



International evaluation and accreditation

## EVALUATION REPORT

UBI Luxembourg

Bachelor in Business Studies

**—  
REPORT TRANSMITTED  
TO THE MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND  
RESEARCH OF LUXEMBOURG ON 24 MAY 2018.**



**For the Hcéres<sup>1</sup> :**

Michel Cosnard, President

**On behalf of the experts committee<sup>2</sup> :**

Eric Godelier, President of the committee

In accordance with the decree n°2014-1365, November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2014,

<sup>1</sup> The president of Hcéres "contresigne les rapports d'évaluation établis par les comités d'experts et signés par leur président." (Article 8, alinéa 5) — "countersigns the assessment reports made by the experts' committees and signed by their president" (article 8, alinea 5).

<sup>2</sup> The evaluation reports "sont signés par le président du comité". (Article 11, alinéa 2) — "are signed by the president of the committee" (article 11, alinea 2).

# CONTENTS

I. Presentation of the institution.....	2
1. Context.....	2
2. Objectives and missions .....	2
II. Brief overview of the programme.....	2
1. Methods and results of the previous accreditation(s) .....	2
2. Human and material resources dedicated to the program.....	3
3. Student population: evolution and typology over the last 4 years .....	3
III. On-site visit description .....	3
1. Composition of the experts panel.....	3
2. On-site visit programme .....	3
IV. Evaluation.....	4
1. Strategy and governance of the higher education institution .....	4
2. Aims and goals of the teaching programme .....	5
3. Admission, recognition and certification .....	7
4. Teaching programme management .....	8
5. Research .....	10
6. Internal quality assurance.....	11
V. Conclusion .....	12
1. Strong points:.....	13
2. Weak points:.....	13
3. Recommendations to the institution.....	13
VI. Comments of the institution.....	15

# I. PRESENTATION OF THE INSTITUTION

## 1. CONTEXT

United Business Institutes (UBI), a not-for-profit establishment of higher education was established on April 1992 in Brussels (Belgium). The first students were recruited in October 1992. In 2013, UBI-Luxembourg was opened and received Luxembourg Government accreditation to operate a campus in Wiltz, Luxembourg. Its first class was opened on September 15th, 2014. One of the main reasons for the launch of this new campus was a critical change in the Belgian Government visa policy. Fearing difficulties in the recruitment of foreign students, UBI top managers decided to open a new campus in order to be able to develop their recruitment policy outside Europe, especially in Asia.

## 2. OBJECTIVES AND MISSIONS

As is mentioned in the UBI Statement in their demand for accreditation (p4): "The mission and vision of the Institution is to offer the highest quality programmes in professional business training with a particular emphasis on international and intercultural aspects, oriented towards a successful business career with a foundation of a good general business education." The mission of the Institution is: "To provide its students with a business management training programme in order to promote their capacity to engage in national and international business and to contribute to the development of their personal skills and knowledge; to train its students to contribute to global understanding and socio-economic development by providing them with intercultural communication skills; to develop a stimulating learning environment in which international business practices are acquired through top-level academic methods and based on principles of ethical behaviour; to teach students the attitudes, skills and abilities of continuing education and leadership in a global economy; to be an intellectual and concrete centre of excellence in the environment in which teaching, research and practice are integrated."

The objectives of United Business Institutes are to: "provide British-style business education to its students, thereby enhancing their ability to engage in international commerce and to contribute to workforce development".

# II. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME

The BA (Hons.) Business Studies programme at UBI is a full-time, modular three-year programme. This degree is validated by Middlesex University, London. Students are expected to complete 120 credit points (60 ECTS) per academic year i.e. a total of 360 credit points (180 ECTS) to be achieved to graduate from the degree programme. Students are awarded a double degree from UBI (Belgium or Luxembourg) and Middlesex University.

The courses are taught entirely in English. All courses are delivered to very small groups of students. Each academic year, there are two periods of student intake – in September and in February. Personal Tutoring is at the core of this Education programme. In terms of teaching methodology, case studies are also very frequently used.

## 1. METHODS AND RESULTS OF THE PREVIOUS ACCREDITATION(S)

In a first round, UBI BA was accredited by the Quality Assurance Agency UK (QAA). This has been arrived at through association with Middlesex University accreditation. UBI programmes have been validated through British Universities since 1998. The last evaluation was undertaken in November 2015. UBI Luxembourg was accredited in June 2013 until the end of the 2017/2018 academic year. In November 2016, UBI was accredited by ERASMUS until 2020.

## 2. HUMAN AND MATERIAL RESOURCES DEDICATED TO THE PROGRAM

UBI-Luxembourg employs a Dean for the Bachelor programme and about 30 professors who have qualifications equal or superior to the Bachelor level. They have practical professional experience in the fields they teach. Most of the professors are part-time teachers and are business professionals.

