



**European Association for
Public Administration
Accreditation**

17 July 2011

EAPAA Accreditation Committee Evaluation Report

Bachelor's programme Public Administration and Organization Science and the master's programme Public Administration at the Faculty of Social Sciences, VU University Amsterdam, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Evaluation Report with respect to the request for accreditation of 1 December 2009.

In consideration of the Self-Evaluation Report of the above programme of 31 July 2010, the Site Visit Report of 26 April 2011 of the EAPAA Site Visit Team for this programme, and the response of the programme of 14 July 2011 to the draft of the Site Visit Report, the EAPAA Accreditation Committee, at its meeting of 6 September 2011, Bucharest, Romania, has evaluated this programme against the EAPAA Accreditation Criteria (version 7, September 2009).

1. Accreditation Criteria

2. Applicability/Eligibility	
2.1 Domain	The programmes both are public administration programmes.
2.2 Geography	The Netherlands belongs to the EAPAA domain.
2.3 Programme longevity	The curriculum in its current structure was introduced in the academic year 2003, so complies this requirement.
2.4 Programme variants and locations	The master's programme has two tracks (Public Administration and Governance general track, and the Governance of Security track). Both master programmes have a part-time version (1,5 years)
4 Category of accreditation	Bachelor: public administration bachelor level programmes (3 or 4 years) Master: public administration master level programmes (1 or 2 years)
5. Standards	
5.1 Domain of public administration Score: Adequate	To assess the public administration character of the bachelor's programme, the committee has compared the curriculum components with the requirements as defined by the EAPAA. The committee concludes, similar to its findings in standard 2, that attention to public administration is somewhat limited, but sufficient to meet the EAPAA criteria. Because of the broad focus of the curriculum, the faculty had to make choices concerning the acquisition of (in-depth) knowledge and understanding in the various subdisciplines of public administration. The committee has found that there are some deficits in the fields of public management and e-government. Nevertheless, the committee has evaluated that these choices are conscientiously made and that the programme is up to standard. Throughout the bachelor's programme, students acquire sufficient relevant competences to become professionals capable of intelligent, creative

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	<p>analysis, communication and action in the public sector. This is also reflected in the outcomes of the programme, which are assessed by the committee as good (see standard 25). The deficits noted will be partly repaired in the new curriculum, which will include a course Public Management with a study load of 6 EC.</p> <p>The committee has also studied the public administration character of the master's programme and assessed that the programme sufficiently meets the requirements as defined by the EAPAA. In its considerations, the committee has made a distinction between on the one hand the general track and on the other hand the specialized tracks Governance of Security and Governance of the Third Sector. The committee highly values the specialized tracks. According to the committee, they are an asset for the Dutch higher education. However, in these specializations there is rather limited attention to public administration, specifically the attention to the core curriculum components: public management, policies and institutions. The general track, conversely, meets the criteria of the EAPAA more adequately. In its assessment, the committee has taken into account that the programme comprises of only one study year and that the faculty has made conscious choices to fill in this year. Moreover, the committee has taken into account the fact that –although not part of this accreditation procedure- the course Public administration theory will be moved from the general track to the common courses. It seems that the new curriculum will better ensure the development of public administration competences of all students, independent of the chosen track.</p> <p>Based on these considerations, the committee assesses the standard that relates to the public administration character of the programmes as 'satisfactory' for both the bachelor's programme and the master's programme.</p>
<p>5.2 Mission of the programme Score: Adequate</p>	<p>Mission: the faculty aims to educate students to become responsible professionals. The faculty aims to be a breeding ground for involved professionals, who have learned to think in a scientific way and place knowledge above prejudice, who are willing to examine their ideas critically and to confront these with reality, who contribute to public debate, whose education and research reveal their commitment to the society around them. Didactic vision: the Faculty of Social Sciences fosters a climate of inspiration, in which students and academic staff are challenged to question their assumptions, to contribute to public debates and to affirm their commitment to society. The faculty believes in taking a personal approach, offering high-quality education in an inspiring environment. Degree programmes are small-scale and well-organized. Members of staff from different academic disciplines within the faculty cooperate closely, maintaining a focus on current issues. This results in broad and multidisciplinary degree programmes.</p> <p>The self-evaluation report states that the bachelor's programme PAOS is grounded in the university's and faculty's mission statement and didactic vision. The programme puts emphasis on the role that graduates should play in society. Students learn to reflect on the roles played by public and private organizations, to consider the functioning of public administration in a wider social and market context, and to consider the functioning of</p>

