



**European Association for  
Public Administration  
Accreditation**

## **EAPAA Accreditation Committee Evaluation Report**

**"Master en Administration Publique" MPA programme, IDHEAP, University of Lausanne.**

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

In consideration of the Self-Evaluation Report of the above programme, the Site Visit Report of 24 August 2012 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 10 September 2013 in Edinburgh, UK, has evaluated this programme against the EAPAA Accreditation Criteria (version 8, September 2011).

### **1. Accreditation Criteria**

<b>2. Applicability/Eligibility</b>	
2.1 Domain	<p>The MPA is clearly devoted in training students for working in staff positions in public services on the different levels of Administration, Federation, canton or communes. It is specifically conceived for middle career employees who have already professional experience, though some ones may have had it outside of public administration. So it is an executive diploma.</p> <p>The programme is diverse and explicitly multi-disciplinary, but oriented on public issues and with the will to mix academic and scientific knowledge with practical one. It has no explicit specialization, but optional courses. It intends to give a general comprehension and management capacities for public entities. More technical specialization (in contracting, finances, law, human resources management etc.) can be acquired in specific trainings with IDHEAP or elsewhere, as the country is federal with many different legal systems.</p> <p>So the diploma and the programme are coherent with the mission defined nearly since the creation of IDHEAP.</p>
2.2 Geography	<p>Switzerland are a member of the Council of Europe, therefore the programme falls within the jurisdiction of EAPAA.</p>
2.3 Programme longevity	<p>The "Master en administration publique" (MPA) is delivered by the University of Lausanne (Faculty of law) and has already been accredited in 2005. It existed already many years before. So it has sufficient duration. There have not been significant modifications during the former accreditation period and the new project is in continuity. With respect to this criterion and resulting type of accreditation, the MPA can therefore go for accreditation without restriction.</p>

2.4 Programme variants and locations	All activities of the programme are in the new – and beautiful - building on the Lausanne University Campus (UNIL) in Chavannes-près-Renens. There are no variants of the programme, but it offers a great flexibility in the agenda and is specially adapted for persons who have a professional activity.
4 Category of accreditation	With respect to this criterion the resulting category of accreditation will be “Master of Public administration, <i>executive/mid-career public sector</i> ”.
<b>5. Standards</b>	
5.1 Domain of public administration <b>Score: Good</b>	As it appears clearly in the description of the curriculum and also in the objectives of the master, the research programmes of the Faculty, this is quite classical public administration in modern times.
5.2 Mission of the programme <b>Score: Good</b>	The programme states clearly its educational philosophy and mission and has an orderly process for developing appropriate strategies and objectives consistent with its mission, resources, and constituencies. It is a system with great originality and noticeable specificity. It is well conceived for the Swiss public administrations, which are very complex and diverse due to a deeply autonomous federalism.
5.3 Level <b>Score: Good</b>	The final qualifications of the programme correspond to general, internationally accepted description of the qualifications of an academic master degree. It has the requirements for admission of students, the duration and content of the curriculum, a dedicated team of professors and a solid management that cares of the success of students and the Institute. This is an excellent track for persons who want to work in Swiss administration.
5.4 Practice and internships <b>Score: Good</b>	Most of the students in the programme have a professional background in public administration and follow the programme alongside their professional activities. For this reason, a highly interactive didactic format has been adopted. The thesis has a significant empirical part. Overall, there is a strong connection to practice. It is difficult to embed internships into this type of programme. However, short visits to other administrations and other countries would enrich the programme.
5.5.1 Curriculum Content	
5.5.1.1 Core components <b>Score: Good</b>	This is a rather classical programme on public management. One can be surprised that there are not more elective courses on concrete policies than just environment and social: regional development, housing, security, education, health, transportation, culture, etc. These do not all have to be offered, of course, but this could be a good opportunity to have practitioners as associate professors in these “technical” domains.
5.5.1.2 Other Components	Not applicable.
5.5.1.3 Structure and	The programme is very coherent in its contents and has been discussed and

