



*European Association for  
Public Administration  
Accreditation*

31 August 2010

## **EAPAA Accreditation Committee Evaluation Report**

**Master of Public Administration, Netherlands School of Public Administration (NSOB)**

Evaluation Report with respect to the request for accreditation of 13 January 2010.

In consideration of the Self-Evaluation Report of the above programme of January 2010, the EAPAA Accreditation Committee, at its meeting of 7 September 2010 in Toulouse, France, has evaluated this programme against the EAPAA Accreditation Criteria (version 7, September 2009).

### **Preamble:**

This programme of the NSOB has been accredited by EAPAA before (2003). Based on the EAPAA accreditation procedures, the programme has requested for the re-accreditation to waive for the site visit, based on the fact that the changes in the programme were minor. Based on the Self-Evaluation Report produced by the programme, a subcommittee of the EAPAA Accreditation Committee has considered the request, and advised to the Accreditation Committee to waive the site visit.

### **1. Accreditation Criteria**

<b>2. Applicability/Eligibility</b>	
2.1 Domain	The MPA programme is aimed at enabling mid-career, high-potential Dutch public sector officials to develop their professional competence. Professional competence here includes knowledge of public sector issues, institutions and policymaking processes in and beyond the Netherlands; analytical, social and problem-solving skills relevant to public administrators; ability to reflect and learn from experience.
2.2 Geography	The NSOB is situated in The Hague, the Netherlands and is thus situated in a country belonging to the Council of Europe.
2.3 Programme longevity	First admission: Autumn 1989 First graduation: Summer 1991 Cohorts graduated so far: 19
2.4 Programme variants and locations	The MPA programme is offered only in one variant, namely part-time.
<b>3 Category of accreditation</b>	The MPA programme falls in the category of ' executive (part-time) public administration master programmes' (2 years).
<b>4. Standards</b>	
4.1 Domain of public administration SVT score: <b>good</b>	The field of public administration (broadly conceived) is taught in this programme, both theory and research. The aim is not only to present factual and comparative knowledge, but also to enhance students' ability to think

	<p>conceptually about public policy and management.</p> <p>At the attitudinal level, the programme is aimed at: sensitivity to the impact of the social, political and international environment in which public administrators operate, openness to change, and reflection.</p> <p>At the skills level, the programme seeks to strengthen the problem-solving, interpersonal leadership skills and communication skills.</p> <p>The programme fulfils this criterion.</p>
4.2 Mission of the programme SVT score: <b>good</b>	<p>The NSOB overall mission is to advance the quality of leadership and management in the Dutch public sector through the provision of advanced educational programmes and experiences for professionals. For this, contact is kept with all relevant parties in the public sector.</p> <p>The MPA programme is one of the spearheads within that mission. The MPA programme mission is to equip public officials for leadership roles in government by emphasising the distinctive institutional logic of the public sector, the important changes affecting the structure and process of contemporary governance, and the challenges this entails for senior public executives.</p> <p>The MPA programme is aimed at mid-career public officials with growth potential. Professional growth is an essential element of the programme, therefore supervised individual reflection is part of the programme.</p>
4.3 Level SVT score: <b>good</b>	<p>In the Self-Evaluation Report the five elements of the MPA programme (knowledge and understanding, applying knowledge and understanding, making judgements, communication, and learning skills) are related to the Dublin descriptors, and show coverage of all descriptors on the master level. Also from the course description can be concluded that this programme certainly has a master level.</p>
4.4 Practise and internships SVT score: <b>good</b>	<p>There is no internship because all students work in public administration. In the programme there are practice components (simulation, training in personal leadership, and a group consultancy project). Furthermore, the final project is a foreign study trip to a specific organisation. The organisation and a specific problem have to be analysed and reported upon, together with a relevant literature study, and a personal reflection. This project is supervised by the NSOB and the foreign partner institution. The project is started at the end of the first year.</p>
4.5.1 Curriculum Content	
4.5.1.1 Core components SVT score: <b>good</b>	<p>All basic public administration disciplines are present in the programme: public governance, public law, economics, local governance, political science and theory, public management, and culture (total 28 ECTS in direct courses apart from presentation and group work around application themes related to the courses). A important part of the programme is devoted to application and reflection. The foreign study trip is a research project of 11 ECTS, as is the (group) master thesis.</p> <p>The research methods are limited to 2 workshop in the preparation of the foreign research project.</p>
4.5.1.2 Other Components SVT score: <b>adequate</b>	<p>As other components can be mentioned the personal leadership development which is part of the programme in de form of workshops and individual counselling.</p>
4.5.1.3 Structure and didactics of the	<p>The programme is designed in phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- unfreezing with some basic public administration courses,</li> </ul>

