

Decision of the FIBAA Accreditation and Certification Committee



2nd Meeting on 28 May 2021

PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION

Project Number:	19/099
Higher Education Institution:	Ho Chi Minh City Open University (HCMCOU)
Location	Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
Study Programme:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Master of Business Administration2. Master of Economics3. Master of Finance-Banking4. Master of Teaching English to speakers of other languages
Type of Accreditation	Initial accreditation

The FIBAA Accreditation and Certification Committee has taken the following decision:

According to § 12 (2) in conjunction with § 16 (1) of the “Special Conditions for awarding the FIBAA Quality Seal for Programme Accreditation “FIBAA Programme Accreditation””, the study programmes are accredited.

Period of Accreditation: 28th of May 2021 until the end of summer semester 2026

The FIBAA Quality Seal is awarded.



Assessment Report

Higher Education Institution (HEI):

Ho Chi Minh City Open University (HCMCOU)
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Master study programmes:

1. Business Administration
2. Economics
3. Finance-Banking
4. Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

Qualification awarded on completion:

1. Master of Business Administration
2. Master of Economics
3. Master of Finance-Banking
4. Master of Teaching English to speakers of other languages

General Information on the Study Programmes

Brief description of the study programmes:

Master of Business Administration (MBA)

The MBA programme has been designed to enhance the knowledge, skills, self-reflection and responsibility capacity in order to become managers who are fit to work and develop in the competitive and globalised business environment. The main objective of the programme is to build effective professional skills to solve problems proactively. In addition, the programme aims to update and develop the theoretical knowledge and practice of business management (in strategy and leadership; organisation; external environment and management). The programme is offered in Vietnamese language.

Master of Economics (ME)

The ME programme has been developed to provide the specialised knowledge and professional skills for those who work at economic planning, economic policy analysing in state management agencies, public enterprises and private organisations. The students gain a thorough understanding of basic principles and theories, and relevant knowledge in a multidisciplinary field of study. They receive advanced and specialised skills including analysis, synthesis and evaluation of data and information to solve problems in a scientific way. The programme is offered in Vietnamese language.

Master of Finance-Banking (MFB)

The MFB programme has been designed to provide students with the profound knowledge and skills in banking and finance to be a professional, dynamic, and successful financial manager in the competitive and globalised business environment, who also has an understanding of business ethics and social responsibility. It constructs also their solid foundation for self-studying and personal growth and enhancing learners' adaptability to a changing working environment. The students combine theoretical and practical knowledge of finance and banking to conduct business operations at banks, financial organisations and enterprises. The programme is offered in Vietnamese language.

Master of Teaching English to speakers of other languages (MTESOL)

The MTESOL programme aims to provide graduates with a solid grounding in both theory and practice of English language teaching for the essential development of their professional knowledge and teaching skills. The students gain profound knowledge in English teaching and learning theories as well as core principles for language teaching methods. They analyse, synthesise and evaluate theories and principles of English learning and teaching to apply them to a range of educational contexts. The programme is offered in English and Vietnamese language.

Type of study programmes:

Master programmes

Projected study time and number of ECTS credits assigned to the study programmes:

MBA/MFB/MTESOL: 2 years/120 ECTS credits/ 60 traditional credits

ME: 2 years/ 130 ECTS credits/65 traditional credits

Mode of study:

Full-time

Didactic approach:

study programmes with obligatory class attendance

Double/Joint Degree programme:

no

Scope (planned number of parallel classes) and enrolment capacity:

MBA: 105

ME: 45

MFB: 54

MTESOL: 47

Programme cycle starts in:

Summer and Fall Academic Terms

Initial start of the programme:

MBA: 2004

ME: 2008

MFB: 2008

MTESOL: 2006

Type of accreditation:

Initial accreditation

Procedure

A contract for the initial accreditation of the Master of Business Administration, Master of Economics, Master of Finance-Banking and Master of Teaching English to speakers of other languages was made between FIBAA and Ho Chi Minh City Open University on December 20, 2019. On November 3, 2020, the HEI submitted a self-evaluation report, which included a detailed description of the programmes and further documents in order to prove that the criteria for programme accreditation are met.

At the same time, FIBAA appointed a review panel. The HEI has agreed with the chosen experts. The panel consisted of:

Dr. Thi Thu Ha Dinh

Thai Binh Duong University, Faculty of Economics and Law
Head of Finance – Banking Division

Prof. Dr. Stefanie Hehn

Hochschule für Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Ludwigshafen, University of Applied Sciences, Germany

Professor of General Business Administration, especially Corporate Finance & Capital Market Theory

Dipl.-Rom. (BWL) Astrid Hock-Breitwieser

Commerzbank AG, Frankfurt (Main), Germany
Senior Consultant Executive Development

Diplom-Schauspieler Constantin Elias Konradi

Hochschule Wismar, University of Applied Sciences, Germany
Student of Business Administration & Human Resource Management

Dr. Eugenia Llamas

École des Ingénieurs de la Ville de Paris, France
Director of International Relations

Prof. Dr. Mouna Thiele

Hochschule Duesseldorf, University of Applied Sciences, Germany
Professor of Economics, in particular Economic Policy

FIBAA project manager:

Dilan Hatun

The assessment is based on the self-evaluation report, amended by further documents, as requested by the panel, and an online conference. The online conference took place on March 16-18, 2021 via the video conferencing tool Zoom. At the end of the online conference the panel has given a short feedback on its first impressions to representatives of the HEI.

The assessment report based on this was delivered to the HEI for comment on May 4, 2021. The statement on the report was given up on May 7, 2021. It has been taken into account in the report on hand.

Summary

The study programmes Master of Business Administration (MBA), Master of Economics (ME), Master of Finance-Banking (MFB), Master of Teaching English to speakers of other languages (MTESOL) offered by Ho Chi Minh City Open University fulfil the FIBAA quality requirements for master programmes and can be accredited by the Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA) for five years starting on May 28, 2021 until the end of summer semester 2026. The programmes are in accordance with the national and the European Qualification Frameworks and the European Standards and Guidelines in their applicable version valid as of the time of the opening of the procedure, and with the Bologna Declaration.

The quality requirement that has not been fulfilled – internationality of the student body (chapter 3.4.2) – is not an asterisk criterion and therefore does not lead to a condition. The measures the HEI takes to solve the identified problem are to be considered during the re-accreditation.

The panel members identified several areas where the programmes could be further developed:

- International orientation of the study programmes' design (see Chapter 1.2) – for all programmes
- Positioning of the study programmes (see Chapter 1.3) – for all programmes
- Ensuring foreign language proficiency (see Chapter 2) – for MBA, ME and MFB
- Examination and final thesis (see Chapter 3.1) – for all programmes

The measures that the HEI takes in order to implement the recommendations of the panel members will have to be considered during the re-accreditation.

There are criteria in which the programmes exceed the quality requirements:

- Guest Lecturers (all programmes) (see Chapter 3.3)
- Pedagogical / didactical qualification of faculty (MTESOL) (see Chapter 4.1)
- Practical business experience of faculty (MTESOL) (see Chapter 4.1)
- Student support by the faculty (all programmes) (see Chapter 4.1)
- Alumni Activities (all programmes) (see Chapter 4.5)

For the overall assessment of the programmes, please refer to the quality profile at the end of this report.

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Information on the Institution

Ho Chi Minh City Open University (HCMCOU) is a public institution, offering multidisciplinary programmes in both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. This is one of the first two universities (HCMCOU and Ha Noi Open University) of Vietnam that has allowed open enrolment into the Bachelor programmes since 1990. HCMCOU was founded on June 15, 1990 according to the Decision No. 451/Ttg signed by the Minister of Education and Training. HCMCOU aims to meet various learning needs of society and to contribute to the development of the country's human resources (cf. self-evaluation report ME p. 9).

The HCMCOU commits itself to contribute and promote knowledge to society by offering the upmost flexible and accessible methods of delivery. By 2023 the HCMCOU intends to become one of the leading public multi-disciplinary universities in Vietnam focusing on practice-orientation, universalising knowledge and civic engagement, and on distance education programmes achieving the Southeast Asia standards (cf. self-evaluation report ME p. 9).

Currently, HCMCOU offers 34 Bachelor programmes, twelve Master programmes and five Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programmes. The University has twelve faculties in the fields of economics-management, technology and social sciences and humanities. There are more than 23,000 students and 600 teaching staff. The University has awarded nearly 100,000 Bachelor's, 2,541 Master's, and 7 Doctor's degrees.

Table 1: HCMCOU Faculties

Names of faculty	Year established
Faculty of Accounting and Auditing	2003
Faculty of Biotechnology	1991
Faculty of Business administration	1990
Faculty of Civil engineering	1992
Faculty of Economics and Public management	2007
Faculty of Finance-Banking	2005
Faculty of Foreign languages	1990
Faculty of Information technology	1990
Faculty of Law	2015
Faculty of Sociology – Social work – Southeast Asian studies	1991
Graduate School	1992
School of Advanced studies	2006

The programmes at hand: Master of Business administration (MBA), Economics (ME), Finance-Banking (MFB) and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (MTESOL) belong to the Graduate School¹ (GS). They account for 65 % of the number of students of the GS.

In total, the GS offers twelve Master programmes of the following disciplines: Business administration, Finance-Banking, Economic, Accounting, Business law, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), Biotechnology, Computer science, Sociology, Civil engineering, Chinese, and Construction management, as well as five doctorate programmes: Business administration, Economics, TESOL, Finance-Banking, Civil engineering.

¹ <http://sdh.ou.edu.vn/en/>; last access on 28.04.21

In addition, the GS also operates ten joint Master programmes. They are (1) Master of Education (TESOL) with Edith Cowan University (ECU), Australia; (2) Master of Business administration (MBA); (3) Master of Marketing and communication management; (4) Master of Business quality and performance management with Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB), Belgium; (5) MBA (Strategic human resource management) with University of Southern Queensland (USQ); (6, 7) Master of Education (TESOL) with USQ; (8, 9) MBA (International business) and MBA (Finance) with Flinders University, Australia; and (10) MBA with Fresenius University, Germany. The students attending the joint Master programmes account for 20 % of the total number of students of the Graduate School.

The Graduate School is one of the longest-established faculties of the University and has 1,000 Master students of the local programmes (including MBA, ME, MFB, MTESOL), more than 100 students of the joint Master programmes, and 57 PhD students.

All the programmes are operated in the spirit of nurturing HCMCOU values as knowledge enrichment, applicability, civic engagement, and professionalism. The guiding educational philosophy is “Humanity-Openness-Practice-orientation-Globalization”. This is strongly embedded in the curriculum contents and practice (cf. self-evaluation report ME p. 4). The Graduate School is following four key components (cf. self-evaluation report ME p. 5):

1. The programmes are updated, flexible, transferrable, and practice-oriented. The programme administration is effective with practical information and clear processes.
2. Academic and administration services to students are effective and handy.
3. Plentiful scholarships are offered in various forms. Students have the same research financial supports as HCMCOU staff do.
4. A large network of alumni which helps promote experience sharing and professional development.

Statistical data

Table 2: Statistical Data: Business Administration

Year	No of applicants	No of students accepted	% of selection	% of attrition after the 1 st year	No of graduates	% of success	Average duration (months) of study	Average final grade
2013	1010	82	8.12	0	54	65.85	24.89	7.35
2014	411	92	22.38	0	54	58.70	28.89	7.53
2015	270	140	51.85	0	101	72.14	35.35	7.21
2016	151	83	54.97	0	27	32.50		
2017	94	88	93.62	0	5	5.70		
2018	145	110	75.86	0	0	0		
2019	99	67	67.68	1	0	0		

Table 3: Statistical Data: Economics (ME)

Cohort	No of applicants	No of students accepted	% of selection	% of attrition after the first year	No of graduates	% of success	Average duration (months) of study	Average final grade (10-point scale)
2013	503	238	47.32	0	191	80.25	23.03	7.29
2014	454	142	31.28	0	113	79.58	28.62	7.41
2015	93	54	58.06	0	42	50	37.14	7.23
2016	40	18	45.00	0	9	38.89		
2017	39	28	71.79	0	4	14.29 In Year 3		
2018	26	24	92.31	0	In Year 2	In Year 2		
2019	16	14	87.50	0	In Year 1	In Year 1		

Table 4: Statistical Data: Finance-Banking (MFB)

Year	No of applicants	No of students accepted	% of selection	% of attrition after the 1 st year	No of graduates	% of success	Average duration (months) of study	Average final grade
2013	545	40	7.3	0	26	65.00	29.54	7.28
2014	262	53	20.2	0	35	66.04	28.97	7.30
2015	189	84	44.4	0	48	57.14	36.75	7.24
2016	151	73	48.3	0	28	38.36 In Year 4		
2017	48	34	75.0	5.9	4	11.76 In Year 3		
2018	47	37	78.7	2.8		In Year 2		
2019	31	25	80.6	0		In Year 1		

Table 5: Statistical Data: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (MTESOL)

Cohort	No of applicants	No of students accepted	% of selection	% of attrition after the first year	No of graduates	% of success	Average duration (months) of study	Average final grade (10-point scale)	GPA distribution %
2013	129	39	30.2	0	23	59	36.8	8.01	8.7 Exc; 91.3 Good
2014	136	35	25.7	0	24	68.6	37	7.93	8.3 Exc; 91.7 Good
2015	128	58	45.3	0	35	60.3	40.8	7.58	91.3 Good; 5.7 Aver.
2016	131	40	30.5	0	10	25 In Year 4			
2017	132	45	34.1	0	3	6.67 In Year 3			
2018	89	45	50.6	0	0	In Year 2			
2019	84	45	53.6	0	0	In Year 1			

Appraisal

According to the statistical data provided, there has been a sharp decrease of applicants for all programmes. During the online conference it became clear that HCMCOU is aware of this trend and it implements corresponding measures in its strategy. During the interview rounds it was stated that this is the most concerned issue of the GS since 2016. The decreasing number of applicants might be due to the following main reasons: (1) the fast-growing number of HEIs providing the same Master programmes; (2) the strict requirements from Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) in setting the related areas to be eligible to enrol into each area since 2015; (3) the fast-growing number of international HEIs providing the same Master programmes in Vietnam; (4) More students can afford going abroad to do their Master studies.

There have been a lot of meeting to find solutions/improvements such as (1) revising the curricula to be more attractive to students such as more update, practice oriented, (2) compacting time of studying from two years to one year and a half; (3) inviting well known and devoted teaching staff as well as speakers from industry; (4) improving the marketing campaign to be more digital, more personal; (5) providing more services to students (student loan, professional seminars for alumni, research awards, etc.; Providing flexible schedule for students: classes during weekdays and weekends or blended learning or online formats, especially during the Covid pandemic.

The panel recommends taking the trend very seriously and continuously reviewing the measures taken and their success.

