



**European Association for
Public Administration
Accreditation**

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EAPAA Accreditation Committee Evaluation Report

Master of Public Administration Programme in Governance, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, Erasmus University (Rotterdam), the Netherlands, realized in Paramaribo, Suriname

Evaluation Report with respect to the request for accreditation of 25 May 2010.

In consideration of the Self-Evaluation Report of the above programme of 30 December 2010, the Site Visit Report of 14 July 2011 of the EAPAA Site Visit Team for this programme, and the response of the programme of 1 August 2011 to the draft of the Site Visit Report, the EAPAA Accreditation Committee, at its meeting of 6 September 2011 in Bucharest, Romania, has evaluated this programme against the EAPAA Accreditation Criteria (version 7, September 2009).

1. Accreditation Criteria

2. Applicability/Eligibility	
2.1 Domain	<p>The programme's aim is: "The Programme, Master of Public Administration in Governance (MPA), is designed for professionals working in the public sector in the wider sense (that is, including semi governmental organizations or other organizations that are involved in the provisioning of public goods in one way or another), and seeks to enhance their capacity to analyze and deal at an academic level with the complex issues of governance that present themselves at the local, national, regional and international level."</p> <p>From the content of the programme it is clear that public administration and modern governance is at the centre of the content of the programme. "The Programme departs from the idea that governance is not something that is confined to the public sector ('government') but that it has wider dimensions and involves also actors within, and activities undertaken by, the private sector and civil society."</p>
2.2 Geography	<p>The Dutch institution – ISS The Hague - is responsible for major aspects of the programme and provides quality guarantee. Netherlands is a member of the Council of Europe, therefore the programme falls within the jurisdiction of EAPAA.</p>
2.3 Programme longevity	<p>The Programme started in 2005. The first cohort of students (MPA1) studied in 2005-2006, the second cohort in 2006-2007 (MPA2), the third cohort in 2008-2010 (MPA3). The fourth cohort started in 2009; and the fifth cohort started in December 2010. At present, May 2011, three cohorts have completed the Programme.</p>
2.4 Programme	<p>There is only one version of the programme which is provided at one</p>

variants and locations	location.
4 Category of accreditation	The programme clearly belongs in the category of executive/mid career public administration master programmes and applies for this category of accreditation.
5. Standards	
5.1 Domain of public administration Score: Adequate	<p>The programme states in its SER that it understands itself as a MPA “in Governance”, i.e. with a broad view not only on government and public administration but also on the various other stakeholders collaborating in a governance context (e.g. economic sector, civil society). The multidisciplinary nature of the programme is also stressed. Furthermore, in the SER the final qualifications are listed which are to be achieved in the MPA-version under review.</p> <p>Conclusion: The programme meets the basic standard. It is dealing with Public Administration in a rather broad perception. It is taught in an academic way and it is also based on empirical research.</p>
5.2 Mission of the programme Score: Adequate	<p>According to the mission, the programme aims to contribute to the education of well-equipped professionals for the Surinamese public sector. The mission of the programme is adequate and plausible. There is no doubt that ISS and FHR are successfully fulfilling its mission, as the graduates of the programme are considered to be well qualified for the Surinamese public sector (few work also in non-profit sector). The programme also enjoys a strong reputation in the government of the country. However, the institutions being responsible for the programme may critically analyse the whole learning approach of the programme to make it more consistent with its mission, particularly with regard to the observed “professional/academic”-tension. The ‘academic’ ambitions should be critically analyzed and on the professional part especially the ‘professional management’ goals should be described in a more operational way.</p>
5.3 Level Score: Adequate	<p>In the SER the programme is defined as being a Bologna level-two Master programme. In reality, the specific features of this programme show that it is rather a postgraduate programme for experienced midcareer students. The entrance requirement of having at least two years of work experience makes it for instance evident that this is a postgraduate programme. Another entrance requirement of the programme is a Bachelor’s degree in any variant of the social sciences. Most of the students of the programme have a B.A. from the Surinamese Anton de Kom University in Law, P.A. or economics/business administration. FHR-representatives explained that so far no student was accepted without having a Bachelor degree. Apart from this, the programme is in line with the respective Dublin descriptors.</p> <p>Conclusion: The programme is a postgraduate Master programme for experienced employees (mostly) from the Surinamese public sector which fulfils the relevant international standards of such a programme.</p>
5.4 Practise and internships Score: Good	The programme offers some training of practical skills, e.g. concerning planning methods, communication, ICT-use. The training of managerial skills is comparatively weak. The link to the (Surinamese) public