	<p>private organizations in a social context in which public regulation and organizations are also important factors. The strong focus on research and academic skills further contributes to the development of the students' critical attitude.</p> <p>According to the self-evaluation report, the master's programme is also grounded in the university's and faculty's mission statement and didactic vision. The programme continuously focuses on the application of public administration and organization in practice. It encloses a number of courses that explicitly address the role of public administration in society and its normative aspects. Furthermore, the programme includes courses that combine major themes in organization and public governance with academic skills like research design, research evaluation, academic writing and critical reflection.</p> <p>The committee noticed that the self-evaluation reports contain descriptions of the mission statements on both university and faculty level, but that they lack an elaboration of the educational philosophy and mission at the programme level. Nevertheless, during the site visit the committee found a convincing connection between the university's and the faculty's mission statements and the aims and objectives of the programmes. Especially the interdisciplinary character of the programmes and the strong focus on research and academic skills give students the necessary baggage to become involved, responsible and (self) critical professionals. In addition, the strong emphasis on philosophy, integrity and ethics contributes to the aim to prepare students for an active role in society.</p> <p>The committee assesses this standard as 'satisfactory' for both programmes.</p>
<p>5.3 Level Score: Adequate/Good</p>	<p>The committee has established that the learning outcomes correspond sufficiently to the Dublin descriptors and that they specify the level of the programmes adequately in both cases. In its view, the intended learning outcomes reveal that students of the bachelor's programme acquire knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes at a basic level that is typical for a bachelor's programme. For example, students of the bachelor's programme learn how to apply social scientific knowledge and understanding in the domain in order to address relatively limited problems of public administration and organization. Moreover, they learn how to conduct, under supervision, a relatively limited research project.</p> <p>Similarly, the intended learning outcomes show that students of the master's programme obtain knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes at an advanced level that is characteristic for master's programmes. Students of the master's programme learn, for example, to design and conduct (independently or in cooperation with others) research and to critically reflect on the results of the research conducted in relation to theoretical debates in the discipline.</p> <p>The committee assesses the standard Level as 'satisfactory' for both programmes.</p> <p>The committee studied the intended learning outcomes to be acquired by students of both programmes from the perspective of their orientation. It had already concluded that these learning outcomes correspond sufficiently to the demands of the scientific discipline (or the professional colleagues</p>

	<p>and the relevant domain) and the professional practice. The committee also examined the learning outcomes from the perspective of the required academic orientation. It assessed that both the bachelor's programme and the master's programme have a strong academic orientation. The learning outcomes are explicitly of an academic nature and level and correspond sufficiently to the requirements of the international scientific practice. For example, the learning outcomes of the bachelor's programme refer to the ability to draft a scientific argument, written or oral, to analyze and interpret empirical data and to show a scientific attitude. The learning outcomes of the master's programme refer to the ability to execute independently a research project, to critically reflect on the results of the research conducted and to relate this to theoretical debates in the discipline.</p> <p>The committee ascertained that graduates of the bachelor's programme have unconditional access to the master's programmes Public Administration, Policy, Communication and Organization and Culture, Organization and Management. In addition, graduates can also qualify for a research master's degree. Furthermore, the committee is convinced that graduates of the master's programme will have acquired the qualifications to carry out academic research in their area of specialization and therefore qualify for relevant PhD programmes.</p> <p>Based on these considerations, the committee assesses the standard that relates to the academic orientation of the programmes as 'satisfactory' for both the bachelor's programme and the master's programme.</p> <p>The committee has found a very strong interaction between education and research. It established that all lecturers are actively engaged in research and appreciates the fact that current scientific developments and theories and research permeate the curriculum in this way. The committee has found that the learning materials used are adequate and that lecturers confront students with current developments in the discipline and with the results of research in their area of specialization.</p> <p>The committee highly appreciates the strong focus on methodology and research skills in the bachelor's programme. It observed that in the programme students get acquainted with state of the art research methods and that there are numerous opportunities to practice and develop research skills and other academic competences. Students finish their bachelor's programme with a research practice course, in which they design and conduct a joint research project, and a bachelor's thesis, a systematic literature review.</p> <p>The committee also found a solid academic orientation of the master's programme. It has observed that all general courses and tracks are interwoven with academic activities relating to research. Moreover, the master's thesis provides students the opportunity to conduct research independently and to further develop all the required skills. The committee has noted that the incoming students have different backgrounds. Therefore, it highly approves the offering of a range of optional methodological courses during the thesis period from which students, depending on their needs, can choose.</p> <p>The committee has also evaluated that there is a strong link with the</p>
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	<p>professional field in both programmes. By the use of (real life) cases, guest lecturers and assignments derived from the professional field, students are acquainted with the professional practice. Moreover, students in the bachelor programme can derive practical skills through an internship. The interviewed master's students confirmed that part-time students frequently are stimulated to link their work experience to the subjects being taught, although not on a regular basis, and that full-time students also profit from this.</p> <p>The committee concludes that the programmes clearly surpass the criterion which relates to the requirements for academic programmes and therefore assesses this standard in both cases as 'good'.</p>
<p>5.4 Practise and internships Score: (adequate)</p>	<p>Bachelor students are confronted with the professional field by the use of real-world case studies, the contributions of guest lecturers and the use of assignments derived from the professional field. In the first semester of the third year, students have the opportunity to do an internship (a maximum of 15 EC) and get acquainted with their chosen professional fields and the issues faced by practitioners. This enables students to acquire practical experience alongside the academic skills that they have developed during the bachelor's programme.</p> <p>The master's programme has no internship.</p>
<p>5.5.1 Curriculum Content</p>	
<p>5.5.1.1 Core components Score: Adequate</p>	<p>As explained in the self-evaluation report, the curriculum of the bachelor's programme consists of four didactic paths. Two disciplinary paths teach students the basics of the curriculum, enabling them to develop their knowledge and understanding of the fields of public administration (didactic path 1: 30 EC and 5 EC elective) and organization (didactic path 2: 30 EC and 5 EC elective). These two paths are combined with a methodology path (didactic path 3: 20 EC) which aims to develop students' methodological understanding and skills.</p> <p>The central path of the programme (didactic path 4: 60 EC and 5 EC elective) is called the "Integration, application and competency development path". At this point, students' academic skills are further developed in the process of integrating and applying disciplinary and methodological knowledge and understanding. Students are taught the relevant academic skills (academic writing, presentation and argumentation, and conducting empirical research) while they learn about integrated themes in public administration and organization and apply these to the field of governance and organization.</p> <p>Currently the faculty is revising the curricula of the bachelor's and master's programmes. The new programmes will run from the academic year 2011-2012. The main innovation of the bachelor's programme is that students, after a common first year, will specialize by choosing one of the two tracks: a Public Administration track or an Organization Science track. Each track will consist of 5 courses. Another innovation will be the so called 'workgroup ribbon' in year one. In this didactical path students will be introduced to different lecturers and their research, and will develop various academic skills.</p> <p>As mentioned in the self-evaluation report, the curriculum of the master's</p>