Programme Description and Appraisal in Detail

1. Objectives

1.1 Objectives of the study programmes (Asterisk-Criterion)

The programmes have been developed in line with the Vietnamese Qualifications Framework (VQF). Thus, the learning outcomes benchmark with those of VQF requirements for the Master level.

Master of Business Administration (MBA)

The MBA programme has been designed to enhance the knowledge, skills, self-reflection and responsibility capacity of future managers who are fit to work in the competitive and globalised business environment. The graduates shall be able to apply the theory and practice in business administration and to solve professional issues at the workplace. They also learn to perform effective administration activities to ensure the stability and development to requirements of human resources, finance, marketing, and business operations.

The main objective of the programme is to build effective professional skills for work and to solve problems proactively. The graduates are expected to develop cognitive, critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Furthermore, they shall develop skills to conduct research. They shall be able to design research, use efficiently the statistical software, collect information, analyse data and write reports on research results. With regard to the personal development, students evolve effective communication, intercommunication skills, and performance skills. Hence, the primary aim of the MBA programme is to develop capacity of adapting to the changing working environment, to develop career and lifelong learning, to build the responsibility for work and to develop responsibility for community, spirit of serving the country, and professional ethics (cf. self-evaluation report MBA p. 11).

Master of Economics (ME)

The ME programme has been developed to provide the specialised knowledge and professional skills for those who work at economic planning, economic policy analysing in state management agencies, public enterprises and private organisations. They develop professional skills and skills to coordinate and apply knowledge to make decisions and solve professional issues systematically, and perform professional tasks to their job position.

They enhance their interpersonal, communication, performance, and working skills in the changing environmental conditions such as time management, problem-solving skills, and leadership. The students gain a thorough understanding of basic principles and theories and have relevant knowledge in a multidisciplinary field of study. They possess a profound economic knowledge and receive advanced and specialised skills including analysis, synthesis and evaluation of data and information to solve problems in a scientific way. Overall, the students learn to adapt to the changing working environment, career development, and lifelong learning. The study programme promotes responsibility for work and pro-activeness in solving problems. It enhances responsibility for the community, consciousness of serving the country, and professional ethics (cf. self-evaluation report ME p. 8).

Master of Finance-Banking (MFB)

The MFB programme has been designed to provide students with the profound knowledge and skills in banking and finance to be a professional, dynamic, and successful financial manager in the competitive and globalised business environment. The programme provides knowledge in finance-banking for decision making in management and in doing research. The graduates are able to solve problems related to the strategies, development and changes of finance-banking in research and in practice. The programme also constructs a foundation for self-studying and personal growth and enhancing learners' adaptability to a changing working environment. The graduates are able to research and discover new issues related to finance-banking for initiatives to solve problems arisen. The students combine theoretical and practical knowledge of finance and banking to conduct business operations at banks, financial organisations and enterprises. The programme enables them to solve problems related to the strategies, development and changes of finance-banking in research and in practice (cf. self-evaluation report MFB p. 8).

Master of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (MTESOL)

The MTESOL programme aims to provide graduates with a solid education in both theory and practice of English language teaching. The study programme justifies the relationship between nature and forms of English language as well as sociocultural knowledge. The students gain profound knowledge in English teaching and learning theories as well as core principles for language teaching methods. The graduates are able to construct a solid knowledge to apply English teaching – learning principles and resources appropriately and creatively. They analyse, synthesise and evaluate theories and principles of English learning and teaching to apply them to a range of educational contexts. The students also enhance their research capability and are provided with expert suggestions for English teaching and learning problems. In regard to their personal development they evolve their self-reflection, creativity, leadership, professional development and lifelong learning (cf. self-evaluation report MTESOL p. 13).

Appraisal:

The qualification objectives of the programmes (MBA, ME, MFB, MTESOL) are explained and convincingly presented in relation to the target group, targeted professional field and societal context of the discipline. They embrace academic proficiency, comprehensive employability, as well as the development of the individual student's personality.

The subject-specific qualification objectives and skills to be acquired correspond with the aspired level at graduation. They take into account the requirements of the national qualification framework.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
1.1*	Objectives of the study programme (Asterisk Criterion)			X		

1.2 International orientation of the study programmes' design (Asterisk Criterion)

The programmes comply with international standards in regard to its curriculum. They were developed using a benchmarking process of universities in industrial countries (e.g. the University of Warwick (England) and University Putra Malaysia in the MBA programme, University of Kiel (Germany) and Australian National University in the ME programme, St. Gallen University (Switzerland), Gent University (Belgium) and University of Newcastle (England) in the MFB programme) in order to assure that the programmes can provide up-to-date internationally-oriented contents in courses, comprehensive knowledge, and hand-on skills.

MTESOL:

MTESOL is orientated towards international requirements of employability. The MTESOL programme learning outcomes are in line with those of the English as a foreign language/English as a second language (ESL/EFL) teacher organisations, such as Teacher.Org in the US² or Cambridge Education Group in the UK³. The courses are approaching to those of international higher education institutions such as La Trobe University, Australia; Nottingham University, UK; Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand; and University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, USA.

Furthermore, at least two foreign lecturers (guest lecturers) per year are arranged to teach the programme. All the Vietnamese staff have graduated from Australia, UK or the US to help provide students with multicultural perspectives. The University also offers students from the MTESOL programme extra activities, such as a one-week study trip to the Edith Cowan University in Perth, Australia. The goal of this is to let the students discover other cultures, visit places of academic and cultural interest and undertake studies in a foreign setting.

For all programmes:

HCMCOU has completed the two Erasmus + projects: (1) KNOTS (Fostering multi-lateral knowledge networks of trans-disciplinary studies to tackle global challenges) hosted by Vienna University, (2) Higher education student and staff mobility with Vincent Pol University, Poland and will work on the three new Erasmus + projects (already approved by EC) in 2020: (1) RECOASIA (Regional Cooperation in the field of recognition among ASIAN countries) hosted by University of L'Aquila; (2) International Credit Mobility project hosted by University of International Studies of Rome – UNINT and (3) Trust-Financial technology and digital innovation to modernize and develop curricula of Vietnamese and Philippines Universities" hosted by University of Studies Guglielmo Marconi, Italy. HCMCOU has been informed to be accepted for one new Erasmus + project in 2021: INnovative Capacity building by participative and REflective teacher training for Academia, Society and Enterprises coordinated by University of Klagenfurt (Austria).

² <https://www.teacher.org/career/esl-teacher> (last access: 03.03.2021).

³ <https://www.cambridgeeducationgroup.com/ugc-1/1/9/0/ce209b87-cdfc-4f27-a1ef-12a173b85dfc.pdf> (last access: 03.03.2021)

Appraisal:

During the online conference the panel could be convinced that international outlook is important to the University. It actively participates in Erasmus+ projects and has a broad cooperation network with foreign universities. Students have the possibility to make use of academic mobility. However, during the interview round the programme management stated that usually the possibility of going abroad will not be taken by students due to the financial burden. Therefore, the panel members recommend finding other ways for promoting students' international experience, e.g. giving them the opportunity to participate in international classes digitally from Vietnam.

The panel appreciates the efforts to benchmark Vietnamese curricula with foreign curricula in order to align with Western standards and thus increase students' opportunities to work in foreign labour markets.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
1.2* International orientation of the study programme design (Asterisk Criterion)			X		

1.3 Positioning of the study programmes

The HCMCOU is located in the most dynamic education hub in Vietnam where people from provinces cluster to study and to find new job opportunities. The HCMCOU's mission⁴ is to become the top multi-disciplinary public University in Vietnam with practice-orientation. The main values of HCMCOU are knowledge enrichment, applicability, lifelong learning, public engagement, and professionalism, effectiveness, creativeness and hospitality. To go along with these, the programmes have been designed to balance theory and practice.

Currently, there are many higher education institutions (HEIs) in HCMC which provide similar master programmes. The University states in its self-evaluation report that among other numerous programmes of this kind, it has been building differentiations by continuously improving quality, flexibly adapting to the conditions and expectations of the students, and persistently catching up the well-known programmes in the world (cf. self-evaluation report MBA p. 19). The results of the questionnaire surveying applicants of HCMCOU Master programmes indicate that their choice to HCMCOU's master programmes is (1) that because HCMCOU can offer programmes in various disciplines that meet students' need; (2) the suitability of study schedule; (3) the convenient location of classes; and (4) the reputation of programme quality.

MBA, ME, MFB:

HCMCOU is creating a study atmosphere that is adapted to the needs of their target group by providing two class schedules for the programmes in parallel: one at weekday night time and one at weekends. Both schedules run in parallel. Most of the students living in Ho Chi Minh City and the vicinity prefer to study after their work so that they can have some time at weekends for their family. For students in provinces, studying at weekends is their first

⁴ <http://en.ou.edu.vn/pages/view/22/mission-vision-and-core-values> (last access: 29.04.21)

concern as they can work and travel to study in Ho Chi Minh City at weekends. Students have the possibility to choose the class and examination schedule that suits best to them.

Business Administration (MBA)

The University has thoroughly analysed the feedback of stakeholders, new students' expectations, job market for graduates and has comprehensively incorporated the results in the study programme. The main job expectations of MBA students are:

- to start up or to seek their own business opportunities
- to work as specialists, managers at all levels at enterprises, or at domestic and international organisations
- to pursue research, teaching and consultant jobs

For pursuing these aims the curriculum of the study programme includes courses combining theories, skill and experience share from case studies, which helps students to cope with the strategic and daily issues in business practice. Also they included areas like marketing, human resource, operations and supply, and finance. For students who plan to start their own business, courses about innovation and entrepreneurship are provided. Those who pursue an employment in the academic field can choose the research-oriented path of the programme where statistics and research methods are conveyed.

Economics (ME)

The ME program is among the long-established postgraduate programmes of HCMOU. There are various Master of Economics programmes in HCMC, however, the ME programme of the HCMCOU is quite competitive. There are 711 students who have graduated from the programme. The ME alumni are leading with those holding high positions in State management agencies. They are the leaders of People committee or Communist Party of Tien Giang, Dong Thap and Long An province. Most of the directors of the provincial departments and district-administrative-level offices of Tien Giang, Dong thap, Long An and Binh Thuan provinces are also the ME alumni. The main target of the programme is to train people working at the provincial management agencies, especially those of the provinces in Mekong delta. Often, the employers of the students guarantee the scholarship and time allowed for the employees to follow the study programme.

The surveys taken in 2018 and 2019 show that the main job expectations of the students are:

- working as consultants, policy makers, or middle-level to senior managers at the State management agencies
- working at the policy analysis and decision making departments in the domestic and international corporations or groups
- working as researchers, instructors at the research institutes, universities, etc.
- starting a business or seek their own business opportunities in an international environment and global integration

For pursuing these aims, the curriculum of the study programme includes courses combining theories, skill and experience share from case studies, which help students to cope with the strategic and daily issues in Vietnamese business practice in public sectors as well as in

NGOs or in private sectors. At the macro level, the macroeconomic preparation with knowledge and practice, such as for Public economics, Policy analysis, Macro-economics, Development economics, Urban economics and Environment economics. For students who plan to start their own business courses related to the micro level of economics such as Microeconomics, Project appraisal, International finance, and Money-Banking and financial markets are offered.

MFB

The MFB programme is designed to provide the profound knowledge, operational and management skills for managers at all levels and professionals working in finance-banking to make decisions, to better fit to work posts and to do research.

Upon successful completion of the programme, the graduates are able to:

- work as financial analysts or specialists or chief-finance officers in companies
- work as analysts, consultants, or managers in financial institutions, investment funds or securities companies
- work as specialists in the business sections or executives in commercial banks
- work as researchers and lecturers at universities or as consultants on strategic-planning and policy-making at research institutes; consulting services companies

MTESOL

Started in 2006, this Master programme is the second Master programme to be offered in HCMC, after that of University of Social Sciences and Humanities, HCMC National University. Currently HCMCOU is the only HEI in HCMC and the South Vietnam to meet the MOET requirements to provide programmes leading to Bachelor, Master, and Doctorate level related to TESOL (cf. self-evaluation report p.15). There is a fierce competition among HEIs anyhow for the Master students currently. As the potential students mainly come from HCMC, the Mekong delta provinces and the southern part of the Central, HCMCOU MTESOL programmes therefore have to compete with other 20 MTESOL programmes or Master of English linguistics (MELIN) programmes specialising in TESOL and ten international Master programmes in Vietnam (cf. self-evaluation report p.16). Therefore, the University actively thoroughly examines the educational market via collecting data through questionnaires and data from the other HEIs, and uses the results in establishing its competitive profile: regularly reviewing the MTESOL curriculum, offering its specialties as flexible pathways of learning, practice orientation, international contents and extra-curricular activities.

The main job expectations of MTESOL students are:

- working as instructors at universities, colleges, vocational schools, secondary schools, high schools, and foreign language centres
- working as researchers, consultants, and specialists for the planning and designing the English training programmes
- management work at institutions, educational departments, or participate in educational projects

- start up and operate the language centres, or setting up tutoring classes at home, or find jobs abroad

Compulsory English learning becomes the national strategy for globalisation, and the demand of English teachers is growing. Currently, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), that Vietnam is member of, has stated their goal to promote skilled labour mobility. Employers can take advantage of policies that facilitate the hiring of skilled workers in certain sectors to address the frequent skilled labour shortages such as shortage of English teachers in ASEAN countries. As mentioned above, the programme has empowered students to work abroad, besides the preparation for the professional knowledge, skills and attitudes. Programme learning outcomes are designed in line with the international job profiles (see Chapter 1.2).

Appraisal:

The reasons given for the positioning in the educational market of the study programmes are plausible. The panel formed the view that HCMCOU is well informed about its positioning on the educational market. There is a high competition between the Vietnamese HEIs that results in decreasing number of students. Given the competitive situation on the educational market, the panel members recommend the University to sharpen the study programmes' individual profile so that they are more accentuated on the educational market.

The arguments in support of graduate employability on the basis of the stated qualification objectives are convincingly presented. The future fields of employment for graduates of MBA, ME, MFB, MTESOL are plausibly set forth.

The study programmes are convincingly integrated into the HEI's overall strategic concept. The study programmes' qualification goals are in line with the HEI's mission and strategic planning.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
1.3	Positioning of the study programme					
1.3.1	Positioning of the study programme in the educational market			X		
1.3.2	Positioning of the study programme on the job market for graduates („Employability“)			X		
1.3.3	Positioning of the study programme within the HEI's overall strategic concept			X		

2. Admission

The HCMCOU admission procedure is defined by the “Regulation - On training on master’s degrees” by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). These regulations enumerate the minimum requirements for admission into Master programmes. The HCMCOU has implemented these regulations into their admission procedure and can be found in the “Regulation on master’s degrees programme of Ho Chi Minh City Open University⁵”.

