



**European Association for
Public Administration
Accreditation**

EAPAA Accreditation Committee Evaluation Report

Evaluation Report with respect to the request for accreditation of the Master of Public Information Management (MPIM) of the Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR), Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Public Administration and Sociology, Rotterdam, the Netherlands,

At its meetings of September 3 and 4, 2018 in Lausanne (Switzerland), the EAPAA Accreditation Committee evaluated the programmes against the EAPAA Accreditation Criteria.

1. Accreditation Criteria

2. Applicability/Eligibility	
2.1 Domain	The programme is an academic level programme specifically oriented to public sector information management. The programme fulfils this criterion. The programme is a two-year in-service programme for trainees of the PBLQ, a government funded consultancy firm in The Hague operating in the field of public information management, for a period of two years.
2.2 Geography	The responsible party for the content and quality of the programme is the Department of Public Administration and Sociology , Rotterdam, the Netherlands. The Netherlands is a member of the Council of Europe, therefore the programme falls within the jurisdiction of EAPAA.
2.3 Programme longevity	The programme has been nationally accredited in 2002 for the first time. The programme fulfils this criterion.
2.4 Programme variants and locations	There are no variants or other locations.
4 Category of accreditation	The master programme opts for the second cycle executive graduate/master level public administration programmes accreditation.
5. Standards	
5.1 Domain of public administration	All relevant aspects of the public administration domain are being taught in the programmes. The aim of the programme is to train students that are able 'to serve as a linking pin between the technical (ICT) and the policy departments of public organizations, thus contributing to the effective use of ICT in public organisations'.
5.2 Mission of the	The Master of Public Information Management educates and trains Young

programme	Information Professionals in how to combine and align ICT and business processes within the public sector more effectively. This implies the alignment of interests and values between organisations or organisation units or functions and establishing effective relations between the people concerned. The context of this alignment is the complexity involved in the development of ICT systems within the public sector, including the decision-making, implementation and management of these systems. A table in the self-evaluation report shows how the intended learning outcomes map the courses. The panel has studied the intended learning outcomes and concludes that these are in line with the requirements set by the national and international field. They adequately reflect the academic orientation of the programme.
5.3 Level	The level of the programme is clearly at the master level. Students need a master degree before they can be selected for the programme.
5.4 Practice and internships	Alongside the courses, students are employed as trainees (now called 'Young Information Professionals') on three projects by PBLQ. Projects last between six to eight months each. Although these assignments are not part of the master's programme itself, the students are able to apply theories directly at work, see how they hold in practice and bring back their experiences to the classroom. The SVT concludes that the programme has a very intense and productive relation to practice. Basically students follow three large internships and bring their experiences back to the courses.
5.5.1 Curriculum Content	
5.5.1.1 Core components	The programme's curriculum has recently been changed. It consists of four parts: 27 ECTS of so-called 'foundation courses', 16 EC of thematic courses, a skills line (2 ECTS), and the concluding master's thesis (15 ECTS). The five foundation courses equip the students with a basic knowledge of relevant disciplines: public administration, information management, ICT, and organisation management. The thematic courses elaborate on different aspects of information management. In its courses, the programme uses theories, concepts and research methods from the fields of public administration, information management, law, public finance and public management. As programme management acknowledges in the self-evaluation report, political science, sociology and economics are not specifically addressed. However, teachers delivering the programme have various disciplinary backgrounds, and as a result together use a multidisciplinary approach to these courses. The SVT concludes that MPIM succeeds in offering a strong and coherent master's curriculum that makes the most of students' different backgrounds and work experiences. When it comes to research skills, however, the panel thinks the programme could demonstrate more clearly where these are addressed in the core courses.
5.5.1.2 Other Components	The MPIM programme contains no elective courses and no specialisations. However, the students said that a certain degree of specialisation can be reached. According to them, there is a lot of room to choose traineeship assignments. The SVT recommends to give more and structural attention to recent

