



**European Association for
Public Administration
Accreditation**

EAPAA Accreditation Committee Evaluation Report

Evaluation Report with respect to the request for accreditation of the Bachelor's programme Public Administration, the Master's programme Public Administration, and the Master's programme Public Sector Management, of Leiden University, Institute of Public Administration, Faculty of Governance and Global Affairs, Leiden, the Netherlands

At its meetings of September 3 and 4, 2018 in Lausanne (Switzerland), the EAPAA Accreditation Committee evaluated the programmes against the EAPAA Accreditation Criteria.

1. Accreditation Criteria

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| 2. Applicability/Eligibility | |
| 2.1 Domain | The bachelor and master programmes are standard academic degree programmes in public administration. The programmes fulfil this criterion. |
| 2.2 Geography | All programmes are organized by the Institute of Public Administration, which is situated in the Hague, as part of the Faculty of Governance and Global Affairs of Leiden University, the Netherlands. The Netherlands is a member of the Council of Europe; therefore the programme falls within the jurisdiction of EAPAA. |
| 2.3 Programme longevity | All programmes have been accredited by EAPAA before (lastly 2011). However, the MA Public Sector Management in 2011 was part of the MA Public Administration. The programmes fulfil this criterion. |
| 2.4 Programme variants and locations | There are no variants or other locations. |
| 4 Category of accreditation | The bachelor programme opts for the first cycle bachelor level public administration programmes accreditation. The master programmes opt for the second cycle graduate/master level public administration programmes accreditation. |
| 5. Standards | |
| 5.1 Domain of public administration | The (Dutch taught) bachelor's programme Public Administration concentrates on public administration and governance in an ever-changing context. Characteristic of the programme is the multi-level perspective on public administration and the attention to different actors in the process of public policy making. Students choose one of two tracks: Economics, Governance and Management or Policy, Governance and Organisation. The |

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| | <p>programme has a research focus ('research-led teaching') and teaches students how to integrate different research approaches and designs. The central question in the English-taught master's programme Public Administration is how society's most pressing problems can be addressed from the perspective of governance. The programme offers three specialisations, each with a different focus: International and European Governance, Public Management and Economics and Governance. The master's programme Public Sector Management (delivered in Dutch) is an evening programme intended for professionals already working in the Dutch public sector. The programme pays attention to processes between and within organisations in the public sector, and to the different perspectives that actors might have. There are two specialisation tracks: Public Affairs and Strategy, Consulting and Change Management. All relevant aspects of the public administration domain are being taught in the programmes. The bachelor's and master's programme Public Administration and the Master of International Public Management and Public Policy have clearly defined and distinctive profiles. They all take a multi-disciplinary, multi-level approach; they focus on research and analytical skills and look at different organisations and actors, both from an internal and external perspective.</p> |
| 5.2 Mission of the programme | <p>The bachelor's programme Public Administration concentrates on public administration and governance in an ever-changing context. Characteristic for the programme is the multi-level perspective on public administration and the attention to different actors in the process of public policy making. The central question in the English-taught master's programme Public Administration is how society's most pressing problems can be addressed from the perspective of governance. The master's programme Public Sector Management (delivered in Dutch) is an evening programme intended for professionals already working in the Dutch public sector. The programme pays attention to processes between and within organisations in the public sector, and to the different perspectives that actors might have. The bachelor's and master's programmes have clearly defined and distinctive profiles. They all take a multi-disciplinary, multi-level approach; they focus on research and analytical skills and look at different organisations and actors, both from an internal and external perspective. The committee thinks that the written aims of the programmes could be rephrased to better match these distinctive features. For all three programmes, the mission statement could also be clearer on the educational principles underpinning the programmes.</p> |
| 5.3 Level | <p>The intended learning outcomes of the programmes are in line with the level, academic orientation and requirements of the field. The panel is satisfied with the concise way in which they have been formulated.</p> |
| 5.4 Practice and internships | <p><i>Bachelor's students</i> can opt for a 15 EC or 30 EC internship in the third year of their programme, and experience what it is like to work and (in case of the 30 EC option) carry out research. The two master's programmes do not contain an internship, but do facilitate and offer supervision for an extracurricular internship of 15 EC,</p> |