	<p>programme consists of three general courses plus three specialized courses for each of the master's tracks: the Public Administration and Governance general track; the Governance of Security track; and the Governance of the Third Sector track. In the methodology course all students choose one of the four following courses: Qualitative data analysis, Qualitative interview techniques, Multivariate analysis and Policy research and evaluation. The master's programme will be completed with a master's thesis. All courses comprise 5 EC; the master's thesis comprises 25 EC. In addition to the general master's courses, each track consists of a specialized didactic path. In the Public Administration and Governance general track students develop a deeper theoretical knowledge and understanding of public administration and public governance, with extra attention paid to the relationship between theory, knowledge and public administration practice. The Governance of Security track focuses on the integrity-related, international and interdisciplinary aspects of security governance. The courses in this track offer both theoretical knowledge and empirical insights into domains of safety and security studies. The Governance of the Third Sector track, finally, focuses specifically on the governance of non-profit organizations. The courses address the wider societal role and the internal and external management of 'mission-driven' organizations, among which also religious organizations are considered.</p> <p>Each track also has a part-time version, but these only differ from the full-time programme in terms of timing. The part-time master's programme takes one-and-a-half years to complete, rather than one year. The individual courses are spread over the first year in the part-time programme, with the master's thesis starting in the second year.</p> <p>The new curriculum of the master's programme Public Administration will still consist of three general courses and three tracks with three courses each track. The content of the general courses will be adjusted and also the content of some courses within the tracks. In the new general courses all students will acquire advanced knowledge and understanding on public administration theory, policy and management and good governance. The methodology module will be obligatory for all students and will focus on different research designs. As a final assessment of this module, students will work on the research design of their own master's thesis.</p> <p>According to the self-evaluation report, the bachelor's programme Public Administration and Organization Science (PAOS) primarily aims to offer students a multidisciplinary education in the field of public administration and organization. PAOS is a broad social scientific programme that covers the traditional sub-disciplines of public administration (political science, sociology, economics and law) and organization science. The main object of study is the functioning of public administration and organizations in the public and private sectors. In the faculty's view, private, non-profit and public organizations are closely interconnected. Therefore the functioning of public administration and organizations and the interaction between them, lies at the heart of the PAOS bachelor's programme.</p> <p>The master's programme Public Administration aims to educate students to a level that will enable them to function as specialized professionals in the field of public administration or as scientific researchers. It combines a</p>
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	<p>focus on public administration with a more general focus on public governance, while paying attention to specific areas of interest (security and third sector governance). As mentioned in the self-evaluation report, VU master's programme Public Administration also reveals a significant overlap with the key features of Dutch public administration as set out in the PAGO framework. In addition to classical public administration, the scope of study has been broadened to include non-governmental actors, reflecting the often complex, public-private, multi-actor networks that deal with collective and public interests. Multi-level and multi-actor governance is a key issue.</p> <p>The committee studied the formulated learning outcomes of both programmes and found that the learning outcomes describe the knowledge, skills and academic attitudes students acquire in the courses of the programmes. The committee also compared them to its domain-specific frame of reference. It emphasizes that the bachelor's programme is rather unique. Especially the combination of public administration and organization science is innovative and distinguishes the programme from most other Dutch programmes in the field of public administration. During the site-visit, many students pointed to this combination as the main reason to choose for VU University Amsterdam. The programme clearly answers to a need, which is also reflected in an increasing share of the Dutch academic "public administration market".</p> <p>The committee found that the faculty makes use of adequate and well-considered arguments to ground this broad approach. It also found that this broad approach is clearly visible in the intended learning outcomes. Students will gain knowledge and understanding of administration and organization and will integrate and apply these to the fields of governance and organization. A consequence of this broad interdisciplinary focus is that the faculty had to make choices about the in- and exclusion of specific knowledge and understanding in the field of public administration. The committee found for example that the attention to economics and public finance in the learning outcomes is rather limited. Nevertheless, the committee has assessed that the learning outcomes of the programme sufficiently correspond to the academic learning outcomes for PAGO studies as outlined in the domain-specific framework.</p> <p>The committee found that the intended learning outcomes of the master's programme are also satisfactory. They correspond sufficiently with the standards as described in the PAGO framework. According to the committee, the three streams serve interesting niches of public administration. The committee wants to make a remark about the international orientation of the programme. While European borders are blurring and international governance is becoming more important, the committee has noted that the programme strongly focuses on the Dutch situation. Although during the site visit it became clear that in a number of courses there is some attention to international subjects, the committee highly recommends increasing the international approach on the programme level.</p> <p>The committee therefore assesses this standard Discipline specific requirements as 'satisfactory' for both programmes.</p>
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5.5.1.2 Other Components Score: (adequate)	In the bachelor's programme there are electives (30 EC).
5.5.1.3 Structure and didactics of the programme Score: Adequate	<p>The committee studied the correspondence between the learning outcomes and the curriculum, and concluded that the bachelor's and master's programme are adequately designed to ensure that the students achieve these learning outcomes. It confirmed that the tables containing information about the curricula reveal how the individual courses of each programme are systematically and adequately cross-matched with the learning outcomes.</p> <p>The committee found that every learning outcome receives sufficient attention in the bachelor's curriculum and that the distribution of learning outcomes over the curriculum is appropriate. The committee noted that the academic and professional skills are rather implicitly woven in the curriculum. Therefore, it is not always transparent for students and lecturers which academic skills will be learned in which courses. In the new curriculum, the attention to skills development will be strengthened by creating a separate learning path. The committee approves this intention and suggests the use of this learning path also to increase the attention for management and organization skills, which are rather underexposed in the current curriculum.</p> <p>The committee is content with the elective space. It provides students a good opportunity to specialize or to broaden their knowledge. It is also a good chance for students to become acquainted with their chosen professional fields and the issues faced by practitioners. During the site visit, the committee noted that opinions about the internship are rather diverse. Students do appreciate the opportunity to gain some working experience, while staff members are a bit more reluctant. The committee is aware of the merits and threats of the internship and understands the hesitation of the faculty but supports this valuable chance for students to get acquainted with the professional field. Therefore, the committee advises the faculty to start a broad discussion about the merits, goals and disadvantages of the internship to match the expectations and to maximize the potential.</p> <p>Concerning the master's programme, the committee found that every learning outcome receives sufficient attention in the curriculum and that the distribution of learning outcomes over the curriculum is adequate. The committee advises the management of the master's programme, as suggested by the master's students, to broaden the focus of the Third Sector track, by involving other political origins like political activations, humanitarian organizations and historical contents.</p> <p>The committee concludes that both the bachelor's programme and the master's programme fulfil the criteria which refer to the relation between the learning outcomes and the curriculum and assesses the Correspondence between the aims and objectives and the curriculum as 'satisfactory' for both programmes.</p> <p>The committee studied the consistency of the bachelor's curriculum and concluded that the curriculum is designed and structured in a well-considered way. Although the self-evaluation report states that considering</p>