	<p>administration profession is strong as the students mostly come from the government sector and maintain close connections to it. The programme enjoys strong acceptance and appreciation from the (quite small) bureaucratic elite of the country. As students all have a practical background and as they all work in public sector organisations, there is no need to offer an internship.</p> <p>Conclusion: The relation of the programme to practice is assessed as pretty strong, although it does not provide much managerial skills.</p>
5.5.1 Curriculum Content	
<p>5.5.1.1 Core components Score: Adequate</p>	<p>The programme ‘aims to educate mid-career students in public administration in order to make them more competent professionals, able to work effectively in the context of a developing economy faced with increasing challenges of ongoing globalization and regionalization’. The curriculum therefore ‘covers subjects crucial for an understanding of public administration; it has a development, international and comparative perspective; it includes courses that train academic and professional skills and that aim to promote ethical behavior’.</p> <p>The content of the curriculum has been subject to changes since 2005 and those changes were based, amongst others, on arguments based on advice from the professional field. The introductory block was integrated; the topic of the specialization block changes from MPA to MPA. The changes are however, for a small part, also related to changes in the supply from ISS. The committee welcomes the international and comparative character of the programme. The courses are based upon and embedded in the international literature and present a ‘state of the art’ of the different disciplines, based on the observations of the committee of handbooks, articles and references to the literature.</p> <p>The programme is presented as a multi – disciplinary one. The main focus however is on ‘governance’ and public policy and less on public administration and management, as can be analyzed looking at the list of ‘criteria for qualifications’ and how those qualifications contribute to the final goals of the programme. Compared to other professional masters, the amount of courses on public administration and especially on the more technical or professional aspects of public management is quite modest. There is an introductory course on public management and another course pays attention to the public sector and change management. But also in those two cases, the courses are more about studying management from a political science viewpoint rather than analyzing management using sociological and organizational frameworks and applying techniques and instruments of, for instance, personnel management, financial management or information management.</p> <p>Conclusion: The core curriculum is quite multi-disciplinary and has a high academic standard with a strong international development focus. The programme could be more focused on Public Administration and Management issues.</p>
<p>5.5.1.2 Other Components Score: Adequate</p>	<p>The MPA programme does not offer the possibility to specialize within the programme itself. The courses with the label “specialization” focus on a specific topic but are obligatory for all students. The committee is well</p>

	<p>aware of the fact that the number of students is quite limited for specialized or tailor-made courses.</p> <p>Conclusion: The programme management may discuss options of introduce a mild specialization. The standard, however, is met adequately.</p>
<p>5.5.1.3 Structure and didactics of the programme Score: Adequate</p>	<p>The programme starts with a remedial block, followed by three blocks of courses and finally the ISP, the Individual Study Project, 'during which students develop their capacity to analyze a complex problem related to governance and are required to formulate analytically sound and well-researched policy options relevant to the problem'.</p> <p>The committee appreciates the training in academic skills; the mix of learning and teaching methods; the organized feedback during the courses, on assessments and exams. The didactical concept is in line with the educational objectives.</p> <p>The interaction with the practice of the public sector in Suriname however could probably be better developed.</p> <p>During the courses the practice of the public administration in Suriname is confronted with the theoretical parts of the courses using group discussions and also in the papers and the ISP the knowledge of the participants is applied. But the general impression of the committee was that the courses are 'imported' products, although of a high international standard, but based on literature with a strong theoretical level that often lacks the transfer to the Surinamese situation and culture. The committee is of course well aware that this is due to the backgrounds of the staff and is limited by the capacity of and in Suriname itself.</p> <p>Conclusion: The faculty applies a good mix of learning methods. A stronger focus on teaching materials with a regional or even local focus (e.g. case studies) would be recommendable.</p>
<p>5.5.1.4 Intake Score: Good</p>	<p>The intake requirements state that potential candidates must possess a bachelor's degree of a minimum of three years university study; proficiency in the English language and substantial professional work experience, relevant to the MPA. In exceptional cases the first and third requirement can be waived by the convenor and/or the FHR director. Based on the information during the site visit, the committee concludes that the latter procedure really is exceptional and that no student without a bachelor degree participates in the ongoing MPA.</p> <p>The committee has been confronted with some widespread comments critically questioning the quality of the bachelor's degree of the Surinamese University nowadays. This means that additional energy has to be spent to increase the quality of the basic academic standards. This was the main reason for the integration of a new introductory block into the programme. But even then and with these changes, it remains a challenge to meet the academic standards.</p> <p>Conclusion: This criterion is assessed as good, taking into consideration the very specific educational environment of Suriname. However, the reported low overall quality of the Bachelor degrees of the Anton de Kom University is a matter of concern. Measures are taken seriously to improve the quality of level, pressed by the new Minister of Education.</p>
<p>5.5.2 Length</p>	<p>The curriculum consists of 72 ECTS's, spread over a period of two years. The</p>