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| | <p>providing it matches the goals of the programme and has an academic character. Sometimes a short internship is part of the master's thesis project.</p> <p>The self-evaluation reports explain that the relationship with practice in all three programmes has recently been intensified in a number of ways. All programmes frequently invite public sector professionals as guest lecturers. In addition, the programmes have started a pilot project with extracurricular 'current affairs lectures' where professionals talk about a recent practical issue.</p> <p>The SVT concludes that the programmes have adequate links with and make good use of the The Hague environment. They are connected to the professional field at different levels of government through guest lecturers, external teachers and staff research (though most clearly in the master's programmes). The panel is of the opinion that the capstone projects in the master's programme relate well to professional practice and have been well implemented.</p> |
| 5.5.1 Curriculum Content | |
| 5.5.1.1 Core components | <p>The BPA has 24 compulsory courses (of 5 EC) of which almost half are track-specific, 6 electives and a 10 EC for a bachelor project.</p> <p>The MPA has 20 EC of required courses, 20 EC of track-specific courses and one elective course. The programme concludes with a master's thesis (15 EC). The four core courses are two substantive and two research courses. The MPSM consists of five general compulsory courses (25 EC) and the master's thesis (15 EC) and offers two specialisations: Public Affairs and Strategy, Consulting and Change Management, each consisting of track-related courses (20 EC). The SVT advises the programme to rebalance the focus between academic skills and professional content in favour of academic skills, especially research skills.</p> <p>The SVT concludes that all three programmes make good use of research methods, concepts and theories from disciplines that are highly relevant to the field of public administration and study the relationship between these disciplines.</p> |
| 5.5.1.2 Other Components | <p>In the BPA 30 EC is reserved for 'optional subjects'. Students in the bachelor's programme can specialise in a certain area of the field of public administration by choosing an economic or public sector track.</p> <p>There are three tracks in the master's programme: International and European Governance, Public Management, and Economics and Governance. For the MPA there room for one elective course (5 EC). As said above, the MPSM has two specialisations, but has no electives.</p> |
| 5.5.1.3 Structure and didactics of the programme | <p>The bachelor's programme builds on four principles: (1) integrating knowledge and insights, (2) increasing independence in learning, (3) building up knowledge and (4) learning through variation in assessment. The SVT concludes that the programme uses an impressive variety of teaching methods. Nevertheless, students commented that, in the first two years of the programme, the level of challenge could have been higher</p> <p>The MPA is based on the following three didactic principles: (1) coherence between courses, (2) incremental learning process and (3) diversity of</p> |

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| | <p>teaching and assessment methods. The SVT believes that the master's programme is an impressive and comprehensive programme with strong substantive courses that bind the programme together</p> <p>The MPSM has two learning pathways: one related to knowledge and understanding and one to the development of academic and professional skills. The SVT concludes that the overall structure of the programme is clear and coherent, but thinks that the MPSM programme could offer a wider variety of teaching and learning methods. The SVT was surprised to discover that the MPSM programme is a one-year full-time programme that is followed by a substantial number of students who combine the programme with a daytime job.</p> |
| 5.5.1.4 Intake | <p>The BPA organises several matching activities in order to prepare high school students for the programme.</p> <p>Students that enter one of the two master's programmes have already completed an academic bachelor's or similar degree, either in the Netherlands or abroad. Some of them will have finished one of the two premaster's programmes. From talking to the students, the panel concludes that the premaster does not completely solve the gap for students with a HBO-background, but that differences can quickly be resolved in the first months of the programme .</p> <p>The panel concludes that in general the structure, contents and didactics of the programmes match the students' qualifications. In the view of the panel, the introduction and matching activities in the bachelor's programme are appropriate ways of making sure that students know what is expected of them when they enter the programmes. The panel thinks that the master's programmes could also offer such matching activities, especially in the MPSM programme where success rates are low.</p> |
| 5.5.2 Length | <p>The bachelor's programme (180 EC) and both master's programmes (60 EC) meet the length criteria for academic bachelor's and master's programmes in Europe.</p> |
| 5.5.3 Results | <p>From studying the theses, the SVT concludes that the quality of both bachelor's theses and master's theses is adequate. The SVT establishes that students have achieved the intended learning outcomes.</p> <p>According to the data provided, graduates from the <i>bachelor's programme</i> mostly choose to stay at Leiden University (54% of students in 2015). Most of them continue their studies in the master's programme Public Administration.</p> <p>After the master's programme Public Administration 74% of graduates manage to find a position within six months and 89% within a year. 73% of MPS graduates find a job within three months, and 90% within a year (practitioners who followed the programme alongside a job are not included in these numbers).</p> <p>The SVT concludes that students of all three programmes have achieved the intended learning outcomes. Bachelor's theses have a clear structure, and show sufficient attention for theory and methodology. Master's theses testify that students pay a lot of attention to methodology.</p> |
| 5.6 Quality Improvement and Innovation | |

