



**European Association for
Public Administration
Accreditation**

EAPAA Accreditation Committee Evaluation Report

Evaluation Report with respect to the request for accreditation of Institute of Public Administration and Civil Service (IPACS), Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA), Moscow, Russia, Master of Public Administration programme.

The EAPAA Accreditation Committee, at its online meeting of 1 September 2020 has evaluated this programme against the EAPAA Accreditation Criteria.

1. Accreditation Criteria

2. Applicability/Eligibility	
2.1 Domain	The MPA programme fulfils the primary objective to be accredited as it provides professional academic level education leading to a formal degree. The programme mainly prepares persons for professional roles in the public sector.
2.2 Geography	The Russian Federation is a member of the Council of Europe, therefore the programme falls within the jurisdiction of EAPAA.
2.3 Programme longevity	The MPA programme has started ten cohorts since 2009 and qualifies for normal accreditation.
2.4 Programme variants and locations	None.
4 Category of accreditation	The MPA programme complies with category of accreditation executive (part-time) public administration master programmes.
5. Standards	
5.1 Domain of public administration	The programme complies with the criteria of Public Administration as it is multi-disciplinary and oriented towards the public sector.
5.2 Mission of the programme	The MPA programme has a rather newly developed mission, which is quite broad, but in line with the development of the institutional context in Russia focusing on the improvement of the interaction between state and public at the local and municipal level. Although the programme has an updated and relevant mission for its purposes of training a new generation of public managers in Russia, it is difficult to see how the mission is translated into educational objectives.

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	<p>There exist learning outcomes in the sense of key competencies for each course, but the process how these competencies are developed against the backdrop of the mission (e.g. how does the mission of new generations of public servants frame teaching of research methods?) and what type of educational philosophy stands behind it, is not that clear. The regular process for the development of the educational and didactical cornerstones of the curriculum and its components could be strengthened. Although the MPA center organizes contacts between teachers of the same thematic blocks and close disciplines, the mission process happens rather along natural situations such as informal contacts between teachers or as the MPA centre organizes certain contacts. Thus, a shortcoming of the IPACS MPA is that it seems to lack a general venue where course coordinators, lecturers and student representatives can discuss and further develop the mission, the educational content, the intended learning outcomes of the overall programme, and its implications for content and didactics of thematic blocks and cycles. At present, reflection on learning outcomes and didactics seems to be conducted at the level of individual courses, but not at the level of the overall study programme.</p>
5.3 Level	<p>The learning outcomes of the programme correspond with the national educational as well as Academy standards for master level professional education. However, a link between the Dublin descriptors and the competencies of the MPA programme is not yet established.</p>
5.4 Practice and internships	<p>The attention to relations with practice is good. However, as a recommendation can be suggested that the program provides opportunities for the exchange of experience in the organizations where the students are working. Moreover, it is advisable to organize a request on the subject of final works from the public sector so other public organizations (not only employers of students) could suggest topics for final works and students could apply for.</p>
5.5.1 Curriculum Content	
5.5.1.1 Core components	<p>The curriculum of the IPACS MPA expresses the general idea of public administration as a multidisciplinary field of study. The main disciplines, which are necessary for understanding the multidisciplinary field of public administration, are covered in the curriculum of the IPACS MPA programme. A thematic emphasis of the MPA is on the cooperation between the public service and the business sector. Several courses deal with lobbying as well as intersectoral communication and interaction.</p> <p>The programme has a focus on the development of individual skills and competencies. It is positive that students – as a group – can choose elective courses according to the interests of the student group. This makes the study programme more tailored to students’ needs and interests than usual study programmes in Russia. The focus on skills and competencies is another advantage of the IPACS MPA programme. It guarantees a link to the requirements of the working place for future public service employees. A second advantage of the IPACS MPA</p>