MBA:

Candidates must hold a BA in business. In case students do not graduate with business major, but they have a Bachelor degree in the business related areas such as finance-banking, insurance, accounting, auditing, management or economics, they must take three supplementary courses: Management, Basic marketing and Strategic management. In case students do not graduate with business major, nor with business related major, they must have at least two-year working experience in business and have to take eight supplementary courses: Management, Basic marketing, Strategic management, Basic accounting, Basic financial management, Money-Banking, Microeconomics, and Macroeconomics.

ME:

Candidates must hold a BA in economics;

-In case students do not graduate with economics major, but they have a Bachelor degree in the related areas such as business-management, finance-banking-insurance, accounting-auditing, etc., they must take three supplementary courses: Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, and Money-Banking.

MFB:

Candidates must hold a BA in finance-banking-insurance. In case students do not graduate with finance-banking-insurance, but they have a Bachelor degree in the related areas such as business-management, accounting-auditing, or economics, they must take three supplementary courses: Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, and Money-Banking.

MTESOL:

Candidates must graduate from a local university BA in TESOL or in English language programmes. Candidates can graduate from foreign universities in the fields of education (language teaching related), English studies or English literature. This ensures that their English language proficiency is at least at C1 level of the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR). In case students do not graduate with TESOL major, they must have at least two-year teaching experience or have to take a supplementary course in teaching methodology.

In MBA, ME, and MFB, the admission is based on the entrance exam for Vietnamese applicants. The subjects to be tested in the entrance examination are developed based on the programme objectives. The candidates are selected based on the knowledge and skills in the basic macroeconomics and microeconomics. In MTESOL the entrance exam deals with the subject of linguistics and teaching methodology.

⁵ <http://sdh.ou.edu.vn/pages/view/17-quy-dinh> (last access on 29.04.21)

For all programmes:

In addition, a foreign language proficiency test (English for MBA, ME, and MFB; French, German, Russian, Chinese or Japanese for MTESOL) is carried out. The applicants should be proficient at the B1 level according to the CEFR⁶. This corresponds to the Level 3/6 Common European Framework of References for Languages-Vietnamese version (CEFR-V). Applicants are exempted from the language examination in the following cases:

- If they received their academic degree abroad from a recognised University
- If they have a University degree in foreign languages
- If they have a foreign language proficiency certificate within two years from the date of certificate issuance to the date of enrolment registration, issued by an institution authorised or recognised by the Ministry of Education and Training

Candidates eligible for selection must score 50 % of the scale for each exam subject. Based on the quota number allowed for each programme and the total marks of the two exam subjects (the language test is excluded) of each principle, the Admission Council shall determine the minimum admission mark. In case there are many candidates who have the same above-mentioned total mark, the successful candidates are determined according to the following priority orders:

- 1) Female candidates;
- 2) People with higher marks in core subjects of the discipline;
- 3) People who are exempt from foreign language examination or have higher marks in foreign language subject

For each examination, the Admission Council is established. The Chairman of the Admission Council is responsible for the organisation of examination in complying with the provisions of the regulations, especially with the test design and candidate selection procedures. The selection procedures are under the close supervision of HCMCOU Office of Legal Affairs. Also the MOET can send their supervisor anytime during the selection to the University in order to check whether HCMCOU undertakes all the requirements.

The enrolment for the programmes is taking place twice a year. The application portfolio consists of:

- Copy of the degrees and transcripts
- Personal profile confirmed by the citizen management office in the locality where they are working or by the local government of their place of residence
- Physical check-up
- Application form and other documents for admission privileges

Admission privileges are given in special cases. This implies to receive ten additional points at the foreign language exam and added one point for one out of two examination subjects. Following groups are allowed to receive this different treatment:

⁶ The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) was officially adopted as the national framework of reference for foreign language education in Vietnam in 2008 under Decision 1400/QĐ-TTĐ of MOET.

- Persons who have worked for two consecutive years or more in localities defined as Region 1⁷
- War invalids, beneficiaries of policies like war invalids
- Children of martyrs
- Ethnic minority people who have registered for permanent residence for two years or more in localities as Region 1
- Children of people who took part in resistance war and who are victims of toxic chemicals, who are recognised by the provincial-level People's Committees as deformed, or degraded self-reliance in daily life or study as a result of toxic chemicals

The counselling services for applicants are offered by the Graduate School administrative staff that provides counselling at the office, via telephone, email, and other social media platforms such as Facebook from 8.00 am till 6.00 pm from Monday to Saturday and Sunday morning. Information is given regarding admission procedures, entrance examination, academic programme, scholarships and financial aid, credit transfer opportunities, joint Master programmes, and career opportunities. The faculty members also introduce the programme to public mainly via the face to face info sections or live stream info sections. Their counsel mainly relates to the objectives of the programme, job opportunities, the programme contents and how to be successful with the programme.

The HCMCOU issues an announcement of enrolment at least three months before the entrance examination day. The announcement of enrolment is posted on the bulletin board, leaflets, and the website of the Graduate School. The contents of enrolment announcement include mainly the examination requirements; exam subjects, examination contents and format of the examination papers or requirements for application documents; examination schedule; time of announcement of enrolment results; course start time and duration.

Foreign Applicants

The regulations for the admission of foreign students follow MOET's regulations on Admission and Training of Masters and PhD programmes for foreigners, issued in 2018. According to that, applicants need to pass the same entrance examination and to have the Vietnamese proficiency level of at least B2 or Level 4 of the Vietnamese language proficiency framework for foreigners.

Appraisal:

The HCMCOU admission requirements for national and international students are defined by state regulations, which are embedded in the University regulation "Regulation on master's degrees programme of Ho Chi Minh City Open University". The national requirements are taken into account.

The required English language proficiency level in the MBA, ME, MFB programmes is set at B1 level (CEFR). According to the panel members this level seems to be too low since the programmes include several courses in English. Furthermore, most of the literature is provided in English which also requires a higher level of language proficiency. During the

⁷ Regions cited in the list of the remote hamlets and provinces issued yearly by the Government. They are subject to the supportive policies of the Government.

digital conference, the University stated that the English level is set at B1 due to the regulations of MOET that have to be followed. However, in the panel members' view, in the long-term a C1 level (CEFR) should be considered for the study programmes to be able to cope with the English offered courses and literature during their studies. Therefore, after the admission to the study programmes according to MOET regulations, the panel recommends the level of English be checked individually for each student and, if necessary, ensure that students reach the C1 level, e.g. through additional English courses.

Applicants can directly turn to a student counselling service for clarification of specific questions, of personal aptitude and/or career perspectives. The counselling service can be contacted via Social Media or E-Mail.

The admission and selection procedure is transparently presented on the "Regulation on master's degrees program of Ho Chi Minh City Open University". The admission requirements are comprehensibly described and defined.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
2.1*	Admission requirements (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
2.2	Counselling for prospective students			X		
2.3*	Selection procedure (if relevant)			X		
2.4(*)	Professional experience (if relevant; Asterisk Criterion for master programmes that require professional experience)					X
2.5*	Ensuring foreign language proficiency (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
2.6*	Transparency and documentation of admission procedure and decision (Asterisk Criterion)			X		

3. Contents, structure and didactical concept of the programmes

3.1 Contents

Business administration (MBA)

Table 6: Curriculum Business Administration

Courses				CU _s	ECTS		
TERM 1: Research and Practice oriented				16	32		
Philosophy				4	8		
Managerial economics				3	6		
Human resource management				3	6		
Strategic marketing management				3	6		
Global strategic management				3	6		
TERM 2							
Practice oriented		15	30	Research oriented		12	24
Financial management		3	6	Financial management		3	6
Business research methods		3	6	Business research methods		3	6
Optional basic knowledge 1, 2		6	12	Optional basic knowledge 1, 2		6	12
Optional professional knowledge 1		3	6				
TERM 3							
Practice oriented		17	34	Research oriented		14	28
English		5	10	English		5	10
Optional professional knowledge 2, 3, 4, 5		12	24	Optional professional knowledge 1, 2, 3		9	18
TERM 4, 5							
Practice oriented: Thesis		12	24	Research oriented: Thesis		18	36

The programme has two orientations: Practice or research oriented. Students will take either 13 courses or 15 courses depending on their chosen orientation. In addition to eight compulsory courses and a thesis, there are five or seven out of 13 elective courses offered so that students could choose depending on their demands.

Table 7: Modular structure Business Administration

NO	Course code		Name	Credit		
	Letter	Number		Total	Theory	Practice
PART 1. FOUNDATION				9	6	3
1	ECO	501	Philosophy	4	4	0
2	ECO	506	Foreign languages	5	2	3
PART 2. BASIC KNOWLEDGE				15	15	0
Compulsory				09	09	
3	BUS	601	Managerial economics	03	03	

	Letter	Number		Total	Theory	Practice
4	BUS	606	Business research methods	03	02	01
5	BUS	641	Global strategic management	03	03	
Optional: choose 02 of 04 courses (6-7)				06	06	
<i>Research-oriented</i>						
	BUS	644	Data analysis	03	02	01
	BUS	613	Strategic brand management	03	02	01
	BUS	645	Operations and supply chain management	03	02	01
	BUS	622	Service business management	03	03	
<i>Practice-oriented</i>						
	BUS	613	Strategic brand management	03	02	01
	BUS	645	Operations and supply chain management	03	02	01
	BUS	622	Service business management	03	03	
	BUS	644	Data analysis	03	02	01
PART 3: PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE						
<i>- Research-oriented</i>				18	18	
<i>- Practice-oriented</i>				24	24	
Compulsory				09	09	
8	BUS	602	Human resource management	03	02	01
9	BUS	603	Strategic marketing management	03	03	
10	BUS	604	Financial management	03	02	01
Optional						
<i>Research-oriented:</i> choose 03 of 07 courses (11-13)				09	09	
	BUS	609	Change management	03	03	
	Letter	Number		Total	Theory	Practice
	BUS	616	International business management	03	02	01
	BUS	619	Corporate social responsibility	03	03	
	BUS	703	Leadership	03	02	01
	BUS	612	E-Commerce	03	03	
	BUS	615	International marketing	03	02	01
	BUS	643	Innovation and entrepreneurship	03	03	
<i>Practice-oriented:</i> choose 05 of 09 courses (11-15)				15	11-15	0-4

	BUS	609	Change management	03	03	
	BUS	616	International business management	03	02	01
	BUS	703	Leadership	03	02	01
	BUS	612	E-Commerce	03	03	
	BUS	615	International marketing	03	02	01
	BUS	610	Project management	03	02	01
	BUS	646	Information system management	03	03	
	BUS	619	Corporate social responsibility	03	03	
	BUS	643	Innovation and entrepreneurship	03	03	
PART 4: THESIS						
			Thesis			
	BUS	701	Practice-oriented	12	12	
	BUS	702	Research-oriented	18	18	
TOTAL						
<i>- Research-oriented</i>				60	60	
<i>- Practice-oriented</i>				60	60	

In the first semester of the programme, courses are taught that contribute to basic aspects for further studies. For example, “Philosophy”, “Managerial economics”, “Human resource management”, “Strategic marketing management”, “Global strategic management” do convey essential content that build the foundations for the courses in the subsequent semesters. During the second semester students do have courses that focus on theoretical content such as “Financial Management” and “Business Research methods”. In the third semester the students only have to take one mandatory course in English. The rest of the courses are conveying subject-specific knowledge.

Regarding the integration of theory and practice, there are, as above mentioned, two study pathways: practice- or research-oriented. Students that follow the practice oriented programme take more courses and their thesis is the application of theories to solve issues arisen in real situations, proven in the project based thesis. The students of the research orientated programme have less courses and heavily academic requirements on the thesis contents. So far the large majority of students (over 90%) have chosen the practice-oriented focus.

All courses are designed with a balance of academic knowledge and practice. The practice activity is interwoven with lessons in class and the self-study at home to perform reports, individual or group discussions and presentations of cases or projects in class. Most of the courses have a practical part by organising group presentations, experience sharing with entrepreneurs and case studies. The results of the assigned exercises will help teachers to assess the ability to apply theory to the reality of students. In addition, every year, the Faculty of Business Administration conducts various seminars for experience and practice sharing as well. All courses introduce students to related research in the field. Students are encouraged to present a new research trend or model.

The interdisciplinary thinking of the MBA is extensively applied on the programme level. First, the programme objectives are achieved due to integrating other disciplines such as

languages or humanities (e.g. "Philosophy") with the business-related ones. The "Data analysis" or "Business research methods" courses empower students to be confident in selecting the research methods, use the software to analyse data, which helps to make appropriate decisions in business and write their thesis. Besides, students acquire interdisciplinary thinking via cluster of courses which are the combination of closely related areas (e.g. human resources, finance, marketing, services, and leadership) to business knowledge as well as management. The interdisciplinary thinking is also reflected in the course contents. "E-commerce" or "Brand management", "International marketing" courses combine the knowledge of marketing, commerce, IT and management. The "Leadership, Human resource management", and "Change management" courses generate the knowledge of culture, society, psychology together with management. "Project management" and "Financial management" involve finance-banking knowledge together with management knowledge and skills. The "Operations and supply chain management" and "Service business management" courses address the quality control, psychology and business.

Ethical aspects are embedded in the curriculum and expressed in the course learning outcomes. The "Business research methodology", the "Data analysis" courses, and Thesis writing orientation communicate academic ethical issues to the students. Secondly, the professional ethical issues: The "Brand management" and "International business management" courses discuss the issue of good professional ethics, being honest and self-responsible for self-behaviours and decisions at work, being conscious of environmental protection and showing responsibility of individuals and business representatives to society and community. In the "Operations and supply chain management" course, students are required to understand corporate social responsibility in the supply chain field. The "Financial management" course aims to build the professional and behavioural ethics related in the field of financial management of the company. In the "E-Commerce" course, students are aware of how e-commerce activities are related to social and ethical issues.

Students are provided with the necessary knowledge and skills to engage in research work through the following courses: "Business research methods", "Data analysis".

