



**European Association for
Public Administration
Accreditation**

EAPAA Accreditation Committee Evaluation Report

2016

Evaluation Report with respect to the request for accreditation of Executive Master Programme of Public Administration of the Kompetenzzentrum für Public Management, University of Bern, Switzerland.

In consideration of the Self-Evaluation Report of the above programme, the Site Visit Report of August 15, 2016, 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 in Utrecht, The Netherlands,, has evaluated this programme against the EAPAA Accreditation Criteria.

1. Accreditation Criteria

| 2. Applicability/Eligibility | |
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| 2.1 Domain | The Executive MPA is a multi-disciplinary university study programme, with the core disciplines business administration, political economy, political science, constitutional law and administration law, and the contents of those disciplines that are relevant for the administration of public institutions. The Executive MPA addresses the specific target group of current or future senior managers from public, parastatal, or related organisations (such as non-profit organisations, advisory firms). In terms of conditions for a re-accreditation through EAPAA, the Executive MPA fulfils these conditions by offering a comprehensive study programme for the qualification of the specific target group of public sector employees. |
| 2.2 Geography | The Executive MPA is operated by the Centre of Competence for Public Management at the University of Bern in Bern, Switzerland, within their further education programmes. Switzerland has been a member of the Council of Europe since 6 May 1963. |
| 2.3 Programme longevity | The study programme Executive MPA has been offered every two years at the Centre of Competence for Public Management (KPM) at the University of Bern since 2003. |
| 2.4 Programme variants and locations | The programme does not contain any variations and is not offered at several university sites or as a joint programme of several universities. |

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| 4 Category of accreditation | The Centre of Competence for Public Management requests for the Executive MPA the re-accreditation within the category 'executive part-time public administration master programmes', since it corresponds to the respective criteria within the EAPAA guidelines and has already been accredited within this category. |
| 5. Standards | |
| 5.1 Domain of public administration | The programme is firmly based in the field of Public Administration with a strong focus on Public Management. |
| 5.2 Mission of the programme | Overall, the targets of the programme align very well with its overall mission. The SVT considers the three skill sets a good way to operationalise the general programme objectives. The leadership and steering components could benefit from a refreshment exercise, but this does not affect the overall positive evaluation of the mission and its operationalisation. The SVT is convinced by the concept of a 'reflective practitioner' as a learning objective, and encourages the MPA team to further develop that concept. |
| 5.3 Level | The combination of academic input and knowledge on the one hand and the focus on application of knowledge is suitable for an Executive Master's Programme. Both the academic and the practice orientation are clearly established in the programme. |
| 5.4 Practice and internships | Within the programme, the link to practice and application is established through the engagement of practitioners in the curriculum. Overall, the practice orientation is very well reflected in the design and practice of the programme. |
| 5.5.1 Curriculum Content | |
| 5.5.1.1 Core components | The didactics of the programme combines classic academic teaching, input from practitioners and practical exercises (like media training, outdoor exercises). The challenges for public managers to deal with competing evidence and advice, as well as the international comparative dimension, could be further developed. |
| 5.5.1.2 Other Components | The sequence of the programme moves from general contextual and analytical aspects (and the disciplines covering these themes) to the more applied and hands-on aspects of public management and leadership, but returns to another important context factor (the international context) in the final module. |
| 5.5.1.3 Structure and didactics of the programme | The sequence and the structure of the modules are very convincing. |
| 5.5.1.4 Intake | The reputation of the programme has resulted in a wide interest of both potential participants and employers in the programme. The programme has achieved a very important quality criterion, namely that employers support their ambitious staff to participate in the programme. This is the result of a strong link between the structure, contents and didactics of |

