



**European Association for  
Public Administration  
Accreditation**

15-03-2013

## **EAPAA Accreditation Committee Evaluation Report**

**Bachelor and Master Programme in Public Administration, School of Public Administration, Faculty of Social Science, University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg, Sweden**

Evaluation Report with respect to the request for accreditation of 2 November 2011.

In consideration of the Self-Evaluation Report of the above programme of 17-04-2012, the Site Visit Report of 21-2-2013 of the EAPAA Site Visit Team for this programme, and the response of the programme of 14 March 2013 to the draft of the Site Visit Report, the EAPAA Accreditation Committee, in a written evaluation procedure in March 2013, has evaluated this programme against the EAPAA Accreditation Criteria (version 8, September 2011).

### **1. Accreditation Criteria**

<b>2. Applicability/Eligibility</b>	
2.1 Domain	The bachelor and master programmes of the School of Public Administration of Gothenburg University (SPAGU) cover the whole domain of (national) public administration practice.
2.2 Geography	Sweden is a member of the Council of Europe, therefore the programme falls within the jurisdiction of EAPAA.
2.3 Programme longevity	The public administration programme of Gothenburg University formally started in 1993. The bachelor and master programmes were introduced in 2007, due to the implementation of the Bologna process in Swedish higher education.
2.4 Programme variants and locations	Within these programmes there are no relevant variants and no other locations than Gothenburg.
4 Category of accreditation	SPAGU applied for the accreditation of its PA bachelor level programme (3 years, 180 ECTS) and its PA master level programme (2 years, 120 ECTS).
<b>5. Standards</b>	
5.1 Domain of public administration <b>Score: Adequate</b>	The bachelor programme consists of fundamental courses in public administration, political science, law, economics, accounting, public management and social science research theory and methods. The master programme consists of elective specialisation courses (Policy Analysis, Organisation & Management, Public Finance & Management Control), an imperative course for all students on Information Management, Internship or an alternative course and a thesis. The programmes comply to the EAPAA interpretation of public administration programmes.

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<p>5.2 Mission of the programme <b>Score: Adequate</b></p>	<p>The mission of the bachelor and the master level programme is to educate students to become civil servants on the basis of sound professional ethics, who are able to be effective and creative leaders in public sector organisations, in agencies and in (profit or not for profit) organisations that are linked to the public sector.</p> <p>The educational philosophy and mission of the programme is clear and focused. The programme followed an orderly process in developing appropriate strategies which are consistent with the mission, with the resources, and with the various constituencies. Also the formulated educational objectives are in line with the mission.</p>
<p>5.3 Level <b>Score: Adequate</b></p>	<p>The final qualifications of the programme correspond to general, internationally accepted descriptions of these qualifications.</p> <p>The self-evaluation report shows clear goals of the different programmes, linked to the Dublin descriptors.</p>
<p>5.4 Practise and internships <b>Score: Adequate</b></p>	<p>Both the bachelor level programme as the master level programme show a clear link to practical skills that are needed in order to demonstrate the type of leadership in public administration that is referred to in the mission of SPAGU.</p> <p>The site visit team wondered why the internship is an elective. At the same time it recognised the fact that in the programme practical skills play an important part, that research training implies the rich, practical learning environment that is needed and that practitioners are invited to provide master classes within the curriculum.</p> <p>The conclusion is that the programmes have an adequate link to public administration practice.</p>
<p>5.5.1 Curriculum Content</p>	
<p>5.5.1.1 Core components <b>Score: Adequate</b></p>	<p>The curriculum of the Bachelor and Master Programmes of Public Administration at SPAGU conceives of public administration as a multidisciplinary application of science that contributes to advance the practice of public administration. It focuses on theoretical knowledge, and practical skills and competencies to prepare students to work in public sector organisations and in non-profit and not-for-profit agencies linked to the public sector.</p> <p>The Master programme consecutively expands knowledge, skills and competencies even further as to the three specialisations of Policy Analysis, Organisation and Management, and Management Control.</p> <p>The site visit team judges the curriculum to be generally adequate within the framework of the mission of the programme, and that it is designed to deliver capable professionals to work in Swedish public, semi-public, and voluntary organisations.</p>
<p>5.5.1.2 Other Components <b>Score: N.A.</b></p>	<p>This is not applicable to this programme.</p>
<p>5.5.1.3 Structure and didactics of the programme</p>	<p>The Bachelor and Master programmes are coherent in the design of content, and the course syllabi and faculty conferences are used as instruments for vertical and horizontal co-ordination of the content and</p>