didactics of the programme <b>Score: Adequate</b>	improved since long time by a team that shares the same general philosophy. The didactic concepts are in line with the aims and objectives of the programme. The teaching methods correspond to the didactic philosophy of the programme. The only iterative question we have on this programme is the overly long duration of the studies of a significant number of students and the departure of a likewise significant % of students. There are explanations, but the staff should be more concerned about these facts.
5.5.1.4 Intake <b>Score: Good</b>	The structure, contents and didactics of the programme are in line with the qualifications of the students that enter into the programme.
5.5.2 Length <b>Score: Complies</b>	The minimum length of the MPA is 3 trimesters, the maximum 5 years. The actual length of the MPA is 2-3 years. While the flexible length helps to integrate the programme into professional life, the long duration creates problems in itself, as students are more likely to experience changes in their professional and/or personal lives. This leads to a significant drop-out rate. Since the delays appear mostly related to the memoir, it is recommended to set a more structured timetable and allow more regular supervision, including more attention to methodology.
5.5.3 Results <b>Score: Good</b>	Examination results are based on levels of knowledge and on the results of group work. The acquisition of relevant professional competences is suggested by the rise in the numbers of students who obtain a new position following their studies. Students thus get an opportunity to advance or change their careers. Contacts with stakeholders show that IDHEAP enjoys an excellent reputation. It is recommended that the institute expands its market, since numbers of students could easily rise without creating problems within the programme.
5.6 Quality Improvement and Innovation	
5.6.1 Programme accomplishment <b>Score: Good</b>	There is a thorough and compulsory procedure of systematic evaluation that is well described in the self-evaluation report. Professors have direct evaluations. We consider it sufficient, especially considering the specificity of the "students" who are professionals accustomed to evaluation and sufficiently mature to make critical remarks or proposals.
5.6.2 Curriculum Development <b>Score: Adequate</b>	This Public Administration programme provides evidence of judicious balance between stability and continuity, which are very important in this track as the students can enter at any moment and be in the programme for 3 year, and reform of the content or the methods. New options or internal modification of certain courses show an adequate process of curriculum development.
5.6.3 External Reviews <b>Score: Good</b>	There is no national review of the programmes. So the references are the recommendations from the 2005 EAPAA accreditation. These recommendations appear to have been mostly taken into account, although there remain difficulties with the place of law in the programme.
5.7 Student Assessment <b>Score: Adequate</b>	There is a systematic and diverse evaluation of the students that is quite classical in this kind of track, mixing exams and evaluation of collective works, with a memoir at the end. There is limited comparability of the

	exams and evaluations of the professors.
5.8 Programme Jurisdiction <b>Score: Good</b>	The special Regulation for the MPA creates a “Committee for the studies” (Commission des études) which has responsibility for supervision and ruling of current running of the master. This is a very serious organization, considering it concerns just one master programme. So we have an identifiable person and group of persons who manage the programme.
5.9.1 Faculty nucleus <b>Score: Good</b>	This is an excellent and important faculty. It is recommended to have a more formal participation of some practitioners, considering especially that the link with practitioners is a “marketing argument” for other masters in the country.
5.9.2 Faculty qualifications <b>Score: Good</b>	The group of professors and persons teaching in this master are of exceptional qualification on national and international standards. Some will retire in short time, but there are no grounds for concern about the attention that will be given by the Institute and the University for recruiting qualified new professors who will also accept the general philosophy of the IDHEAP.
5.9.3 Diversity: gender and minorities <b>Score: Adequate</b>	IDHEAP offers several facilities to women working within the organisation: part-time work, flexible working hours, maternity provisions and childcare places. Numbers of women among administrative and technical personnel mirror those of the students, but at the professor level they number less than 18%. The costs and organisation of the programme make it very difficult for foreign students to take part.
5.10 Admission of Students <b>Score: Good</b>	There are clear admission requirements. Decisions about admission take account of professional experience, professional development and language skills. Candidates are invited for an interview and a written test. Some of the students have backgrounds at some distance from public administration, without sufficient legal, economic or financial expertise or work experience in an administration, which raises questions over their direct employability.
5.11 Supportive Services and Facilities <b>Score: Good</b>	The following services are offered to students: an information package on the programme, ahead even of applications; a system of tutorship; a specialised library; career counselling; membership of an alumni network.  A certain number of students terminate their studies due to difficulties with the thesis. The average duration of the programme is strongly prolonged by the work of the thesis. This appears to be due to the isolated working conditions during this phase of their studies.
5.12 Student Services <b>Score: Excellent</b>	The specific organisation of studies and the professional position of students require different services than for students in “ordinary” masters. The new building and its facilities, the staff of the IDHEAP provide excellent conditions. The general facilities of the UNIL are open to the students. So student services are adequate in relation to the mission of the programme.
5.13 Public Relations <b>Score: Adequate</b>	There has been an improvement in this domain since the former accreditation and the context of competition obliges to continue on this path.

<b>6 Additional Criteria Score: N.A.</b>	Not applicable.
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## 2. Conclusion

This is a programme that is already a success story delivered by a prominent institution, well known in the country for its diverse activities in the academic field, as well as assistance to public administrations. There are few criticisms from the different partners or stakeholders. The main problems are the excessive length of the study by a part of the students and the relatively high number of students who don't achieve the diploma. These two questions are linked and are, apparently mostly due to the difficulty for many practitioners to finish writing the thesis. This is an important exercise and EAPAA does not recommend its suppression. The students have sufficient facilities to complete it, but we recommend modifications in the management of the memoir period.

### Recommendations

- IDHEAP has to achieve successfully and with serenity its integration in the Faculty of Law of the University of Lausanne. Modifications will be mainly on the administrative level. It is important that its autonomy and personality are formally recognised from the beginning.
- It has also to pay attention for the recruitment of new professors as some prominent ones will retire in short time; the new ones must be able to integrate the specificity of IDHEAP.
- IDHEAP must have a strategy of development considering the growing competition in the country in this domain of PA and training of executive practitioners. This concerns more specifically the other diploma delivered by the Institute, but also the MPA, whose past glory is not a permanent guaranty of future success.
- In the content of the programme more explicit attention should be given to international comparative approaches.
- Efforts should be made to reduce the number of students leaving without a diploma and to reduce the average delay for preparing it. Since the delays appear mostly related to the memoir, it is recommended to set a more structured timetable and allow more regular supervision, including more attention to methodology.

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