



**European Association for
Public Administration
Accreditation**

EAPAA Accreditation Committee Evaluation Report

Master Public Management (MPM), Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences – PLD, University of Twente.

Evaluation Report with respect to the request for accreditation of the Master Public Management (MPM), Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences – PLD, University of Twente, The Netherlands.

In consideration of the Self-Evaluation Report of the above programme, the Site Visit Report of 26 July 2021 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 7 September 2021 in Brussels, Belgium, has evaluated this programme against the EAPAA Accreditation Criteria (version 9, September 2013).

1. Accreditation Criteria

2. Applicability/Eligibility	
2.1 Domain	The MPM programme provides professional academic level education leading to a Master's degree. The MPM programme offers a post-initial ("executive") education for people who have finished their Bachelor or Master's degree and want to further develop their academic competences in Public Management when already working in the professional field.
2.2 Geography	The Netherlands is a member of the Council of Europe, therefore the programme falls within the jurisdiction of EAPAA.
2.3 Programme longevity	The MPM programme has been running since 1990. The programme has been accredited by EAPAA already in 2006, and 2013.
2.4 Programme variants and locations	There is only one part-time variant of the MPM programme. There are no specializations. The programme is offered in a combined way in two locations: in Utrecht (60%) and at the University of Twente campus (40%).
4 Category of accreditation	The accreditation is searched in the third category of executive Master programmes. The MPM programme is a part-time executive programme spread over two and a half years (68 European credit points).
5. Standards	

5.1 Domain of public administration	<p>The MPM programme has historically departed from four disciplinary pillars: Political Science, Economics, Law and Sociology which served as a multidisciplinary basis of the initial programme in Public Administration. Since 2010, the MPM programme adopted a stronger orientation on management. Five years ago, the multidisciplinary approach was replaced by an integrated approach through the introduction of distinguishable learning paths. Throughout the current programme, students are getting acquainted with theory-based constructs such as the main paradigms, perspectives, approaches and models in Public Management as well as with practice-oriented tools and techniques to analyse concrete problems and design workable solutions. Case studies and other types of empirically grounded research are extensively referred to in this regard.</p> <p>Two years ago, a process has been initiated to gradually reorient the programme (and in first instance its mission and vision) more towards modern public administration and management in particular. This reorientation is aimed at aligning the programme more with two main developments in the public sector: 1) the Volatile, Unstable, Complex and Ambiguous (VUCA) –nature of the environment in which public organisations currently operate and will increasingly do so in the future and 2) the versatile role of technology in public management. Studying these developments is believed to enlarge students’ understanding of the challenging and multi-dimensional interaction between government and society as they touch upon a wide range of issues including the creation of democratic values (such as safety, equality, liberty), the assessment of multi-actor and –level policies (for example as far as their sustainability is concerned) and the variety of governance arrangements for service delivery (with their respective conditions for implementation success in a political-administrative setting). The ongoing reorientation process will be enrolled gradually over the upcoming years.</p>
5.2 Mission of the programme	<p>The MPM programme’s mission is “to provide students with academic knowledge, skills, and attitudes – at the professional Master’s level – in such a way as to enable them to hold (future) strategic and leading managerial positions in public organizations. The programme furthermore intends to sharpen the academic competences of the students; thus improving their managerial performance in “a VUCA environment that is characterized by a changing role of the public sector.” The programme has seven Programme-Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) which describe the competencies that students should attain during their studies. PILOs and competencies are explicitly linked to the mission of the programme as well as to the Dutch Specific Reference Framework of the field of Public Administration and to the Dublin descriptors. The educational philosophy of the MPM programme is based on hands-on learning and academic reflection on students’ professional work. The programme has a very interactive character and the programme responds to the demands and expectations of practitioners.</p>