	<p>programme is the participation of expert practitioners in the teaching of the curriculum. Expert practitioners include employers in public service institutions as well as the business sector. Through practical examples and discussions, students can learn from practical knowledge and experiences. Moreover, students can apply the knowledge obtained in the theoretical courses to examples from public service and business practice. However, the curriculum of the IPACS MPA programme has also shortcomings. The programme seems to be designed as a training programme, rather than an academic course. There is little room for reflection and critical discussion. The theoretical courses and the workshops and seminars on competencies and skills seem to be only poorly integrated. The students learn how to understand and implement public administration and management, but do not seem to be highly encouraged to discuss and reflect upon public administration and public service on the basis of theories and practical examples. Furthermore, research methods are taught in one course which seems to be detached from the rest of the program. The course is mostly about structuring the students' research projects, integrating other viewpoints, and formulating implications for practice. However, the use and application of empirical research including the appropriate qualitative and quantitative methods is not a relevant part of the curriculum.</p> <p>The core curriculum of the IPACS MPA programme covers the main disciplines of Public Administration and provides a thorough basis for a public service study programme. The thematic blocs provide an introduction in the basic concept and theories in the disciplines of law, economics, political science, sociology, public finances and management. However, the integration of the core disciplines could be improved. In addition, the topic of public policy including implementation and policy analysis could be strengthened in the curriculum, especially against the background of the citizen- and customer-oriented mission of the programme. The course project and final examination projects are adequate tools for students to proof their ability to develop solutions to problems of public service practice.</p>
5.5.1.2 Other Components	<p>The IPACS MPA Programme clearly defines its objectives for additional work and the rationale for the objectives of the elective part of the study programme. It is a real advantage of the IPACS MPA Programme that it allows students to choose electives. This makes the study programme more flexible than most study programmes in Russia. It also guarantees that the IPACS MPA Programme is tailored to the interests and needs of the student group.</p>
5.5.1.3 Structure and didactics of the programme	<p>The structure of the IPACS MPA programme appears to be coherent and well-balanced. Each course has a didactic concept, which corresponds to the objectives of the course. The lecturers are trained in didactics and appear to be well prepared in teaching their disciplines and transmitting the knowledge the students need for their future career in public service. The study programme seems to be 'doable' in the formal time foreseen for the programme in the respective years and in the two variants (weekend and module blocks) offered. If students are unable to follow</p>

	classes, lecturers are able to provide individual opportunities for following the programme and taking the course examinations.
5.5.1.4 Intake	The entrance requirements are carefully checked before the students start the IPACS MPA programme. The entrance requirements are transparent for the applicants. The focus on previous work experience is a useful entry requirement for a post-graduate teaching programme and the programme seems to be able to attract candidates that fit to the programme although a higher share of representatives of public organizations would be in favor of the programme. The interviews showed that the student population seems to be very motivated and heavily supports the mission of the programme.
5.5.2 Length	The curriculum length and teaching load are adequate for a post-graduate IPACS MPA programme. The length of the MPA programme is in accordance with the accreditation category that is applied for.
5.5.3 Results	The examination results seem to be adequate for a post-graduate MPA programme. It is an advantage of the IPACS MPA that students work on an individual qualification project, which is linked to their interest, their field of work experience, their future plans and a topical research question that results from public service practice. An overview of qualification projects showed that IPACS MPA students have independently developed relevant projects that were connected to their individual strengths and interests. Projects seem to be rather disciplinary oriented than multi- or interdisciplinary. However, the relevance for practice seems to be high.
5.6 Quality Improvement and Innovation	
5.6.1 Programme accomplishment	The programme uses information of various sources for its improvement and programme adaptation. It seems that the programme is able to adapt during one cohort to make most for a good learning experience reflecting students' opinions and requests. However, the tools, processes and meetings seem not to be part of a more coherent quality cycle giving reliable information to all stakeholders how the programme is evaluated. There is room for improvement in designing the quality improvement and innovation system with so regular processes not excluding spontaneous reactions and possibilities to give feedback. In addition, there are also other actors and stakeholders like, for instance, employers and other public organizations, which could be involved into the process from a more coherent quality improvement strategy.
5.6.2 Curriculum Development	The curriculum development is mainly initiated by the MPA centre. The centre received information from various sides (e.g. MPA club) and organizes meeting between relevant stakeholders. This seems to work quite well as students appreciated very much the reactions on their requests and proposals. At the same time, a rather formal curriculum development process with regular meetings of the core faculty and MPA centre seems to be in development recently (meetings in 2017 and 2018). In accordance to our comments about the quality improvement cycle the curriculum development could be more systematized within an overall

