BACHELOR'S PROGRAMME

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND

ORGANIZATION SCIENCE

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT AMSTERDAM

CONTENTS

This report was finalized on 06-04-2018

REPORT ON THE BACHELOR'S PROGRAMME PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND ORGANIZATION SCIENCE OF THE VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT AMSTERDAM

This report takes the joint NVAO-EAPAA Accreditation Framework 2016 as a starting point.

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE PROGRAMME

Bachelor's programme Public Administration and Organization Science

Name of the programme:	Bestuurs- en Organisatiewetenschap (Public Administration and Organization Science
CROHO number:	50007
Level of the programme:	bachelor's
Orientation of the programme:	academic
Number of credits:	180 EC
Specializations or tracks:	Public administration
	Organization science
Location(s):	Amsterdam
Mode(s) of study:	full time
Language of instruction:	Dutch
Expiration of accreditation:	31/12/2018

The visit of the assessment panel Public Administration to the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam took place on 14 - 15 December 2017.

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE INSTITUTION

Name of the institution:	Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU)
Status of the institution:	publicly funded institution
Result institutional quality assurance assessment:	positive

COMPOSITION OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

The NVAO has approved the composition of the panel on 16 October 2017. The panel that assessed the bachelor's programme Public Administration and Organization Science consisted of:

- Prof. dr. T. (Tony) Bovaird, professor emeritus of Public Management and Policy at the University of Birmingham (United Kingdom) [chair];
- Prof. dr. M. (Marleen) Brans, professor at the Public Governance Institute of the KU Leuven (Belgium) [vice-chair];
- Prof. dr. P.B. Peter Sloep, professor emeritus in Technology-Enhanced Learning, in particular Learning in Social at the Open Universiteit Nederland;
- Prof. E. (Esther) Versluis, professor of European Regulatory Governance at Maastricht University.
- Drs. H. (Henk) de Jong, director of Strategy and Policy of the Dutch National Police. Previous positions include chair of the board of the ROC Leiden and positions in the municipalities of Amsterdam and Rotterdam;
- J.C. (Jasper) Meijering, master's student Engineering and Policy Analysis at Delft University of Technology [student member];

The panel was supported by Mark Delmartino MA, who acted as secretary.
Appendix 1 contains the curricula vitae of the panel members.

WORKING METHOD OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

The assessment of the bachelor's programme Public Administration and Organization Science of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam is part of a cluster assessment. From October to December 2017, a panel assessed seven bachelor's programmes and seventeen master's programmes in Public Administration at eight universities.

The panel consists of seventeen members:

- Prof. T. (Tony) Bovaird, professor emeritus of Public Management and Policy at the University of Birmingham (United Kingdom) [chair];
- Prof. A. (Adrian) Ritz, professor for Public Management at the University of Bern (Switzerland) [vice-chair];
- Prof. M. (Marleen) Brans, professor at the Public Governance Institute of the KU Leuven (Belgium) [vice-chair];
- Prof. H.M.C. (Harrie) Eijkelhof, professor emeritus of Physics Education at Utrecht University;
- Prof. P.B. Peter Sloep, professor emeritus in Technology-Enhanced Learning, in particular Learning in Social at the Open Universiteit Nederland;
- Prof. T. (Tiina) Randma-Liiv, professor of Public Management and Policy and vice-dean for Research at Tallinn University of Technology (Estonia);
- Prof. L. (Lan) Xue, professor and dean of the School of Public Policy and Management, Tsinghua University (China);
- Prof. E. (Esther) Versluis, professor of European Regulatory Governance at Maastricht University.
- Prof. W. (William) Webster, professor of Public Policy and Management at the Stirling Management School, University of Stirling (UK);
- Prof. J.J.A. (Jacques) Thomassen, emeritus professor of Political Science at the University of Twente;
- Prof J. E. (Jenneke) Bosch-Boesjes, emeritus professor of Development and Differentiation in Academic Education at the University of Groningen;
- Drs. B. (Bertine) Steenbergen, interim director at the Ministry of Security and Justice.
- Prof. J.P. (Jan) Pronk, professor emeritus in Theory and Practice of International Development at the International Institute of Social Studies and former Minister for Development Co-operation and Minister of Environment, Spatial Planning and Housing;
- Drs. C. (Cees) Vermeer, town clerk of the city of Breda;
- Drs. H. (Henk) de Jong, director of Strategy and Policy of the Dutch National Police;
- J.C. (Jasper) Meijering BSc, master's student Engineering and Policy Analysis at Delft University of Technology [student member];
- S. (Sophie) van Wijngaarden BSc, master's student Systems Engineering, Policy Analysis & Management at the Delft University of Technology [student member].