	<p>integration there is room for improvement, the committee has found that the four learning paths give enough structure to the curriculum. Especially the bachelor's workgroup, project and thesis provide enough opportunities to integrate and apply disciplinary knowledge and skills and methodology. The committee studied the new curriculum design and concluded that the intended measures will improve the internal consistency of the curriculum. It therefore supports the decision to restructure the curriculum of the bachelor's programme.</p> <p>The committee also studied the consistency of the master's curriculum. It found that the different tracks are well designed. The contents of the courses within these tracks are coherent and balanced. The committee also found that there is a connection between the general programme and the tracks, but this connection is somewhat limited and unclear for students. Some interviewed master's students confirm this. The committee strongly advises the faculty to strengthen the relation between the general courses on ethics and organization and policies in their social contexts, and the specialized courses in the various tracks.</p> <p>Based on these considerations, the committee assesses the standard relating to the consistency of the curriculum as 'satisfactory' for both programmes.</p> <p>The committee has established that the curriculum of the bachelor's programme can in principle be completed in the nominal period of three years. It has not received any information that indicates that the curriculum contains serious obstacles, which lead to delays in students' progress. During the site visit, the committee learned that the actual workload is lower than the planned workload, which also indicates the programme to be feasible. However, the committee also learned that the study load varies throughout the curriculum. The first year is relatively easy while the third year is quite demanding. In the committee's view, the curriculum should be more balanced and the workload may be increased in the first year, which is confirmed by students. In the interview with students, the committee verified that some students feel the programme could be more challenging. They refer in this respect to the teaching methods used, especially the large-scale courses with lectures. However, the overall conclusion of the committee is that this does not seem to be a serious issue, either for the staff or for the students.</p> <p>The committee assessed that the workload of the master's programme is quite high. Especially the simultaneously programmed courses and the strong focus on time-consuming papers, contribute to this. The committee also assessed that it is difficult for students to finish their master's thesis in time. Students are supposed to start early in the year with their master's thesis but tend to postpone work on their thesis project until they have finished other courses. This causes a delay, which is reflected in the completion rates (standard 26). The committee took notice of the proposal by the department to introduce master's thesis groups. It approves this measure; it expects that the working groups will stimulate the students and enable them to meet the deadlines.</p> <p>Compared to the full-time programme, the committee assessed the planned workload of the part-time programme to be more realistic. Not</p>
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	<p>only is the programme better spread in time, but also the longer turn around time for the thesis project makes the programme more feasible. Based on these considerations, the committee assesses the standard that relates to the workload of the programmes as 'satisfactory' for both the bachelor's programme and the master's programme.</p> <p>The committee studied the coherence of the structure and the contents of the programmes. It concludes that the didactic methods used in both programmes are in line with the aims and objectives. The committee particularly appreciated the working groups and the bachelor project, which contribute to the research orientation of the programme.</p> <p>The committee concluded that the teaching methods in the bachelor's programme are not always optimal with respect to the learning goals but, considering the number of students, adequate. Throughout the curriculum, there is a strong focus on large-scale lectures, although other teaching methods are being used as well. Especially within the integration, application and competency didactic path, small-scale interactive teaching methods are also applied. From the interviews, the committee learned that teaching methods are a topic that will be addressed at the faculty level.</p> <p>Facing increasing numbers of students and a cutback in expenses, the faculty searches for opportunities to use staff time more efficiently and, at the same time, to make education more interactive and attractive. The committee advises the faculty to make more use of ICT-based learning tools (including a more intensive use of Blackboard) and of blended learning. In its opinion the use of e-learning will increase the (inter)active character of the programme.</p> <p>The committee has found that the master's programme uses more small scale, interactive teaching methods. However, if the numbers of students does increase as expected, it is possible that the master's programme will have to face similar problems as the bachelor's programme. The committee advises the faculty to adequately prepare itself for the increase in the number of students.</p> <p>Based on these considerations, the committee assesses the coherence of structure and contents as 'satisfactory' for both programmes.</p>
5.5.1.4 Intake Score: (adequate)	The admission criteria (see 5.10) are adequate for the aims and objectives of the programme.
5.5.2 Length Score: Complies	The length of both the bachelor programme (180 ECTS) and the master programme (60 ECTS) are in line with the Dutch and the European requirements.
5.5.2 Results Score: Bachelor: Good/Adequate; Master: Adequate	<p>To be able to assess the achieved learning outcomes, the committee has studied a number of bachelor's and master's theses. Because a lot of the theses were written in Dutch, the secretary-general of the EAPAA also reviewed a number of theses.</p> <p>The overall conclusion of the committee is that the quality and level of the bachelor's theses are good. The committee evaluated that in all theses the objectives were clear and the students kept to them. In general, students' reasonings were consistent and presented logically. Moreover, the students used good research methods (literature research) and a clear research design. The students demonstrated a good knowledge of the literature and</p>