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| 5.6.1 Programme accomplishment | All three programmes have an adequate system of quality assurance in place. Course and curriculum evaluations lead to continuous improvements to the programmes at the level of the courses, the connections between courses and the programme as a whole. |
| 5.6.2 Curriculum Development | All three programmes have embedded curriculum development in a yearly quality cycle. All programmes are regularly evaluated at three levels: micro-level (course evaluations), meso-level (connections between courses) and macro-level (curriculum as a whole). During the site visit, the SVT spoke to both Programme Committees. Each committee consists of three students and three staff members. The Programme Committees have an advisory role for the Course and Examinations Regulations and the annual reports, and they organise individual course evaluations. The SVT concludes that the two Programme Committees are functioning well as part of the quality control chain. |
| 5.6.3 External Reviews | In the past six years the programmes have been reviewed twice. Comments from the degree assessment by NVAO-EAPAA have been adopted (2011), as well as those from the six-yearly Midterm Review (2014). |
| 5.7 Student Assessment | <p>Each of the three programme's assessment policies is formalised in the Course and Examination Regulations (in Dutch: OER), the Board of Examiners' Rules and Regulations and the Assessment Plan. The Assessment Plan links the intended learning outcomes of the courses to course assessment and to the overall goals of the programmes.</p> <p>The SVT has studied the assessment plans and concludes that these are very helpful tools to ensure that assessment methods are diverse and that assessment ties in well with both the course objectives and the overall goals of the programmes.</p> <p>From talking to the Board of Examiners, the SVT concludes that within a short period of time the Board has greatly improved the assessment process.</p> <p>The assessment procedure for the bachelor's and master's theses has been revised after the Midterm review to enhance transparency and uniformity of grading. An important instrument in this process is a standardised form for thesis assessment (the programmes call it a grade form) which has been in use since 2016 and contains the various criteria on which thesis assessment should be based, including research question, research design, theory, analysis, students' independence and writing style/quality of argumentation. The SVT is very impressed with the process of thesis quality assurance and considers this good practice.</p> <p>The programmes have an impressive assessment system in place. The SVT is enthusiastic about the changes that the Board of Examiners has made to assessment in the programmes and quality control. The SVT recommends the MPSM programme to increase the variety of assessment methods and to pay more attention to the assessment of academic skills.</p> |
| 5.8 Programme Jurisdiction | Covered in the Institutional Accreditation |

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| 5.9.1 Faculty nucleus Score: | Covered in the Institutional Accreditation |
| 5.9.2 Faculty qualifications | The panel is satisfied with the quality of the teaching staff in all three programmes. Staff are clearly highly experienced researchers, and the panel values the link between research and teaching. The panel considers the low involvement of full professors in the BPA programme disappointing. From talking to the students, the SVT concludes that they are generally very satisfied with their teachers. |
| 5.9.3 Diversity: gender and minorities | All three programmes aim for an equal division between men and women at staff and student level. The SVT concludes that the number of male and female students is more or less balanced. At staff level, gender balance is less complete and the SVT thinks that this imbalance needs further attention. The SVT is content to see that the master's programme <i>Public Administration</i> has taken steps to better include international students and students from different cohorts in the programme and in the University. |
| 5.10 Admission of Students | The BPA admits students with a completed pre-university education (vwo) degree or a completed first year of higher professional education (hbo). The MPA admits students with an academic bachelor's degree in Public Administration. Students from abroad with a similar degree must submit a letter of motivation and have an IELTS test score of 7.0 (or TOEFL 100). All other students with a bachelor's degree in a related social science discipline or a completed public administration degree at a university of applied sciences (HBO) must first complete a pre-master's programme. The admission requirements of the <i>master's programme Public Sector Management</i> state that the programme automatically admits students with a bachelor's degree in Public Administration or Political Science who are able to show that they are sufficiently motivated in a motivation letter. The admission procedure also states that the Board of Admissions may decide that applicants who do not meet the entry requirements can be admitted on the basis of academic capacity, previous education, professional experience and completed courses automatically or after a bridging programme (premaster). The panel concludes that the admission procedures for all three programmes are clearly defined. They match the learning objectives and missions of the programmes. The panel recommends the MPS programme to formulate its admission requirements more precisely and not to deviate from them on an individual basis, to prevent the suggestion of arbitrariness. |
| 5.11 Supportive Services and Facilities | Covered in the Institutional Accreditation |
| 5.12 Student Services | Covered in the Institutional Accreditation |
| 5.13 Public Relations | Covered in the Institutional Accreditation |
| 6 Additional Criteria | N.a. |

2. Conclusion

Based on all material and especially the report of the NVAO-EAPAA site visit team, the Accreditation Committee has evaluated the programmes.

In conclusion: the master and bachelor public administration programmes are good, but the educational philosophy and the internships need attention. The MPSM needs a clearer identity. The workload and the research methods need attention, and the programme should consider the EAPAA executive programme category.

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