Economics (ME)

Table 8: Curriculum Economics

No	Course codes	Courses	CUs
Term 1			
Compulsory (16 CUs)			
01	ECO501	Philosophy	04
02	ECO601	Advanced microeconomics	03
03	ECO602	Advanced macroeconomics	03
04	ECO603	Development economics	03
05	ECO604	International economics	03
Term 2			
Compulsory (6 CUs)			
01	ECO605	Public economics	03
02	ECO606	Econometrics	03
Optional (9 CUs): 3 courses from the basic and professional knowledge			
Term 3			
Compulsory (8 CUs)			
01	ECO607	Research methodology in economics	03
02	ENG502	Foreign languages	05
Optional (6 CUs): 2 courses from the basic and professional knowledge			
Term 4, 5			
01	ECO701	Thesis	20

Table 9: Modular structure economics

NO	Course codes	Courses	Volume of credit		
			Total	Theory	Practice
Part 1: Foundation			09	06	03
01	ECO501	<u>Philosophy</u>	04	04	0
02	ECO502	<u>English</u>	05	02	03
Part 2: Basic and professional knowledge (compulsory)			21	21	0
03	ECO601	<u>Advanced Microeconomics</u>	03	03	0
04	ECO602	<u>Advanced Macroeconomics</u>	03	03	0
05	ECO603	<u>Development Economics</u>	03	03	0
06	ECO604	<u>International Economics</u>	03	03	0
07	ECO605	<u>Public Economics</u>	03	03	0
08	ECO606	<u>Econometrics</u>	03	03	0
09	ECO607	<u>Research Methodology in Economics</u>	03	03	0

Part 3: Basic and professional knowledge (optional)			15	15	0
10	FIN610	International finance	03	03	0
11	ECO608	Policy Analysis	03	03	0
12	FIN602	Money – Banking and Financial Markets	03	03	0
13	ECO610	Agricultural Economics	03	03	0
14	FIN615	Project Appraisal	03	03	0
15	BUS628	Place Marketing	03	03	0
16	ECO613	Public Management	03	03	0
17	ECO616	Environmental Economics	03	03	0
18	ECO617	Urban Economics	03	03	0
19	ECO618	Labor Economics	03	03	0
20	ECO621	Vietnam Economy	03	03	0
Phần 4: Thesis			20	20	0
20	ECO701	Thesis	20	20	0
TOTAL			65		

The programme consists of four sections: the foundation with two courses, Philosophy and Foreign languages, required by the MOET, the compulsory basic and professional knowledge with seven courses, and the optional basic and professional knowledge with five courses.

Regarding the integration of theory and practice all courses are designed with a balance of academic knowledge and practice. Among others, courses such as “Econometrics”, “Research methodology in Economics”, “Project appraisal”, and “Vietnam economy” have a high practical function. The practice activity is interwoven with lessons in class and the self-study at home to perform reports, individual or group discussion and presentations of cases or projects in class. Most of the courses have a practical part by organising group presentations, experience sharing with entrepreneurs and case studies. Students interpret problems using the economic theories or principles they have been introduced, and explain and discuss solutions to the issues. The results of the assigned exercises will help teachers to assess the ability to apply theory to the reality of students. In addition, every year, the GS and Faculty of Economics and Public Management conduct various seminars for experience and practice sharing as well. Students can overview the new research trends, or present their research.

The interdisciplinary thinking of the ME is applied on the programme level. First, the programme objectives are achieved due to integrating other disciplines such as applied economics (the contents are reflected in “International economics”, “Urban economics”, “Environmental economics”); various areas of management (the contents are reflected in “Public management”, “Project appraisal”); finance (“Money-banking” and “financial markets”, “International finance”); policy making (“Policy analysis”, “Public economics”), and business. “Econometrics” or “Research methodology in economics” empower students to be confident in selecting the research methods, use the software to analyse data, which helps to make appropriate decisions in business and write their thesis. The interdisciplinary thinking is also reflected in the course contents. “Place marketing” combines the knowledge of marketing, commerce, and management. “Public management” and “Development economics” address the business, finance, and social sciences. “International finance”, “Money-banking” and

“Financial markets” involve finance-banking and politics knowledge together with management knowledge and skills.

Ethical aspects are embedded in the curriculum and expressed in the course learning outcomes. “Research methodology in economics”, “Econometrics” and Thesis writing orientation communicate academic ethical issues to the students.

In “Development economics”, “Public economics”, “Public management”, “Place marketing”, “Environment economics” and “Labour economics”, ethical issues are discussed in terms of human development. Issues such as income, poverty, and inequality which relate to different ethical approaches.

Students are provided with knowledge to engage in research work through the following courses: “Philosophy”, “Research Methodology in Economics”, “Econometrics”, “Policy analysis”.

Finance-Banking

Table 10: Curriculum Finance-Banking

Program structures		Practice oriented	Research oriented
Foundation	Compulsory 2 courses	9 CUs (15%)-18 ECTS ECO501 Philosophy ECO506 Foreign Languages	
Core & professional knowledge	Compulsory 6 courses	18 CUs (30%)-36 ECTS BUS601 Managerial Economics FIN620 Financial markets FIN605 Corporate finance FIN608 Derivative markets FIN606 Commercial bank management FIN604 Research methods	
	Elective	21 CUs (35%)-42 ECTS 7 courses FIN607 Contemporary issues in finance and banking FIN603 Financial investments FIN609 Financial risk management FIN610 International finance FIN611 Financial statement analysis FIN612 Econometrics for finance FIN614 Portfolio management FIN616 Mergers and acquisitions FIN617 Personal finance FIN618 Behavioral finance FIN619: Investment banking FINA613: Financial Accounting	15 CUs (25%)-30 ECTS 5 courses FIN607 Contemporary issues in finance and banking FIN603 Financial investments FIN609 Financial risk management FIN610 International finance FIN611 Financial statement analysis FIN612 Econometrics for finance FIN614 Portfolio management FIN616 Mergers and acquisitions FIN617 Personal finance FIN618 Behavioral finance FIN619: Investment banking FINA613: Financial Accounting
Thesis	Compulsory	12 CUs (20 %)-24 ECTS	18 (30%)-36 ECTS
Total		60-120 ECTS	60-120 ECTS

Table 11: Modular Structure Finance-Banking

NO	Course name	Code	Credits		Note
			Theor y	Practi ce	
1. Foundation			6	3	
1.	Philosophy	ECO501	4	0	
2.	English	ECO506	2	3	
2. Basic and Professional knowledge					
a)	Compulsory		13	5	
3.	Managerial Economics	BUS601	3	0	
4.	Financial Markets	FIN620	2	1	
5.	Corporate Finance	FIN605	2	1	
6.	Derivatives markets	FIN608	2	1	

7.	Commercial Bank Management	FIN606	2	1	
8.	Research Methods	FIN604	2	1	
b)	<i>Optional course (Choose 5 of the below courses)</i>		12	3	
9.	Contemporary Issues in Finance and Banking	FIN607	3	0	
10.	Financial Investments	FIN603	2	1	
11.	Financial Risk Management	FIN609	2	1	
12.	International Finance	FIN610	2	1	
13.	Financial Statements Analysis	FIN611	2	1	
14.	Econometrics for Finance	FIN612	2	1	
15.	Portfolio Management	FIN614	2	1	
16.	Investment Banking	FINA619	2	1	
17.	Personal Finance	FIN617	2	1	
18.	Behavioural Finance	FIN618	3	0	
19.	Mergers and Acquisitions	FIN616	2	1	
20.	Financial Accounting	FIN613	2	1	
3. Thesis					
20.	Research-oriented (Thesis)	17FIN701	18	0	
21.	Practice-oriented (Project)	FIN702	12	0	
	<i>Choose 2 of the below courses</i>		6	0	
	Elective course 1		3	0	
	Elective course 2		3	0	

The MFB programme has two orientations: Practice or research-oriented. Students will have to take either 13 courses (research orientation) or 15 courses (practice orientation) and submit their thesis. The programme has four modules: The compulsory foundation accounts for 15 % of the programme workload; the compulsory core and professional knowledge accounting for 30 %; the elective core and professional knowledge accounting for 25 % (for research orientation) or 35 % (for practice orientation), and thesis, 20-30% according to the direction.

Regarding the integration of theory and practice, there are two study pathways: practice or research-oriented. Students that follow the practice oriented programme take more courses and their thesis is the application of theories to solve issues emerged in their working contexts, proven in the project based thesis. The students of the research orientated programme have less courses and heavily academic requirements on the thesis contents. All courses are designed with a balance of academic knowledge and practice. The practice

activity is interwoven with lessons in class and the self-study at home to perform reports, individual or group discussions and presentations of cases or projects in class. Most of the courses have practical part by organising group presentations, experience sharing with entrepreneurs and case studies. “Research methods”, “Econometrics for finance”, “Financial statement analysis” provide the knowledge and skills in doing research and analysing data to make decisions. Professional courses such as “Commercial bank management”, “Investment banking”, “Financial investment” or “Financial risk management” provide knowledge and skills for students to solve the practical cases in their specific working areas. The results of the assigned exercises will help teachers to assess the ability to apply theory to the reality of students. In addition, the final thesis requires students to apply theories to solve a practical issue or a research problem in the field of finance-banking.

The interdisciplinary thinking of MFB is applied on the programme level. First, the programme objectives are achieved due to integrating other disciplines such as foreign language courses and “Managerial economics”. “Econometrics for Finance” or “Research methods” that empower students to be confident in selecting the research methods, use the software to analyse data, which helps to make effective decisions in financial operations and write their thesis. Students acquire interdisciplinary thinking via the combination of closely related areas as law, economics, and leadership being conveyed in “Contemporary issues in finance and banking”, “Mergers and acquisitions”, “Derivative markets”, “International finance”, “Financial markets” and “Investment banking”. Students also gain more interdisciplinary thinking from the combination of other areas as psychology and services from “Behavioural finance” and “Personal finance”. “Financial statement analysis”, “Corporate finance”, “Financial risk management”, “Commercial bank management”, “Financial investment”, “Portfolio management” and “Financial Accounting” combine the knowledge of finance and management.

Ethical aspects are embedded in the curriculum and expressed in the course learning outcomes. “Research methods”, “Econometrics for finance” and Thesis writing orientation communicate academic ethical issues to the students.

In “Financial markets”, “Corporate finance”, “Derivatives markets”, “Financial statement analysis”, “Mergers and acquisitions”, “Commercial bank management”, “Investment banking”, “Personal finance”, “Financial investment”, and “Portfolio management” work ethics and social responsibilities of the graduates are discussed.

Students are provided with the necessary knowledge and skills to engage in research work through the following courses: “Research Methods”, “Econometrics for finance”.

MTESOL

Table 12: Curriculum Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

No.	Course codes	Courses	CUs
Term 1			
Compulsory (10 CUs)			
01	ECO501	Philosophy	04
02	16ENG503	Academic writing	03
03	ENG611	Theories of language learning and teaching	03
Optional (6 CUs): 2 courses from Basic knowledge			
Term 2			
Compulsory (6 credits)			
01	ENG501	Research methodology	03
02	ENG701	Advanced methodology for language teaching	03
Optional (6 CUs): 1 course from Basic and 1 course from Professional knowledge			
Term 3			
Compulsory (11 credits)			
01	ENG702	Language teaching practice	03
02	ENG709	Course design and material development	03
03	ENG502	Foreign languages: French or Chinese	05
Optional (6 CUs): 2 courses from Professional knowledge			
Term 4, 5			
Compulsory			
01	ENG716	Thesis	15

Table 13: Modular Structure Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

Course codes		Courses	No. of CUs		
			Total	Theory	Practice
Foundation			15		
ECO	501	Philosophy	4	4	
ENG	501	Research methodology	3	2	1
ENG	504	Foreign languages: French or Chinese or others	5	5	
16ENG	503	Academic writing	3	3	
Basic knowledge			12		
Compulsory: 3 credit units					
ENG	611	Theories of language learning and teaching	3	3	
Optional: 9 credit units, in which ENG603 and ENG604 are compulsory					
ENG	602	Sociolinguistics in language teaching	3	3	
ENG	603	Communication and culture	3	3	
ENG	604	Applied linguistics	3	3	
ENG	606	Pragmatics in language teaching	3	3	
ENG	607	Second language acquisition	3	3	
ENG	609	Issues in language learning	3	3	

Professional knowledge			18		
Compulsory: 9 credit units					
ENG	701	Advanced methodology for language teaching	3	3	
ENG	702	Language teaching practice	3	2	1
ENG	709	Course design and material development	3	3	
Optional: 9 credit units					
ENG	710	Language testing and assessment	3	3	
ENG	711	Technology and language learning	3	2	1
ENG	712	Professional development	3	3	
ENG	713	Language program management	3	2	1
ENG	714	Bilingual Education	3	3	
ENG	717	Content and language integrated learning (CLIL)	3	2	1
ENG	718	Teaching English to young learners	3	2	1
Thesis			15		
ENG	716	Thesis	15	15	15
Total			60	54	6

The programme consists of four sections: the foundation including four courses among which Philosophy and Foreign languages courses are required by the MOET, the basic knowledge with four courses, and the professional knowledge with six courses. Both the basic and professional knowledge have the compulsory part and optional ones which comprises of 30 % of the programme workload, to give students more options to their profession requirements and their time allotment as well. The courses are provided in three terms and the time left for the thesis writing.

Regarding the integration of theory and practice all courses are designed with a balance of academic knowledge and practice. Among the courses, “Foreign language”, “Language teaching practice”, “Technology and language learning”, “Language program management”, “Content and language integrated teaching”, and “Teaching English to young learner” have a high practical function. The following courses are embedded into theories: “Academic writing”, “Communication and culture”, “Issues in language learning”, “Advanced methodology for language teaching”, “Course design and material development”, “Language testing and assessment”, “Professional development”. Lecturers highlight the theoretical aspects of the topics and use a variety of teaching activities such as presentations, tutorials, assignments, projects, case studies and extra activities to provide students with the opportunity to apply theoretical concepts to various classroom contexts. In addition, every year, the Graduate School and Faculty of Foreign Languages organise practice sharing seminars for students with speakers sharing teaching experience or introducing teaching methods in specific teaching contexts.

The interdisciplinary thinking of MTESOL is extensively applied on the programme level. First, the programme objectives are achieved due to integrating other disciplines such as psychology, education, and linguistics. In particular, the programme connects English linguistics with the fields of education and management, which is reflected in “Research methodology”, “Theories of learning and teaching” and “Language program management”. Integration in the field of linguistics, including linguistics and second language acquisition can be found in “Second language acquisition”, “Applied linguistics”, “Sociolinguistics in language teaching”. The relationships between language and educational theory are addressed in “Bilingual education and Content” and “Language integrated learning”, or the relationships between statistics and education are addressed in “Research methodology”. The courses “Communication and culture”, “Sociolinguistics in language teaching”, “Language program management” involve culture, education and psychology.

Ethical aspects are embedded in the curriculum and expressed in the course learning outcomes. “Research methodology”, “Academic Writing” and Thesis writing orientation communicate academic ethical issues to the students. The courses “Advanced methodology for language teaching”, “Language teaching practice”, “Course design and material development”, “Language testing and assessment”, and “Professional development” discuss the issue of being a teacher.

Students are provided with the necessary knowledge and skills to engage in research work through the following courses: “Academic Writing”, “Research Methodology” and Thesis writing orientation. These courses provide students with the methodological knowledge and practical experience to conduct research in English language education, how to make use of online reading materials and to implement successful teaching practice. Students have to submit their paper writing which normally comprises of a mini research or their paper on their project work as their final assessment for all courses in the programme.

For all programmes:

The Graduate School regularly conducts thesis orientation sessions including thesis guides or guides how to make use of online reading sections and seminars to help students improve their research skills and publications. The “Qualitative research course” of the PhD programmes is also offered free to Master students in case they need information related to the qualitative research.