Score: Complies	use of the 72 ECTS is rather exceptional, compared to other master programmes (usually it is 60 credit points for a one year fulltime or two year parttime programme). The rationale behind this specific number of credits was somewhat unclear for the committee. Most of the students finish the programme within the period of two academic years. This is line with other experiences of similar programmes for professionals. The length of the program (72 ECTS) and study times is consistent with European standards.
5.5.2 Results Score: Adequate	<p>Courses: All courses are graded with a 60 as pass mark. Some (a very limited number) students quit the programme after failure in the first introductory blocks. Passing them is a prerequisite to enter the following block. The Institute uses several mechanisms to check whether the students achieve the final qualifications of the courses. The convenor is responsible for the overall quality of the assessment. The ISS also employs an external programme evaluator who is annually monitoring the performance of the students and particularly endorsing the fail marks (below 59) and the distinctions (above 90). In the most recent report the external evaluator looked at the way of examining and the modes of assessment and she considered the quality of the whole process of assessment on course level as 'fair'. The committee appreciates the in-depth work of the external evaluator: this kind of external assessment on a voluntary base is an interesting example for other institutions and programmes.</p> <p>Individual Study Project (ISP): The ISP is a very important part of the programme. The ISP is designed in such a way that students are tested on their academic competencies: they should be able to design a piece of academic research; to collect relevant literature; to translate that literature into an own research project based on a solid hypothesis or research question, to undertake empirical research in their own professional environment underpinned by a reliable set of research techniques. The students have to present their ISP to a panel of two people: one from the Institute and one from ISS. The students have to defend their ISP and respond to critical questions. The final mark for the ISP partly depends on this defense. The ISP is assessed by the promoter or supervisor, by the second reader and, afterwards, by the external programme evaluator. The committee appreciates the process of assessment and the different steps within that process.</p> <p>The academic quality of the ISP's has been subject of a discussion during the site visit. The members of the site visit committee based their judgment on the reading of a representative number of ISP's. In general the committee was rather critical in relation to the academic quality of the ISP's. The Institute and the programme convenor are well aware of this problem of basic academic quality and several changes have been made in the consecutive MPA's. The committee itself is well aware of the input – quality problem: students, although often experienced and highly motivated professionals, starts the MPA with little or even, in most cases, no experience in academic work and they are at the beginning not at all trained in using academic research techniques. The external evaluator (MPA 2008-2010) made some similar remarks.</p> <p>Outcome of the MPA: The committee is very positive on the final effects of</p>

