



**European Association for
Public Administration
Accreditation**

EAPAA Accreditation Committee Evaluation Report

Evaluation Report with respect to the request for accreditation of the Master's Degree Programme Administration, Faculty of Administration, Ljubljana University

In consideration of the Self-Evaluation Report of the above programme, the Site Visit Report of 30 June 2015 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 25 August 2013 in Toulouse has evaluated this programme against the EAPAA Accreditation Criteria (version 8, September 2011).

1. Accreditation Criteria

2. Applicability/Eligibility	
2.1 Domain	It is clear that the primary objective of the programme is to provide professional academic level education leading to a formal degree and that the purpose of the programme is to prepare persons for academic level roles in the public sector, as well as to academic public administration teaching or research positions.
2.2 Geography	The University of Ljubljana, hosting the programme, is located in Slovenia which a member of the Council of Europe. Therefore, the programme falls within the jurisdiction of EAPAA.
2.3 Programme longevity	The programme has been in operation more than four years and there are more than two cohorts of graduates. Therefore, the programmes fulfils the EAPAA criterion of accreditation.
2.4 Programme variants and locations	The programme is offered in two locations, Ljubljana and Maribor. The curriculum is the same and the amount of the teaching hours is the same. Student support is based on IT and organised from Ljubljana. Teachers travel to Maribor where the Faculty has hired facilities for organising lectures. The purpose of the arrangement is to serve the educational needs of the eastern part of the country. For part-time students, who have to pay tuition fee (2500 € a year), the curriculum and the requirements are the same as for full-time students with the exception that attendance at lectures and seminars is not mandatory, as it is for full-time students, who have to attend at least 80% of all hours for seminars.
4 Category of accreditation	The programme is a second-cycle degree programme and falls clearly in the category of public administration master level programme with the duration of two years.
5. Standards	

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5.1 Domain of public administration Score: Adequate	The programme understands the multidisciplinary nature of Public Administration as a discipline and builds its education on academic standards of the discipline. The programme meets the standards of EAPAA, but the emphasis on political science should be stronger.
5.2 Mission of the programme Score: Adequate	The programme fulfils the EAPAA criteria of mission-based accreditation. However, the mission process should be more transparent for external consideration, and the programme might want to reconsider a formulation of more concise and coherent mission statement/main objective that would refer also to the academic identity of a multidisciplinary programme.
5.3 Level Score: Adequate	The intended learning outcomes correspond to internationally accepted qualifications of the master degree.
5.4 Practice and internships Score: Adequate	The programme fulfils the EAPAA criteria of programme's relation to practice. The programme should consider developing a more systematic strategy for stakeholder collaboration with core public organisations.
5.5.1 Curriculum Content	
5.5.1.1 Core components Score: Adequate	The curriculum content is multi-disciplinary and meets the standards of the EAPAA. There is a relatively good balance between core and specialised modules in the curriculum, and students are offered satisfactory choice. A core course in policy analysis would strengthen the Political Science content in the curriculum.
5.5.1.2 Other Components Score: Adequate	The programme could consider the provision of more dedicated specialisation to Leadership studies and there appear to be demand for this area. The provision of specialisation in Economics, Law, Organisational Theory and Informatics add rather than detract from the core curriculum and satisfactorily meet the EAPAA criteria.
5.5.1.3 Structure and didactics of the programme Score: Adequate	The programme team should continue to review the electives offered in the individual track specialisations and their place in the overall programme structure. The Faculty has invested in ensuring that teachers have professional development opportunities to obtain training in new teaching methods/techniques. The programme meets the standards anticipated by the EAPAA criteria.
5.5.1.4 Intake Score: Adequate	Entry requirements, course content, and the general instruction of the programme is suitable for entrants. An induction to research methods could be provided for students who enrol from programmes external to the Faculty of Administration. Overall, the procedures in place meet the criteria determined by the EAPAA.
5.5.2 Length Score: Complies	The programme curriculum length meets the accreditation standards and is mostly in line with stated objectives.
5.5.3 Results Score: Adequate	The final qualifications achieved by the graduates meet the intended outcomes of the programme and graduates are able to operate adequately in the public sector.
5.6 Quality Improvement and Innovation	
5.6.1 Programme accomplishment	The EAPAA criteria of programme accomplishment are met. The programme is active and innovative in contributing to improvements and

