European Association for
Public Administration Accreditation

EAPAA Accreditation Committee Summary Evaluation 2026-2032

PhD-programme in Public Governance, Netherlands Institute of Governance (NIG)
Leiden University, Institute of Public Administration– the Netherlands.

Summary evaluation with respect to the request for accreditation of the PhD-programme in Public Governance, Netherlands Institute of Governance (NIG), Leiden University, Institute of Public Administration– the Netherlands.

In consideration of the Self-Evaluation Report of the above programme, the Site Visit Report of 17 September 2026 of the EAPAA Site Visit Team for this programme, and the response of the programme to the draft of the Site Visit Report, the EAPAA Accreditation Committee, at its online meeting of 23 September 2026, has evaluated this programme against the EAPAA Standards (September 2023).

Criteria	Summary evaluation
Mission, objectives and competencies	The NIG PhD programme has a clear and well-implemented mission, consistently understood and valued by stakeholders, providing distinctive doctoral training within Public Governance that complements local offerings, while fostering a strong national and international scholarly community. Its coherent educational philosophy, grounded in scholarly excellence, interdisciplinarity, methodological pluralism, and practical relevance, effectively supports the development of independent researchers in public governance.
Entry into the programme	The NIG PhD programme admits well-qualified PhD candidates whose academic backgrounds are broadly aligned with its objectives and educational approach, while its interdisciplinary intake enriches learning and strengthens Public Governance as a field. NIG has developed a flexible and effective structure to accommodate disciplinary diversity, though continued attention is needed to ensure coherence and comparable learning outcomes as participant backgrounds become increasingly varied.
Structure of the curriculum	The curriculum is coherent, flexible and well-aligned with the programme's objectives, offering a strong combination of core, elective, and thematic courses that effectively support doctoral education in Public Governance. Its clear division of responsibilities between NIG and participating universities, together with intensive course formats and tailored study planning, provides a highly valued learning environment, although attention should be given to

	maintaining curriculum breadth and predictability considering future developments.
Content of the curriculum	The curriculum provides comprehensive, current and interdisciplinary coverage of Public Governance, combining strong theoretical foundations, specialised electives, research training, and transferable-skills development in a way that is well-aligned with the programme's objectives and competencies. The programme effectively complements external methods training opportunities. However, continued attention to ensuring transparent, reliable and accessible methods provision will be important, particularly considering uncertainty surrounding existing collaborations.
Didactic approach	The NIG PhD programme is highly student-centred, offering flexible and interactive learning opportunities tailored to doctoral students' needs. Ongoing changes in student diversity and internationalisation highlight the need to reassess the programme's mission and didactic approach, preferably with active involvement of PhD students.
Student Assessment	The NIG programme employs a flexible, feedback-oriented assessment approach that is widely appreciated by stakeholders and focuses on supporting PhD students' learning and development, rather than grading. Looking ahead, improvements in communication, clearer AI guidelines and potential adjustments to assessment practices will be needed to accommodate evolving student needs and programme objectives.
Preparation for the labour market	The NIG programme faces strategic choices regarding how it can continue to add value in preparing PhD-students for academic and non-academic careers, particularly in areas not yet widely covered by home universities. Potential directions include training in research funding and publication, societal impact, long-term thinking and new methodological skills, which could broaden both the programme's focus and its target audience.
Results	Participants achieve the intended learning outcomes through a flexible and well-integrated approach to doctoral training, allowing candidates to tailor coursework to their individual research needs and stages of development. Sustained student demand, high course evaluations, strong research outputs and the academic success of alumni collectively demonstrate the programme's effectiveness in developing advanced research competencies and supporting excellence in Public Governance scholarship.
Quality monitoring and improvement	The NIG programme has established a robust and mature quality assurance system characterised by a strong culture of continuous improvement, systematic stakeholder engagement, and effective use of feedback to drive tangible enhancements in curriculum, governance and student support. Its longstanding commitment to external review, inclusive governance structures, and strategic international advice provides a solid foundation for maintaining high quality, responsiveness and long-term sustainability.

Faculty	The NIG programme is supported by a highly qualified and experienced academic staff whose expertise is closely aligned with its educational objectives, enabling the delivery of high-quality doctoral training. Its ability to draw on faculty from partner universities, complemented by international guest lecturers and active research networks, provides students with access to a rich and diverse academic environment that strengthens both the programme's research orientation and academic standards.
Diversity	The NIG programme demonstrates staff and student diversity through a balanced teaching faculty, varied academic backgrounds, and increasing international participation. This diversity is seen as strengthening its interdisciplinary identity and inclusive learning environment, although further expansion and broader inclusion remain areas for development.
Responsibility and autonomy	A clear and effective governance structure provides a strong foundation for strategic leadership, operational management and stakeholder participation, while ensuring appropriate levels of institutional and academic autonomy. The recent transfer of management to Leiden University creates opportunities for further development and renewal. A strategic review of future funding options would strengthen the programme's long-term sustainability and resilience.
Supportive services and facilities	A committed and highly accessible management team, combined with strong facilities, effective support structures, and close collaboration across the NIG network, creates a supportive and high-quality learning environment. Student satisfaction is high. Maintaining this culture of accessibility and engagement will be important following the recent management transition.
Research basis	A strong and vibrant research environment underpins the programme, providing doctoral candidates with access to internationally recognised scholars, cutting-edge research and a wide range of opportunities for scholarly exchange and academic development. Close alignment between teaching and research, together with an active and supportive research community, ensures that the programme is firmly research-based and highly relevant to contemporary developments in Public Governance.
Internationalisation	The programme has developed a thoughtful internationalisation strategy that prioritises meaningful international engagement for candidates through curriculum design, scholarly networks, mobility opportunities, and collaboration with leading international partners. Building on the exceptional strength of the NIG network, further enhancing international partnerships, European perspectives and the visibility of the NIG model would reinforce its position as a leading example of collaborative doctoral education and research training in Europe.