	<p>the MPA for the participants. Most of the students operate better in their field of the Surinamese public administration and a lot of students speed up their career: a significant part of them made important upward moves. Of course, one could expect that only very motivated students follow this MPA: their career moves are not only related to the MPA but also to their personal characteristics and attitudes. Nevertheless: the MPA effect is undeniable and the positive comments of the chief executives illustrate the quality of the master degree for improving the quality of the public sector in Suriname.</p> <p>Conclusion: The qualification of this criterion is good, taking into consideration the very specific educational environment of Suriname. There is, however, some room for improvement concerning the quality of the ISPs.</p>
5.6 Quality Improvement and Innovation	
<p>5.6.1 Programme accomplishment Score: Good</p>	<p>The internal quality assurance system is institutionalized and cyclical with clear feedback loops.</p> <p>Course Evaluations and regular meetings with Students: Immediately upon the end of each course (but before the assessment has taken place), students evaluate the course through completion of written assessment forms. Lecturers also submit their written assessment report. These assessments are complemented with comments from FHR management, based on own observations and feedback from students (in particular the Class Elder who acts as a liaison between the students, the lecturers and FHR management).</p> <p>Conclusion: The programme management has established a regular and elaborated quality assurance system in which individual courses and the programme as a total are evaluated. The results are regularly used for improvements, what is for example visible from the development of curricula (see also next criterion). The programme tries to react to all critical remarks of External Evaluators and regular progress is visible.</p>
<p>5.6.2 Curriculum Development Score: Adequate</p>	<p>Regular self-assessments and benchmarking. The Programme is regularly assessed by those involved in its delivery. All academic staff involved in the MPA also teaches in other Master-level Programmes. This facilitates benchmarking. Assessment activities include: periodic internal evaluation, the public defense of the ISP's, and ongoing communication between FHR management and the ISS Programme Convenor and Programme Administrator about the performance of students, (specific) teaching needs and the performance of lecturers.</p> <p>Every cycle of the Programme is evaluated by an External Programme Evaluator. At the end of the cycle, the External Programme Evaluator evaluates the Programme and its components (content of the courses, assessment of the courses and the quality of the ISPs), gives an overall judgment about the quality of the Programme and makes suggestions he/she would deem being appropriate to improve the quality.</p> <p>In 2009, an alumni survey has been undertaken. It is the intention to conduct such a survey on a more regular basis. Feedback from Board of Examiners and Teaching and Learning Committee, two ISS committees that are relevant in this context.</p>

	<p>Quality assurance system feedback has led to several changes and improvements in the Programme (there is a culture of continuous innovations). Curricula changes have not affected the overall mission, educational objectives and educational philosophy; they focus on systematic improvements in line with information collected by quality management tools. Most important changes (including recent ones in MPA 4 and 5) to help students to achieve the goals of the programme were for example the reduction of ECTS from 73 to 68, the introduction of a Preparation Segment, of an Academic ICT skills workshop, of ISP writing workshops and of a specific course on methods for policy-oriented research. The curriculum revision is to a large extent driven by the ISS but not much by local requirements.</p> <p>Conclusion: There is an adequate system of programme/curriculum development in which main relevant stakeholders are involved.</p>
5.6.3 External Reviews Score: N.A	The ISS has been subject to several external reviews, but the programme itself has not been evaluated specifically
5.7 Student Assessment Score: Adequate	<p>The performance of students is assessed in each course. Various modes of assessment are used - closed book exam under invigilated circumstances, open book exam under invigilated circumstances, case study, short answer group examination, essay/summary, group work including presentation, written assignment (Policy Brief, Case-studies, Report or memorandum, Country Study, Paper), active participation.</p> <p>The main weight is on written forms of examination, partly due to the fact that teachers from ISS and other institutions are present only during a quite short period of usually 7-10 days. The SVT found that more diversity of assignment forms would be appropriate. External reviewer reports include several remarks concerning the contents of some of the written examinations (like too simple questions), the programme reacted with several improvements.</p> <p>The ISPs which have the function of a master thesis are assessed by supervisor and one reviewer and defended publicly. Comparative higher grading of ISP is caused by different ranking scale system – outstanding level is set over 90 points (normally 80 in Netherlands). All exams/ essays/assignments that receive a mark below 62 or above 87 are double marked. Double marking is done by a member of the teaching team, often the Convenor. No ISP Paper is awarded a distinction mark (90 or higher) or a fail mark (0 – 59) unless this grade is endorsed by the External Programme Evaluator.</p> <p>Conclusion: The programme uses standard means of student assessment, both for course examinations and final ISP evaluation.</p>
5.8 Programme Jurisdiction Score: Adequate	<p>ISS is responsible for the curriculum and the granting of the MPA degree. FHR is responsible for organizing the Programme in Paramaribo, Suriname. This encompasses the management, coordination, scheduling and administration of the Programme.</p> <p>The Deputy Rector for Academic Affairs of ISS appoints a Convenor. The Convenor is accountable for the quality of teaching in the Programme. The Convenor selects and leads the Teaching Team of the Programme. The Teaching Team takes care of the design and redesign of the teaching</p>