Score: Adequate	utilises information offered both by university-wide surveys and surveys organised by the Faculty in the development of the programme.
5.6.2 Curriculum Development Score: Adequate	The programme meets the criteria set by the EAPAA. The programme recognises the limits set by the University and national accreditation practices and pursues flexible arrangements within available limits.
5.6.3 External Reviews Score: Adequate	The programme meets the criteria set by the EAPAA. The recommendations of external reviews have received adequate attention.
5.7 Student Assessment Score: Adequate	The programme meets the criteria set by the EAPAA. However, the programme should reconsider the Master's thesis evaluation process. The committee overseeing the defence could be enlarged and it should be ensured that comprehensive written feedback on the thesis is given to students to enhance their learning.
5.8 Programme Jurisdiction Score: Adequate	The programme meets the requirements of the EAPAA criteria. However, enhancing the multidisciplinary of the programme creates some challenges that are beyond the powers of the Faculty of Administration, which has, nevertheless, over the years, tried to find solutions to remedy the situation.
5.9.1 Faculty nucleus Score: Adequate	There is an identifiable faculty nucleus that accepts primary responsibility for the programme; this responsibility is recognised at the next higher level of the organisation. This regular faculty consists of a sufficient number of faculty significantly involved with the programme to support the teaching responsibilities.
5.9.2 Faculty qualifications Score: Adequate	All teachers regularly involved in the programme hold an earned doctorate. The field of expertise and experience of the faculty reflects the needed expertise to deliver the programme as intended. Educational skills of the faculty are regularly tested. All faculty staff is actively involved in public administration research activities.
5.9.3 Diversity: gender and minorities Score: Adequate	The gender balance is relatively good in the academic staff. However, the University nor the Faculty seem to have clear strategies related to issues of gender and minorities.
5.10 Admission of Students Score: Adequate	The admission meets the requirements of set by the EAPAA. The programme should at least be aware and potentially consider recruitment strategies to encourage a more balanced gender representation among the student population in the programme.
5.11 Supportive Services and Facilities Score: Good	The accommodation and material facilities are adequate to realize the programme in an effective and efficient way.
5.12 Student Services Score: Good	There are a range of student services that complement and support the student experience. Targeted support services are available for students who encounter difficulties with their studies. The EAPAA criteria are clearly met.
5.13 Public Relations Score: Good	The programme provides future students information about the programme and utilises modern ICT tools in innovative ways. However, there might be more to do in spreading relevant information for other

	stakeholder groups more systematically.
6 Additional Criteria Score: N.A.	Not applicable.

