markets or customers on an international scale • Translates data into opportunities and threats for the organisation and leverages these with the strengths and weaknesses • Determines possible strategies in consultation and collaboration with experts from various disciplines • Conducts impact analyses of the possible strategies on the context and the organisation and proposes viable, desirable and sustainable strategies to pursue	**Complexity and autonomy average (C):** • Collects data regarding current and expected trends and developments (forecasts by others) • Investigates parts of the internal organisation environment based on a general 'problem' / assignment and determines possible strengths and weaknesses • Collects data about a new and unknown context, market or customer based on a general 'problem' / assignment and determines possible strengths and weaknesses • Translates data into opportunities and threats for the organisation and leverages these with the strengths and weaknesses as part of a multidisciplinary team • Conducts impact analyses of given possible strategies and determines their viability, desirability and sustainability	**Complexity average, autonomy low (B):** • Collects data regarding current trends and developments with guidance and under supervision • Determines the relevance of current trends and developments for the organisation, with guidance and under supervision • Collects data about familiar and unfamiliar –but transparent– international/foreign contexts, markets or customers on based on a specific and clear assignment/instruction (e.g. 'conduct a market analysis of region X for product Y') as part of a multidisciplinary team, under supervision • Determines opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses for the organisation (no confrontation matrix) • Conducts an impact analysis of a given possible strategy to determine its viability and sustainability

Appendix D –
IB PLOs 2023 and AuCom (cont.)

PLO	End level (graduation) – fixed	Intermediate level – suggestion	Lowest level – suggestion
PLO 2: Business transformation	**Complexity average, autonomy high (D):** • Analyses multiple operational / tactical processes In conjunction with each other • Determines which organisational elements are incompatible with doing business on an international scale, responsibly, effectively and efficiently • Formulates viable, feasible and compliant recommendations for organisational change in consultation and collaboration with experts from various disciplines • Designs, plans, coordinates and/or monitors the implementation process of changes in terms of people, processes and information	**Complexity and autonomy average (C):** • Analyses several operational / tactical processes based on a general 'problem'/assignment • Determines possible bottlenecks in the processes for doing business on an international scale, responsibly and effectively • Proposes feasible and compliant process improvements in consultation and collaboration with experts from various disciplines • Contributes to the design, planning and/or monitoring of the implementation of approved process improvements	**Complexity average, autonomy low (B):** • Analyses one or several operational/tactical processes based on a specific and clear assignment/instruction, as part of a multidisciplinary team, under supervision • Determines possible bottlenecks in the processes for doing business on an international scale responsibly, with guidance and under supervision • Analyses the feasibility and compliance of process improvements or recommendations for uncomplicated organisational changes, based on a specific and clear assignment/instruction as part of a multidisciplinary team, under supervision • Contributes to the planning of the implementation of approved process improvements

PLO	End level (graduation) – fixed	Intermediate level – suggestion	Lowest level – suggestion
PLO 3: Relationship management	**Complexity high, autonomy high (E):** • Conducts (research) activities and initiatives to identify and select potential internal and external (networks of) stakeholders on an international scale • Determines necessary and desired characteristics of potential stakeholders and identifies parties that meet these • Profiles stakeholders to determine the appropriate relationship management and/or negotiation strategy for them based on the (new and unknown) context • Negotiates, bargains, lobbies, networks and collaborates with stakeholders from different cultures and disciplines, creating trust and rapport • Represents their organisation / team in internal and external networks, events or meetings • Coordinates the implementation process, collaborating and communicating with diverse stakeholders • Manages conflicts in a constructive and respectful way	**Complexity and autonomy average (C):** • Conducts (research) activities and initiates to identify potential internal and external (networks) of stakeholders on an international scale, based on a general 'problem'/assignment • Proposes necessary and desired characteristics of potential stakeholders • Profiles stakeholders to determine their fit with the necessary and desired characteristics, and with possible (existing) management and/or negotiation strategies • Contributes to negotiations and networking activities with stakeholders from different cultures and disciplines, with some guidance • Represents their team in internal networks, collaborating and communicating with diverse stakeholders, with some guidance • Contributes to the coordination of the implementation process as part of a team, collaborating and communicating with diverse stakeholders • Proposes constructive and respectful conflict management strategies	**Complexity average, autonomy low (B):** • Conducts (research) activities and initiates to identify potential internal and external (networks) of stakeholders on an international scale, based on a specific and clear assignment/instruction, as part of a multidisciplinary team, under supervision • Profiles stakeholders based on a specific and clear assignment/instruction • Analyses the viability of several negotiation and networking strategies with stakeholders from different cultures and disciplines • Collaborates and communicates with diverse stakeholders, under supervision • Contributes to the planning of approved implementation processes as part of a team, with guidance and under supervision • Recognises conflict situations and discusses strategies to deal with them with supervisors