	<p>components and their implementation. ISS also appoints the External Programme Evaluator. The Board of Examiners of ISS is responsible for all exam-related issues of the Programme. The Convenor is assisted by a Programme Administrator at ISS.</p> <p>The FHR appoints a Programme Manager who is responsible for all organisational aspects connected with running the Programme. The FHR hires directly about 30% of lecturers, however not from own local capacities, but from abroad. This limits the opportunities for the adjustment of general knowledge to local specific circumstances and may impact the long-term sustainability of the programme. Furthermore, the institutional sustainability of FHR seems to be a bit risky as the whole FHR Lim A Po-institute largely depends on one person, the founder and spiritus rector Hans Lim A Po.</p> <p>The students of this programme are so far not represented in decision-making bodies, e.g. in the Teaching and Learning Committee of the ISS (see Recommendations).</p> <p>Conclusion: The responsibility for the programme is clearly divided between ISS and FHR. Working relations between ISS and FHR are good. The structures responsible for the supervision and running of the programme are adequately developed. There are, however, some sustainability issues.</p>
<p>5.9.1 Faculty nucleus Score: Adequate</p>	<p>The ISS as the overall responsible institution has a sufficient faculty nucleus of altogether 9 lecturers. They regularly provide a number of courses in the programme, they care for the thesis writing (ISP) and for the academic preparation of students for ISP and they manage the whole academic side of the programme, including exams and general scientific quality control. Apart from the ISS teaching staff, the FHR is hiring independently lecturers for the rest of the courses. Thus, there are at least two poles: The ISS nucleus and the freestanding lecturers hired by FHR. Although ISS is – via the convenor and other organs – providing some coordination, there is a segmentation of the faculty (split-up into ISS-team and “other” lecturers). Furthermore, the FHR is beginning to establish its own faculty by employing a few locally available academics (very recently a local resident - Mr. Muller - was appointed as the first “associate faculty” for the MPA at FHR). Thus, new modems of coordination may have to be implemented in future.</p> <p>Conclusion: The standard is met as there is a clear faculty nucleus at the side of ISS. The coordination of the different faculty groups in the ISS and in FHR (including the selfstanding lecturers) may become a problem in future.</p>
<p>5.9.2 Faculty qualifications Score: Adequate</p>	<p>The faculty of ISS is doubtless adequately qualified; all hold a PhD and are active in research. They also have sufficient didactical qualifications. An advantage of the ISS-team is the very dominant developmental orientation which matches well the educational challenges of a MPA for the preparation of public administrators in a country like Suriname. There is, however, a deficiency: almost none of the ISS-staff has a core competence in Public Administration/Management. For a MPA this seems to be a kind of a deficit. The freestanding faculty of FHR which consists primarily of several lecturers of Dutch universities (and three lecturers from US and UK) shows a similar picture. Most of them have good research records and reasonable teaching experience. However, the FHR-faculty also does not have any</p>