	<p>The programme's mission is currently under reformulation. This reformulation brings three elements to the core of the (future) programme (development) i.e. 1) the data-driven and digital environment in which public sector managers/leaders operate; 2) the glocal (i.e. global as well as local) nature of the issues that they face and 3) the required collaborative network and other personal skills to do the job. The aligned reorientation process (supra) will impact the programme objectives and courses in a gradual and balanced way. For example, the future curriculum will include an additional Programme Intended Learning Outcome (PILO) concerning digitalization/e-government. This PILO will be shaped by offering several new and elective courses to students instead of requiring each (core) course to zoom in on this public sector development. Similar transitions are considered and will be implemented over the next years.</p>
5.3 Level	<p>The MPM programme follows the internationally recognised standards equivalent to a Master's level. It is expected that newly developed PILOs and specific courses meet the same international standards and that they will be assessed to this end.</p>
5.4 Practice and internships	<p>This programme is specifically aimed at meeting the needs of mid-career professionals in the public sector who demand professional Master-level education on public management. Various courses offer hand-on learning and academic reflection upon the students' own professional work experiences. Furthermore, professionals are regularly involved as guest speakers in order to offer not only typical university lectures but also professionally-based ones. As such, the programme is strongly work-field oriented.</p>
5.5.1 Curriculum Content	
5.5.1.1 Core components	<p>As indicated in the self-evaluation report, the curriculum will be further developed based on new developments in the work field, especially in the context of a transforming socio-technical context in society. This challenge will require to move beyond the conventional academic sphere and to make more innovative connections with other than the traditional disciplines aligned with public administration such as informatisation or behavioural psychology.</p> <p>The core curriculum contains traditional courses of public management by that providing students with the basic concepts, theories and approaches of public administration. Research methods are given due attention. The challenge for the future is related to the integration of new courses into core curriculum in line with the changing mission of the MPM programme. This may require an audit of the existing core curriculum and possible consolidation of some of the existing courses in order to make space for novel approaches.</p>
5.5.1.2 Other Components	<p>The presence of a variety of elective courses illustrates that the programme seeks and succeeds to meet the varying demands of mid-career professionals and managers in a wide range of (semi) public</p>

	organizations. With the introduction of the new mission of the programme, the range of elective courses is likely to grow further.
5.5.1.3 Structure and didactics of the programme	The didactic approach of the MPM programme fits well the executive nature of the programme and life-long learning. Coordination among a variety of teaching staff requires continued attention. By and large, the programme is “doable” within the nominal time of the programme.
5.5.1.4 Intake	The formal intake- and admission procedures are in place. Diverse academic and professional backgrounds of students could be given additional consideration by the programme management.
5.5.2 Length	The curriculum length is in line with the objectives of the programme (mentioned under 5.5.1.3) and in accordance with the expectations regarding an EAPAA – accredited master of Public Administration.
5.5.3 Results	The programme’s strong practice-orientation is one of its undeniable strengths. When revising the programme over the coming years, it deserves attention to continuously strive for a healthy balance between practice versus theory as an academic programme is required to do so.
5.6 Quality Improvement and Innovation	
5.6.1 Programme accomplishment	The achievement of the programme objectives is regularly and closely monitored. It is positive to notice that revisions to the programme have and will continuously be made, if deemed necessary on the basis of this information.
5.6.2 Curriculum Development	Apart from students and alumni, other stakeholders have also been involved in the ongoing reorientation process of the programme and especially in the formulation of a new mission/vision. These stakeholders include (potential) students’ employers and other professionals next to the teaching staff and the programme management. The new mission of the MPM programme will likely materialize in changes of the curriculum.
5.6.3 External Reviews	In 2013, a former EAPAA accreditation report was published with various recommendations to the MPM programme. The self-evaluation report sums up the most important ones. Over the past eight years, various steps have been taken to follow up the formerly stated EAPAA recommendations (such as by hiring several, internationally regarded experts in public management to dispose over core expertise in this field or by introducing RER as a fourth learning path to put more emphasis upon administrative ethics throughout the programme). However, some crucial steps are still in an early stage (such as the revision of the mission statement) and/or will be undertaken in the upcoming years (such as by introducing another PILO on digitalization to sharpen the programme’s identity). This calls upon a clear and strict time management for the programme’s future transitions.
5.7 Student Assessment	The formal framework for student assessment consists of regulations on the university, faculty and programme level. The programme assesses students on how they perform in group as well as individually. The primary focus is on the individual assessment as each student has to solely write several research essays as well as a Master thesis to finalize