Regarding the conduction of the thesis, students are guided in steps. Information related to the thesis requirements and format as well as the time schedule are available in the student handbook. Before conducting their research leading to a thesis, students have to defend a proposal and receive feedback from their supervisor and the Academic Board. Students can also seek counselling from the academic tutor of the programme or from lecturers.

Assessment methods are designed to evaluate the achievement of the course learning outcomes. Depending on the course learning outcomes, different assessment methods are used. In any courses, midterm and final assessment are required with the final one accounting 50 % up of the total marks. Assessment methods include: written/oral projects, home or in-class individual/group assignments, term projects/portfolios, midterm exams and final exam. For the course final examination, various types of assessments as examination or project or paper or a combination.

Appraisal:

The curricula generally reflect the qualification objectives of the study programmes. The contents of the courses are well-balanced, logically connected and oriented towards the intended learning outcomes. The degree and programme names correspond to the contents of the curricula and the programmes’ objectives.

The overall objectives of the study programmes as well as the presented teaching and learning materials and final theses demonstrate the achievement of Master level. However,

there are selected courses in the MBA and MFB programmes where the described learning outcomes in the course descriptions are not completely appropriate with the aspired qualification level: “Human Resource Management” in the MBA; “Corporate Finance” in the MFB. Therefore, the panel members recommend revising the course descriptions and adjusting the learning outcomes.

Also the low number of elective courses for acquiring additional competences and skills was noticed by the panel members for all programmes. The University stated that there are a few electives due to the low numbers of students. However, the panel recommends raising the elective courses as soon as the number of students in those programmes increases.

Interdisciplinary thinking is conveyed in the module “philosophy” that is mandatory in each study programme. Ethical implications are communicated as well.

The panel formed the view that the main courses established in the curricula aim to teach the theoretical aspects of the topics and enhance obtained knowledge through practical application samples. Additionally, a variety of instruction methods such as projects and case-studies provide students with the opportunity to apply theoretical concepts to real cases.

All exams, as they are defined for the courses, are suited in format and content to ascertain the intended learning outcomes. The requirements are in accordance with the desired qualification level. The exams are characterised by a wide variety of test formats such as e.g. papers, project writings and written examinations.

The panel learned that many students struggle with writing the Master thesis. This leads to a prolongation of their studies. In order to prevent that, the panel members recommend implementing more examination forms already in the beginning of their studies where students can practice scientific work and get used to work with quantitative and qualitative methods.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
3.1 Contents					
3.1.1* Logic and conceptual coherence (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.1.2* Rationale for degree and programme name (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.1.3* Integration of theory and practice (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.1.4 Interdisciplinary thinking			X		
3.1.5 Ethical aspects			X		
3.1.6* Methods and scientific practice (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.1.7* Examination and final thesis (Asterisk Criterion)			X		

3.2 Structure

Business Administration (MBA)

Projected study time	2 years, 4 years of maximum study
Number of Credit Points (CP)	60 credit units (CU)/120 ECTS credits
Workload per CP	60 hours per 1 CU/25-30 hours per 1 ECTS credit
Number of modules	4
Time required for processing the final thesis and awarded CP	12 CU practice oriented/18 CU research oriented, 6-12 months
Number of contact hours	838-943 Structured contact ensured by classes at weekday night time or at weekends.

Table 14: MBA Curriculum structure

	Practice oriented		Research oriented		Notes
	CUs	contact hrs	CUs	contact hrs	
Total	60	943	60	838	
Lectures and activities interwoven	36	540	31	465	Max elective courses with practice chosen
Practice	13	390	12	360	Max elective courses with practice chosen
Thesis	12	13	18	13	13 working hrs with supervisor per student

Economics (ME)

Projected study time	1,5 years , 4 years of maximum study
Number of Credit Points (CP)	65 credit units (CU)/130 ECTS credits
Workload per CP	60 hours per 1 CU/25-30 hours per 1 ECTS credit
Number of modules	4
Time required for processing the final thesis and awarded CP	20 CU, 6-12 months
Number of contact hours	838-958 Structured contact ensured by classes at weekday night time or at weekends.

Table 15: ME Curriculum structure

	Details		Notes
	CUs	Contact hrs	
Total	65	733	
Lectures (theories with practice embedded)	42	630	15 hrs/CU
Practice	3	90	30 hrs/CU
Thesis	20	13	13 working hrs with supervisor/student

Finance-Banking (MFB)

Projected study time	1,5 years , 4 years of maximum study
Number of Credit Points (CP)	60 credit units (CU)/120 ECTS credits
Workload per CP	60 hours per 1 CU/25-30 hours per 1 ECTS credit
Number of modules	4
Time required for processing the final thesis and awarded CP	12 CU practice oriented/18 CU research oriented, 6-12 months
Number of contact hours	733

Table 16: MFB curriculum structure

	Practice-oriented		Research-oriented		Notes
	CUs	contact hrs	CUs	contact hrs	
Total	60	958	60	838	
Lectures and activities interwoven	33	495	29	435	Max elective courses with practice chosen
Practice	15	450	13	390	Max elective courses with practice chosen
Thesis	12	13	18	13	13 working hrs with supervisor per student

MTESOL

Projected study time	1,5 years , 4 years of maximum study
Number of Credit Points (CP)	60 credit units (CU)/120 ECTS credits
Workload per CP	60 hours per 1 CU/25-30 hours per 1 ECTS credit
Number of modules	4
Time required for processing the final thesis and awarded CP	15 CU, 6-12 months
Number of contact hours	763-808

Table 17: MTESOL curriculum structure

	Details		Notes
	CUs	Contact hrs	
Total	60	808-763	
Lectures (theories with practice embedded)	37-40	555-600	15 hrs/CU. CUs vary due to elective courses
Practice	8-5	240-150	30 hrs/CU. CUs vary due to elective courses
Thesis	15	13	13 working hrs with supervisor/student

For all programmes

All course descriptions provide detailed information and contain elements, such as course content, name of the lecturer, teaching and learning methods, expected learning outcomes, the mode of teaching, the workload / the number of credit units (CU), and a list of literature.

The study and exam regulations have been defined in the “regulation on master’s degrees program of Ho Chi Minh City Open University”. Article 25 of the regulation sets standards for the structure and grading of exams. Course assessments must comprise of mid-term and final ones, with the final test contribution cannot be less than 50 % of the total course marks. Students can retrieve their results from their account. They can raise their appeal for the scores of the exams to their lecturer and send their notice to the Office of Legal Affairs in case they want to make the appeal of the overall score of the courses.

The 10-scale grading system, their letter grade equivalent and respective descriptions are illustrated below and are listed in the Diploma Supplement of the University as well:

Table 18: 10-scale grading system

<i>HCMCOU 10-scale grading for courses and GPA</i>	<i>New letter scale for courses</i>	<i>Descriptors</i>	<i>New numeric scale for GPA of the terms or school year</i>
8.5-10	(A)	Excellent	4
7-8.4	(B)	Good	3
5.5-6.9	(C)	Average	2
4-5.4	(D)	Below average	1
0-4	(F)	Weak/Fail	0

Regarding the recognition of degrees and periods of study at other HEIs, the Lisbon Recognition Convention is not ratified in Vietnam. However, students who had successfully completed courses at other universities locally and internationally, which have no substantial differences to the ones offered in the related programme, can have their results transferred (but not more than 50 % of the programme). This is regulated in the “Regulations on Exemption of Courses”.

If students fail a certain course (score under four out of ten) during their programme, they are allowed to repeat such a course with students of the next intake or take the courses in the joint Master programmes. In addition, students have to retake courses to improve their GPA if their GPA of the whole programme courses is under 4.5 out of 10. The programme maintains formative assessments in priority with various types and summative assessment for each course to ensure students’ commitment to their study throughout the course. The Academic Board and the Graduate School will take actions if needed after analysing student study results and collecting student feedback from questionnaires for individual courses as well as the entire programme.

In its self-evaluation report, the HCMCOU commits itself to ensuring equal opportunities for its students (cf. self-evaluation report MBA p. 33). It adheres itself to non-discrimination in admission against ethnicity, religion, gender, economic social background, marital status, people in extremely difficult conditions, or age. As for disable students, there are special considerations in the financial support, admission, and the support in their study and assessment waive. In general, HCMCOU seeks potential students who are committed to successfully pursuing the programme through a rigorous entrance examination with a clearly stated and transparent procedure from application, entrance examination, selection and admission. Students in special circumstances (single parent, family grievance, illness or

academic difficulty) can lodge their request either for financial assistance from HCMCOU, or/and the Graduate School for particular assistance such as extension of submission, further tutorials, consultation with the academic faculty.

Appraisal:

The programme structures support the smooth implementation of the curriculum and help students to reach the defined learning outcomes. The programme consists of modules and assigns Credit-Units (CU) per module on the basis of the necessary student workload. The module descriptions provide detailed descriptions of intended learning outcomes.

The feasibility of the study programmes' workload is ensured by a suitable curriculum design, by a plausible calculation of workload, by an adequate number and frequency of examinations, by appropriate support services as well as academic and general student counselling.

There are legally binding study and exam regulations which contain all necessary rules and procedures and take into account, where applicable, national requirements. The study programmes are designed so that students can study for a certain time at other HEIs without any extension of their overall study time. The recognition of degrees and periods of study at other HEIs is regulated in accordance with the Lisbon Recognition Convention. The final grade is supplied with a relative grading table and is indicated in the Diploma Supplement.

The panel formed the view that the HCMCOU ensures gender equality and non-discrimination. The HCMCOU confirmed that students with disabilities are provided with affirmative actions e.g. concerning time and formal standards/requirements throughout the programme and examinations. It is regulated and well described in the document "Regulations on organizing educational activities to support students with disabilities".

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
3.2 Structure					
3.2.1* Modular structure of the study programme (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.2.2* Study and exam regulations (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.2.3* Feasibility of study workload (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.2.4 Equality of opportunity			X		

3.3 Didactical concept

The didactical focus of the Master programmes is learner-centered and is oriented towards the programme objectives. The lecturers employ a variety of activities to promote students' active role in their learning process such as case studies, problem presentations and discussions, project building, article journal reviews, group and individual presentations and paper writing. It shall enhance individual students' understanding of theories to select the use of theories in specific contexts. On the other hand, seminar, project works, research projects,

and the supervised Master thesis enhance students' research skills. In most courses, students are encouraged to work together in a group with their own experiences to construct ideas and work with their team members for the project work. In doing so, together with their actual business working environment, students acquire and develop their understanding of concepts and principles, as well as skills in communication, interpersonal, and performance skills. Though HCMCOU has a strong infrastructure to offer courses in blended mode or online, all the courses of the Master programmes confine themselves to the presence teaching as other modes of delivery are not permitted by MOET yet.

Course outlines, textbooks and all other course materials are made available to students before the courses begin. For each course, there are two common types of materials: required textbooks and references. The lecturers also use online resources, supplementary materials such as journal articles or case studies, which are supposed to provide a comprehensive view of the course. Apart from the University's library, students have access to an online library operated by the Center for Statistics and Science and Technology Information of Ho Chi Minh City. Students can get journal articles, research reports, and other materials for their assignments and theses from national as well as international databases such as ProQuest, Springer, and IEEE Explore.

In addition to several tutoring sections fixed for the related programmes such as "Choosing topics for the thesis" at the second term, "Exploiting the online materials" is conducted twice a year. There is one academic tutor for each programme. The tutor is one of the course lecturers who agree to work on a yearly contract with the Graduate School. The tutor is also a member of the Academic Board of the programme so that he is well informed of the programme operation and he can easily inform the Academic Board issues for prompt improvement. This programme tutor helps students with their study problems, especially with choosing topics for their theses and writing research proposals and theses. Lecturers of courses also provide academic counselling related to their areas.

The programmes host a variety of international and local guest speakers from different universities, institutes and enterprises from different public and private sectors to deliver seminars, workshops or to join the classes to share their work experience with the students. Guest speakers are invited based on their expertise, for the purposes of updating current principles or theories or research trends or providing demonstration of how to apply the theories into practice, or experience sharing in practical and factual cases.

MBA, ME, MFB:

In addition, students are required to attend the International Conferences co-organised by the GS and the Faculty of Business Administration every year. To make the best out of the limited resources, the GS considers the three closely related Master programmes as one group and students and lecturers of the three programmes all share the resources assigned as the seminars, conferences and lecturers, reading materials as well. The following table summarises the seminars and conferences from 2017.

Table 19: MBA, ME, MFB: Seminars and conferences from 2017

Names of seminars, conferences	Date
International conferences	
Vietnam's business, economics and resources conference (VBER) http://vber.ou.edu.vn/vber2019-home/	18-20/7/2019
VBER http://vber2018.ou.edu.vn/	22-24/7/2018
VBER http://vber2017.ou.edu.vn/	16-18/11/2017
International conference on Business (ICB)2019 tp://icb2019.ou.edu.vn/pages/view/13-proceeding-online	5-6/11/2019
International conference on Business (ICB) 2017 http://icb2019.ou.edu.vn/pages/view/13-proceeding-online	12/10/2017
International conference Sustainable tourism in HCMC http://kqtkd.ou.edu.vn/hoi-nghi-ban-tron-hoi-thao-sustainable-tourism-2017	12-14/4/2017
Rethinking Asian development and society in the 21st Century: A comparative overview on 30 years of Vietnam's achievements under Doi Moi and challenges ahead	6-9/11/2019
Domestic conferences	
Cơ chế và chính sách tạo lập nguồn vốn phát triển vùng kinh tế trọng điểm phía Nam (Policies and mechanisms to raise funds for developing the Southern key economic zone)	21/12/2018
Những giải pháp điều tiết giá trị gia tăng từ đất, tập trung vào đầu tư cơ sở hạ tầng và chuyển đổi mục đích sử dụng đất (Monitoring the added value of the land, focusing on investment into the land)	20/10/2017
Chính sách gắn kết FDI với doanh nghiệp trong nước (FDI and local entrepreneurs)	08/09/2017

TESOL:

The programme hosts seminars on various topics in the field of TESOL with speakers coming from Vietnam and other countries in the world. The speakers share with students their experience and expert knowledge of research, publications, and teaching at specific contexts. In addition, students are required to attend the yearly International Open TESOL Conferences co-organised by the GS and the Faculty of Foreign Languages to share and to be shared their research, teaching experience, and update the new trends in language learning and teaching.