In Luxembourg, UBI shares the Chateau of Wiltz premises with other higher education institutions, mainly the BBI School of International Tourism and Hospitality Management. UBI operates over 2 campuses – one in Luxembourg (Wiltz) and the other in Belgium (Brussels). The main campus is in Brussels.

## 3. STUDENT POPULATION: EVOLUTION AND TYPOLOGY OVER THE LAST 4 YEARS

Currently on the Wiltz campus there are only 22 students in total over the 3 years of the programme. Student enrolments have grown to this figure, but have experienced a down turn for 2017/2018.

# III. ON-SITE VISIT DESCRIPTION

## 1. COMPOSITION OF THE EXPERTS PANEL

Eric Godelier, Professor of Management, Ecole Polytechnique (president)  
Jean-Philippe Denis, Professor of Management, Université Paris Sud  
Nathalie Mitev, Senior Visiting Research Fellow, School of Management, King's College (London)  
Daniel Peyron, Consultant and Former director of La Rochelle Business School  
Audrey Milton, PhD Student, Université de Poitiers

## 2. ON-SITE VISIT PROGRAMME

The Mission was planned from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> of March 2018. The panel arrived in Wiltz the 4<sup>th</sup> of March.

During the mission, the expert panel was divided into two groups (2 or 3 members in each group). Each group focused on a specific point of the evaluation process. It met with a variety of UBI stakeholders, staff (Education and Administrative) and students.

During the visit, the expert panel was accompanied by Solange Pizarz, Head of projects at the EID of Hcéres and Pr Evelyne Lande, Scientific adviser SHS (Hcéres).

## IV. EVALUATION

### 1. STRATEGY AND GOVERNANCE OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

- a) The higher education institution bases its activity on the guidelines and strategic objectives that it makes public. It publishes clear, accurate and updated information on its activities, including its academic programmes, admission requirements, achieved learning outcomes and qualifications achieved at the end of these programmes.**

There was evidence that UBI has formally designed its mission in a clear way. Nevertheless, the objectives seem quite general. Some elements could have been provided for instance related to employability or to enable a better understanding of the positioning of the institution vis-a-vis the surrounding ecosystem. Currently the student numbers are dangerously low and in regression to allow a certain future. The internationalisation strategy regarding recruitment seems to be based on developing growth in China, but currently this is at the stage of a future project. It also appears that there is little differentiation in terms of the programme compared with what is offered by other Business Schools, some of which are close by. There does not appear to be clear strategic objectives concerning many aspects of the operation of the institution. Despite this, there is clear information provided concerning its activities, its academic programmes, admission requirements and the learning outcomes and qualifications achieved. There was also found however to be a strong enthusiasm and competence among the members of the management team.

- b) The origin of the financial resources available to the institution is transparent and organised in compliance with the rules of scientific neutrality.**

Evidence was provided in the form of financial statements including income statements and balance sheets which clearly outlined in a transparent manner the origin of financial resources (predominantly arising from student fees) and these were based on generally accepted accounting practices. UBI Wiltz benefits from financial support from its sister institution UBI Brussels. Nevertheless, the UBI Luxembourg budget is in deficit. Financial equilibrium is planned to be reached in 2021. This hypothesis relies on a drastic increase of the number of students recruited.

- c) The Institution provides regular academic programmes as defined under article 28bis, paragraph 3 of the law. Regarding double or joint diplomas, responsibilities of each institution engaged in the programme are clearly stated and organised with a formal and detailed partnership agreement.**

The institution provides regular academic programmes as defined under the law. It offers a double diploma with Middlesex University. The agreement is clearly defined and respected and operates effectively. The necessary agreements and quality assurances on the contract were provided and were validated by QAA UK. The agreement is formal and detailed. It is not clear however what value is added for the students in having the same diploma from two different institutions. Today, aside of legal agreements, there is almost no contact between UBI students or professors and Middlesex University.

- d) The recruitment of staff members follows clearly defined procedures**

Staff are recruited based on their professional experience and recruitment follows clearly defined procedures. Advertisements are publicly placed and through internal networks and interested and suitably qualified individuals have the opportunity to respond.

- e) In the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the institution employs staff with the necessary scientific and professional qualifications to provide training within the frame of the academic programmes offered by the institutions under the provisions of the law (art. 28ter, paragraphs 1-2).**

Teaching staff are employed in line with the strategy of the institution which is to provide a professionalising education. In line with this, staff are selected based on their industry and professional experience and knowledge, and have the necessary level of academic qualifications to provide such training under the terms of the law. Emphasis is not placed so much on academic qualifications as on professional experience.