A panel of six to eight members was appointed for each visited, based on the expertise and availability of each panel member, and taking into account possible conflicts of interest.

Peter Hildering MSc of QANU was project coordinator of the cluster assessment Public Administration. He was secretary during the visits to the University of Twente, Radboud University, Erasmus University Rotterdam and Leiden University. He also attended the final panel consultations of every visit and read and commented on draft versions of each report in order to monitor the consistency of the assessments and the resulting reports. Mark Delmartino MA, freelance worker of QANU, was secretary of the panel during the visits to Tilburg University, Maastricht University, Utrecht University, and the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Dr. Joke Corporaal, freelance worker of QANU, was second secretary during the visits to the Erasmus University Rotterdam and Leiden University.

Joint NVAO-EAPAA assessment
The panel assessment was aimed at (re-)accreditation by both NVAO and EAPAA. In order to increase efficiency and reduce administrative burden, both accreditation processes were combined. NVAO and EAPAA agreed on a joint process and framework on 12 September 2016. This report is based on the joint NVAO-EAPAA framework and is aimed at double accreditation for all programmes involved.

Preparation
Before the assessment panel's site visit to the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the project coordinator received the self-evaluation reports that the programmes wrote based on the joint NVAO-EAPAA framework. He sent it to the panel after checking it for completeness of information. Upon reading the self-evaluation reports, the panel members formulated their preliminary findings. The panel also studied a selection of fifteen theses and the accompanying assessment forms for each programme. This selection was made by the panel's chair, in cooperation with the secretary, from a list of graduates from the past three years. The chair and secretary took care that all tracks and specializations within the programmes were covered, and made sure that the distribution of grades in the theses selection matched the distribution of grades over all theses.

The panel chair, secretary and programme jointly composed a schedule for the site visit. Prior to the site visit, the programme selected representative partners for the various interviews. Interviews were planned with students, teaching staff, management, alumni and professional field, the programme committee and the board of examiners. See appendix 5 for the definitive schedule.

Site visit
The site visit to the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam took place on 14 and 15 December 2017, and followed a visit to Utrecht University from 11 to 13 December 2017. At the start of the week, the panel held a preparatory meeting during which it was instructed regarding the assessment framework and procedures. On 14 December, the panel discussed its working method and its preliminary findings for the Amsterdam site visit, and reflected on the content and use of the programme's domain-specific framework of reference. During the site visit, the panel conducted interviews with representatives of the programmes, and examined materials provided by the programmes. An overview of these materials is given in appendix 6. The panel provided students and staff with the opportunity to speak informally with the panel outside the set interviews. No use was made of this opportunity.

The panel used the final part of the visit to discuss its findings in an internal meeting. Afterwards the panel chair gave an oral presentation, in which he expressed the panel's preliminary impressions and general observations. The visit was concluded with a development conversation, in which the panel and the programmes discussed various developments routes for the programmes. The result of this conversation is summarized in a separate report.

During the site visit, the panel concluded that documentation on the new format for the bachelor's thesis (see Standard 2.1 and 3) was incomplete. It decided to postpone its assessment of Standard 2.1 and 3 awaiting additional information on the new format of the bachelor's thesis envisioned by the programme. The programme delivered the additional documentation five weeks after the site visit. The panel used this to complete its assessment.