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| | the programme on the one hand, and the qualification demands for future leaders in the Swiss public sector on the other hand. |
| 5.5.2 Length | The length of the programme is adequate. |
| 5.5.3 Results | There is strong indication that the programme achieves its objectives in terms of training future leaders. |
| 5.6 Quality Improvement and Innovation | |
| 5.6.1 Programme accomplishment | Based on the self-evaluation report and the qualitative information from stakeholders, the quality assurance on the course level is good. However, after successfully running for several years, a fresh look at the programme as a whole would be advisable. |
| 5.6.2 Curriculum Development | The process of curriculum development is adequate. Information gathered during the evaluation process is adequately used to further develop the individual modules of the programme, and relevant stakeholders (students, staff, alumni) play a role in this. However, it would be good if the programme takes a fresh look at the programme as a whole. |
| 5.6.3 External Reviews | It must be noted that the 2008 report was very positive about the programme, and made only modest recommendations. Most of them have been addressed during the last seven years and the SVT garnered clear evidence that the programme management has initiated several changes in the programme. Nevertheless, it is observed that although an exchange with HSoG has been set up, the application procedure should be improved. Students noted during the interview that they were recommended to make a decision about which courses to follow at HSoG just after the start of the programme. They do not feel qualified to make a justified decision then. The committee advises the programme and the exchange partners to discuss the application procedure and, therefore, to make it more easy for students to follow courses at HSoG (or somewhere else) and give them more time to decide about this choice. |
| 5.7 Student Assessment | Although an adequate variety of assessment methods are used during the programme, even more variety is advisable. |
| 5.8 Programme Jurisdiction | The jurisdiction of the programme is good, with good formal procedures of decision making. |
| 5.9.1 Faculty nucleus | Although a lot of people are involved in the teaching process, a clear nucleus of high quality staff is clearly visible. They are also highly committed to the programme. The staffing of the programme is therefore assessed as excellent. |
| 5.9.2 Faculty qualifications | The qualitative level of the academic staff is excellent. The same holds for the practitioners, although there is always a danger that their expertise does not match didactic qualifications. |
| 5.9.3 Diversity: gender and minorities | The percentage of female teaching staff has increased in recent years, but the programme is encouraged to keep this point high on the agenda |

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| | – both when seeking new academic staff as well as when recruiting practitioners. |
| 5.10 Admission of Students | The admission procedure is very good. The programme is able to attract a steady stream of highly qualified applicants and takes their work to strive for quality, but also diversity seriously. |
| 5.11 Supportive Services and Facilities | The facilities and supportive services are very good. Everything is close by which will add to the group-feeling of students. |
| 5.12 Student Services | Student counselling services are good. The programme does an excellent job in achieving group cohesion which very probably helps in preventing attrition. It hence does an excellent job in helping students to finish the programme on time. |
| 5.13 Public Relations | Public relations of the programme are excellent. It is a very good sign that many alumni advise new students to follow the programme. |
| 6 Additional Criteria Score: N.A. | Not applicable. |

2. Conclusion

Based on all material and especially the report of the EAPAA site visit team, the Accreditation Committee has evaluated your programme.

The programme is commended on the following points:

- Staff and students are highly committed and both are highly reputed;
- The programme is well structured, with proper guidance to timely accomplishment;
- The combination of political, institutional and managerial dimensions at the very start of the programme is a well suited way to fully immerse the students in the multi-disciplinary character of public administration and management;
- The alumni networking is excellent and invaluable for the programme's public relations.
- The programme is cohesive and so is the student body;
- Media training is commended as a useful skills training component;
- The practitioners teaching in the programme are highly reputed;
- The programme maintains strong links with the profession, and has a central geographical position;
- The programme has strong support by the university, and ancillary faculties;
- The quality of services to students are excellent and up to the standard of an executive programme.

The programme is advised to:

- Engage in a refreshing exercise on the curriculum development in view of future challenges in the discipline, in the public sector and its environment; In this sense strengthen the outward and forward looking dimension at the practical skills level, as well in the dissertation work;
- Engage in a further definition of learning goals and outcomes in terms of public management and leadership competences;
- Sharpen the mission of the programme in the direction of training reflective practitioners, and to capture better the accumulative properties of sequentially integrating the different disciplinary and practice oriented contributions;
- Peer evaluate and diversify student evaluation methods;

- Consider the introduction of take home exams, in view of a greater mix of examination methods;
- Consider the introduction of pre-assignments to incentivize students to prepare for classes;
- To stimulate the use of non-German literature in the course discussions and dissertation work;
- To bring the formal thesis instructions in line with the actual substantive thesis guidance practice;
- To create more discussion time about practitioners' contributions to the courses;
- To continue seeking ways to attract more women in both academic and practitioners' teaching positions;
- To allow students more time to decide on partaking in exchange programmes.

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