	framework of curriculum and quality development taking into account information sources more comprehensibly.
5.6.3 External Reviews	The programme clearly demonstrates its ambition of receiving external feedback from international organizations including EAPAA. However, the evidence proven about changes based on the recommendations is rather small. A meeting of teachers on project activities of MPA students or a meeting of the MPA Club are two attempts of going forward. Against the backdrop of the short timespan between having received external feedback and the EAPAA site visit it is fair to say that the program plans to deliver more evidence in the near future. However, in general, a more systematic and comprehensive effort of addressing external recommendations as part of the overall quality improvement cycle seems to be necessary.
5.7 Student Assessment	The level of examination seems to be rather knowledge-oriented. Most exams are evaluated by means of multiple choice, or a list of possible questions are handed out in advance from which the teacher picks a sample at the exam. Tests, however, are evaluated by a broad spectrum of evaluation techniques, such as recorded presentations with peer-review from fellow students, and leave autonomy to the lecturer. The quality of the Final Qualification Project (FQP) is good. Most research papers are focused on a concrete problem from the student's work environment, apply a clear methodology, and a theoretical framework is present. However, the great majority of FQPs remain in one of the main subfields, that is economics or legal studies, depending on the academic background of the student. Policy analysis and multidisciplinary PA theories remain largely absent. Furthermore, the grades of the FQP (as provided for 47 projects in 2017, 2018 and 2019) are quite high. 77% are assessed as excellent, 19% as good, and 0.5% as satisfactory. One reason could be that the Term Paper may be used as a basis for the FQP. Thus, the FQP should always reflect an improvement of the Term Paper which might already have been a goof project.
5.8 Programme Jurisdiction	The management responsibility for the MPA programme is clearly at the level of the MPA centre. The centre seems to have enough room for manoeuvre within its competencies set by IPACS and RANEPa. The support of both institutions for the MPA program is high and the program belongs to the core of the institute's educational programs. However, the organizational hierarchy and the framework of regulations seems to be rather dense so the influence with respect to important aspects of the programme is limited to issues around management and organization of the programme. More influential decisions concerning the direction of the programme and financial matters are taken at higher levels like, for instance, at the IPACS directorate or RANEPa which seems to be appropriate as far as solutions are offered what is the case in regard to financial resources. Concerning better infrastructure and room capacity the influence of the MPA centre seems to be limited.
5.9.1 Faculty nucleus	The IPACS MPA is organized by a team of responsible, qualified and engaged course coordinators and academic lecturers. The lecturers are

	<p>academically trained and involved in university teaching and research at the Institute of Public Administration and Civil Service (IPACS). An advantage of the IPACS MPA is the involvement of expert practitioners from public service institutions and business enterprises, who enrich the programme with examples from their practice and mostly teach electives. Workshops on skills are taught by professional trainers. Overall, the teaching staff seems to be qualified and well-prepared. Against the backdrop of the high variety of backgrounds of teachers and their involvement in different programs coordination across the disciplines and individual courses could be strengthened to enhance the coherence of the study programme.</p>
5.9.2 Faculty qualifications	<p>The field of expertise and experience of the faculty members reflects the needed expertise in the IPACS MPA programme. The lecturers are involved in research and university teaching and have contacts to academic institutions and individual researchers. The members of the faculty regularly publish in scientific journals and are involved in the organization of academic conferences and meetings. Participation and publication in higher levels academic conferences and outlets of the international Public Administration research community can be improved. However, it is an executive/mid-career MPA program for which the practical focus is also of high relevance. For practical workshops and seminars external lecturers from others institutions and from public service institutions are attracted. The involvement of expert practitioners in the curriculum and the good contact between IPACS and several public service institutions are a special strength of the IPACS MPA programme, as the provide students with the opportunity to get acquainted with the functioning of these institutions and make personal contacts with key persons in public service.</p>
5.9.3 Diversity: gender and minorities	<p>The percentage of men and women among the teaching staff is balanced. However, in the student population female students are underrepresented. The discussion with the faculty showed that there is little to no awareness for gender and minority issues at IPACS.</p>
5.10 Admission of Students	<p>Overall, the programme has high admission requirements, which are in line with the mission to attract high-level in-service civil servants, and a well-established admission procedure in place.</p> <p>There are, however, three main challenges. The first relates to the goal to attract experienced civil servants, yet about half of the students are business-owners.</p> <p>Second, as concerns the academic admission requirements, it remains unclear under what circumstances a BA diploma is sufficient to be allowed to the programme.</p> <p>The third challenge relates to the gender balance. Given there is no policy to attract more woman to the programme, with a clear gender imbalance in favour of men, this element of student admission is rather poor.</p>

