Learning outcomes

ACADEMIC SKILLS - Have the advanced academic and research skills to contribute to the body of knowledge:
1. Make relevant (academic, managerial and societal) contributions to the marketing discipline using academic research skills

BRIDGING THEORY AND PRACTICE - Have state-of-the-art knowledge and an evidence-based approach to solving complex business problems in the field of marketing:
2. Demonstrate and apply state-of-the-art specialized theory in the field of marketing
3. Develop solutions from different theoretical perspectives for complex real-life business problems by applying relevant marketing theories and methodologies.

PROFESSIONAL/SOCIAL SKILLS - Have the professional/social skills to interact with other professionals:
4. Work well in a team and reflect on all roles and contribution within teams
5. Present in English (orally and in writing) to both academics and professionals convincingly

BROADENING YOUR HORIZON - Have a broad horizon beyond the professional area:
6. Formulate own opinion on Master’s related issues within society, their outlook including both economic interests and environmental, societal and ethical concerns

SELF-AWARENESS - Are self-reflective professionals:
7. Take responsibility for their own learning and knowledge

Teaching

Every theory course\(^1\) starts in the trenches, at an actual company, where a marketing manager or CMO introduces the company and describes their work and responsibilities and their marketing issue. In the subsequent plenary lectures, the case is often used to exemplify theory, though many other examples will feature as well. In the tutorials, the case is discussed in light of the theory presented that week, and students work in teams on the case step by step. They prepare an analysis of the actual problem and explain which theory is relevant for understanding the problem, and what the implications of that theory would be. Using Pitch2Peer, a peer review platform, students present their ideas, analysis and solutions in short videos to each other and learn from one another. The academic staff eventually selects the best three pitches to be presented to the company at the end of the course (class visit on site or company visit to the Vrije Universiteit).

\(^1\) Theory courses are Marketing Strategy, Consumer Marketing, Retail Management & E-Commerce, Digital Marketing, Management Integration Project, Branding & Advertising and International Product Management. The method courses (Customer & Marketing Analytics, Survey Research, Experimental Research and Big Data Analytics) may focus instead on datasets and training instead
Each course has an individual written exam, accounting for 70% of the grade. The case (and other assignments) accounts for 30%; a minimum grade of 5.0 is required on each, and the final composite grade must be at least 5.5 to pass. Note that while the team submits one team solution, grades are individual. At the end of each course or case, team members evaluate each other anonymously for their role in the project using the BuddyCheck plugin in Canvas. The test includes scales on contribution to the task, interaction with team members, expert role and project management. This results in an individual weight of around 1.0, with scores above 1.0 for bigger contributions to the team in terms of content, group process or project management and scores below 1.0 for relatively smaller contributions. By applying this weighting system, students get a ‘fair share’ of the overall case grade, making free-riding very difficult. In addition, with seven cases throughout the programme, students function on many different teams and in different situations, receiving feedback from each team member in each case. This provides valuable feedback on personal performance and strengths and weaknesses as a team member. To enhance the learning process on team performance, two team sessions are video recorded, and students in period 3 write an individual reflection on both the observations and the BuddyCheck feedback received across cases. After period 3, students focus increasingly on looking beyond current theory and on how to contribute to the body of knowledge. Period 4 is therefore in part devoted to research method electives, such as experimental research, survey design and big data analytics.

At the end of the programme, all Learning Objectives (except for Team work) converge in the master thesis in Periods 5 and 6. While research skills (e.g. conceptual models, empirical cycle, methods), for example, have been introduced in Periods 1 and 2, they are fully tested in the master thesis as an individual demonstration of such skills. Similarly, critical understanding of the current literature as tested in course modules is taken to the next level. By delineating what relevant new knowledge would be and how to bring it about, students demonstrate that they are responsible for their own learning and knowledge. Finally, the master thesis is to be accompanied by a 120 second video pitch, in which students introduce themselves and explain what they stand for, what the thesis is about, and why that is relevant.

**Enrolment for courses and exams**

See VUnet for more information about course enrolment.