<b>Score: Adequate</b>	<p>didactics of courses. The programmes rely quite heavily on independent learning, which holds students responsible for their own learning. Students spend much of their time in essay writing and group work. In many courses students must, individually or in groups, conduct research where theory is linked to practice. A variety of teaching methods is used, supported by compulsory didactical training of lecturers. In a meeting with students, it was mentioned that contact hours were relatively limited, and that the workload was feasible, if not relatively light.</p> <p>The SVT is of the opinion that the structure and didactics of the programme are adequate.</p>
5.5.1.4 Intake <b>Score: Adequate</b>	<p>The Bachelor programme admits students with secondary education, and the structure, contents and the didactics of the programme seek to educate and train them as knowledgeable and capable professionals for employment in the public sector. For the enrolment into the Master programme, students need to have obtained a degree in social sciences, and most of the candidates have indeed accomplished a Bachelor in public administration or political science, and some in business. The students without prior Bachelor education in public administration, the requirement is that they have mastered at least 60 ECTS in the foundations of public administration.</p>
5.5.2 Length <b>Score: Complies</b>	<p>The length of the bachelor program (180 ECTS), the master programme (120 ECTS) and study time is consistent with European standards.</p>
5.5.3 Results <b>Score: Adequate</b>	<p>The Master programme is finalized with a master thesis. Four faculty members read all dissertations, which adds to the consistency and objectivity of the judgment of the quality. Graduates have no difficulty finding a job in the public and semi-public sector, as is also testified by an alumni survey.</p> <p>The SVT read some of the master theses and concluded they were of good quality. It seems the programmes are at good level.</p> <p>The SVT judges the results of the programmes to be adequate.</p>
5.6 Quality Improvement and Innovation	
5.6.1 Programme accomplishment <b>Score: Adequate</b>	<p>All Swedish universities have to apply an appropriate quality assurance system. At Gothenburg University there are various action plans for improving the teaching quality in place at different levels. The department undertakes course evaluations at a regular basis. Additionally, a faculty-wide survey (SOM: Society, Opinion, Media) is regularly conducted. Furthermore, the department uses the results of LADOK, an education information system. From time to time, the department also conducts alumni surveys.</p> <p>The programmes are assessed on a regular basis. Faculty shows a culture of quality-improvement.</p>
5.6.2 Curriculum Development <b>Score: Adequate</b>	<p>There was no major change of the curriculum since the launch of the new BA- and MA-programmes in 2007. Smaller adjustments, however, have taken place regularly. In case of larger changes, there are appropriate governance mechanisms.</p>
5.6.3 External Reviews	<p>The former programme of SPAGU was assessed both by EAPAA (in 2002)</p>

