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BACHELOR OF INTERNATIONAL JOURNALISM

REPORT FOLLOW-UP EDUCATIONAL MIRROR

2025-2026

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1. Conclusions of the panel

1.1. Explanation of terms

Term	Explanation
Advice/recommendation	Follow-up required.
Opportunity	Free to take. Programme decides whether to take action on it. No follow-up required.

1.2. Scope and content of follow-up process

In 2022-2023, the programme went through the process of the Educational Mirror. The panel concluded that the programme achieved the final level (6) with the required professional orientation. To strengthen the sustainable character of the assessment of the final level, the panel formulated some recommendations for the programme:

- Revisit the final level and the way it is assessed to align it with the new mission and vision, and the new curriculum.
- Have a critical look at the design, construction and assessment of the final level and make it more explicit in a clear and straightforward set of instruments.
- Make explicit where each domain-specific learning outcome (DLO) is assessed in Internship and Final Work and ensure these courses are complementary.
- Develop a framework which describes (the criteria of) a qualitative internship.
- Formulate a set of fixed themes, linked to the learning outcomes, that every student should incorporate into the internship report.

The purpose of this follow-up process is to evaluate the extent to which these recommendations from the 2023 Educational Mirror have been addressed, in order to draw conclusions about the sustainability of the final assessment. The achievement of the final level was determined in the 2023 Educational Mirror and is not within the scope of this follow-up process.

The following sections address the panel's findings. They present the panel's impressions based on its review of the documents and discussions with stakeholders.

1.3. Outcomes of the discussion about the final level

The panel observed some general **positive aspects** during the discussions.

The programme management and lecturers emphasised the strong involvement of stakeholders and the importance they attach to open communication and stakeholder participation. Lecturers, for example, played a key role in the development of the revised curriculum. Working groups were established to design the structure of the three curriculum phases and the final assessment. In addition, “thinking days” are organised to support reflection and continuous improvement within the programme’s growth cycle. The panel concludes that lecturers are actively involved throughout all phases of change processes, from the development stage to the evaluation and feedback phase following implementation.

"I am very proud of the lecturers. The curriculum changed in a record pace and the lecturers played a leading role in this transformation." (programme management)

With regard to students, the panel observed during the discussions that students demonstrate a critical and reflective mindset, which is an important characteristic for future journalists. They openly share both strengths and points for improvement with lecturers. Work-field representatives are also able to provide feedback during evaluation moments with supervisors. However, the panel notes that students and work-field representatives are mainly involved after implementation, through feedback and evaluation processes. The panel therefore sees opportunities to involve both students and work-field representatives at an earlier stage in future change and development processes.

1.3.1. New vision and new curriculum

In 2023-2024 the programme developed a new vision centred on the baseline: "new world, new narratives, new voices". During the curriculum revision, this vision was embedded in the newly developed courses as well as in the assessment criteria for the final assessment. The panel concludes that the **vision** is not merely a statement on paper, but effectively **guides the programme's educational choices and course design**. At the same time, the panel identifies an opportunity to make the vision more visible and explicit to students throughout the programme.

"We use cultural sensitivity as one of our evaluation criteria. It reflects a core value embedded in our educational vision and something we consider essential for our students to develop. Internship mentors are sometimes surprised to see this criterion included in the assessment process." (programme management)

Through the new vision and curriculum revision, the programme has also succeeded in differentiating itself more clearly from the Dutch programme Bachelor in de Journalistiek. The transition to a fully English-taught programme has resulted in a more diverse student intake and strengthened the international character of the learning environment. While the Dutch Journalistiek curriculum focuses primarily on specific media formats, the International Journalism curriculum is organised around themes that are relevant to contemporary global developments.

"I am very proud of the diverse students intake we have today. We have successfully translated our mission into the students intake. This diversity enriches not only the student community, but also the lecturers and the curriculum itself." (programme management)

In addition, the programme introduced a **six-week track system**. Programme management demonstrated a clear awareness of both the strengths and limitations of this approach. Students indicated that the six-week structure is less suitable for some courses. The panel also notes that students do not always fully recognise which competencies and skills are developed within the different tracks of the system, which makes it more difficult for them to clearly articulate the added value of the educational approach.

"For certain courses, we would have preferred a twelve-week format. The six-week structure did not always give us sufficient time to study the course material." (student)

1.3.2. Complementary Final Work and Media Internship

In the information file, the programme **clearly specified which learning outcomes and learning goals are assessed** through the Final Work and which are assessed through the Media Internship. The panel can therefore conclude that it is transparent where and how each learning outcome is evaluated. The panel also appreciated that lecturers were supported by an educational expert in (re)formulating the learning goals.

The programme furthermore provided a clear explanation of the **complementary nature** of both courses. Based on the information file, the panel concludes that the learning goals and context of the two components are sufficiently distinct. The Final Work focuses on the independent development of a project from concept to completion, offering students a high degree of autonomy. During the Media Internship, students learn to operate within a high-pressure professional environment and to engage with contextual factors. During the discussions, programme management indicated that they are proud that both courses now have their own added value and are each considered essential in enabling students to achieve the intended final level.