- f) On the territory of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg the institution has adequate infrastructure for the various academic programmes and allowing students to complete the required work to achieve the educational objectives.**

The Chateau of Wiltz is a very old and well recognised building, dominating the heart of the town. It has sufficient rooms and large facilities for teaching, housing and the organizing of events. The institution has sufficient infrastructure for the academic programmes it offers and has all the necessary facilities to allow students to complete the work required to achieve the objectives including a library and internet resources and all the applications necessary. If the institution plans to grow its student numbers, then it may have to invest further in student accommodation, but for the moment, this is adequate. Since September 2017, the Lease Agreement of the facilities is between the Ville of Wiltz and the ASBL Campus Wiltz (of which both BBI and UBI LU are equal members), which in turn makes the facilities available in equal parts and expenses to BBI and to UBI LU.

- g) The institution regularly collaborates with other institutions on the national and international levels as well as with economic and social actors of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.**

There is no evidence of working collaborations with partner institutions internationally, other than the validation partnership with Middlesex University. However, students partake in internships of one month (which could be lengthened) at local institutions and businesses nationally and internationally. UBI has achieved Erasmus + status and plans to develop these relationships in the near future.

- h) The institution actively participates in international exchange programmes for students and academic staff.**

Currently there are no international exchange programmes for students and academic staff, but this is certainly an area for development.

## 2. AIMS AND GOALS OF THE TEACHING PROGRAMME

- a) The academic programme has a structured curriculum which reflects the objectives of the programme. It includes knowledge, specific skills and transversal skills.**

UBI offers the BA (Hons) Business Studies at its campuses in Brussels and in Wiltz. The programme is validated by Middlesex University and students graduate with a degree from UBI and a degree from Middlesex University. UBI prides itself on its small class numbers with small student/staff ratios. The objectives of the programme are to provide industry- relevant pragmatic training where emphasis is placed on practice and real-life experience rather than on a more classical theoretical approach. Evidence was provided in official documentation and in discussion to show that students benefit from the acquisition of knowledge and both industry specific and transversal skills

which fits in with curriculum objectives. In addition, students are required to undertake an internship each year which further develops these skills. The curriculum is well structured and develops and deepens knowledge and skills in progressing through the years of study, however, it would be preferable that some degree of research dissertation or project is necessary in order to achieve the Honours element of the degree. This is noted by UBI and there are plans to develop this aspect.

**b) The academic programme is defined in line with European standards and the Bologna process. It is defined in terms of ECTS credits and designed based on student centred learning and in particular in support of the student's success, active participation in the studies and the development of skills, knowledge and know-how.**

As outlined in the student handbook and the accreditation documentation, there is clear evidence to support the fact that the academic programme is defined in line with European standards and the Bologna process. Reference is constantly made to ECTS credits and the number of credits required and achieved is in line with the European standard. The programme is student-centred and teaching and learning approaches emphasise the active participation of the students. In addition, because of the small class size, students have a high level of interaction with teachers. The use of case studies, group work and presentations testify to the opportunity for students to develop skills, knowledge and know-how.

**c) The academic programme is divided into modules each of which is assigned a certain number of ECTS credits. The objectives and the learning outcomes of each module are clearly defined.**

The academic programme is divided into modules and each module narrative was available to show this. Each module is assigned a certain number of ECTS credits and the credits awarded to each module were in line with what would be anticipated and found in other similar institutions. The objectives and aims of the programme, along with the learning outcomes to be achieved were clearly stated as were the teaching, learning and assessment strategy or approach being utilised. These were in line with the aims of the programmes and showed evidence of student-centred learning and active engagement with the subject.

**d) The workload is appropriate and distributed in a balanced way between the semesters.**

The student workload appears to be balanced throughout the years of study and through the semesters and shows progression in terms of level throughout the years. In addition, students undertake a work internship each year, each time in a different organisation which allows them to develop and expand their skills and knowledge over the years. There are two student intakes each year and the requirements per semester for the second intake of students is also balanced between the semesters.

**e) The relationship between theoretical and practical courses is in line with the programme objectives. Based on the objectives of the programme, internships are planned.**

The objectives of the programme are to provide a pragmatic approach, rather than a theoretical approach, and therefore a high level of emphasis is placed on the practical aspects of the course rather than the theory. Nonetheless, any degree level course would be anticipated to provide theoretical approaches to learning, rather than just a practical training which would be more anticipated to be the domain of further education colleges. It was clear however that a certain amount of theory is being taught, however, it is not emphasised. In addition, it is not clear that the link of theory informing practice is highlighted. As outlined, the main aim of the programme is to provide students with practical and industry relevant skills and as such, students plan and obtain an internship every year of their studies at an organisation relevant to the skills and knowledge they obtain throughout their educational programme. There was clear documentation showing how



these internships were planned, undertaken, supported and evaluated which was found to be satisfactory.