programme SVT score: <b>excellent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- workshops in the form of ‘concept ateliers’ with theoretical/conceptual courses coupled to assignments in subgroups around specific public administration relevant themes,</li> <li>- foreign study trip in the form of a research project</li> <li>- reflection at the hand of courses on culture (two options), on politics (future of politics or consequences of globalisation), and management and leadership (two options),</li> <li>- application through a group consultancy project.</li> </ul> <p>Several teaching methods are used, like lectures, workshops, group and individual assignments, study trip, and training workshops.</p>
4.5.1.4 Intake SVT score: <b>adequate</b>	<p>Participants must have obtained a bachelor degree or higher; or they must have reached an equivalent level of thought and practice through their working experience and education. Participants must be high-potential mid-career civil servants (five years of experience), or well-positioned employees from organisations closely connected to the public sector.</p> <p>Prior to the start of the programme the potential participants take part in an assessment. The purpose of this assessment is to determine whether or not the participant’s level is adequate enough to participate successfully in the programme, and to determine the individual learning goals. On the basis of the results of the assessment the participant draws up his personal learning contract.</p>
4.5.2 Length SVT score: <b>fulfilled</b>	The programme is taught in two years and has 60 ECTS.
4.5.2 Results SVT score: <b>adequate</b>	<p>The master theses are ranked by a jury of high-ranking academics and practitioners from public institutions. Furthermore, the practical usefulness of the final project is tested by giving the case provider (a renowned institution) the opportunity to comment on the results.</p> <p>Each year about 20 students start with the programme. From the last 5 cohorts that have finished their programme (so about 100 persons), only one didn’t finish yet.</p> <p>The programme has a high standing and very good name in the Dutch public sector.</p>
4.6 Quality Improvement and Innovation	
4.6.1 Programme accomplishment SVT score: <b>good</b>	Each module of the programme is evaluated in writing and orally. Because the total student population is small there are a lot of informal contacts which are used as well. The programme is inspected regularly by the board of trustees of the programme.
4.6.2 Curriculum Development SVT score: <b>good</b>	Based on the above evaluations, the programme has been modified regularly on minor points during its existence (change of modules or phasing, changes in literature, changes in didactical methods). The deans consult regularly with the lecturers. The Self-Evaluation Report gives several examples of such changes. the deans consult regularly with the lecturers. The management of the NSOB consults very regularly, on an informal basis with relevant stakeholders from the NSOB network and on a formal basis twice a year with the members of the board of trustees of the MPA. This is a council consisting of 7 high-ranking practitioners (who work for national or provincial or local government, or police departments). Two members are MPA graduates. Consultations between employers and HRM professionals from the public sector also take place on a regular basis. The changes are

	both on a level of didactics and content.
4.6.3 External Reviews SVT score: <b>adequate</b>	In reaction to the last EAPAA accreditation process, the amount of individual feedback sessions was raised from one to three, in order to provide the students – in addition to the performances during modules and in the workshop and application teams – on an individual level structurally with feedback on their academic performance.
4.7 Student Assessment SVT score: <b>adequate</b>	Several assignments are individual (among which the foreign study trip annex research assignment). Each core lecturer gives an evaluation of the individual performance of the fellow after they have completed the module.
4.8 Programme Jurisdiction SVT score: <b>good</b>	The NSOB is an independent organisation based on cooperation between several universities. It has full autonomy on what is taught and how. The NSOB is responsible in the end and has to approve study programmes. The deans of the MPA and the project manager have a lot of influence on the programme, consulted by the lecturers.
4.9.1 Faculty nucleus SVT score: <b>good</b>	As has been mentioned above, the NSOB is an interuniversity organisation. Consequently, the position of the lecturers differs from their position in the Public Administration department of a university. There is a identifiable nucleus of persons who feel responsible for the programme, but they belong to different organisations. The number of teachers is adequate to the objectives of the programme. Some of the teaching is done by practitioners.
4.9.2 Faculty qualifications SVT score: <b>excellent</b>	Most lecturers are renowned scholars in public administration with good track record in teaching, research and consulting. Research is done at their home institutions. Since a few years the NSOB has put up a think tank in which self-initiated and contract research is executed.
4.9.3 Diversity: gender and minorities SVT score: <b>adequate</b>	In Dutch universities 5% of the professors are women. At the moment there is one female professor in Public Administration involved in the MPA programme. Two female lecturers are coaching two groups in the workshop phase. One female lecturer is lecturer in the workshop and reflection phase. Female guest lecturers are invited regularly to contribute to the programme and to take part in the jury's judging on the performance of the groups in the workshop and the application phase. The programme management of the MPA has made it their aim to strongly increase the number of female lecturers between now and five years from now. We are already trying to recruit more female lecturers.
4.10 Admission of Students SVT score: <b>good</b>	Given the level of the subject matter and the study pace, participants need to have great capabilities and a strong motivation. For this reason the NSOB has adopted an intake procedure which ensures a scrupulous selection of participants. This development assessment is structured in such a way that it encourages students to begin developing from the outset. In the post-assessment interview, the recommendations for development are further elaborated and operationalised in a concrete plan of action devised by the student in consultation the programme management.
4.11 Supportive Services and Facilities SVT score: <b>good</b>	The NSOB is a foundation that does not receive subsidies. The MPA programme expenses are paid from the tuition fees (the employers of) the participants pay. The tuition fee is increased by the inflation percentage every year. The tuition fees (at present € 41.500) do not include expenses for the foreign study visit, but do include catering and literature.

	<p>The NSOB is closely situated to the Koninklijke Bibliotheek (National Library) in The Hague. It has the largest collection of books and periodicals in the country. Next to that, the NSOB has its own specialised library (with a focus on public administration, literature and professional journals). Apart from a WiFi-facility, there are no other computer facilities for the students. The NSOB has its own building in the Hague with teaching adequate for the programme and office facilities.</p>
4.12 Student Services SVT score: <b>adequate</b>	<p>During the programme each participant has four consultation meetings with the dean on the subject of their study progress. For adult and part-time students this is adequate.</p>
4.13 Public Relations SVT score: <b>adequate</b>	<p>The programme is adequately presented in brochures and websites. Mouth-by-mouth recommendation is most important. Yearly the new graduates are presented in a newspaper advertisement.</p>
<b>5 Additional Criteria</b> SVT score: <b>n.a.</b>	<p>No review of other criteria was requested.</p>

## 2. Conclusion

**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.**