1.3.3. Revision of the final assessment and its instruments

Based on the information file and the discussions, the panel concludes that the programme has taken important steps in strengthening the **validity and reliability** of the final assessment. This conclusion is supported by the following observations:

- In the Media Internship, the internship mentor provides an assessment of the extent to which the learning goals have been achieved. This assessment is subsequently discussed with the supervisor and adjusted where necessary. The final grade is determined by the programme.
- In the Final Work, assessment is conducted by a jury consisting of multiple members, each contributing from their own area of expertise and perspective. This multiple-eye principle strengthens the reliability of the assessment process. As in the Media Internship, the final grade is ultimately determined by the programme.
- Work-field representatives indicated that the expectations regarding both supervision and assessment are communicated clearly to them for both the Final Work and the Media Internship.
- Students stated that they experience the same standards and criteria being applied consistently across all students. As a result, they perceive the assessment of both the Final Work and the Media Internship as fair and transparent.

> *"From the outset, everything that was expected of me was communicated very clearly. I was also provided with contact details for the school in case any questions arose, although I ultimately did not need additional support. (…) Students are very much graded in the same way, even when their topics differ significantly." (internship mentor)*

The panel also identifies a few opportunities for further development regarding the assessment of these courses. A first area for improvement concerns **calibration** among lecturers. The panel gained the impression that limited systematic calibration currently takes place. Strengthening calibration practices could support lecturers in developing a more shared understanding of the assessment criteria and expectations, thereby further enhancing the reliability and consistency of grading.

In line with this, the panel sees an opportunity to further clarify and discuss the **distinction between the assessment categories** "sufficient", "good", and "excellent" in the evaluation forms. Students indicated that they have a clear understanding of the difference between "insufficient" and "sufficient", meaning that the minimum expectations to pass are transparent to them. However, the distinction between the higher performance categories is perceived as less clear.

"The expectations for achieving a "sufficient", and therefore the distinction between passing and failing, are very clear to me. However, the distinction between a sufficient, good, and excellent performance is less clear." (student)

Finally, work-field representatives indicated that they would appreciate having more space to provide **qualitative explanations and contextual feedback** within the evaluation forms. The panel considers this a valuable suggestion, as it could contribute to a more substantiated final assessment and provide stronger support for the dialogue between the supervisor and the internship mentor.

1.3.4. Framework for internships

The **framework** developed for the internships was included in the information file. It outlines the criteria for a qualitative internship, the role of the mentor and the role of the supervisor. The panel concludes that this framework is clear and represents a significant improvement. The panel considers it good (and necessary) practice that the task list is reviewed by the internship coordinator prior to the start of the internship.

The panel encourages the programme to continue systematically monitoring the **alignment between the task list and the evaluation criteria** of the Media Internship, in order to ensure that, as far as possible, all students are given sufficient opportunities to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

"There will always be a tension between ensuring that all learning outcomes are addressed in all internships and accommodating a wide variety of internships." (lecturer)

1.3.5. Internship reports

In the information file, the programme included the **template for the internship report**. The panel appreciates that a clear template is available, as this supports consistency and transparency in the internship reports submitted by students.

The programme also indicated that it is considering replacing the internship report with an interview format, as the current report is perceived as becoming less relevant in the context of increasing **AI** use. The panel appreciates that the programme is critically reviewing assessment formats that may be sensitive to the impact of AI and encourages the programme to continue reflecting critically on the design and relevance of assessments in other courses as well.

1.4. Conclusion

The panel notes that the programme has addressed the recommendations formulated during the previous Educational Review in a thoughtful and deliberate manner. The implemented changes have strengthened the sustainable character of the final assessment. The panel particularly observed a strong reflective culture and ownership among programme management and lecturers regarding curriculum and assessment development.
The panel also observes that several developments — often extending beyond the final assessment— still need to be further embedded within the programme. The panel is confident that the programme will continue to work on these areas, with the support of the educational anchor.

2. Annexes

2.1. Panel composition

Composition of the panel for the follow-up of the Educational Mirror of the bachelor of International Journalism:

- **Quinten Verdonck**, chairman. Quinten Verdonck studied Pedagogical Sciences at the University of Ghent. Since 2017, he has been working as an educational specialist for a provincial safety school and several educational projects at the Flemish Foundation for Traffic Knowledge. Since the end of 2019, Quinten has been working full-time in the educational department at Thomas More University of Applied Sciences, with specific expertise in digital learning environments and growing expertise in assessment policy.
- **Sarah Schildermans**, internal educational expert. After ten years of practical experience as a midwife, Sarah worked as a lecturer in HBO5 nursing. Since September 2018, she has been working as an education expert in the education department at Thomas More, supervising curriculum renewal and the implementation of graduate programmes.
- **Niek Hietbrink**, domain expert. Niek Hietbrink is lecturer in Journalism Studies at the journalism programme and researcher at the Valuable Journalism lectorate, both part of Windesheim University of Applied Sciences. He collaborated in teaching exchange students and the Dialogue project (for participating partner institutions see dialogue-journalism.eu).

2.2. Programme visit (May 13, 2026)

08.30 - 09.00 uur	| Preparation panel
09.00 – 09.30 uur	| Management conversation
09.30- 09.45 uur	| Internal consultation
09.45 - 11.15 uur	| Discussion about the Final level
11.15- 12.15 uur	| Internal consultation
12.15	| Feedback

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