- f) Within the frame of the academic programme leading to the Bachelor's degree, with the exception of alternating courses, a compulsory training period with a university or a higher education institution abroad is included in the programme which is subject to the validation of studies followed outside the home institution.**

Currently, there is no compulsory training period with a university or higher education institution abroad. Erasmus + status was awarded to the institution in November 2016. UBI is in the process of developing and expanding its Erasmus agreements and partnerships. Within this Erasmus framework, better coordination or some synergies could be organized between UBI Luxembourg and Middlesex University. In terms of the Erasmus contract, before exchanges take place, studies undertaken with the home institutions must be validated, and this will also be the case for UBI in the future. UBI plans to develop these partnerships with a view to implementing them originally in 2017-2018 as stated in the provided accreditation application document of 28/08/2017, but, to date, there is no evidence to support that students have been accepted to undertake Erasmus exchanges at other institutions abroad. It is not clear that these exchanges will be compulsory.

### 3. ADMISSION, RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION

- a) The admission requirements to the academic programme are clearly defined and published. The admission criteria provide validation of prior experience.**

The academic admission requirements correspond to existing standards and consist of a secondary high school qualification with an emphasis on a sufficient background in mathematics. English language requirements are also standard. Credit transfer, module exemption and direct entry in the second or third year are offered and decided upon by the Dean and the Middlesex University link tutor. Admission procedures are specified such as an admission interview, an essay, and proof of identity. These details are made available on the website and in the student handbook.

No mention of validation of prior experience is made in the documents provided.

- b) The evaluation methods are defined on the basis of the educational objectives.**

Broad educational objectives are enunciated in the student handbook and the emphasis is on continuous assessment. Evaluation methods overall consist in regular and frequent assessment using various methods throughout the programme, including final exams. There is a strong focus on writing individual business projects and internship reports, with the clear aim of relating the courses to real-life practices. The incremental learning strategy from year to year is also clearly described in the student handbook.

- c) The evaluation methods applied in the various modules are clearly communicated to the students.**

Much detail is provided on specific evaluation methods for each module in the student handbook with appropriate information, linking module aims, learning outcomes and formative and summative assessment methods.

There is also evidence of planning and reviewing evaluation methods across modules for the whole programme, including student feedback and taking into account comments from the Middlesex University external examining system.

- d) Diplomas and degrees issued by the higher education institution provide information on the acquired qualifications. They are accompanied by a diploma supplement describing the knowledge and skills acquired by the holder.**

Information available in the programme handbook provides grading details and follows existing standards on degree classification and skills acquired.

It is not clear whether the skills acquired (cognitive, practical, transferrable) in particular are specified for individual students in the diploma supplement. Knowledge of various topics presumably corresponds to grades for each module (accounting, marketing, etc.), which are communicated to the students.

#### 4. TEACHING PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

- a) The academic programme has sufficient resources in terms of academic staff, financial and material resources etc. to cover its specific needs and achieve its objectives. Such resources are available for the entire duration of the academic programme.**

UBI operates the BA (Honours) in Business Studies from its campuses in Brussels and in Wiltz. This programme is validated by Middlesex University London. The programme is taught in English and uses a student-centred approach to learning emphasising a pragmatic approach to learning, rather than a classical theoretical approach. Currently, on the Wiltz campus, student numbers are small and UBI's objective is to grow the student cohort progressively, whilst maintaining small student to staff ratios in order to maintain their attraction to students, who often have not responded well in more traditional Higher Education establishments. A key aim of growing student numbers is to increase revenues to ensure future continuation. So far UBI has recruited mainly in Luxembourg and border regions with Belgium and France. A strategy document states that they are planning a recruitment strategy with various agencies and they have agreements in negotiation for Ukraine, Georgia and Nepal and they are considering some for the US, Russia, China, India and Vietnam and they have recruited a recruitment consultant. So far, they have about twice the number of applicants for next academic year. Their strategy is to grow from the current total number of 22 students to 60 in 3 years and 90 in 5 years.

Currently therefore, UBI would appear to have enough financial resources at its disposal in order to meet its current specific needs, however there is doubt about whether this situation could continue without successful recruitment. Today, it is not clear to what extent the profits of the Brussels campus are being used to subsidise the Wiltz campus. Furthermore, if recruitment is primarily to be international, these students may require more dedicated support which would entail further teaching resources.

In terms of material resources, UBI benefits from the disposition, by the community of Wiltz of the Chateau of Wiltz and other material resources seem adequate for its current needs, however, again, if growth is anticipated, accommodation for students may have to be expanded or relocated.