Report
After the site visit, the secretary wrote a draft report based on the assessment panel's findings. Subsequently, he sent it to the assessment panel and the project coordinator for feedback. After processing the panel members' feedback, the coordinator sent the draft report to the university in order to have it checked for factual irregularities. The secretary discussed the ensuing comments with the panel's chair and adapted the report accordingly before its finalisation.

Decision rules

The panel used the definitions from the NVAO's Assessment framework for limited programme assessments to assess the six standards in the joint NVAO-EAPAA framework. To determine the score for the programme as a whole, the decision rules of the NVAO's Assessment framework for limited programme assessments were applied to the scores for Standard 1 to 4.

Generic quality

The quality that can reasonably be expected in an international perspective from a higher education bachelor's or master's programme.

Unsatisfactory

The programme does not meet the current generic quality standards and shows serious shortcomings in several areas.

Satisfactory

The programme meets the current generic quality standards and shows an acceptable level across its entire spectrum.

Good

The programme systematically surpasses the current generic quality standards.

Excellent

The programme systematically well surpasses the current generic quality standards and is regarded as an international example.

SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

This evaluation concerns the bachelor's programme Public Administration and Organisation Science (PAOS), a three-year full-time 180 EC programme offered by the Faculty of Social Sciences at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

The panel considers that the programme has a clear vision within the domain of public governance and a well-articulated educational philosophy that reflects the university-wide values 'open, personal and responsible'. Both vision and philosophy are prominently present in the objectives of the programme. The PAOS programme hence not only addresses the domain of public governance as specified in the domain-specific reference framework but also adds its own distinctive VU-flavour. In the view of the panel, the intended learning outcomes reflect the content (PAOS), orientation (academic) and level (bachelor's) of the programme. Nonetheless, there is room for formulating the learning outcomes in a more specific and ambitious way, by reflecting more strongly both the VU-flavour and the distinctive components of the programme.

The teaching and learning environment of the PAOS programme is adequate in all its dimensions: according to the panel, the programme integrates the public administration and organisation science components in a coherent curriculum with a clear structure and an interesting mixture of compulsory, specialisation and elective courses. The panel acknowledges the recent changes to the programme and considers that these are for the better: it welcomes in particular the new bachelor's thesis trajectory, which includes both group research and an individual literature study. If anything, the panel sees room for enhancing the professional skills that students need on the labour market: although the skills are taught, there are only few opportunities for students to practice these in real-life situations. Furthermore, the panel considers that the number of staff is adequate and their qualifications relevant. It shares the enthusiasm of the students for the commitment of the staff, the small-scale and intensive tutorials and the emphasis on mentoring in the curriculum.

The programme has an adequate assessment system. The assessment plan is set up in such a way that each learning outcome is tested in various courses and through different forms of assessment. Individual tests are valid, reliable and transparent. In the view of the panel, the thesis evaluation is based on a proper procedure and a relevant evaluation form. However, while many individual assessors make good use of the form, other assessors did not provide feedback or include an insightful justification of the score. The panel thinks highly of the expertise and operational capacity of the Board of Examiners and encourages the Board to keep monitoring the quality of the courses, the inclusion of insightful feedback in the theses and the independent assessment of the co-reader.

Based on its review of a sample of theses, the panel concludes that overall, the thesis quality was sufficient but in a number of cases rather weak. In this respect, the panel strongly welcomes the revision of the thesis process, which will take effect in spring 2018. From its discussions on site and its consultation of the new written materials, the panel is convinced that the combination of a group research project and an individual literature study will generate better quality products and enhance students' capacity to achieve all intended learning outcomes. As regards the employment of graduates, the programme prepares students adequately for a follow-up study and/or a professional career. The panel acknowledges the statements of alumni who emphasised that the programme had trained them broadly content-wise and had turned them into 'academic citizens' who can operate at an appropriate level in a variety of domains relevant to PAOS.

The panel considers that continuous improvement is a key feature of the PAOS programme. The programme has the proper bodies and systems in place to monitor, evaluate and improve the quality of its education. The panel thinks highly of the programme's efforts to consider student concerns and accommodate these, where possible. Similarly, the panel is impressed by the way the programme has addressed recommendations from the previous accreditation committee. Nonetheless, there is room for enhancing the role and systematic involvement of the Field Advisory Board in matters of curriculum development.