Table 20: TESOL: Seminars

Date	Seminars	Speakers
06/09/2020	Managing a language center	Director of HCMC University of Education Language Center, Branch 2
8/12/2019	Classroom management: Teaching all students	Head of international programs Wellspring Sai Gon school
9/11/2019	American culture	The US Consulate HCMC
01/11/2019	Quality in academic publishing: Making smarter choices	Monash University, Australia
09,10,11,14/1/2019	International research and publishing training series for lecturers and experts of foreign languages faculty	Monash University, Australia
02/11/2018	Emerging areas of interest and current Directions in TESOL research: Choosing a topic for graduate research	Monash University, Australia
31/8/2018	Extensive reading and listening	Reading Association
08/12/2017	Self-directed learning in language teaching	Rensburg, University of Southern Queensland, Australia

Appraisal:

The didactical concept of the study programmes is described, plausible, and oriented towards the programme objectives. It allows the application of different teaching and learning methods, such as case studies, problem presentations, discussions and project building. Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process. The concept of self-study allows students to flexibly organise their study time. This is particularly important for students who work or have family commitments.

The accompanying course materials are oriented towards the intended learning outcomes and correspond to the required qualification level. They are up to date and digitally accessible for the students. They are user-friendly and encourage students to engage in further independent studies.

Guest lecturers are regularly invited, their contribution forms an integral part of the study programmes' didactical concept. They come from a variety of occupations, which enhances students' chances of employment thanks to the profound insights they gain.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
3.3 Didactical concept					
3.3.1* Logic and plausibility of the didactical concept (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.3.2* Course materials (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.3.3 Guest lecturers		X			
3.3.4 Lecturing tutors					X

3.4 Internationality

In its self-evaluation report HCMCOU states that internationalisation is one of the main components in the strategic plan of the University (cf. self-evaluation report MBA p. 33). The programmes were designed with regard to the context of globalisation, current development of international labour market, as well as increasing foreign investment in Vietnam. The international contents and intercultural aspects implemented are reflected in the curriculum.

MBA:

The MBA curriculum was benchmarked in the process of developing HCMCOU MBA 2019 curriculum, such as University of Warwick (England), representing the curriculum in the developed countries and Universiti Putra Malaysia (Malaysia), representing the curriculum in Southeast Asia countries, in addition to those of local HEIs.

There is prevalent use of English materials in teaching, learning and in referring for thesis writing. Out of 21 introduced courses, there are 20 courses (except the Philosophy course with the course outline nation-wide prescribed by MOET) using reference books in English, and there are 12 courses using the main textbooks in English.

The multi-cultural aspects of business and global business environment are concentrated in courses and during the teaching process because of the characteristics of business. Examples can be found directly in the contents in the “International business management”, “International marketing” and “Global strategic management” courses. The cases used for study are withdrawn from global companies with their transnational issues as well.

ME:

The ME curriculum is benchmarked in the process of developing HCMCOU ME 2019 curriculum, such as that of University of Kiel (Germany) and Australian National University (Australia), in addition to those of local HEIs. There is prevalent use of English materials in teaching, learning and in referencing for thesis writing. Out of 20 introduced courses, there are 19 courses (except the Philosophy course with the course outline nation-wide prescribed by MOET) using reference books in English.

The international aspects of business, politics and globalisation environment are concentrated in courses and during the teaching process. Examples can be found directly in the contents of all courses such as “International economics”, “International finance”, “Development economics”.

MFB:

The MFB curriculum is benchmarked in the process of developing HCMCOU MFB 2019 curriculum, such as St. Gallen University, Newcastle University and Ghent University. HCMCOU MFB 2019 program has been developed in tune with their objectives, the majority of course contents and sequence.

There is prevalent use of English materials in teaching, learning and in referring for thesis writing. All the professional courses rely on the textbooks in English. Though all courses are taught in Vietnamese, the slides of lessons are given in English prevalently. The courses are updated with latest materials and their main contents are internationally used such as “Financial market”, “Corporate finance”, “Derivative markets” to provide the update knowledge, skills as well as help students build ethical standards required in the field of finance and banking. Some courses are provided in English as well.

MTESOL:

The nature of the MTESOL programme is to enhance Vietnamese teachers how to teach English as a foreign/second language. The international contents and intercultural aspects therefore are mingled in the contents as English language use cannot be understood alone from the culture of the English-speaking countries.

The international contents and intercultural aspects are embedded in the contents of all the courses and extra activities of the programme. International contents are most clearly reflected in the two courses: “Communication and culture” and “Foreign language” (French or Chinese). In addition, many other courses deal with issues in language teaching and learning not only in Vietnam, but all over the world, together with all the materials from the English-speaking countries. These courses include “Theories of language learning and teaching”, “Sociolinguistics in language teaching”, “Applied linguistics”, “Pragmatics in language teaching”, “Second language acquisition”, “Issues in language learning”, “Advanced methodology for language teaching” and “Course design and material development”. The courses above prepare students to function successfully in an international environment taken into consideration the cultural aspects. In the MTESOL programme, 12 out of 14 courses that students have to study are taught in English, and, accordingly, all course materials for them are also in English. In addition, students have to take one foreign language course, which is either Chinese or French. Vietnamese is used as a medium of instruction only for “Philosophy”.

Since 2018, the GS, together with the Edith Cowan University (ECU), Australia, has also organised study tours to Australia, where students can undertake studies and do classroom observation in a foreign setting, visit places of academic and cultural interest. For example, in 2018, participants attended several seminars at ECU, met with ECU postgraduate students, and visited some junior high schools and language centers in Perth, Australia.

All programmes:

English text books and reading materials are used extensively in all courses, which shall require students to improve their English for their study. There are many other classroom activities that need their fluent English such as reviewing articles in English, reading English materials and doing their assignments. Students are encouraged to write thesis in English and present their thesis in English. In addition, the international conferences and seminars (see chapter 3.3.) held on campus also give students an opportunity to experience working

with people from other cultures and gain knowledge, experience and international practice from experts.

The programme enhances the international experience of the faculty members by inviting lecturers from well-known universities from Germany, France, Hungary and Australia in order to teach courses or to give seminars. In addition, the majority of the Vietnamese lecturers of the Master programmes obtained their Master and Doctoral degrees from universities abroad including Australia, USA, England, Thailand, France, Germany and New Zealand (see chapter 4.1). These lecturers actively present their research at international conferences where they have a great opportunity to network and learn new knowledge and skills from colleagues around the world.

The number of foreign students is very limited in all programmes⁸ as potential students are most likely not to be able to meet the MOET's requirements: the "MOET Regulations on Admissions and Training of Masters and PhD programs for foreigners issued in 2018" requires foreigners to pass the entrance exam and have the Vietnamese proficiency level B2.

Appraisal:

The panel welcomes the international contents and literature being implemented in all study programmes. International contents and intercultural aspects are an integral part of the curricula. Students are thus prepared for the challenges in an international working environment. However, the international composition of the student body is very low.

Many lecturers in the study programme graduated from Western countries and studied abroad (see chapter 4.1). Also the lecturer exchange programmes like Erasmus are used for international exchange. With their internationally gained expertise they promote the students' acquisition of international competences and skills.

Foreign language contents will be achieved by the use of international literature and English-taught courses. In MTESOL, the language of instruction is English. For all programmes, the University should ensure that students can cope with international literature and English content (see Appraisal in Chapter 2).

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
3.4 Internationality					
3.4.1* International contents and intercultural aspects (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.4.2 Internationality of the student body				X	
3.4.3 Internationality of faculty			X		
3.4.4 Foreign language contents			X		

⁸ MTESOL: 2 students; MFB: 6 students; MBA: 1 student; ME: 0 students

3.5 Multidisciplinary competences and skills (Asterisk Criterion)

The programmes provide students with multidisciplinary competences and skills in a multi-facet way. Cognitive skills are enhanced through their learning process and the teaching activities. They practice and develop a number of their generic skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, creative thinking, system mindset, team working, leadership. In addition, the programmes help to develop effective communication, intercommunication, performance and self-management skills. These competencies are attended via the activities such as doing case studies, projects in teams, evaluating the performance of other teams, generating ideas about the local and global issue, conducting their oral presentation and discussion on reports or cases in class or conducting research. Moreover, students are encouraged to deliver their discourses in seminars. The team work and conflict handling skills of the students are simultaneously developed through various types of team assignments as well.

MBA:

To cope with the fast changing business community and the multi-dimensional characteristic of the world today, the programme provides students with knowledge and skills in a multi-facet way. Students acquire the relevant knowledge related to the strategy and leadership; organization; external environment and management in inter-disciplined perspectives such as economy, business, sociology, psychology, IT, and laws.

ME:

To cope with the fast-changing economy and the multi-dimensional characteristic of the society today, students acquire the relevant knowledge related to the globalisation, and the development of the country and organisation; external environment and internal management in inter-disciplined perspectives involving economy, business, sociology, psychology, politics, and laws. Their ability to conduct research into business and management issues, either individually or as part of a team for presentations/projects is enhanced as well. The courses from the basic to professional knowledge empower students' multidisciplinary competence.

MFB:

The programme includes several elective courses of related areas in the professional knowledge to create connection of all majors. Students will learn how to appreciate the financial reports in the "Financial statement analysis course". Then they could apply their knowledge and skills acquired in that course to estimate the corporate value in the "Mergers and acquisitions" and the "Investment banking" course.

MTESOL:

As seminars, tutorials (discussions and presentations), and projects are principal modes of teaching and learning, the cognitive, critical thinking, ICT, communication, and performance skills are integrated into most course contents of the MTESOL programme. In these courses, students are required to prepare presentation, to participate into discussions, or to conduct microteaching (as in the "Advanced methodology for language teaching", "Language teaching practice" course in class or in groups to solve the problems, to complete the tasks or projects, to demonstrate their justification of the theories, principles of language learning and teaching, or types of teaching organisation.

Appraisal:

Content and learning outcomes of the curriculum and the didactical and methodological measures show that the students can acquire multidisciplinary competencies and skills. This is supported by means of suitable didactical and methodological measures.

As confirmed by students and programme management during the digital conference, the programmes offer many workshops where projects are made together. Within these projects and activities like presentations and group work, multidisciplinary competences and skills are enhanced.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
3.5* Multidisciplinary competences and skills (Asterisk Criterion)			X		

3.6 Skills for employment / Employability (Asterisk Criterion)

The programmes aim to provide continuous development for students, formation of their personal and professional qualities. The programmes position theory into practice, built on the practical experience of the participants in addition to the academic and practitioner expertise of the faculty. The curriculum intends to provide updated content to equip students to better cope with the more demanding and fast changing environment.

In the MBA and ME programme, most of the students start the programme with the current employment or recent employment experience. Their primary aim is to increase their employability and working effectiveness. The programmes help them to widen their job opportunities in their related professional areas.

Appraisal:

The programmes are oriented towards developing working skills for students to strengthen their employability. The integration of theory and practice by using case studies in the courses, making use of practitioner's expertise of the faculty as well as being informed about global trends help students to get an insight into the labour market and to find their own areas of interest.

These aspects promote students' employability and help them to develop initial professional competencies and skills.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
3.6* Skills for employment / Employability (Asterisk Criterion)			X		

4. Academic environment and framework conditions

4.1 Faculty

MBA:

The MBA programme has 22 full-time, four part-time, and 13 visiting faculty members. All full-time and visiting lecturers are Vietnamese, while part-time lecturers are foreigners or Vietnamese expatriates.

Title	Number			Percentage
	Full time	Part time	Visiting	
Professor		1		2.6%
Associate Professor	2	2	3	17.9%
Lecturer (PhD, DBA)	20	1	10	79.5%
Total	39			100%

As required by MOET, the faculty members need to hold Doctorate degrees and to conduct research to be eligible to teaching the programme. They all hold doctorate degrees in the various business related fields, namely business administration, international business, management, marketing, economics, etc. The majority of the staff (87.2 %) has graduated abroad and the rest obtain their PhD at Vietnamese universities. All have at least two years teaching experience at HEIs.

ME:

The ME programme has eleven full-time, five part-time, and 15 visiting faculty members. All full-time and visiting lecturers are Vietnamese, while two part-time lecturers are foreigners.

Faculty members	Number	Academic degrees and titles		Graduated from	
		PhD.	Prof, Assoc. Prof.	USA, Europe,	Vietnam
Full time	11	11	5	4	7
Part time	5	5	1	3	2
Visiting	15	15	5	14	1
Total	31	31	11	21	10

The majority of them hold the doctorate degrees in economics, while only 6/31 faculty members are of the related fields, such as Development studies, Finance, and Political studies. 67 % of them have graduated abroad and the rest obtain their PhD at Vietnamese universities. All have more than two years teaching experience at HEIs.

MFB:

The MFB programme has 13 full-time, 11 part-time, and 23 visiting faculty members. All full-time and visiting faculty members are Vietnamese, while part-time faculty members are mostly Vietnamese expatriates.

Title	Number			Percentage
	<i>Full time</i>	<i>Part time</i>	<i>Visiting</i>	
Professor		1		2.13%
Associate Professor	2		10	25.53%
Lecturer (PhD)	11	10	13	72.34%
Total	47			

35/47 faculty members of the MFB programme has Doctorate degrees related to finance, banking. The rest are majored in economics, and business administration. 27.7 % of the faculty members have obtained the associate professor or professor titles. 59.6 % of them have been graduated abroad.

MTESOL:

The MTESOL programme has 15 full-time, 5 part-time, and 25 visiting faculty members.

Academic title	Number of staff	Percentage
Professor	1 (part time)	2.2%
Associate professor	7 (2 full time, 5 visiting staff)	15.6
Lecturer	37 (13 full time, 4 part time, 20 visiting staff)	82.2%
Total	45	100%

All faculty members of the MTESOL programme hold doctorate degrees in the fields related to language teaching, namely Education, TESOL, Literature, Linguistics or Language contrastive analysis. The majority of the staff (91.3%) have graduated abroad and the rest obtain their PhD at Vietnamese universities. All have at least two years teaching experience.

For all programmes:

Lecturers, who are eligible to teach at HCMCOU must not only hold the business related doctoral degree, but also have a Certificate of Higher education Teaching as required by the MOET, which equips lecturers the pedagogical knowledge and skills needed to teach at an HEI. HCMOU has its recruitment procedures including document overview and applicant interview, and teaching demonstration. The Recruitment committee appointed by the President checks the applicant's document and conducts interviews with each applicant to ensure that he has adequate pedagogical skills and qualifications. Teaching experience is mandatory for lecturers at the bachelor level. As to teaching the postgraduate programmes, the academic qualifications are of priority.

HCMCOU sets professional development as a requirement for the faculty. Teaching staff has to engage in a variety of professional workshops, meetings, and conferences world-wide, which could benefit them in their teaching and research capabilities. Publications are required for all lecturers yearly (at least having a completed research project at all levels or an article published in the journal list accepted by the Vietnam Professor Council).

HCMCOU regularly holds the in-service training courses and seminars on teaching methodology or various modes of delivery and provides technical support for their teaching enhancement. Teaching demonstration and various activities to model teaching activities as how to teach with English as means of instruction, online teaching, on how to improve teaching methods are organised regularly to boost the effective teaching practice.