In terms of academic staff, UBI currently does not employ any full time academic staff. All teaching staff come from the business world and pursue their own careers concurrently with their teaching at UBI. Teaching staff are therefore employed on a contractual basis and do not necessarily have continuity of employment. Teaching staff are selected for the business experience they bring to their courses, and academic qualifications are not necessarily the priority. Given their current delivery, it appears that there is sufficient teaching staff to meet current aims and objectives, however, it would be desirable to develop a certain quantity of permanent teaching staff also involved in other activities such as research and programme development, in order to reach academic standards of higher education institutions.

**b) Courses are provided by competent staff on the teaching and pedagogical level, capable of linking subject matters to professional practice in the relevant field and current research. Teaching is based on student centred learning, promoting active participation by the students.**

Documentation was available to show how active student participation was encouraged and achieved and module narratives provide evidence of a variety of teaching, learning and assessment practices consistent with student-centred learning. Each student also undertakes an internship which helps them link professional practice to learning and there is also a system of 'community credits' which helps promote active participation in the life of the institution. Students have a very high rate of employability or entry into further study on leaving the course which is testament to the knowledge, skills and abilities learned during their course.

Teaching staff do not receive any formal teacher training but are welcomed by the Academic Officer at the beginning of the year and they have the opportunity to meet with him throughout the year. The lack of permanent staff and the distance for most teachers from campus makes it difficult to co-ordinate teacher involvement outside teaching hours. As most teachers are practising professionals, they are well equipped to bring real-world experience to the classroom, which students seem to enjoy and benefit from. It is unclear however, to what extent teaching staff engage with current research in their field and research in teaching and learning. Teaching staff are currently not required to undertake academic research. The dossier submitted shows that the academic qualifications of the teaching staff are mainly postgraduate Masters, some MBAs, and only one PhD<sup>1</sup>. The point here is not to reproach teachers for not being renowned researchers, but simply to stress that in order to ensure good progress of students in the programme, they should benefit, particularly in the third year (i.e. final year dissertation), from the teaching-research nexus.

**c) The proportion between permanent academic staff and external speakers is adapted to the objectives of the academic programme.**

Excepting UBI's office bearers, there was no evidence of permanent faculty members who undertook teaching. Teaching staff are industry professionals hired on a contractual basis from session to session which is in line with UBI's stated ethos. Some of these teaching staff invite external speakers to augment and enrich their teaching sessions. It would be preferable to see more permanent teaching staff employed, but this may come in time if student numbers increase from the current total number of 22 students.

**d) Continuing education programmes are provided to academic staff.**

In terms of teaching and learning and since teaching staff are industry professionals in the domain in which they teach, these professionals benefit from follow-up within Faculty Meetings to ensure quality teaching and learning and to allow teachers to share experience. In terms of continuing education programmes, there is currently no budget within UBI to allow continuing education programmes for academic staff.

The management team does not seem convinced of the usefulness of strengthening the professorial team from an academic point of view, which is all the more surprising as UBI offers a Master degree on the Brussels site and even mentions the possibility of enrolling in a DBA on its website. At this stage, no action has been taken to improve the academic skills of the faculty. This cannot be a viable and sustainable situation, especially since students may continue in Masters programmes. It seems imperative that a strategy be considered on this point, which is not even embryonic at the moment. Support seems necessary here.

---

<sup>1</sup> Source: Demande d'accréditation UBI Luxembourg, August 2017, Section 4.2 p. 28

**e) Adequate supervision and comprehensive information for students are provided. Students are offered tutoring or mentoring programmes.**

There was clear evidence to support the provision of comprehensive information for students from their website and the student handbook. In addition, there is a staff member charged with promoting student life and who is also responsible for tutoring. Staff at UBI are always available to meet with students when necessary. Teachers we met appeared to be motivated and dedicated to student support and tutoring. Mentoring and tutoring were available on a personal and academic level to students and there is evidence to support its use by students. Furthermore, it is of concern that the current promotion on the Wiltz campus is so small in terms of student numbers. One of the fundamental elements of both Bachelor and Masters level education is the "peer effect", by which, through group work, students learn from each other and from each other's lives, for example through project work, which in an indirect way can be seen as informal tutoring. Students do however have access to informal tutoring from each other.

There is clear evidence to support that students are adequately supervised and have the means to be seen and heard by appropriate members of UBI staff. In addition, students are represented by the Student Council, representatives of which meet with the Dean or his assistant once per month. Further, a Special Cases Committee meets once per week to address students' special requests. The requests are processed, and the decisions taken are submitted for the approval of the External Assessment Board. They are then communicated to the students concerned.

## 5. RESEARCH

**a) The higher education institution performs, in the relevant areas, basic oriented research activities or applied research activities as defined in article 1 of the law of 3 December 2014 on the organisation of public research centres. These research activities will lead to publications in the institution's name in international scientific and peer-reviewed journals.**

So far, scientific research has been taken into consideration primarily for teaching purposes and curriculum development. There is some awareness of the need to carry out applied research activities. There is some mention to undertake applied research activities in partnership with its sister institution, UBI-Brussels and with its partner validation institution Middlesex University, and possibly others in Luxembourg and Europe. This will require the thinking through and development of specific activities for knowledge transfer and for the development of research methods and writing skills in line with an appropriate research strategy such as publishing real-life teaching case studies and supporting teachers for instance in presenting them at conferences.

