



**European Association for
Public Administration
Accreditation**

EAPAA Accreditation Committee Summary Evaluation

Summary evaluation with respect to the request for accreditation of the BSc Public Administration and Organizational Science (PAOS) and the MSc Public Administration (PA) of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

Criteria	Summary evaluation
Mission, objectives and competencies	The profile and ambitions of the programmes are strongly embedded in the mission and educational vision of the university and align with the domain-specific reference framework. The intended learning outcomes take into account the Dublin Descriptors and reflect the substance, level and orientation of the programme.
Entry into the programme	The PA programme attracts students with three types of educational backgrounds: those with a related academic bachelor or master degree, those with a bachelor degree from a university of applied sciences, and those with a non-related academic degree. The first group is admitted directly, the second group after a pre-master programme, and the third after completing a tailored course package. Students who took a premaster/tailored package indicated that it had prepared them well for the master programme in terms of both academic skills and substantive knowledge.
Structure of the curriculum	<p>The panel thinks highly of the intricate curriculum set-up of the bachelor programme featuring a breadth of foundational, specialist, interdisciplinary, academic, elective and research-oriented courses. The panel appreciates in particular that throughout the three-year curriculum, bachelor students get increasingly more discretion to create a study programme that reflects their own interests.</p> <p>The diversity of specializations on offer in the master programme allows students to tailor the study to their own needs.</p>
Content of the curriculum	<p>The PAOS programme stands out among Dutch public administration degrees for its multidisciplinary social scientific approach and its link with the daily practice of organizing and governance.</p> <p>The PA programme stands out among similar Dutch degrees because it focuses on the social/societal embedding of public administration and</p>

	looks at the changing nature of social structures and social problems and their impact on public administration.
Didactic approach	The three core values of the university - Personal, Open and Responsible - are embedded in the learning environment and reflected in the teaching methods of the programmes. The specific educational format in the master programme where fulltime and parttime students take all courses together is a selling point of the programme.
Student Assessment	The programmes have a robust assessment system, which is connected to the provisions and policies of the university and the faculty. The Assessment Plan is a relevant instrument to ensure alignment between teaching and assessment in courses and across the programmes. The assessment methods are varied. Since the previous accreditation, the thesis assessment procedures have been enhanced.
Preparation for the labour market	Students are definitely work-ready by the time they graduate and enter the labour market as reflective, responsible and open professionals with a broad perspective.
Results	<p>PAOS students who eventually graduate the bachelor programme have achieved all learning outcomes. The acquired competencies allow bachelor graduates to pursue a variety of master programmes at VU, elsewhere in the Netherlands and abroad. The sample review of final bachelor products showed that the graduation trajectory featuring both a group research practice and an individual bachelor thesis is relevant; however the panel also found that both products and their learning goals should be closer attuned, and the individual thesis should contain a reflection component.</p> <p>PA students who eventually graduate the master programme have achieved all learning outcomes. The quality of the master theses is good.</p>
Quality monitoring and improvement	The quality monitoring of the programmes is in line with the standards.
Faculty	The panel considers that both programmes have a good number of teaching staff with extensive and relevant research expertise, adequate didactic qualifications and a heart for the PAOS and PA students.
Diversity	Diversity and inclusiveness are in the DNA of the university, and are also present in the master programme. Staff is capitalising on the student diversity in the classroom and addresses substantive issues of diversity in society, governance and organizations in their education and research.
Responsibility and autonomy	There is sufficient autonomy for the faculty to shape their own programmes.

Supportive services and facilities	The panel appreciates the broad offer on student support, guidance and wellbeing, and commends the faculty and the programmes for the initiatives and investments on digital learning since the pandemic.
Research basis	The core staff teaching in the PA specialization tracks are well-known researchers in that specific domain while all other teaching staff also have relevant track-specific research expertise.
Internationalisation	There are sufficient opportunities for internationalisation within the programmes.