



**European Association for
Public Administration
Accreditation**

EAPAA Accreditation Committee Summary Evaluation

Summary evaluation with respect to the request for accreditation of the master programme Research in Public Administration and Organisational Science, offered jointly by Utrecht University and Erasmus University Rotterdam, with Tilburg University and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

Criteria	Summary evaluation
Mission, objectives and competencies	The research master programme has a clear and attractive profile. This profile is adequately translated into three learning pathways and sixteen exit qualifications that align with the domain-specific reference framework and do justice to the content, level and orientation of the programme. The research-oriented nature of the programme is very much present in the learning outcomes and set-up of the programme.
Entry into the programme	The panel found the current admission and selection criteria to be highly relevant because they test that the content and form of the curriculum are effectively aligned with the skills and interests of the candidates, which in turn ensures that selected students can successfully complete the curriculum. The panel appreciates that the programme does not intend to lower the bar for enrolment, despite the fact that enrolment is below the available capacity.
Structure of the curriculum	The curriculum is built around three pillars - theory (30 EC), methodology (42 EC) and research (36 EC) – and an elective space (12 EC). The panel found the structure of the curriculum coherent.
Content of the curriculum	Throughout the two-year curriculum students are taught all disciplinary and methodological components one may expect from a Public Administration / Organisational Science programme, they perform academic and applied research, and pay explicit attention to the ethical dimension of conducting research. There is a clear link between the individual course learning goals and the overall programme learning outcomes.
Didactic approach	The research master programme provides small-scale and intensive education and manages to create a community feeling among the cohorts. This community is growing organically through a lot of direct interaction between students and lecturers. A particularity of the research master programme is the master-apprentice relationship:

	students learn from lecturers by seeing and experiencing the staff working on their own applied and academic research;
Student Assessment	The research master programme has a robust assessment system, which is embedded in the provisions and policies of the school and the university.
Preparation for the labour market	Upon graduation students find a job that is in line with the objective of the programme. Because of its attention to both academic and applied research, the programme provides graduates a good basis for pursuing a research-oriented career.
Results	Students who graduate have effectively achieved all learning outcomes. The clear link in the programme set-up between course learning goals and programme learning outcomes also applies to the thesis trajectory, where students demonstrate their competencies as academic master-level graduates with a specific focus on research.
Quality monitoring and improvement	Utrecht University – and in particular USG – is responsible for the quality assurance of the inter-institutional research master. This means that the policies and provisions of UU apply to all components of assessment in the research master programme – system of assessment, courses, master theses and quality assurance – including those elements that are delivered by staff belonging to one of the partner universities.
Faculty	The teaching staff have been selected for their specific substantive and / or methodological expertise. All staff fulfil the institutional requirements with regard to English language. The panel observed that by involving staff from all four partner universities, the research master programme can offer a wealth of individual specialist disciplines and methodological expertise.
Diversity	The panel considers that diversity is on the radar of the programme, the school and the partner institutions. It welcomes the initiatives taken so far, acknowledges the progress made since the previous accreditation visit, yet encourages all responsible bodies to step up their efforts in recruiting a more diverse student body that is taught by a more diverse faculty.
Responsibility and autonomy	There is sufficient autonomy for the faculty to shape the programme.
Supportive services and facilities	The programme actively monitors the study progress and success rate of its individual students and their cohorts. It recently initiated a tutor programme for all students, while its study advisor and coordinator keep an eye on those students who experience issues in the personal domain such as stress and performance pressure, and/or in the academic sphere such as thesis writing flaws.
Research basis	The panel gathered from the most recent Research Review Public Administration (2021) that all participating programmes are highly

	valued on the criteria research quality, relevance to society, and viability, as well as on the aspects PhD training programme, research integrity and diversity. It also noticed that key researchers of these programmes are directly involved in the courses, tutorials and thesis supervision of the research master programme.
Internationalisation	There are sufficient opportunities for internationalisation within the programme.
Coordination of the joint programme	The research master programme is coordinated by Utrecht University and all organizational and executive responsibilities, including quality assurance, have been delegated to USG. All partner institutions subscribe to the goals, learning outcomes and curriculum of the programme and respect UU's regulations for teaching and examination as laid down in the Education and Examination Regulations. As a result, the situation is clear and straightforward for students.