	<p>recognizable profile in Public Administration/Management (with one exception).</p> <p>Conclusion: The qualifications of the whole faculty are from a formal point adequate, but there is a lack of core competencies in Public Administration/Management.</p>
<p>5.9.3 Diversity: gender and minorities Score: Adequate</p>	<p>The gender mix of the faculty is adequate (6 out of 15 of the faculty are women). However, there are some diversity deficits as so far nobody from Suriname or from the neighbouring countries is faculty member.</p>
<p>5.10 Admission of Students Score: Adequate</p>	<p>The admission policy is clearly stated in the programme materials. Applicants must possess a Bachelor's degree and be proficient in the English language to be admitted to the Programme. They must also have the working experience. Evidence of their experience and commitment has to be provided by the Head of the organization in which they are employed. Applicants are invited for interviews by FHR Management. These interviews are meant to assess their degree, their availability, motivation and commitment, their relevant experience, social and financial constraints and their proficiency in English. The programme reserves the right to provide waivers to small number of students who either do not have a Bachelor degree or no working experience. The option to accept students without Bachelor degree was thoroughly discussed during the site visit and not recommended to apply in future (Bologna requirements are strict from this point of view, good international practice also does not include such option). The SVT also discussed if the offered preparatory courses to train students in academic skills are sufficient.</p> <p>Despite of the small size of Suriname, admission preconditions should be better clarified on the FHR web page. The programme is expensive in relative terms. It does not expect that applications are exceeding its capacity and it therefore does not apply any selection rules to rank candidates.</p> <p>Conclusion: The admission goals, admission policy and admission standards are adequate and in line with the programme objectives.</p>
<p>5.11 Supportive Services and Facilities Score: Good</p>	<p>Budget: FHR is responsible for the organization in Suriname and carries the financial risk. FHR is a non-profit institution and works with private capital for the benefit of the public interest.</p> <p>The funds invested in facilities and buildings are treated as 'sunk cost'. Running costs of the programme are covered from tuition fees, yearly budgets (fixed costs excluded) are almost balanced. The impossibility to cover full costs (fixed and running costs) may cause some problems in future.</p> <p>Teaching and supportive services and facilities: The Programme is conducted in the FHR School of Governance. The FHR School of Governance has fully sufficient capacities to handle all needs of education process. The students were really satisfied with teaching facilities and all supportive services available. ISS/EUR's e-learning and Internet services are accessible and printers and photocopy machines are freely available. Students have access to the on-line Erasmus University Rotterdam library and the (sufficiently equipped) FHR library itself.</p> <p>Conclusion: Teaching premises are well equipped and supportive services</p>

	available to students and staff are more than appropriate.
5.12 Student Services Score: Good	<p>The Programme – in relative terms – has a small scale, a fact that facilitates direct and frequent contact between FHR staff and students. The Course Director attends classes regularly to monitor the progress of the students and to identify and remedy problems early on. The Director of FHR, the Course Director and the Programme Manager are available on a daily basis for the students for questions related to the Programme and assistance in personal problems and circumstances. In such circumstances administrative or similar needs of students are reflected fast and properly.</p> <p>From the point of view of educational support the situation is a bit less positive. Teachers stay in Suriname only during the period of direct lecturing and this limits opportunities for contacts and feedback. Although the faculty is always available via internet and skype, the distance between student and tutor is certainly a problem also when writing the ISP. The programme is aware about this issue and tries to find permanently available local tutors with sufficient experience (which is not a simple task). Thanks to extensive support the drop-out rates are really modest.</p> <p>Conclusion: The representatives of the FHR are available to students almost on 24 hours basis and ready to help to solve any “technical-administrative” problem. The dropout ratio is very modest. The only concern is the improvement of contacts between teaching staff/professional tutors and students</p>
5.13 Public Relations Score: Good	<p>For every cycle, FHR prepares a brochure which is widely distributed. FHR also advertises in local newspapers. FHR organizes open information days where further information is provided before the start of each cycle. Information about FHR, its courses and organization is also available on the website of FHR. HR management maintains intensive contacts with many people and offices that have some influence in Suriname, as well as with representatives from international organizations and embassies. The appreciation of the latter group is evident from the fellowships that they provide to MPA students.</p> <p>The Programme has an active network of alumni that plays an important role in the public relations for the Programme. The alumni are often line managers of new students; their support is crucial for the successful completion of the Programme. The SVT team was able to see that FHR has really a good reputation and is well known and appreciated in the country.</p> <p>Conclusion: The programme is visible in the country and uses all standard means of communicating its mission and goals.</p>
6 Additional Criteria Score:	None

2. Conclusion

The site visit team found that this programme is well designed for its target group, it is coherent and it has a positive impact on the country’s development. The site visit team considers the following aspects of the programme as being particularly well developed: supportive services for students and staff, public relations, quality assurance and programme (curriculum) development. The SVT was able

to see that FHR with its MPA programme has really an excellent reputation in Suriname and serves as an example of good practice. Its role in developing the higher education system in Suriname is visible, its impacts on the quality of the higher civil service are crucial.

The site visit team assessed also most other accreditation criteria quite positively. However, some issues of the programme need further improvement.

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.