In the view of the panel, the diversity of the student body is impressive and so is the attention to diversity issues in the curriculum and in the policies at university and faculty level. The panel agrees with those it met during the site visit that diversity is in the DNA of the programme and hopes that the diverse role models in the programme will stand it in good stead in attracting students and more diverse staff.

In sum, the panel concludes that the quality of the bachelor's programme is up to standard on all accounts, hence its overall positive conclusion. Because the programme stands out in terms of diversity, the panel considers this standard to be good. Therefore, the panel assesses the standards from the NVAO-EAPAA accreditation framework for limited programme assessments as follows:

Bachelor's programme Public Administration and Organization Science

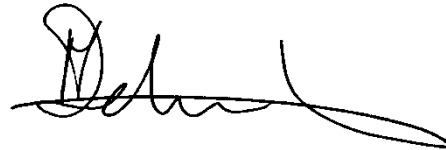|	
Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes	satisfactory
Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	satisfactory
Standard 3: Student assessment	satisfactory
Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes	satisfactory
Standard 5: External input	satisfactory
Standard 6: Diversity	good
General conclusion	satisfactory

The chair and the secretary of the panel hereby declare that all panel members have studied this report and that they agree with the judgements laid down in the report. They confirm that the assessment has been conducted in accordance with the demands relating to independence.

Date: 06-04-2018

Prof. Tony Bovaird   Mark Delmartino MA

DESCRIPTION OF THE STANDARDS FROM THE COMBINED NVAO-EAPAA ACCREDITATION FRAMEWORK 2016

Organisational context

The bachelor's programme Public Administration and Organization Science (PAOS) is one of twelve degree programmes organised by the Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS) at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU). The programme is offered in Dutch and mainly taught by staff from the FSS departments of Organization Science and of Political Science and Public Administration. A programme director is responsible for the content, organisation and quality of the programme, and supported by two programme coordinators, one per department. The bachelor's programme PAOS was launched in 2002, re-accredited in 2011 and internally reviewed in 2015. While the panel mainly assessed the bachelor's programme on its merits over the past few years, it also discussed the recent adjustments to the programme that are being implemented in this academic year 2017-2018.

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes of the programme have been detailed with regard to content, level and orientation; they meet international requirements. As for level and orientation (bachelor's or master's; professional or academic), the intended learning outcomes fit into the Dutch qualifications framework. In addition, they tie in with the international perspective of the requirements currently set by the professional field and the discipline with regard to the contents of the programme. Insofar as is applicable, the intended learning outcomes are in accordance with relevant legislation and regulations. The programme should clearly state its educational philosophy in reaching these outcomes and identify a clear mission.

Findings

To assess the programme objectives, the panel studied the domain-specific reference framework (Appendix 2) and the intended learning outcomes (Appendix 3) of the bachelor's programme.

The mission of the bachelor's programme PAOS is to offer a comprehensive, challenging and engaging curriculum to students. The panel observed that the programme has a clear vision within the domain of public governance: governance and organising are permanently interacting processes that occur in the public and private sector; policy making and the opportunities of public organisations to have a real impact on society are pre-eminently dependent on the (quality of the) internal organisation; combining insights from public administration and organisation sciences is therefore valuable to better understand the working of public and private organisations, and to contribute to the development of both policy itself and to the organisation processes that are likely to determine how successful that policy will be.

The panel learned from the written materials and its discussions on-site that the educational philosophy of the programme is based on the core values of the university: both VU and PAOS aim to be 'open, personal and responsible'. Students and staff confirmed during the visit that the teaching staff create an open climate for dialogue between students and staff and encourage the diverse group of students to share their perspectives on scientific and societal issues. Moreover, students feel welcome as a person, not a number, right from the start when they attend tutorials where mentors (teachers of intensive first year courses) get to know students personally and students engage with each other. Furthermore, bachelor's students are educated to become 'academic citizens', who are able to act professionally, ethically and responsibly in their careers. Students and staff indicated to the panel that ample attention is paid in the courses to considering the consequences of one's professional conduct for people as well as for society as a whole.