	<p>technological developments.</p> <p>The SVT comes to the conclusion that the University and PBLQ could do more to make sure the students are aware of the 'code of conduct' and its implications for their assignments and research.</p>
5.5.1.3 Structure and didactics of the programme	<p>The programme uses an educational philosophy based on the problem-oriented approach of action learning (learning by doing). The SVT concludes that the structure of the curriculum, with foundation courses in year one and thematic courses in year two, is well thought through, as is the tailor-made skills line running through the curriculum and the thesis project at the end. However, in line with the previous assessment visit, the panel sees room for improvement regarding research skills in the curriculum.</p>
5.5.1.4 Intake	<p>Each year about 100 students apply and 15 are selected.</p> <p>Half of the students (51%) that enter the programme have a background in social sciences, the other half come from, for instance, humanities (14%), economics/business administration (14%) and computer science (6%). The foundation courses serve to give students from different backgrounds the same level of knowledge. In addition, an introductory course was designed 'to give all students the necessary factual knowledge of the institutions in Dutch and European government'.</p> <p>The panel considers that students in the programme do well, even though they come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Differences between students are diagnosed and dealt with, for instance in the foundation courses and skills line. However, when it comes to research skills, the panel believes that certain groups of students might benefit from a more personalised approach.</p>
5.5.2 Length	<p>The length of the programme (60 ECTS) meets the criteria for academic master's programmes in Europe.</p>
5.5.3 Results	<p>The employability rates show that graduates have no trouble in finding a position after completing the programme.</p>
5.6 Quality Improvement and Innovation	
5.6.1 Programme accomplishment	<p>The SVT was satisfied with the quality of the theses and thought that they covered suitable topics and were generally well executed and delivered. Overall, it agreed with the marks given. The SVT concludes that the programme is structured and delivered in such a way that MPIM graduates achieve the intended learning outcomes. The success rate of the programme is good (82%) and graduates are in high demand.</p>
5.6.2 Curriculum Development	<p>The programme management tries to ensure the coherence between the various courses in a number of ways. Before the start of every course, there is a meeting between the principal teacher, the programme manager and a member of the Academic Board. They talk about the contents of the course and discuss whether any changes need to be made following student evaluations and recent developments in the field. Secondly, all principal teachers meet once a year, when they address the same two points (contents, necessary changes), as well as the coherence of the curriculum as a whole. Lastly, students' comments lead to programme changes.</p> <p>Three sources that the programme uses to review (parts of) the curriculum</p>

	are: student evaluations (each lecture day is evaluated, and so is the course as a whole), progress meetings with clients (twice per project) and frequent contacts between students and programme coordinators. In addition, every semester the programme organises a general meeting between students and the Academic Board, where possible improvement points are identified. Finally, after the last course, students evaluate the programme as a whole. The SVT concludes that the programme has a good network and direct relations with stakeholders.
5.6.3 External Reviews	MPIM was reviewed twice in the past six years: in 2011 by the previous assessment panel and in 2013 by a midterm review committee. In its self-evaluation report, the programme has provided two tables with the recommendations that were made in these two assessment processes and the measures that were taken in response. The tables show that all recommendations have led to curriculum changes. The SVT concludes that the programme has a solid system of quality assurance.
5.7 Student Assessment	The programme's assessment policy is based on four pillars: validity, reliability, efficiency and transparency. Validity is strived for by using assessment matrices – linking the assessment criteria to the learning outcomes of the courses – and by assessing the courses in a form that is consistent with each course. The programme uses a wide variety of assessment methods. The thesis assessment procedure is well regulated, with two supervisors and a 'third reader'. The SVT is impressed by the wide variety of assessment methods in the programme. The thesis assessment procedure is well structured. However, the SVT thinks that the quality assurance around testing needs to be improved. The SVT advises making the thesis grading procedure more transparent and independent.
5.8 Programme Jurisdiction	Programme management is in hands of an Academic Board, consisting of two professors of Erasmus University and one senior consultant at PBLQ. Three programme coordinators at PBLQ and an administrative back office support the programme.
5.9.1 Faculty nucleus Score:	Covered in the Institutional Accreditation
5.9.2 Faculty qualifications	Lecturers teaching in the MPIM programme are attracted from various universities in the Netherlands: Erasmus University Rotterdam, Tilburg University, Utrecht University, University of Twente, and Delft University of Technology. Of the twelve principal lecturers, seven are (full or endowed) professors. All principal teachers have a PhD degree, as well as a teaching qualification or another form of didactic training, for instance within PBLQ, which has its own didactic experts. The percentage of (guest) lecturers without a university affiliation is low. The SVT is satisfied with the quality of the principal teachers involved in the programme and the quality assurance steps taken to monitor the quality of teaching.
5.9.3 Diversity: gender and minorities	The SVT concludes that student diversity is how it should be. The gender imbalance of staff, however, needs new commitment and new initiatives.

5.10 Admission of Students	To qualify for this post-initial programme, applicants need to have obtained a master's degree in any other field, they must be able to demonstrate an interest in the fields of public administration and ICT, and have at least two years work experience. The admission procedure consists of three steps: assessing the prospective students, interviewing them and (if admitted) discussing employment conditions. An IQ-test is part of the assessment procedure and, after being interviewed, students have to present an ICT-related problem case in the public sector. Instead of using an IQ-test, the SVT suggests considering a diagnostic test focussing on research skills, for instance as demonstrated in students' previous master theses. Secondly, the panel thought that, from the side of Erasmus University, the admission criteria could be clearer
5.11 Supportive Services and Facilities	Covered in the Institutional Accreditation
5.12 Student Services	Covered in the Institutional Accreditation
5.13 Public Relations	Covered in the Institutional Accreditation
6 Additional Criteria	N.a

2. Conclusion

Based on all material and especially the report of the NVAO-EAPAA site visit team, the Accreditation Committee has evaluated the programmes.

In conclusion: a selective academic programme. The independence of the 2nd reader need attention, and also the research methods.

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.