	<p>the programme. The Centre of Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) of the University of Twente provides practical support in developing assessments. The assessments in use value various principles including validity, reliability and transparency. Students get feedback on their course performance via group interactions and/or specifically outlined procedures. As such, the programme provides adequate feedback to the students.</p>
5.8 Programme Jurisdiction	<p>The programme has a clear governance structure which is in line with all educational programmes at University of Twente. The Faculty Board has strategic oversight for Master's programmes within the faculty. The programme director has operational control of the programme and he is supported by a programme manager. Many of the governance systems, including the Examination Board and Programme Committee are decreed by Dutch higher education law.</p>
5.9.1 Faculty nucleus	<p>The programme is supported by a core faculty of 12 academics who work as course coordinators across the programme. These course coordinators also invite other university lecturers and guest lecturers to support delivery of their courses. There are between 3 to 11 lecturers on each module. The teaching team meets regularly and has done so even more so throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>The variety of lecturers on each course was seen as a real strength by students. At the same time there are some courses, such as Human Resources and Organization Management and Financial and Operational Management which have 11 different lecturers delivering the content. This can create challenges in relation to coherence within each course. The course coordinators regularly attend all the taught sessions and again this was seen as a real strength of the course. It is important that this continues wherever possible and that efforts are made to ensure coherence in the taught content of each course.</p>
5.9.2 Faculty qualifications	<p>The standard of teaching staff on the programme is a real strength. The faculty are also taking steps to ensure that all course coordinators are affiliated with a research university. It is important that staff continue to be supported to develop their professional skills including attendance at relevant academic conferences.</p>
5.9.3 Diversity: gender and minorities	<p>Gender issues remain to be a challenge for the MPM programme and need to be systematically addressed in the coming years.</p>
5.10 Admission of Students	<p>There is a clear admission procedure in place to check a student's fulfilment of these criteria. This procedure is three phased as it spans 1) the submission of a clearly described list of documents by the student; 2) the assessment of the application by the programme manager and 3) an intake –interview by the programme manager to (double) check various elements that are aligned to the entrance criteria such as the student's past education and further career plans. In case of criterion 1, an additional assessment can be made to determine the student's competencies, resulting in a conditional admission. Towards completion</p>

	of the first course, the programme management will then determine whether the student is allowed/able to follow the full programme, also taking into account advice of the core teacher in this regard. In case of criterion 4, the admission committee will determine whether an additional requirement and correction are in place. There is a healthy gender diversity among the student body.
5.11 Supportive Services and Facilities	The staff seem genuinely committed to supporting students on the programme. The role of the course coordinators is a key. The wide range of courses on offer was highlighted as a positive as it allowed students to experience different lecturers and get to know a wide range of other students. This level of choice should be retained as much as possible. Likewise, the programme should continue to support teaching via Utrecht as this was also seen as a real strength.
5.12 Student Services	University of Twente has a strong reputation in this programme on having a major impact on the career development of students. Student satisfaction is high. The faculty consult with students, alumni and employers regularly and are making changes to the programme, including a greater emphasis on digital public services, to respond to feedback received. The mission of the programme has also been revised.
5.13 Public Relations	Public relations of the programme is adequately developed. However, given a very competitive landscape of Dutch public administration programmes, public relations cannot be underestimated. A challenge that remains is how to find a competitive advantage compared to other similar programmes and how to communicate this to the target group.
6 Additional Criteria	Not applicable.