



**European Association for  
Public Administration  
Accreditation**

## EAPAA Accreditation Committee Evaluation Report

**"Master en Administration Publique" MPA programme, IDHEAP, University of Lausanne.**  
Evaluation Report with respect to the request for accreditation of the "Master en Administration Publique" MPA programme, IDHEAP, University of Lausanne.

In consideration of the Self-Evaluation Report of the above programme, the Site Visit Report of 1 September 2021 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 meeting of 7 September 2021 in Brussels, Belgium, has evaluated this programme against the EAPAA Accreditation Criteria (version 9, September 2013).

### 1. Accreditation Criteria

2. Applicability/Eligibility	
2.1 Domain	The Master in public administration (MPA with 90 ECTS credits) is a multidisciplinary programme delivering an executive diploma, designed for professionals at all levels of the public or para - public sector and NGOs. The executive master programme offers a general training at academic level and is compatible with a professional activity. Most of the students have already substantive experience in public domain or related activities, which is a valuable asset in terms of exchange and collaboration among participants.
2.2 Geography	Switzerland is a member of the Council of Europe, therefore the programme falls within the jurisdiction of EAPAA.
2.3 Programme longevity	The MPA, launched in 1994, was accredited by EAPAA for the first time in 2005 and again in 2012/3. Retrospectively, the integration into the University of Lausanne can be considered a success insofar as a large scientific and strategic autonomy has been preserved within a relatively similar faculty of entities with relatively similar interests and experience with other Executive programmes. The diversification in terms of training courses on a modular basis makes it possible to play with the complementarity of the offer in order to meet the needs of different participants and to enlarge the influx of students in the MPA. The tendencies in the academic world towards focusing on output-related rankings for academic careers, based on international publications and international research, could eventually harm the USP of IDHEAP and put pressure on the rich tradition of applied research and consultancy.
2.4 Programme variants and locations	Criterion non-applicable to IDHEAP. The regular master in politics and public management is organized by a network of Swiss universities but this programme is not captured by this procedure.

	The only (secondary) variant within the MPA is the flexibility to start the program in January or in September. This is highly appreciated by the students and the alumni.
4 Category of accreditation	Executive master in public administration (90 credits), three years based on nine trimesters (three trimesters per year).
<b>5. Standards</b>	
5.1 Domain of public administration	IDHEAP is without any discussion the leading institute in public administration with a strong reputation in the field, based on strong links with the field, mainly through the applied research and the active involvement of the staff in the Swiss public sector, on all levels of government. The MPA is a mix of the core components of the study of public administration. The programme is without any discussion based and build on a multidisciplinary approach and all the required building blocks for studying public administration are well-embedded in fundamental and applied research.
5.2 Mission of the programme	<p>The mission statement of IDHEAP states that the programme wants to meet the challenges faced by society that requires the public sector to be innovative and capable of continuous rethinking the way they work. Therefore IDHEAP wants to provide the public sector with managers with accredited training courses, cutting edge research, informed opinions and evidence – based assessments also by cultivating an interdisciplinary approach orientated towards meeting stakeholders’ needs at all levels.</p> <p>The SVT is convinced that the team of IDHEAP is firmly inspired by its mission and that the programme in general meets those strategic objectives. However, IDHEAP could use some more formalised strategic documents of the type that are required by EAPAA and as a consolidation of the internal debates. The paragraphs spent on ‘strategy’ in the self - evaluation report are now rather abstract, rather general and broad and are not translated towards an operational strategy, let alone into competencies related to the courses and the learning outcomes per course.</p>
5.3 Level	The MPA is a conceptually strong programme and the close interaction of the scholars with the field is much appreciated by the students. The SVT is convinced that the MPA of IDHEAP matches the international criteria for a master degree at executive level.
5.4 Practice and internships	The link with the practice of the public sector is obviously very strong: almost all students are professionals working in the public sector. IDHEAP and its scholars are well known for the interaction with the field and practices of public administration. The topic of practical skills seems to be rather implicit in the MPA programme. By implicit we mean that students probably are not well aware that skills are at stake. The discussion on research skills seems to be a little bit underdeveloped and is worth more attention.
<b>5.5.1 Curriculum Content</b>	
5.5.1.1 Core components	The programme certainly is conceived in a multidisciplinary philosophy, but there is some doubt about the interdisciplinary character of the