The institution has personnel resources, premises and equipment which can support extending current didactic practices to include an applied research orientation. Initiatives include a "Research Foundation" to research specific business areas with the aim to also develop practical real-world deliverables that could generate business opportunities for the Foundation. The Institution is also working on the organisation of a conference in the field of Business Communication and has begun the initial stages of a feasibility study to begin a peer-reviewed Open-Access Journal.

The institution could also consider exchanging with BBI, its co-located institution at Wiltz. BBI has already set up a research methods and skills training programme for its teachers specifically targeted at writing teaching case studies, the use of case studies being already an established teaching practice at UBI in which teachers are well-versed.

**b) The institution incorporates the results of its research in the education it is providing.**

Module learning outcomes are reviewed every year to determine that they are relevant to recent scientific research and developments in the working environment. Some student projects consist in performing research investigations into business-related topics (sometimes in relation to their internships) and include skills at presenting research in writing; and viva examinations are organized to assess students' ability to participate in academic discussion and investigate students' awareness of where their original work sits in relation to the wider research field.

Further training in research methods and skills could be considered for students, particularly with a view of producing more research-oriented third year final dissertations, in line with BA with Honours standards. This may help teachers in producing and publishing teaching real-life case studies.

## 6. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

**a) The higher education institution ensures to collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management and the continuous improvement of its academic programmes and research activities.**

From the documentation provided and in discussion it was clear that UBI has many processes in place for the collection of information in order to improve its programmes. These include meetings with faculty members, meetings of the student council and through evaluation questionnaires. There is evidence in minutes of meetings that data is analysed and actioned, however in many cases the actions were of a basic nature and would not impact greatly on the academic programme. UBI relies heavily on the processes of Middlesex University. These include the moderation of exam results, second marking which serves to highlight and improve internal quality assurance, but how this improves the academic programme is unclear. Currently there are no research activities being undertaken.

**b) The higher education institution has an internal and external quality assurance system that it makes public and that forms an integral part of its strategic management. The internal and external measures for the quality assurance of the institution are in compliance with the standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).**

In this area, again, UBI places heavy emphasis on the systems and procedures of Middlesex University, who are subject to accreditation by the Quality Assurance Agency of the UK. In this, it is felt that QAA guarantees the conformity and application of the Guidelines of the European Higher Education Area. The Institution's internal and external quality assurance system is the result of the processes provided for in the Validation of the Institution by Middlesex University. The validation of the course by Middlesex University has been a strategic decision by UBI and therefore plays a large role in its strategic management. UBI staff participate in regular course meetings with Middlesex University and Middlesex University hosts validation workshops. However, it is felt that the development of their own Quality Improvement and Management Plan would serve UBI well, and clearly articulating their own policy would be to their advantage.

**c) The academic programmes are regularly subject to an internal review to ensure they reflect the latest results of research and teaching in the relevant field, that they fulfil the targeted objectives and meet the continuously changing needs of students and society.**

There was clear evidence obtained that UBI reviews its teaching, learning and assessment materials regularly and that all module outcomes are clearly stated and articulated. The programme is less officially reviewed as a whole but is subject to the review of Middlesex University rather than UBI itself. In addition, all examination materials are reviewed and approved by Middlesex University

before they are applied, and Middlesex University employs an external reviewer to ensure curriculum content. That being said, it is not clear, and evidence was not obtained to show how the latest results of research and teaching in the relevant field are being implemented or evidenced in order to ensure the fulfilment of targeted objectives. In that UBI staff do not conduct official research for the institution and the organisation does not subscribe to any academic journals it cannot be stated that these developments are being incorporated. In addition, it is not clear how the latest pedagogical developments are being implemented as no teacher training is offered by the institution and none of the teaching staff enjoys a permanent contract.

**d) Responsibilities, competencies and the decision-making process within the higher education institution are clearly and transparently defined.**

A short, but clear statement was available to attest to this and in discussion, confidence was placed in the committee structure including Faculty Meetings, External Examination Boards and the Student Council. Roles and responsibilities were clearly defined and there was found to be ample opportunity to obtain information regarding these bodies and their processes and competencies. Middlesex University also plays an important role and its responsibilities and competencies were clearly defined.

**e) Academic staff and students have sufficient means to make known their position and to participate in the decision-making process.**

Through the committee structure outlined and the regular meetings of the committees that were attested to, satisfaction can be had that academic staff and students have sufficient and regular means by which to make their position known. Academic staff, in consultation with members of the Board have regular opportunity to participate in the decision-making process, but how students can influence decision making is less clear. They have the regular opportunity to make their position known, but any action would then depend on academic staff, the members of the Board and the links with Middlesex University.