2. Conclusion

- The programme is well established in the region and students are offered a curriculum that promotes a broad understanding of the public sector through core, a variety of specialised options, and elective courses. The core components of the degree programme comprise administrative procedural law, comparative public administration, public choice economics, public finance, management, human resources, e-government and research methods. The multidisciplinary nature of the programme is a distinctive feature that discerns the programme from other study programmes of the University.
- There is an identifiable faculty nucleus that accepts primary responsibility for the programme; this responsibility is recognised at the next higher level of the organisation. The regular faculty consists of a sufficient number of faculty significantly involved with the programme to support the teaching responsibilities. The faculty is well-balanced according to qualification and age. The gender balance is relatively good in the academic staff. Teachers regularly publish scholarly articles in national and international journals, prepare monographs or chapters in monographs and regularly participate in international conferences on public administration and other areas that are related to public administration, but staff mobility could be more extensive.
- The Faculty has its own staff for pedagogical development as well as PR-staff, both with innovative approach in improving and promoting the study programmes of the Faculty.
- The Faculty is located in a relatively modern building which is only 15 years old and provides very good working conditions for students and acceptable working conditions for staff. Classrooms are equipped with modern technologies. The building provides computer classrooms and Wi-Fi is available for teaching and study purposes.
- The study programme has no mission statement but articulates the mission of the Faculty in setting the main objective of the programme. The mission process should be more transparent for external consideration, and the programme might want to reconsider a formulation of more concise and coherent mission statement/main objective that would refer also to the academic identity of a multidisciplinary programme.
- The curriculum of the programme should include more elements of political science (public policy process, policy analysis). Leadership studies could also have more emphasis in the core of the curriculum (public values and ethics, public leadership), given the target to educate students for demanding professional and managerial jobs in the public sector. More emphasis should be given to governance approaches and civic engagement.
- The programme team indicated that they aim to embark on a more comprehensive reform of curricula that encompasses both the first and second cycle levels of public administration. A constraint is the strict requirements for programme level approval at university level. This concentrates on the formal structures of the programme but may slow down the process of changing the curriculum and even complicate the provision of teaching, if there are comparable courses (e.g. with the same name) offered by another faculty. It takes the University up to one to two years to approve major changes in curriculum.
- There are many services for students, both curricular and extra-curricular services. Students are very satisfied, and even excited, about their studies and teachers. Teachers are

considered to be approachable and the teacher-student interaction seems to support learning effectively.

- The programme offers a tutoring system for students, both by teachers and students. For disabled persons, the faculty has established a special system of additional study to help them adapt to the system. The Career Centre offers various free services to students actively.
- Faculty can be commended for its commitment to students. Ongoing improvements in programme delivery acknowledged and staff very approachable. The programme has a very good record in employability. However, students would like to have the opportunity take political science courses in the Faculty of Administration and have a preference for courses on developing leadership. Some students wished for more interactive courses and open book exams.
- The programme should at least be aware and potentially consider recruitment strategies to encourage a more balanced gender representation among the student population in the programme.
- The strength of this programme in terms of content and graduate attributes was stressed by employers. The programme is well placed to direct its graduates towards public sector employment (as generalists). The programme is well regarded when benchmarked to its direct competitors and the private colleges in particular. More systematically established links could be forged with employers, particularly Ministry and city administration, although the programme and the Faculty interact frequently with their stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A core course in policy analysis would strengthen the Political Science content in the curriculum and make the curriculum more balanced in terms of multidisciplinary of the domain of public administration. The Faculty has hired a teacher in political science for changes in the first cycle programme and four courses in political science are reflected in its curricula. A similar approach might be taken in the Master's programme to introduce courses to promote a policy relevant education for students. The programme could consider the provision of more dedicated specialisation to public leadership studies (including public values and ethics), especially given the objective to educate students to demanding professional and managerial jobs in the public sector. More emphasis should be given to governance approaches and civic engagement. The programme could also consider opportunities to provide more courses with teachers representing different disciplines, as it would strengthen the multidisciplinary of the programme.
- An induction to research methods could be provided for students who enrol from programmes external to the Faculty of Administration and may not have sufficient background in knowledge and skills of research methods.
- The programme should reconsider the Master's thesis evaluation process. The committee overseeing the defence could be enlarged and it should be ensured that comprehensive written feedback on the thesis is given to students to enhance their learning.
- The Faculty is exceptionally active and innovative in its PR-activities, but it is unclear how much and how systematically the PR-activities reach other stakeholders than future students and intentional target groups. There might be more to do in spreading relevant information for other stakeholder groups more systematically.
- Alumni have established a club that creates a forum for fruitful interaction between the programme and its graduates, but the programme could utilise the club more extensively in the development of the programme, although the programme management already meet the representatives of the club on regular basis. On the whole, the programme should

consider developing a more systematic strategy for stakeholder collaboration with core public organisations.

Based on the above evaluation of the specific criteria, the EAPAA Accreditation Committee concludes that this programme meets the criteria for accreditation sufficiently, and so the programme can be accredited without restrictions.