Appendix D –
IB PLOs 2023 and AuCom (cont.)

PLO	End level (graduation) – fixed	Intermediate level – suggestion	Lowest level – suggestion
PLO 4: Self-management	**Complexity average, autonomy high (D):** • Capitalises on their own needs, characteristics, values, strengths, weaknesses and circle of influence effectively to achieve their goals and ambitions • Continuously monitors and reflects on the appropriateness of their (learning) actions, activities and results before, during and after performing them • Systematically improves their performance • Makes responsible and effective choices regarding when to (not) adapt to the context or circumstances • Takes on a multitude of different roles in teams, fitting with the situation • Creates personally effective stress-reduction strategies to cope with the pressures of their job	**Complexity and autonomy average (C):** • Analyses the meaning of their own needs, characteristics, values, strengths, weaknesses and circle of influence in achieving their goals and ambitions • Reflects on the appropriateness of their (learning) actions, activities and results during and after performing them, based on a general assignment • Improves their performance when prompted (by others or by circumstances) • Reflects on the effectiveness of their choices regarding when to (not) adapt to the context or circumstances • Effectively takes on several different roles in a multicultural and multidisciplinary team, with some guidance • Adopts effective (existing) stress-reduction strategies to cope with the pressures of their studies, with some guidance	**Complexity average, autonomy low (B):** • Explores their own needs, characteristics, values, strengths, weaknesses and circle of influence, based on a clear assignment/instruction • Defines their goals and ambitions based on a clear assignment/instruction • Reflects on their (learning) actions, activities and results after performing them, based on a clear assignment/instruction • Formulates possible ways to improve their performance, based on a clear assignment/instruction • Analyses how they are influenced by their surroundings and vice versa, based on a clear assignment/instruction • Experiments with taking on different roles in a multicultural and multidisciplinary team, with guidance • Experiments with existing stress-reduction strategies to cope with the pressures of their studies, with guidance
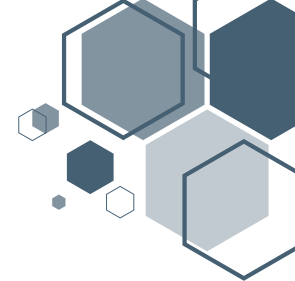
Appendix E –
The AuCom model

The members of the working group finalised the PLOs after the last feedback of the work field. The set-up of the Framework is based upon the structure mentioned in the sector plan Heo. The National Platform has approved the International Business Framework.