**f) The defined institution has a person or a committee dealing with issues relating to equal opportunities policy.**

Currently the organisation does not have an equal opportunities policy. UBI is now aware that this is currently the case.

## V. CONCLUSION

UBI Luxembourg is a small business school focused on general Business Management Education. From a strategic point of view, the expert panel was sometimes a little confused by the nature and objectives presented by UBI leaders. For instance, the close relationship with Middlesex University could be an opportunity for new developments, or a constraint for UBI independence. Moreover, one could be puzzled by the core reasons for UBI Luxembourg developments: is it a long-term strategic project or an opportunistic move to benefit for the more liberal Luxembourg Government visa policy? UBI Luxembourg has a real potential for future development if it develops its strengths and solves its problems.

## 1. STRONG POINTS:

- High personalization of student teaching focused on case studies
- Full courses delivered in English and intakes of two cohorts per year
- Availability of the Dean and professors for the students
- Motivation of the students
- Motivated teachers (mostly professionals & part-time teachers)
- Logistic support to foreign students (visa process, housing)
- A network of professionals

## 2. WEAK POINTS:

Despite some clear potential, UBI Luxembourg presents many weaknesses as follows:

- Unsustainability of the Institution and a lack of credible strategy for the Wiltz Campus (objectives, resources, marketing, student recruitment, relationship with Middlesex University, international and regional developments, student employability, UBI governance, BBI-UBI-Wiltz Castle relationship)
- Opportunistic use of the two campuses (the opening of the Luxembourg campus seems to have mainly been designed to avoid the restriction of the Belgium visa policy for foreigners and not for educational or marketing reasons).
- Low investment in local partnerships.
- An unbalanced partnership with Middlesex University and a lack of understanding between the representatives of UBI and Middlesex University about the nature and core of the relationship (Double degree? Programme validation? Courses content? Institutional exchanges from the Luxembourg Campus?)
- The reticence to develop financial and scientific capabilities in academic research.
- The need for an important and quick development of management research (teachers, students, seminars, events, library, resources, national and international links)
- Small student groups could be an important asset but also a weakness. Education also requires some group dynamics and a minimum number of students per group/course/year.
- No external review committee (assessment of industry jobs and/or labour market requirements, advisory board with more external stakeholders)

## 3. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE INSTITUTION

The expert panel does not recommend the accreditation of UBI. However, it is important to allow the current students of the Bachelor programme to complete all the programme requirements.

In the meantime, in order to set up a renewed UBI project, the expert panel strongly suggests the profound redesign of the project to reach the minimum academic and international standards required for a Higher Education Institution. This includes:

- To develop the research side of a renewed UBI, the management team will have to develop closer relations with a DBA program and/or another academic institution in Luxembourg State.
- To design a strategy more focused on a differentiation basis and based on a clear and competitive advantage (for instance local job market requirements, specific education methods, executive and continuing education, online education, etc.)
- To reach the recognised Higher Education standards, an important investment should be made to recruit more full-time professors and administrative staff adapted to the new UBI project.



## VI. COMMENTS OF THE INSTITUTION

Following the receipt of the Evaluation Report of UBI LU by the Experts Panel on 17 April, 2018, the management of UBI LU has begun the process of self-reflection and analysis of areas addressed by the Report.

Simultaneously, UBI has begun a process of assessing and setting additional standards, which are being woven into the Strategic Plan. Specifically, a long-term plan has been refined for the development of UBI Luxembourg, taking into account both the Luxembourgish educational platform and the Luxembourgish economy. All elements in this plan are entirely dependant on the continuation of accreditation.

UBI Luxembourg has a short-term and long-term **growth** strategy:

A strategic change from recruiting local students to targeted recruitment of both local and international students has been identified as the way forward for UBI Luxembourg. The strategy has already proven successful, with 18 students having been accepted for enrolment for the academic year starting in September 2018. Should the present student recruitment strategy continue in this manner we anticipate a class in year 1 of 25 students starting in September 2018. Additionally, as the result of a recent collaboration with an Asian educational organization: Shanghai Hanlink Education, it is anticipated that 20 students (from China, Hong Kong and Malaysia) will enrol in February 2019.

Partnerships will become a renewed focus for development. A recent agreement with Tongji University, China (ranked in the top 25 of BRICS & Emerging Economies Rankings, Times Higher Education World University Rankings, 2017) provides for both student and faculty exchange. Already, one UBI Luxembourg faculty member has a teaching commitment on 20-21 & 27-28 October 2018. In 2019, a short stay program is planned for Chinese students at the Campus of Wiltz.