5.11 Supportive Services and Facilities	The supporting facilities for the MPA programme are adequate. However, the situation of having two main locations for teachers, administration, and students can create coordination issues and as experienced by the SVT it is not possible to go easily from one place to the other. Furthermore, there is some lack of meeting facilities so students and teachers can meet and discuss teaching progress, feedback on projects etc. Therefore, we recommend to the programme and IPACS of increasing space for the MPA programme so there are adequate facilities for teachers to have meetings with students while classes take place in the building.
5.12 Student Services	The policies and rules regarding handling student attrition are established against the background of executive students, which are adults having their own interests and responsibilities of finalizing their studies. The student services are overall adequate. We recommend further investing into the networking of students and alumni like, for instance, in supporting the MPA Club and raise activities and memberships of graduates in the MPA Club.
5.13 Public Relations	Public relation activities are diverse and in general adequate for the programme. So far, the programme receives enough applications each year. However, the applications from public administrations at the regional and local level could be increased. We recommend targeting more specifically these target groups and involving relevant players from these levels into the public relations strategy by finding adequate forms of involvement for the Russian context, e.g. by establishing a sounding board involving relevant actors from these levels etc.
6. Additional Criteria	None.

2. Conclusion

Based on the above evaluation of the specific criteria, the EAPAA Accreditation Committee concludes that the programme can be accredited with the following recommendations.

1. We strongly recommend the increase of an international education profile of the programme.
 - a. First, the recruitment of teachers needs to be more oriented on their academic profile from an international research background in the disciplines of Public Administration, Public Management, and Public Policy, but also in the other disciplines like, for instance, economics or public law. This means that future lecturers of the programme need to be more present in their international research community, for instance, through conference participation and publications in international academic journals.
 - b. Second, the internationalization strategy also has to be proven in the content and teaching of courses, literature list, and literature used in students' exams.
2. Young promising researchers and lecturers of the programme should get the support for attending international research conferences and education programs like summer schools,

- exchange programs, study tours and (international) conferences to build up the teaching and research fundament for the MPA programme.
3. We strongly recommend the development of an overarching educational philosophy, which links the mission to the learning outcomes/competencies and to teaching as well as assessment forms. The educational philosophy needs to be based on a process for regular curriculum renewal and innovation including the faculty in order to strengthen the academic profile of the programme. This process of generating an educational philosophy has to be linked with the development of a quality improvement cycle building more strongly on formal rather than informal measures. This also includes the systematic and comprehensive use of external recommendations.
 4. We strongly recommend as part of the above recommended processes to clarify and to develop the classification of an ideal MPA graduate. As an academic-level programme we recommend to move from the “trained practitioners” much more towards the “reflective practitioner” as an ideal type of graduate. The implications of such a move has to be proved in the curriculum and learning content of the programme, such as the use of international literature and comparative perspectives.
 5. Concerning the curriculum, we recommend introducing PA theories, also from an international perspective, rather than disciplinary economic or legal theories, and stimulate multi- and interdisciplinary research knowledge and research methods within the final qualification project. We further strongly recommend developing the policy perspective in the curriculum by integrating one or two courses on public policy based on international state-of-the art knowledge in the field. In addition, we recommend further clarifying the scope of the method course, amount of method teaching necessary, and its link to other courses.
 6. We recommend to the programme to further strengthen its profile and marketing strategy towards a public administration including public-private themes programme and towards state, regional, and municipal administration. This also should include a better distinction between the MBA and MPA programme in order to attract more in-service civil servants. In this regard, we also recommend integrating public administration practice not only on the level of practitioner teaching, but also by organizing a request on the subjects of final works from the public sector.
 7. We recommend to the IPACS and to the MPA programme to reflect about the advantages and disadvantages of a more balanced minority and gender representation in the student population. We recommend developing measures to attract more female students.
 8. We recommend further providing opportunities for the exchange of experience in the organizations of the students themselves and between student organizations and other public sector organizations.
 9. We recommend being more hesitating with grading at the level of Excellency and to create room for improvement at all levels of examination.
 10. We recommend to the programme and IPACS of increasing space for the MPA programme so there are adequate facilities for teachers to have meetings with students while classes take place in the building.