High Autonomy & Low Complexity	High Autonomy & Average Complexity	High Autonomy & High Complexity
C	**D (PLO 2 / PLO 4)**	**E (PLO 3)**
Task: Problem from professional practice for which the solutions already exist. The problem is known, the necessary data are known or can be collected by simple methods. The solution is not new. The problems can be solved with standard procedures, basic knowledge and basic skills. No strict quality requirements, professional dilemmas and/or laws and regulations need to be considered.	**Task**: Problem from professional practice for which no solution yet exists, but which may arise from combining insights. The problem is partly known and partly yet to be analysed, the necessary data must be collected, analysed and applied in a responsible and critical manner. The solution is new to the situation or discipline. There are standard procedures that must be adapted to new situations using advanced and specialised knowledge and skills. Quality requirements, professional dilemmas and/or laws and regulations must be considered to a limited extent.	**Task**: Issue from professional practice for which a solution does not yet exist, it has yet to be created. The problem is new and information must be collected, analysed and applied in a responsible and critical manner so that creative and highly innovative solutions are devised. The solution is new to the world. There is no standard approach; new procedures must be developed using advanced, specialised and cross-disciplinary knowledge and skills. Sometimes new knowledge, meta-knowledge and skills must be developed. Strict quality requirements, (ethical) professional dilemmas and/or laws and regulations must be taken into account.
Context: The organisation is small and there are few rules, there is little time pressure, the impact of the work is small.	**Context**: The organisation is of medium size and there are regulations that must be taken into account. There is time pressure and the impact of the work is fairly large.	**Context**: The organisation is large and there are many rules to be taken into account. There is great time pressure and the impact of the work is great.
The student or professional: Receives little direction and guidance and limited control of intermediate results. Independently directs his/her own learning and development process. Acts on his/her own initiative, makes choices and decisions independently, cooperates with others and takes the initiative to approach specialists and come to co-creation, possibly outside his/her own domain. Guards his/her own limits and reacts appropriately to unexpected circumstances. Is responsible for his/her own work and that of others. Bears shared responsibility for directing processes and the professional development of others.	**The student or professional**: Receives little direction and guidance and limited control of intermediate results. Independently directs his/her own learning and development process. Acts on his/her own initiative, makes choices and decisions independently, cooperates with others and takes the initiative to approach specialists and come to co-creation, possibly outside his/her own domain. Guards his/her own limits and reacts appropriately to unexpected circumstances.	**The student or professional**: Receives little direction and guidance and limited control of intermediate results. Independently directs his/her own learning and development process. Acts on his/her own initiative, makes choices and decisions independently, cooperates with others and takes the initiative to approach specialists and come to co-creation, possibly outside his/her own domain. Guards his/her own limits and reacts appropriately to unexpected circumstances.

Appendix E –
The AuCom model (cont.)

| Average Autonomy & Low Complexity	Average Autonomy & Average Complexity	Average Autonomy & High Complexity
B	**C**	**D (PLO1)**
Task: Problem from professional practice for which the solutions already exist. The problem is known, the necessary data are known or can be collected by simple methods. The solution is not new. The problems can be solved with standard procedures, basic knowledge and basic skills. No strict quality requirements, professional dilemmas and/or laws and regulations need to be considered. **Context**: The organisation is small and there are few rules, there is little time pressure, the impact of the work is small. **The student or professional**: Receives intermediate or remote or on-call guidance and limited monitoring of intermediate results. Independently takes most of the steps in his/her own learning and development process. Acts mostly on his/her own initiative, regularly makes independent choices and makes independent decisions, asks questions, cooperates with others and recognises his/her own limits and enlists help when necessary. Is responsible for his/her own work and partly for that of others. Bears shared responsibility for directing processes.	**Task**: Problem from professional practice for which no solution yet exists, but which may arise from combining insights. The problem is partly known and partly yet to be analysed, the necessary data must be collected, analysed and applied in a responsible and critical manner. The solution is new to the situation or discipline. There are standard procedures that must be adapted to new situations using advanced and specialised knowledge and skills. Quality requirements, professional dilemmas and/or laws and regulations must be considered to a limited extent. **Context**: The organisation is of medium size and there are regulations that must be taken into account. There is time pressure and the impact of the work is fairly large. **The student or professional**: Receives intermediate or remote or on-call guidance and limited monitoring of intermediate results. Independently takes most of the steps in his/her own learning and development process. Acts mostly on his/her own initiative, regularly makes independent choices and makes independent decisions, asks questions, cooperates with others and recognises his/her own limits and enlists help when necessary. Is responsible for his/her own work and partly for that of others. Bears shared responsibility for directing processes.	**Task**: Issue from professional practice for which a solution does not yet exist, it has yet to be created. The problem is new and information must be collected, analysed and applied in a responsible and critical manner so that creative and highly innovative solutions are devised. The solution is new to the world. There is no standard approach; new procedures must be developed using advanced, specialised and cross-disciplinary knowledge and skills. Sometimes new knowledge, meta-knowledge and skills must be developed. Strict quality requirements, (ethical) professional dilemmas and/or laws and regulations must be taken into account. **Context**: The organisation is large and there are many rules to be taken into account. There is great time pressure and the impact of the work is great. **The student or professional**: Receives intermediate or remote or on-call guidance and limited monitoring of intermediate results. Independently takes most of the steps in his/her own learning and development process. Acts mostly on his/her own initiative, regularly makes independent choices and makes independent decisions, asks questions, cooperates with others and recognises his/her own limits and enlists help when necessary. Is responsible for his/her own work and partly for that of others. Bears shared responsibility for directing processes.