	<p>their explanation how the literature was selected was exemplary. The committee also established that the quality of the presentation (main notions, footnotes, references, language) was good.</p> <p>The thesis procedure is very structured and controlled. The committee values these strict outlines for the bachelor's thesis, which appear to work out pretty well. The committee has assessed that the grading is adequate as well.</p> <p>The committee assesses the quality and level of the master's theses as satisfactory. In general, the objectives of the theses were sufficiently clear and properly elaborated. The research methods applied were adequate. The presentation of the theses was adequate, with one exception, a thesis which also had some theoretical shortcomings. All theses were clearly public administration oriented, but they incorporated organisational perspectives as well.</p> <p>In the interviews with alumni and representatives of the working field the committee has found additional evidence that graduates of the master's programme have achieved the learning outcomes.</p> <p>The committee has examined the study progress of the programmes and expressed its concerns. It has noted that the success rates are low, but comparable to those of other programmes in the same area in the Netherlands. Still, the committee feels that the programmes meet the criteria for this standard.</p> <p>During the site visit the committee was reassured that the programme management is sufficiently involved in finding ways to reduce the drop-out rates and increase the success rates. It found that several measures like the binding study advice and the scheduling of a representative introduction course at the start of the programme are being taken to improve the success rates. Moreover, as mentioned in standard 25, the management introduced master's thesis groups in order to streamline the thesis process and to diminish the students' delay.</p> <p>The committee therefore assesses the standard related to the success rates as 'satisfactory' for both the bachelor's and the master's programme.</p>
5.6 Quality Improvement and Innovation	
<p>5.6.1 Programme accomplishment Score: Adequate</p>	<p>The committee studied the periodic evaluations conducted of the programmes and the system behind them. It concluded that the curricula are evaluated periodically according to verifiable objectives, also reflecting past measures. The programmes make sure that both courses and the curriculum are evaluated on a regular basis according to set guidelines. The committee established that the evaluation instruments used by the programmes - the annual education reports, course evaluation forms and the annual evaluation forms - are adequate and coherent. The students of the education committees have a key role in the course evaluations. They receive all forms and analyze the results in detail. These forms also assess the quality of lecturers. The programme committees discuss the outcomes of course and curriculum evaluations and make recommendations to the programme boards. The annual education reports assure that at least once a year all aspects of education quality are systematically evaluated.</p> <p>The committee assesses this standard as 'satisfactory' for both</p>