<b>Score: Adequate</b>	and by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education Evaluation (in 2006). The department followed-up the Agency's recommendations and presented a draft quality plan to the Agency, which responded positively. A more recent evaluation of the programmes under review was conducted within the University of Gothenburg itself and the National Agency, and learned that SPAGU has a bias for teaching at the expense of research. Recommendations received during previous reviews in general lead to changes in the content or the organisation of the programme.
5.7 Student Assessment <b>Score: Adequate</b>	The department has diversified the options of assignments over the last years. The curricula of both programmes nowadays offer a variety of assignment forms, covering also written exams, essays, project reports etc. The offered assignment variants are in relation to the expected learning outcomes.
5.8 Programme Jurisdiction <b>Score: Adequate</b>	The responsibility structures in relation to the two programmes are clear and unambiguously distributed. It is guided and overseen by the Department Board which is chaired by the Head of Department. Under the general guidance of this Head, a Study Director is responsible for the operation of the two programmes. Furthermore, a Board for Undergraduate Studies is responsible for controlling and steering of the two programmes under review. There is no specific Exams Committee in the department.
5.9.1 Faculty nucleus <b>Score: Adequate</b>	During 2011, 28 people were involved in delivering the bachelor and master programmes, out of whom 20 can be defined as faculty nucleus. This is a sufficient number of faculty members considering various curricula elements and specializations offered. In addition, the Faculty also successfully hires practitioners for teaching. There is an identifiable nucleus. It accepts responsibility for the programme and this is recognised within the faculty (and the university as a whole).
5.9.2 Faculty qualifications <b>Score: Adequate</b>	About 95 % of the faculty nucleus holds a doctorate degree. Practically all members of the part-time faculty are PhD-students at SPAGU while about half of the individuals in the additional faculty hold a doctorate degree and half are practitioners from various fields of public administration. The qualifications of faculty are quite adequate.
5.9.3 Diversity: gender and minorities <b>Score: Adequate</b>	The proportion of women who participate in the various academic activities is comparable to the national average. However, the proportion of women diminishes when moving up the hierarchy. There is no special policy to increase the number of female employees in senior positions.
5.10 Admission of Students <b>Score: Adequate</b>	When it comes to admission to higher education in Sweden, for the most part all admissions to higher education are handled by the National Admission Office to Higher Education. All applicants who fulfil the prerequisites of the study programmes and that have sufficiently high grades to compete for a study place may be admitted. In addition to the general admission for the bachelor programme the prerequisites require the students to have at least E in mathematics intermediate level and in social science basic level. Concerning the master programme the students have to have a bachelor's

	<p>degree of 180 ECTS, for example in political science and economics or an equivalent Swedish or foreign degree. The requirements for the specialization in Management Accounting, in addition to the above, ask for a degree which must include at least 60 credits in one of the subjects of business, management, finance, health care administration, economics, public trusteeship or equivalent.</p> <p>Apart from the requirement of certain prerequisites, SPAGU does not have the possibility to control admissions.</p> <p>Admission is in line with the goals of the programme.</p>
<p>5.11 Supportive Services and Facilities <b>Score: Good</b></p>	<p>The library and computer facilities are of high quality. The students at SPAGU have access to all the ten libraries units which form the University of Gothenburg's Library. At the library the students could easily access extensive data bases and the Course and Newspaper Library has a good mixture of literature in political science, public administration and public management. In SPAGU's own facilities there is a newly built study area with modern desktops which could be used by the students. There are also good varieties of differently sized classrooms.</p> <p>The accommodation and material facilities are adequate.</p>
<p>5.12 Student Services <b>Score: Adequate</b></p>	<p>SPAGU offers their students a variety of services which help them to perform well. There is for example a student counsellor whose duties include giving individual students guidance on career choices and study problems. There is also a service centre for students in connection to SPAGU's facilities.</p> <p>Student services are adequate.</p>
<p>5.13 Public Relations <b>Score: Adequate</b></p>	<p>The website <a href="http://www.spa.gu.se/">http://www.spa.gu.se/</a> is well designed which gives the viewer a good idea what SPAGU has to offer in terms of programmes and courses. To complement this SPAGU has in recent times sent out information about their bachelor programme to students in secondary schools attending social science programmes. Students with bachelor degree in social science from the University of Gothenburg have also received information about the master programme.</p> <p>The programme provides future students with adequate information.</p>
<p><b>6 Additional Criteria Score: N.A.</b></p>	<p>Not applicable</p>

## 2. Conclusion

Based on the above evaluation of the specific criteria, the EAPAA Accreditation Committee concludes that these programmes meet the criteria for accreditation sufficiently, and so the programmes can be accredited without restrictions.