Appendix E –
The AuCom model (cont.)

Low Autonomy & Low Complexity	Low Autonomy & Average Complexity	Low Autonomy & High Complexity
A	**B**	**C**
Task: Problem from professional practice for which the solutions already exist. The problem is known, the necessary data are known or can be collected by simple methods. The solution is not new. The problems can be solved with standard procedures, basic knowledge and basic skills. No strict quality requirements, professional dilemmas and/or laws and regulations need to be considered. **Context**: The organisation is small and there are few rules, there is little time pressure, the impact of the work is small. **The student or professional**: receives instruction, guidance and/or supervision and regular monitoring of intermediate results. Under guidance, he/she takes the steps in his/her own learning and development process. acts according to assignment, consults on choices to be made, asks questions, cooperates with others and enlists help when necessary. He/she is responsible for his/her own work and partly for that of others.	**Task**: Problem from professional practice for which no solution yet exists, but which may arise from combining insights. The problem is partly known and partly yet to be analysed, the necessary data must be collected, analysed and applied in a responsible and critical manner. The solution is new to the situation or discipline. There are standard procedures that must be adapted to new situations using advanced and specialised knowledge and skills. Quality requirements, professional dilemmas and/or laws and regulations must be considered to a limited extent. **Context**: The organisation is of medium size and there are regulations that must be taken into account. There is time pressure and the impact of the work is fairly large. **The student or professional**: receives instruction, guidance and/or supervision and regular monitoring of intermediate results. Under guidance, he/she takes the steps in his/her own learning and development process. acts according to assignment, consults on choices to be made, asks questions, cooperates with others and enlists help when necessary. He/she is responsible for his/her own work and partly for that of others.	**Task**: Issue from professional practice for which a solution does not yet exist, it has yet to be created. The problem is new and information must be collected, analysed and applied in a responsible and critical manner so that creative and highly innovative solutions are devised. The solution is new to the world. There is no standard approach; new procedures must be developed using advanced, specialised and cross-disciplinary knowledge and skills. Sometimes new knowledge, meta-knowledge and skills must be developed. Strict quality requirements, (ethical) professional dilemmas and/or laws and regulations must be taken into account. **Context**: The organisation is large and there are many rules to be taken into account. There is great time pressure and the impact of the work is great. **The student or professional**: receives instruction, guidance and/or supervision and regular monitoring of intermediate results. Under guidance, he/she takes the steps in his/her own learning and development process. acts according to assignment, consults on choices to be made, asks questions, cooperates with others and enlists help when necessary. He/she is responsible for his/her own work and partly for that of others.

Appendix F - References
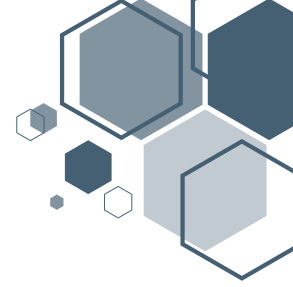
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