	programmes.
5.6.2 Curriculum Development Score: Adequate	<p>The committee studied the way in which measures for improvement are dealt with by the programmes. It concluded that the evaluation procedures are the basis for measures for improvement. The committee also ascertained that the results of evaluations give rise to improvement measures when necessary. It is convinced that improvements are implemented as a result of the evaluation process.</p> <p>During the site visit, the committee observed that staff and management see the opportunities of designing the new curricula and that they are determined to make the necessary improvements. The committee finds their level of concern about adapting the programmes and their achievements so far very convincing.</p> <p>The committee noted that students, even the student members of the education committee, don't always notice the improvements as a consequence of their feedback. This has an effect on their motivation to fill in course evaluation forms. Students have confirmed this during the interviews. The committee also found that lecturers are quite reluctant of publishing detailed evaluation results on internet, for reasons concerning the confidentiality of this information. The committee considers feedback important in the evaluation cycle and recommends the faculty to search for other methods to inform students about the measures to be taken.</p> <p>On the basis of these considerations, the committee concludes that both the bachelor's programme and the master's programme fulfil the criterion with respect to measures for improvement. It therefore assesses this standard as 'satisfactory' for both programmes.</p> <p>The committee studied how the staff, students, alumni and professional field are involved in the programmes and their quality assurance system. It concludes that the staff and students are actively involved in the internal quality assurance system. The committee noted that students can influence the quality of their education mostly through the course evaluations and the education committee. The student representatives on the education committee stated that they actively approach students to get informed about the issues and problems that have arisen among them. The committee found that the staff is very much involved in the assurance and improvement of the educational quality. It emphasizes that the programmes are fortunate to have such committed staff members.</p> <p>The committee has evaluated that alumni are not involved in the internal quality assurance system yet. However, during the site visit it became clear that alumni would appreciate to stay more in touch with the faculty and with other alumni. This comment was fed back to the faculty who recognised the advantages of maintaining good links with alumni and indicated that they would search for new ways of doing this.</p> <p>The committee verified and highly values the plan of the department of Governance Studies to establish an Advisory Board for Education and Research. This Board will be an important body to strengthen the connection with the professional field. Moreover, this Board will have a valuable contribution by reflecting on the programmes in relation to the developments within the field.</p> <p>Based on these considerations, the committee assesses this standard as</p>

	'satisfactory' for both programmes.
5.6.3 External Reviews Score:	No information is available.
5.7 Student Assessment Score: Adequate	<p>The committee examined the learning assessment procedure of the bachelor's programme and master's programme. It concluded that the bachelor's programme has a strong focus on traditional assessment methods, like multiple choice exams and written exams, but other methods are also being used, for example peer-review and oral presentations. Similar to the teaching methods used in the bachelor's programme, lecturers explained they use multiple choice exams mostly for efficiency reasons. According to the committee, more variation in assessment methods could be considered, but with the current number of students, the committee finds the chosen methods defensible. During the site visit it became clear that lecturers work on innovative methods like online testing, but there is no overall policy. Experiences and good examples are shared during staff meetings.</p> <p>The committee noted that the master's programme has a relatively strong focus on written assignments which mainly test the acquisition and application of knowledge and insights and academic writing skills. This is confirmed by the master's students. Although this assessment method is in line with the didactical concepts of the master's programme, the committee thinks the assessment methods could be more balanced. Students' knowledge and insight, for example, can also be assessed by the use of written exams. During the site visit the committee ascertained that within the curriculum revision process the assessment methods will also be reconsidered. It supports this intention.</p> <p>In the view of the committee, the quality assurance system is adequate (see also standards 22, 23 and 24). It approves the measures that are taken to control the quality of assessments and exams. During the site visit the committee noticed that the Board of Examiners takes a relatively reactive role. The Board mainly focuses on maintaining the examination regulations. The committee would like to point out to the Board of Examiners that its role has been changed since September 2010 (as legally required), making the board formally responsible for the quality of the contents of the examinations. It therefore advises the Board of Examiners to consider the consequences of this and to take a more active role.</p> <p>Based on these considerations, the committee assesses the standard that relates to the learning assessment as 'satisfactory' for both the bachelor's programme and the master's programme.</p>
5.8 Programme Jurisdiction Score: Adequate	<p>The departments Department of Governance Studies and the Department of Organization Studies are jointly responsible for the bachelor's programme in PAOS. This shared responsibility reflects the programme's aim to integrate the disciplines of public administration and organization science in a single approach to (public) governance in its societal and organizational context. The Department of Governance Studies primarily runs the master's programme Public Administration.</p> <p>Based on the information provided by the self-evaluation reports and the interviews with staff and management, the committee concludes that the</p>