Most of the faculty members have professional experience in their related field. They have actively conducted various research related to their field. Some are working in their related field and are teaching part-time at the same time. Their practical experience helps to bridge the gap of theory and practice, which is a benefit for the programmes. In Vietnam, the State employees as HCMCOU faculty members are required not to work for other organisations and this therefore limit them to work in addition to teaching to a large extent. HCMCOU makes it up by employing part-time faculty members to share their working experience and expertise in their course and seminars.

Cooperation among the faculty members within the programmes is reflected in different academic activities throughout the year. At the faculty level, each lecturer is directed to work during the year through a worksheet given at the beginning of each academic year. Faculty members who share the same works have collaborated together to implement it. In addition, lecturers also work together in organising conferences, seminars and training programmes. The faculty members have yearly informal meetings for courses review and formal meetings every two years to revise the curriculum. They often collaborate on issues related to the improvement of existing academic programmes and on the development of new courses. Meetings are also held at the beginning of the term, or for the strategic development of the programmes. At the university level, lecturers need to attend the university-wide meeting on the first Monday of the month. In this meeting, lecturers have been updated on the university's activities in the previous month, the orientations in the current month and may participate in various community activities. Through these meetings, lecturers can meet their colleagues in the same faculty and from other faculties. This will help improve internal cooperation among the lecturers.

For academic support, students are receiving regular support through various sections such as programme orientation at the beginning of the programme, how to exploit materials online, how to work effectively for publications, and how to select topics for thesis. In addition, the programme has an academic tutor for all students. The academic tutor provides students with the necessary guidance related to their course selection, study plan, thesis writing and helps students cope with their study issues. Each lecturer is required to give students consultation, counselling via email and personal tutoring on demand in and out of class. Students may make appointment or come during the faculty office time for inquiry, discussion or guidance related to the course. A thesis academic advisor is assigned to each student upon their preparation for thesis. The supervisors are responsible for giving guidance, advising, and giving feedback on students' work on their research and writing up reports.

Appraisal:

The structure and number of the faculty correspond to the programmes' requirements and ensure that students reach the intended qualification objectives. The panel highlighted the numerical relation between lecturer and student that ensures an individual consultation between student and lecturer.

According to the CVs of the faculty staff, the panel formed the view that the academic qualification of the faculty corresponds to the requirements and objectives of the study programmes. During the online conference, the faculty staff confirmed that measures for the

further qualification of the faculty members such as trainings for teaching methods take place.

The pedagogical and didactical qualification of the faculty staff correspond to the requirements and objectives of the study programmes as well. The HCMCOU ensures that assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive support in developing their own skills in this field.

According to the CVs of the lecturers in the MTESOL programme, the pedagogical and teaching qualifications are impressive, as most of the lecturers come from the educational and pedagogical field and have first-hand experience of teaching methods.

The practical business experience of the faculty corresponds to the requirement of the programmes to integrate theory and practice. The panel welcomes that particularly the part-time lecturers are coming from the professional field. This practical experience conveys to the students a special insight into practical problems and solutions but also opens them a chance to get a direct link to a future job. The practitioners in the MTESOL programme can be highlighted in this matter as their practical experience is directly linked to essential course content.

The faculty members cooperate with each other for the purpose of tuning the curriculum and lectures towards the overall qualification objectives. Meetings of all those teaching in the programme take place in the frame of conferences and in monthly meetings.

Student support is an integral part of the services provided by the Faculties. During the online conference, the students confirmed that the faculty members are available via email and Social Media for the students, even outside the office hours as well. The faculty members respond quickly. The students are fully content with the support they receive.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
4.1 Faculty					
4.1.1* Structure and quantity of faculty in relation to curricular requirements (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.1.2* Academic qualification of faculty (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.1.3* Pedagogical / didactical qualification of faculty (Asterisk Criterion)		MTESOL	MBA, ME, MFB		
4.1.4 Practical business experience of faculty		MTESOL	MBA, ME, MFB		
4.1.5* Internal cooperation (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.1.6* Student support by the faculty (Asterisk Criterion)		X			
4.1.7(*) Student support in distance learning (only relevant and an Asterisk Criterion for blended-learning/distance learning programmes)					X

4.2 Programme management

The programme director of the Master programmes at the Graduate School consists of two persons: the Graduate School Dean being in charge of the operation and management of the programme, and the Head of the Academic Board mainly in charge of the academic-related aspects. The Graduate School Dean has the last voice and can be considered as Programme director of all Master programmes.

The Graduate School Dean is appointed by the HCMCOU President. She/he is assisted by the Vice Dean and by an administrative staff of ten people. The Dean is responsible for administration, operation, and student and staff support of the local programmes leading to the Master and Doctorate programmes and the development of new programmes, as well as the quality assurance and improvement of the Graduate School programmes. The Vice Dean is responsible for the administration, operation as well as student and staff support for the joint programmes and short training courses.

Each master programme has its own Academic Board which comprises mainly the Dean of the department related to the discipline and some distinguished lecturers, among whom there is one permanent member. The permanent member works at the Graduate School with a fixed schedule as an academic counsellor/tutor, and works assigned by the Head of Academic Board. The Academic Board is in charge of the academic activities of each discipline such as programme reviews and quality assurance, as well as the arrangement of the teaching lecturers and members of different committees. The Graduate School Dean and Head of the Academic Board work together to ensure the programmes work properly. The Head of the Academic Board is also the Dean of the related Faculty and this enables him to manage efficiently the teaching faculty members as well as to organise joint activities for students at all levels.

The administrative support offered to students and faculty members are of three levels. At the University level, the administrative offices, academic support offices and the faculties provide relevant support to the Graduate School and to both students and faculty members such as library, infrastructure maintenance, finance, etc. The Graduate School is the main administrative support provider to both the students and faculty members at the post graduate level. At the class level, the class monitors will guarantee and the faculty members will help to guarantee that students have the support needed.

At the Graduate School level, the programme Academic Board, and faculty members meet at least once a year, especially at the beginning of the school year, and once or twice for reviewing of the programmes. The faculty members of the programmes receive mainly the administrative support from the Graduate School and academic support from the programme Academic Board. The faculty members are well informed about the purposes of the programmes and any improvement strategies that the programmes are pursuing so that, in turn, they could provide support to students if needed. In addition to that, they can discuss with the Dean and Head of the Academic Board issues related to the learning and teaching activities or request for improvements or more support from the Graduate School and from the University offices. They also receive support from the Graduate School admin staff, as they introduce the faculty to classes, give faculty members the student list or other paperwork, contracts or exchange with the faculty members or help solve the classroom facility issues.

At the class level, each class has a chief class monitor and a vice monitor elected by the students every year. The monitors act as representatives of students, and they are the main contacts with the Graduate School. For administration services, each programme has one administrative staff assigned to support students during their whole time of the study. The staff takes care of the administration and other activities for the smooth operation of the programmes. The administration staff has a meeting with the class every term to understand student problems during their study and acts as a coordinator in connecting different sections in the University offices to solve all the administration issues.

At the beginning of the course, students have an orientation section not only about the objectives of the programme but also about the Graduate School regulations and all the support students can have and how they obtain the service from the University offices and from the Graduate School. Information is very handy in the student handbook and on the website of the Graduate School or from the Graduate school staff consultancy or from the faculty members. In addition, Edusoft/Eduweb/LMS software, the software of academic management of HCMCOU, can help students manage their study themselves from their own account and their study plan. It keeps record of all activities as their grades, tuition, course selection, etc. students have done during their study time.

At least once a year there is a dialog section between students and the President, and the directors of University offices so that students can show their feedback on the service they obtain from the University and from the Graduate School and take part in the decision-making process that could affect positively their study activities and their interest. In addition, the Graduate School also yearly conducts surveys of the graduates regarding their satisfaction with the service from the Graduate School.

Appraisal:

As confirmed during the online conference, the Graduate School Dean and Heads of the Academic Board (Deans of the related study department) coordinate the processes of all participants in the study programmes and ensures that the study programmes run smoothly. Teachers and students are included in the decision-making processes where their areas of work are involved.

Faculty members and students are supported by the administration in the organisation of the study programme. Sufficient administrative staff is available. Decision-making processes, authority, and responsibilities are clearly defined. Teachers and students are included in the decision-making processes where their areas of work are involved.

The opportunities of electronic service-support are used and supplement personal one-to-one counselling. HCMCOU offers the administrative staff opportunities for continuous professional development. During the online conference, they highlighted the training in administrative tasks and communication workshops to stakeholders.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
4.2	Programme management					
4.2.1*	Programme Director (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.2.2	Process organisation and administrative support for students and faculty			X		

4.3 Cooperation and partnerships

HCMCOU has more than 30 agreements with international HEIs. The cooperation contributed to the programmes in several aspects: curriculum development, enhancement of the international environment, joint research, and joint conferences activities. Business is the field where the university has developed the most extensive collaboration with both local and international institutions. As to the international cooperation, there are twelve joint programmes for Bachelor and Master degrees.

HCMCOU is a member of various organisations mainly related to open education and quality assurance as The Asian Association of Open University, International Council for Open and Distance Education, ASEAN University Network-Quality Assurance, the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education organisation-Sufficient Economic Philosophy and Quality Matter.

With the focus on the practice, HCMCOU works very close with industry, professional bodies, local authorities, organisations, and business organisations, both locally and internationally as they are fully aware of the importance of their role in providing concepts in developing the curriculum and their precious sharing of the business practice as well as the employment of the graduates.

In the MBA programme 53 companies have signed a Memorandum of understanding for cooperation. In the ME programme nine companies and organisations and four provinces have signed the Memorandum of understanding. The provinces require HCMCOU to provide training for their human resources, especially those in the economic discipline at the Master level.

The MFB programme has a bank simulation system, a virtual bank model designed by the HCMCOU and VietVictory Company to support students to gain more practical access. In addition, the HCMCOU has signed agreements with banks as Nam A bank, Sacombank, Agribank, etc., and security companies such Phu Hung Securities Corp., FPT securities Corp., Bao Viet securities Corp.

In MTESOL HCMCOU has signed agreements with about ten high schools in HCMC per year so that those institutions will provide premises for TESOL students to do classroom observations, teachers for mentoring students' teaching on the spot and premises for practice.

All programmes regularly invite business or organisation leaders to present at seminars for sharing their practical business experiences or public management practice with Master students.

Appraisal:

The panel formed the view that there is a very good exchange between HCMCOU and other national and international universities. The HCMCOU is very open-minded with regard to curriculum development, enhancement of the international environment, joint research, and joint conferences activities with other universities.

The scope and nature of cooperation with business enterprises and other institutions relevant to the programme are plausibly presented. The agreements forming the basis of the cooperation are documented. The cooperation is actively pursued and has a clear impact on the conception and implementation of the study programme. All such activities contribute to the development of the students' qualification and skills. The panel appreciates the cooperation with governmental institutions that are also a source of student recruitment. Since the number of students remains low the panel suggests looking up for further professional networks which can be used for student acquisition.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
4.3 Cooperation and partnerships					
4.3.1(*) Cooperation with HEIs and other academic institutions or networks (Asterisk Criterion for cooperation programmes)			X		
4.3.2(*) Cooperation with business enterprises and other organisations (Asterisk Criterion for educational and vocational programmes, franchise programmes)			X		

4.4 Facilities and equipment

The Graduate School classrooms are at Vo Van Tan campus. A sufficient number of group rooms are available there for the Master programmes. All classrooms at HCMCOU are equipped with air conditioners, LCD projectors, and display screens. The rooms are properly equipped for disabled students. The quantity, quality, media, and IT facilities of the teaching rooms meet the standards required for teaching generally for all the programmes. Information screens are handy for main information for students.

The Graduate School has several computer labs which are usually utilised for training sessions. There are also computers at the library on Vo Van Tan campus which are accessible to the students for their learning and researching purposes. IT and learning resources are provided to the programme through the Center for Information System Management. These include:

- HCMCOU portal which allows students to access to the school website or any Offices or Faculties websites or Edusoft/Eduweb for information
- Access to the free high-speed internet via wireless LAN. The highspeed Wi-Fi connection and wireless LAN is available everywhere within the building so that students can work on the campus with their own laptops to support a virtual campus for all students; In addition, there is a technical support office located on the second floor of the building

offering advice and troubleshooting technological problems to students during working hours and a hotline for additional support outside normal working hours.

- E-mail accounts given to each student upon enrolment
- LMS platform (<http://gslms.ou.edu.vn/>) for learning, teaching, and managing the courses

The University's main library is located on the sixth floor of Vo Van Tan campus where classes of the Master programmes are held. It is equipped with 162 computers and other equipment for readers such as photocopiers, printers it opens seven days a week, from 7:30 am till 8 pm during the week and from 7:30 am to 5 pm on Sunday. There are 7,976 textbooks and books; 36 journals both in print and electronic; CDs/DVDs, and dissertations/thesis in Vietnamese or English language that students could borrow up to four items for a month free of charge. Besides, students have additional accounts to have a share of e-library of the HCMC Bureau of Science and Technology. The HCMCOU Library offers access to the following Online Library resources: ProQuest, Emerald, ARD, Cengage Learning magazines, Springer, IEEE.

The library website (<http://thuvien.ou.edu.vn/>) allows students to have online services while being off campus. The library has budget for purchasing materials every year in order to keep up with the needs of learning and researching of students. The librarians are available to support students for accessing the online library on spot or via contacting emails. Students may request additional training sections on-site to help them to find electronic documents which are necessary for their research and learning. The HCMCOU library also shares databases with the library of the National University - HCMC, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Hanoi Law University, HCMC University of Science, Industrial University of HCMC, HCMC University of Foreign Languages and Information Technology, An Giang University, providing a diverse and up-to-date reference sources for students and lecturers.

Appraisal:

Since the online conference was conducted replacing an on-site visit, the panel did not have the opportunity to visit the University's building. HCMCOU has provided a virtual tour presenting the University's premises and facilities. Based on the materials provided, the panel formed the view that a smooth running of the University is ensured regarding the capacities for teaching, research, studies, and administration.

During the interviews the students affirmed that the access to the literature and journals as well as to digital media (e.g. electronic media, databases) is ensured, for instance by using online library resources like ProQuest and Emerald. The literature expressly required for the study programmes are available in the library and kept up to date. In this regard the panel also appreciates the possibility to receive literature at other universities.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
4.4 Facilities and equipment					
4.4.1* Quantity, quality, media and IT equipment of teaching and group rooms (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.4.2* Access to literature (Asterisk Criterion)			X		

4.5 Additional services

HCMCOU Office of Student Services has a section (Job placement Centre) in charge of career counselling and placement service for students of the whole University with various activities such as organising job fairs, acting as a head hunter agency for industry, job orientation. The University's career counselling centre has been established long time ago to introduce career-oriented works, internships, career counselling, job placement for alumni and potential graduates via monthly emails, the University's website, and social media. The Office has organised many events, workshops, seminars and job fairs for students and alumni such as coordinating the organisation of extracurricular activities, interacting with industrial organisations, supporting start-up businesses for students, promoting student employability. They also coordinate with professional experts, scholars, lecturers to provide students training courses in terms of personality formation, professional ethics, soft skills, develop skills. Students are offered many guidance and advices in looking for a job namely making a profile, writing a job application, handling situations in interviews, and communicating with employers.