	programme. At a secondary level, the SVT was a little bit surprised that there is no unique basic course in which the students are systematically introduced in the history and theories of public administration. Most of the central topics of PA are discussed in the individual courses, but students also need a more integrated and holistic view on the dynamics of the science of public administration and the context of, and interaction between, the main concepts.
5.5.1.2 Other Components	There are no specialisations in this programme. The students have some flexibility in choosing elective courses, so that they, to a certain extent, can adapt parts of the programme to their specific needs.
5.5.1.3 Structure and didactics of the programme	Students, alumni and employers seem to be (very) satisfied with the overall quality of the courses and the evaluation scores of the recent cohorts of students are impressively positive, with some minor exceptions. 'Horizontal teaching' is the concept used in the self – evaluation report to describe and summarize the didactic approach of this MPA. During the conversations it became clear that this essentially means using the experiences of the students to build up and fuel the content of the courses. The SVT was somewhat critical about the added value of this concept: for an executive master of this type no other choice than working in close interaction with professional students.
5.5.1.4 Intake	The program allows a maximum of 25 students which makes it possible to work in small groups. This is a very strong point for preserving the quality of this type of programme. The importance of the interviews and of the short paper in the intake procedure was not clear.
5.5.2 Length	The length of the programmes matches the ambitions of an executive master. Around 74% of the students need 4 years to complete the master. And although this number has decreased recently, this illustrates a recurrent problem: the combination of a job and family life with a master is very demanding and puts a lot of pressure on the students and their personal lives. The SVT appreciated the exit interviews with students organised by the programme management.
5.5.3 Results	The students, alumni and employers highly appreciate the quality of the MPA and the courses are, in general, very positively evaluated. Alumni testified that completing the MPA has helped them up to promotion: 64% of the recent cohorts have been promoted after obtaining their degree (study of 2019).
5.6 Quality Improvement and Innovation	
5.6.1 Programme accomplishment	The SVT appreciates the organic connections between programme management and faculty management, in which the prominence of consensus and compromise express a collaborative and bottom – up mindset of programme management. There appear to be no significant barriers to programme adjustments from the external and institutional environment of IDHEAP. One performance issue is the overlap between DAS / CAS and probably also between the first year and the second year courses in the master.
5.6.2 Curriculum Development	The proximity with employers and the professional field are an intrinsic part of IDHEAP model, and the informal and interactive possibilities,

	processes, variety of input into curriculum development and change are broad. A point of vigilance could relate to the organic link between the composition of the CFC and course offering which could slow the flow of curricular innovation to the medium term.
5.6.3 External Reviews	IDHEAP is in its second cycle of Swiss Agency AAQ certification (after 2006), obtained in 2020 for the next 7 years “without conditions”. As a member of the Foundation of Continuous training FCUE UNIL-EPFL, IDHEAP includes the external outlook of the Scientific direction of FCUE in its CFC (MPA commission of continuous training), both as an external guarantee for MPA improvement, and a support for the seamless integration within UNIL. Finally, EAPAA accreditations have been a constant in IDHEAP work. Also, we observe that previous EAPAA recommendations (2013) have been closely scrutinized and acted upon.
5.7 Student Assessment	The SVT notes that the operationalisation and the terminology of competences is sometimes drowned in a too generic language (‘professional experience’, ‘knowledge goals’). The course objective defined in the curriculum do not standardize and seldom fit the formalization of competences that is met in more recent competency frameworks currently in use in public organisations and at universities. Nonetheless, the end results appeared satisfying for students and employers. A point of criticism is the evaluation of the master thesis (Mémoire), which seems rudimentary.
5.8 Programme Jurisdiction	The MPA of the IDHEAP has been integrated in the Law faculty, which seems to be the most appropriate environment. The programme management is to a high degree autonomous with respect to all important aspects of the MPA.
5.9.1 Faculty nucleus Score	The CFC (Comité de Formation Continue) is the nucleus of the MPA. There is a basic ratio (number of students / number of professors) of 1 / 7,5. This ratio is excellent and matches the close interaction that is needed between professors and professional students.
5.9.2 Faculty qualifications	All professors in the programme certainly are certified and combine educational activities with research and consultancy in the Swiss public sector.
5.9.3 Diversity: gender and minorities	At this moment 18% of the professors is female. Although the number is rising (slowly) compared to the 2013 accreditation, this still remains certainly a crucial working point for IDHEAP. 28% of the students is female and also this is lower than one could expect. Social diversity is also a concern, due to high fees and a lack of financial support.
5.10 Admission of Students	The admission standards are not only academic. The programme also admits students with a professional bachelor degree and 5 years of professional experience, which is particularly important in a country with a strong dual education system (and scepticism towards too much academicization).
5.11 Supportive Services and Facilities	No special remarks.

5.12 Student Services	IDHEAP offers a new learning lab for all students with a VIP sector for the MPA students. IDHEAP offers also a follow up and tutorship for students, especially for the thesis. The monitoring of the drop-outs will be extended.
5.13 Public Relations	IDHEAP uses the usual printed PR – instruments; online sources of information; direct marketing techniques; information sessions (once per year) with alumni who present their experiences with the programme to potential students. The PR – policy looks solid, based on a variety of instruments and media channels.
<b>6 Additional Criteria</b>	Not applicable.