	<p>organization and management structure of both programmes are sufficiently clear and adequate.</p> <p>The committee established that two departments are jointly responsible for the bachelor's programme and that the formal responsibilities are clearly divided. According to the lecturers, communication between the two departments is given constant attention, but there are no significant problems. The students have verified this.</p> <p>The committee assesses this standard concerning the programme jurisdiction as 'satisfactory' for both programmes.</p>
5.9.1 Faculty nucleus Score:	<p>During the site-visit, the committee learned that there are enough staff to realize the programmes but that the size of the staff is under pressure. The faculty has to deal with a vacancy freeze while the numbers of students still increase. The committee has noted that the faculty is working on measures to use staff time more efficiently. For example, on the level of the faculty the possibility will be explored whether it will be possible to shift staff members to and from other programmes. Also the teaching methods used will be reconsidered in this respect (see also standard 12).</p> <p>The committee also established that there is a tension between research and education at the level of the faculty. Because the faculty gives priority to teaching, it has recently reduced the time for research from 40% to 30%. Lecturers mentioned during the interviews that they would prefer to have more time for research but that they try to be creative solving these time constraints. For example, some lecturers have involved thesis students in their own research.</p> <p>The overall conclusion of the committee is that the quantity of staff is under pressure, but the faculty is able to manage by developing creative solutions. However, the committee remarks that the reduced amount of time for research is threatening the long-term scientific achievements of the departments, which will have in its turn an impact on the staff quality. The committee therefore assesses the standard relating to the quantity of the staff as 'satisfactory' for both programmes.</p>
5.9.2 Faculty qualifications Score: Adequate	<p>The committee examined the academic orientation of the staff of the programmes and concludes that the programmes certainly meet the criteria. Based on the list of names of the core staff members presented in the self-evaluation report, the committee was able to conclude that the majority of the teaching staff has a PhD. The committee also assessed that, because of a clear division of research and education time (30% versus 70%), all lecturers are actively involved in both education and research. Moreover, the committee appreciates the high involvement of senior staff members in the programmes.</p> <p>During the site visit, the committee studied the curricula vitae of some staff members. It ascertained that the staff members who teach the programmes actively contribute to the development of their discipline and have a good scientific reputation. The committee is impressed by the research activities and outcomes of the departments. In the committee's view, the faculty has been able to hire qualified and promising staff.</p> <p>The committee assesses the Requirements for academic orientation of the staff as 'satisfactory' for both the bachelor's and the master's programme.</p>

	<p>The committee assessed the quality of the staff and concludes that the staff deployed is adequately qualified to ensure that the aims and objectives regarding the content, didactics and organization of the programmes are achieved. The committee approves the appropriate composition of staff in the bachelor programme which meets the specific requirements of the interdisciplinary concept of "PAOS". The committee verified that the new teaching staff is trained in didactical skills, and must obtain a basic teaching qualification (the so-called BKO). The committee noted that the faculty makes no great effort to explore the teaching qualities of the established staff. The faculty's policy is quite reactive at this point; only if problems occur are teaching staff encouraged to attend didactical courses. In the view of the committee, the faculty could practice a more active policy. The committee appreciates the attention given to the didactical skills of PhD-students and student-assistants. It also approves the basic principle of not putting PhD students into central teaching roles but assigning them to small-scale working groups.</p> <p>The committee also noted that students are positive about the quality and the educational competencies of their lecturers. Most lecturers are considered approachable, although it is obvious that there is limited time available for feedback to individual students.</p> <p>The committee is very positive about the teaching managers involved in the programmes. It has established that they are relatively new, highly qualified and anxious to bring about improvements where necessary. The committee has great confidence in them.</p> <p>Based on these considerations, the committee assesses this standard as 'satisfactory' for both programmes.</p>
<p>5.9.3 Diversity: gender and minorities Score: Adequate</p>	<p>The committee has found that the departments employ female staff members and aim at extending this number. There is an increasing number of female PhD students. Although there are no clear figures, the committee gathers that there are not many staff members from minority groups. The committee assesses that, although there have been some efforts to attract more female staff members and staff members from minority groups, there is still room for improvement.</p> <p>It therefore assesses the standard relating to the diversity of the staff as 'satisfactory' for both programmes.</p>
<p>5.10 Admission of Students Score: Adequate</p>	<p>As stated in the self-evaluation report, more than 90% of the students who start the bachelor's programme have a pre-university diploma (vwo), while a minority of students has certificates from institutions of higher professional education (hbo). Vwo students who have studied any combination of courses may enrol in the programme, as long as they have Mathematics A, B or C. The self-evaluation report mentions that students enter the master's programme from diverse backgrounds. The Examination Board evaluates each application on the basis of the applicability and relevance of the first degree, paying particular attention to the student's knowledge of and competency in academic social science methods and their knowledge of core public administration and organization theories and their grades (where relevant). As described in the self-evaluation report, some 56% of applicants hold an academic bachelor's degree (BSc or</p>