UBI Luxembourg is in the initial stages of articulating an agreement concerning a student exchange program with University of Technology in Sydney, Australia (ranked in the world's top 250 universities, as well as being ranked 15<sup>th</sup> in the Young University Rankings, Times Higher Education World University Rankings, 2017).

Our long-term focus is to develop an MBA program (possibly in partnership with BBI) tailored to the local market in Luxembourg, a country renowned for its service industry.

UBI Luxembourg has a short and long-term strategy for **economic integration** to Luxembourg.

Student involvement with the local and broader community is a key differentiator for UBI LU. The UBI student body have already organised three globally-recognised TEDx events in the city of Wiltz. The next Wiltz event is planned in November 2018. After this demonstrated success, UBI students organised the 'TEDxLuxembourgCity' event held in April 2018. This event introduced students to significant economic contributors to the Luxembourgish economy, as well as student-led sponsorship deals with organisations including (1) international companies with headquarters in Luxembourg: ING and Deloitte, (2) successful Luxembourgish companies: Maison Moderne (Delano / Paperjam), Groupe Steffan, Neimënster, Fox Beers. This 65,000+ euros event received glowing press coverage in the Grand Duchy. Sponsors have already committed to an event in 2019.

Students and teachers participate in conferences in Luxembourg. Most recently in April 2018, students in their third year had the opportunity to attend a conference and the subsequent networking event at Luxembourg City's Chambre de Commerce. The conference theme was 'Blockchain & Crypto Currencies: a sustainable (re)evolution?'

UBI Luxembourg has a short and long-term strategy for **educational integration** to both Luxembourg and international academic institutions.

As recommended by the Experts Panel, UBI Luxembourg will collaborate further with BBI Luxembourg together on the Campus Wiltz. These synergies will be focused around research and educational collaborations, including further investment into library and academic journals and the Faculty Research Committee. The long-term aim of this collaboration is to form a research centre on the Campus Wiltz. Most UBI LU module leaders will be holders of doctorates by September 2018.

UBI Luxembourg will collaborate further with the University of Luxembourg (support for TEDxUniLu) and Miami University in Luxembourg (case study competition). Together with Shanghai Hanlink Education and Tongji University, China we will have student and faculty exchange. UBI Luxembourg plans to work together with think tanks including the upcoming research collaboration into "Gender Pay Parity" with Equilibre.

Imminent plans for research will contribute significantly to our educational collaborations including seminars and conferences. For example, a conference on Business Communication is being planned. In the long-term UBI Luxembourg plans to establish an open-access, online journal.

UBI LU is part of the Education Committee created by the American Chamber of Commerce and we intend to develop further collaborations with comparable bodies.

UBI Luxembourg has a short and long-term strategy to further **differentiate** itself in the market.



UBI LU currently has a Bachelor programme that is unique in Luxembourg. Students have an exclusively English-taught business programme with annual internships. Furthermore, they receive a dual award with a degree from Middlesex University London.

UBI LU will develop its research competence. UBI LU has a uniquely professional teaching staff with which UBI LU will develop appropriate case studies sourced directly from the Luxembourgish economy. UBI LU will work closer together with professional associations to develop research considered contextually relevant.

UBI LU further plans to develop rotation for students to learn in an immersive environment in other cultures and countries. Current and developing academic partnerships, starting with Tongji University, China, will allow this to happen.

In conclusion, UBI LU has already adopted recommendations mentioned in the Evaluation Report, and has acted quickly to address other areas (e.g. implementation of an equality and diversity policy, establishment of a Faculty Research Committee, planning for research projects etc.). Compliance with all policies and continuous improvement has been emphasized in all discussions with committee stakeholders and will continue to be addressed in future trainings throughout the institution.

Also, UBI LU seeks to further integrate planning, assessment, and programme review with continuous attention to accreditation standards, international best practice in pedagogy and research, and policies. Purposefully placing these standards in the institutional strategic plan assures they will be addressed, evaluated, analyzed and implemented. UBI LU reaffirms its dedication to integrity in its commitment to Luxembourg, and will demonstrate diligence in all areas identified.

	
Dirk Daenen, Managing Director	Lucien van Dievoet, President

The evaluation reports of Hcéres  
are available online : [www.hceres.com](http://www.hceres.com)

**Evaluation of clusters of higher education and research institutions**  
**Evaluation of higher education and research institutions**  
**Evaluation of research**  
**Evaluation of doctoral schools**  
**Evaluation of programmes**  
**International evaluation and accreditation**



2 rue Albert Einstein  
75013 Paris, France  
T. 33 (0)1 55 55 60 10

[hceres.com](http://hceres.com)

[@Hceres\\_](https://twitter.com/Hceres_)

[Hcéres](https://www.youtube.com/Hceres)