The Graduate School also relies on alumni in career counselling. Successful graduates are sources of motivation for current students. The yearly Graduate School Alumni Gathering Day comprising of talk shows and sports and music performance competitions mingles current and graduated students. Alumni are invited regularly (at least once a year) to share tips and experience from their working place as well as information about job opportunities or even offer their peer employment. Furthermore, alumni take part in questionnaires after graduation, which seek students' feedback on the whole programme as well as the support services including the quality of support of the Graduate School staff, the quality of facilities for students' study, research and other activities, such as labs, library, etc.

The HCMCOU Alumni Association is the main communication channel with the graduates of HCMCOU. It comprises graduates from undergraduate to graduate levels. It has been established to facilitate connections between alumni and universities and helps to collect feedback from the graduates and provides a forum to form new friendships and business relationships among graduates. Office of Student affairs and Graduate School also provide pictures, materials, information about the activities of alumni regularly on their websites⁹.

Appraisal:

The panel appreciates that the University offers many services to the students and graduates to promote their employability such as organising many events like workshops, seminars and job fairs. It also highlighted positively the measures that are set up by the University regarding their Alumni Network. Alumni activities are planned on a long-term basis, performed regularly, and are actively used for assessing and evolving the programmes.

⁹ <http://ou.edu.vn/ky-yeu-sinh-vien> (last access: 10.03.2021)

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
4.5	Additional services					
4.5.1	Career counselling and placement service			X		
4.5.2	Alumni Activities		X			

4.6 Financing of the study programmes (Asterisk Criterion)

As a public university HCMCOU is self-funding. Tuition fees finance the Master programmes, which cost around 27,000,000 Vietnam dong (approx. 1,150 USD) for 2019 and the fee increases around 10 % for the year 2020.

HCMCOU Office of Finance manages all the financial and accounting issues. They propose the tuition based on the actual expenses of the previous programmes together with the estimation of inflation, the anticipated increases in student numbers for the following academic year mentioned in HCMCOU Strategic plan and other approved plans of expenditures on infrastructure.

The tuition fee contributes the largest share of the total amount of revenues from educational services and ranges between 95.6 % and 99 %. HCMCOU also receives Government educational grants but mainly for research projects or infrastructure maintenance. Every year, before the next school year, HCMCOU allocates expenditures for staff salary, training and support aids, stationery, funds for the upgrade, expansion of the library and labs, for the purchase of computers and equipment, software and equipment for classrooms, scholarships and reserved fund. The expenditures of all activities in HCMOU are regulated by the internal expense rules which are under the umbrella of the State financial regulations.

Appraisal:

Information on financial stability of the programmes is limited since within the accreditation procedure no detailed information on University's or School's financial performance (incl. accounting and auditing) needs to be presented to the panel. In a written statement, the University indicated that students are guaranteed to finish their studies as long as they receive the admission letter to start the programme. Based on the overall impression gained by the panel during the online conference and based on the discussions held during the interviews, they have no major concerns about the financing of the study programmes and the funding for the entire accreditation period.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
4.6*	Financing of the study programme (Asterisk Criterion)			X		

5 Quality assurance and documentation

HCMCOU has established a Quality assurance Office. It works with leaders and people in charge of quality in University's faculties, offices and centres to improve the internal quality assurance system of HCMCOU. The Quality assurance Office primarily has to:

- develop and implement quality assurance systems and procedures for HCMCOU activities
- monitor the implementation of quality assurance procedures and processes institution-wide
- provide information and analysis necessary for decision making at the institution and division level
- advice the institution on quality proposals, policies, and strategic plans

Responsibilities and duties are reflected in the HCMCOU quality handbook.

The Graduate School is responsible for its own quality assurance procedures of the post graduate programmes. It oversees all the academic activities of the Graduate School generally to ensure that programmes meet their objectives. The main tasks include deciding which specific standards the educational programmes or service must meet by benchmarking with the MOET requirements and determining the extent of quality control actions, and conducting surveys collecting data from the stakeholders' feedback to evaluate the outcomes against the objectives of the programmes for improvement. These are usually internal processes that are conducted on a regular basis. The Graduate School engages all lecturers and administrative staff to contribute to the continuing development and maintenance of standards. The procedures of academic quality assurance take place at courses, programmes and administrative levels. This involves two main overarching processes:

1. the development of new curricula and the review of the existing programmes
2. collecting data from the stakeholders for improvement

The programme Academic board maintains the academic integrity of the programmes and enhance their quality. The Academic board plays a key part in the wide range of activities related to the courses and programme development: planning new curricula, modifying the course, and the existing programme every two years in order to ensure the curriculum of a programme or a course remains current. Besides, the programme Academic board play the key role in programme review every two years maximally. For all Master programmes development and review, the GS has the regulations/procedures/documents guiding how the programmes are designed and regularly reviewed and how to assure the practical applicability spirits. To assure the smooth implementation of the programmes and to have data for programme improvement, the Graduate School maintains a monitoring and feedback system from stakeholders both quantitatively and qualitatively regularly and on demands.

There are three types of student survey by questionnaires:

- course survey at the end of the terms
- programme survey when students are graduated
- programme impact survey when students have graduated for one year

The employer survey and faculty member survey will be undertaken every two years via questionnaire. In addition, the Graduate School oversees the service quality of its staff. The rating of students and faculty help maintain the service meets students and faculty's expectation. HCMCOU has invested increasing budget for classroom and infrastructure for the productive learning and learning environment.

In order to collect feedback from students, the Graduate School regularly conducts student surveys that are course surveys conducted every term and programme surveys conducted at the graduation. The questionnaire for the course survey asks students to give feedback on the course contents and teacher attributes. The questionnaire after graduation seeks students' feedback on the whole programme as well as the support services including the quality of support of the Graduate School staff, the quality of facilities for students' study, research and other activities, such as labs, library, etc. Each faculty member receives his/her individual performance report for the course he/she is in charge of. The Head of the Graduate School Academic Board receives the report of all the lecturers to supervise the teaching quality. In critical cases, the Graduate School Dean will have a meeting with the Head of the Graduate School Academic Board and will talk to the lecturers having the unfavourable evaluation and issues raised by the students, suggesting for certain modification and improvements in teaching and learning. The questionnaire after graduation seeks students' feedback on the whole programme as well as the support service. Student feedback on the curriculum will be taken into consideration in the yearly meeting of the Graduate school, programme Academic Board and faculty members and measures have been taken to improve critical aspects.

The faculty members of each study programme also take part into the evaluation of the related programme so that their feedback can help review and develop the new curriculum. The programme quality shall be enhanced and modified to the demand of the stakeholders. In detail, every two years, the faculty members give feedback on the programme they are teaching. Lecturers are invited to express their voice whether such a section be retained or removed or the related academic issues.

The Graduate School regularly seeks their feedback for improving the quality of teaching and learning via alumni surveys. Between alumni and the Graduate School feedback is being obtained regarding the programme objectives, performance of lecturers in charge, facilities and necessary skills to meet their employability, to see if the goals of the programme can meet the requirements at their workplace and also their personal expectations. A variety of activities held on a regular basis to gather information via different ways, such as questionnaires right after their graduation and one year after graduation and an alumni meeting with the president. The Graduate School periodically organises meetings and gatherings between alumni, HCMCOU President and staff. These meetings allow them to shares their experience in the real working environment as well as their strengths and weaknesses at work. The Graduate School keeps the alumni well informed about the current new programmes so that they could come back to join or tell their working colleagues about HCMCOU programmes to join in. Alumni feedback contributes to inform the staff about the strengths and weaknesses of the programmes and thus can make appropriate revisions to the programme structure and content.

As for employers, on a periodical basis, meetings and requests for feedback are also sent to certain universities, colleges, languages centres for comments on their employees (alumni) performance. This source of information shall enhance the existing curriculum, structure, content, modes of teaching and learning, testing and assessment as well as other student learning support.

General information on the study programmes including each programme's curriculum and its content are published in print and on the website for each programme¹⁰. Prospective students can browse the Graduate School homepage website for information about the programmes, its aims and objectives, content and structure, testing and examination and in particular¹¹. The website also provides information about curriculum in recent intakes, to facilitate students' speculation of the programmes' suitability and applicability of their choice. Besides, the brochure and leaflets are available at the Graduate School office for personal information. In addition, once students having passed the entrance examination and are admitted to the programme, at the orientation session, each student will receive a student handbook in which necessary information about the Graduate School and the related programme, contact officers, course coordinator and the main guidance for successful achievement of the course is included. Further, the course outlines of each unit are provided at the initial session which inform students with brief description of the course, credit hours, aims and objectives, schedule, textbooks and further readings, mode of teaching and learning, assessments and guides to learning of the course. The exam time and rules and final assignment are also available so that students can be made aware of it ahead of time and comply accordingly.

Most of the Graduate School events such as the opening of a new programme or graduation or any memorandum signing ceremony can be found on the HCMCOU website which is edited by the Communication Section and on press as well. HCMCOU actively maintains Press relations and network communication. Information related to the quality assurance for learning and teaching of the institution is open to public at HCMCOU website. The University keeps students and staff informed of the University strategic plans, yearly planning scheme, budget distribution and HCMCOU expenditures at HCMCOU employee annual meeting, where the annual report, a summary of the activities of the Graduate school academic year, and the plan of the next year will be presented for consensus.

Appraisal:

A quality assurance and development procedure, which systematically and continuously monitors and develops the quality of the programmes with respect to its contents, processes, and outcomes, has been set up. Responsibilities are clearly defined.

Quality control by the faculty is carried out on a regular basis. The outcomes are discussed with the Graduate school, programme Academic Board and faculty members and provide input for the quality development process.

¹⁰ <http://sdh.ou.edu.vn/menu/showgroup?grp=Th%E1%BA%A1c+s%C4%A9-Ti%E1%BA%BFn+s%C4%A9-CT%C4%90T+trong+n%C6%B0%E1%BB%9Bc> (last access: 10.03.2021)

¹¹ <http://sdh.ou.edu.vn/> (last access: 10.03.2021)

In addition, evaluation by students, faculty members and external stakeholders like alumni and employers is carried out on a regular basis and in accordance with a prescribed procedure; the outcomes are communicated to the interviewed people and provide input for the quality development process. The evaluation forms for course assessment also take into account the analysis of student workload.

The general description of the study programmes is present on the website and accessible for all interested stakeholders. Course-specific information regarding the related programmes and activities of the University/GS are available on its website.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
5.1*	Quality assurance and quality development with respect to contents, processes and outcomes (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
5.2	Instruments of quality assurance					
5.2.1	Evaluation by students			X		
5.2.2	Evaluation by faculty			X		
5.2.3	External evaluation by alumni, employers and third parties			X		
5.3	Programme documentation					
5.3.1*	Programme description (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
5.3.2	Information on activities during the academic year			X		

Quality profile

HEI: Ho Chi Minh Open City University (HCMCOU), Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Master programmes:

Business Administration (MBA)

Economics (ME)

Finance-Banking (MFB)

Teaching English to speakers of other languages (MTESOL)

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
1	Objectives					
1.1*	Objectives of the study programme (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
1.2*	International orientation of the study programme design (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
1.3	Positioning of the study programme					
1.3.1	Positioning of the study programme in the educational market			X		
1.3.2	Positioning of the study programme on the job market for graduates („Employability“)			X		
1.3.3	Positioning of the study programme within the HEI's overall strategic concept			X		
2	Admission					
2.1*	Admission requirements (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
2.2	Counselling for prospective students			X		
2.3*	Selection procedure (if relevant)			X		
2.4(*)	Professional experience (if relevant; Asterisk Criterion for master programmes that require professional experience)					X
2.5*	Ensuring foreign language proficiency (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
2.6*	Transparency and documentation of admission procedure and decision (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.	Contents, structure and didactical concept					
3.1	Contents					
3.1.1*	Logic and conceptual coherence (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.1.2*	Rationale for degree and programme name (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.1.3*	Integration of theory and practice (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.1.4	Interdisciplinary thinking			X		
3.1.5	Ethical aspects			X		
3.1.6*	Methods and scientific practice (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.1.7*	Examination and final thesis (Asterisk Criterion)			X		

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
	Criterion)					
3.2	Structure					
3.2.1*	Modular structure of the study programme (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.2.2*	Study and exam regulations (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.2.3*	Feasibility of study workload (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.2.4	Equality of opportunity			X		
3.3	Didactical concept					
3.3.1*	Logic and plausibility of the didactical concept (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.3.2*	Course materials (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.3.3	Guest lecturers		X			
3.3.4	Lecturing tutors					X
3.4	Internationality					
3.4.1*	International contents and intercultural aspects (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.4.2	Internationality of the student body				X	
3.4.3	Internationality of faculty			X		
3.4.4	Foreign language contents			X		
3.5*	Multidisciplinary competences and skills (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.6*	Skills for employment / Employability (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.	Academic environment and framework conditions					
4.1	Faculty					
4.1.1*	Structure and quantity of faculty in relation to curricular requirements (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.1.2*	Academic qualification of faculty (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.1.3*	Pedagogical / didactical qualification of faculty (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.1.4	Practical business experience of faculty		MTESOL	MBA, ME, MFB		
4.1.5*	Internal cooperation (Asterisk Criterion)		MTESOL	MBA, ME, MFB		
4.1.6*	Student support by the faculty (Asterisk Criterion)		X			
4.1.7(*)	Student support in distance learning (only relevant and an Asterisk Criterion for blended-learning/distance learning programmes)					X
4.2	Programme management					
4.2.1*	Programme Director (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.2.2	Process organisation and			X		

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
	administrative support for students and faculty					
4.3	Cooperation and partnerships					
4.3.1(*)	Cooperation with HEIs and other academic institutions or networks (Asterisk Criterion for cooperation programmes)			X		
4.3.2(*)	Cooperation with business enterprises and other organisations (Asterisk Criterion for educational and vocational programmes, franchise programmes)			X		
4.4	Facilities and equipment					
4.4.1*	Quantity, quality, media and IT equipment of teaching and group rooms (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.4.2*	Access to literature (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.5	Additional services					
4.5.1	Career counselling and placement service			X		
4.5.2	Alumni Activities		X			
4.6*	Financing of the study programme (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
5	Quality assurance and documentation					
5.1*	Quality assurance and quality development with respect to contents, processes and outcomes (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
5.2	Instruments of quality assurance					
5.2.1	Evaluation by students			X		
5.2.2	Evaluation by faculty			X		
5.2.3	External evaluation by alumni, employers and third parties			X		
5.3	Programme documentation					
5.3.1*	Programme description (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
5.3.2	Information on activities during the academic year			X		