	<p>BA) or an academic master's degree (MSc or MA). A relatively small proportion of the applicants come from the bachelor's programmes Public Administration and Organization or Public Administration. If the Examination Board decides a student's previous degree to be insufficient as preparation for the master's programme, the student is required to follow all or some of the pre-master's courses in Public Administration. Applicants who hold an academic bachelor's degree in Public Administration and Organization or Public Administration from any Dutch university have direct access to the master's programme. The committee examined whether the qualifications of the incoming students match the content of the programmes. It concluded that their qualifications are in line with the structure and contents of the curricula. The committee noted that the numbers of students have grown relatively stronger than other Public Administration programmes participating in this assessment, which is a clear indication of the attractiveness of the programmes. Especially the part-time master's programme attracts many students. As a result, the pressure on the teaching staff capacity and facilities has increased. The committee noted that many of the bachelor's students do not enter the master's programme but choose other master's programmes like Organization Science. During the site visit, the committee learned that this is the effect of the broad character of the bachelor's study. Additionally, it is a consequence of the policy of the university, which implies that students should have several options for continuing their studies at the university. The committee approves the offered pre-master's programme. It concluded that it is rather tailor-made. The Board of Examiners assesses each application and decides which courses an applicant should follow to be able to enter the master's programme. During the site visit, the committee learned that pre-master's students partly join other groups of students from the regular bachelor's programme, but that the department also organizes specific courses. The pre-master's programme is completed with a thesis. According to the students, the pre-master's programme, although heavy, offers an adequate preparation for the master's programme. Concerning the international orientation of the programmes, the committee argues that the labour market asks for more internationally oriented graduates with sufficient English language skills. The committee is therefore positive about the plan of the faculty to offer more courses in English. It also supports the long-term intention of the faculty to develop an English master's programme. Based on these considerations, the committee assesses the standard that relates to the admission requirements of the programmes as 'satisfactory' for both the bachelor's programme and the master's programme.</p>
<p>5.11 Supportive Services and Facilities Score: Adequate</p>	<p>The committee inspected the facilities of the programmes and assessed the facilities as adequate but noticed that the maximum level of capacity has been reached. The committee received a guided tour through the main building of the VU University Amsterdam and gathered relevant information by its interviews with students. It evaluated that there are limited rooms for working groups and the number of computer rooms is restricted. Moreover, the MediaExperience, although impressive, seems to have a rather limited capacity. Sometimes the main lecture hall is not big</p>

	<p>enough to accommodate all students, in which case students need to follow lectures in another room by video streaming. Some students have complained about the library facilities. Many books are stored and need to be ordered, which is not very user-friendly. Furthermore, they mentioned a lack of places where they could study quietly. The committee noted during the guided tour that the IT facilities in the library are quite old-fashioned. During the site visit, the committee was informed about the building construction plans of the VU Amsterdam University. It expects that when the faculty will move to its new building, most of the mentioned shortcomings will be solved.</p> <p>The committee therefore assesses this standard as 'satisfactory' for both programmes.</p>
5.12 Student Services Score: Adequate	<p>The committee studied the way in which the programmes organize tutoring and information provision for students. It concludes that adequate tutoring is provided towards study progress although the programmes could make more use of tutoring. The current tutoring is mainly based on the contacts students have with their tutors during small-scale workgroups (bachelor's programme) or tutorials (master's programme). Therefore there is a strong dependency on the capacities and commitment of individual tutors. This is confirmed by students, who stated that the quality of the tutoring highly depends on the lecturers involved.</p> <p>The committee realizes that the role of the study advisor is very important, especially considering the large numbers of bachelor students and the forthcoming binding study recommendation. It learnt that there have been some complaints about the study advisor in the past. There was an overload; therefore some students didn't get the attention they expected. Meanwhile a second study advisor has been contracted and the committee has established that the services provided are more in line with the expectations of students.</p> <p>Based on these considerations, the committee assesses this standard as 'satisfactory' for both programmes.</p>
5.13 Public Relations Score: Adequate	<p>The committee has observed that the faculty provides prospective bachelor's and master's students with adequate information on the programmes. It ascertained that various methods are being used which are appropriate for their purposes. The committee remarks that the information on the website was not so transparent and appealing and could be improved.</p> <p>It therefore assesses this standard as 'satisfactory' for both programmes.</p>
6 Additional Criteria Score:	None

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.