Further to this vision and educational philosophy, the panel observed that the PAOS programme stands out from other public administration programmes in the Netherlands in a number of ways. The bachelor's programme at VU Amsterdam pays particular attention to the intertwining of

governance and organising; to the argument that private organisations operate in an institutional context and therefore have to deal with key public administration requirements; to studying in an interrelated way the interactions of public and private organisations; and to the consequences of the functioning of organisations for society at large.

The panel learned that it is a deliberate choice to offer the programme in Dutch. Most alumni find jobs on the Dutch labour market and operate in and around Dutch public governance; therefore, a thorough understanding and knowledge of the Dutch public governance practices and cases is essential. Moreover, the programme finds it important from the viewpoint of (cultural) diversity that it does not distance itself from Dutch society and (local) public governance. The panel understands that this proximity to Dutch society is essential for both department and programme to have an informed grasp of Dutch public governance, its people and processes and to minimise the gap between highly educated and less well-educated actors.

Bachelor's students are trained towards achieving fifteen learning outcomes, which are organised in three categories of levels of learning: knowledge and understanding, application, and attitude. The panel observed that the competencies reflect the programme's profile and mission. The learning outcomes are related to the five Dublin Descriptors for bachelor's programmes. Moreover, the exit qualifications cover the topics stipulated by the domain-specific reference framework PAGO. The programme features 30 EC of electives in either public administration or organisation science, as well as a 'profiling space' (minor subject space) of another 30 EC. However, the panel noticed that the set of intended learning outcomes is identical for all PAOS bachelor's students, in spite of these differences in their learning pathways. In the view of the panel, the programme may want to make the formulation of some of the learning outcomes more specifically targeted to the specialisations offered.

Considerations
The panel considers that the bachelor's programme PAOS has a clear vision within the domain of public governance and a well-articulated educational philosophy. Both vision and philosophy are prominently present in the objectives of the programme. In this way, the programme not only addresses the domain of public governance as specified in the PAGO framework but also adds its own distinctive VU-flavour. In the view of the panel, the result is both adequate and interesting.

Furthermore, the panel considers that the intended learning outcomes reflect properly the content (public administration / organization science), orientation (academic) and level (bachelor's) of the programme. Nonetheless, there is room for formulating the learning outcomes in a more specific and ambitious way, by reflecting more strongly both the VU-flavour and the distinctive components of the programme. In the view of the panel, such explicit learning outcomes would raise the bar in relation to the exit qualifications and lead to setting ambitious goals for the thesis.

Conclusion
The panel assesses Standard 1, intended learning outcomes, of the bachelor's programme Public Administration and Organization Science as 'satisfactory'.

Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment
The curriculum, staff and programme-specific services and facilities enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The contents and structure of the curriculum enable the students admitted to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The quality of the staff and of the programme-specific services and facilities is essential to that end. Curriculum, staff, services and facilities constitute a coherent teaching-learning environment for the students.

Findings
To assess the content and structure of the programme, the panel studied the curriculum (Appendix 4) and the content of several core courses (Appendix 6) of the bachelor's programme.

2.1 Core components

The core curriculum provides a thorough teaching of the basic concepts, theories, methods and history (classics) of Public Administration on the level of the programme (bachelor's or master's).

The curriculum of the bachelor's programme consists of four groups of courses: substantive and skills courses (90 EC) in the domain of PAOS; academic core courses (30 EC) attended by all students of the faculty of social sciences; electives (30 EC) in year 2, focusing on either Public Administration or Organisation Science; and a profiling space (30 EC) in the fifth semester which allows for a study period abroad, an internship or a VU-wide minor.

The panel observed that the curriculum is set up in a logical and coherent way. The first year is mainly aimed at acquiring basic knowledge and skills, while more specialised and in-depth courses are offered in years two and three. Throughout the programme, extensive knowledge-oriented lectures are interchanged with intensive skills-related tutorials. Four learning trajectories support the learning process: an integrated PAOS pathway, the Public Administration and the Organisation Science specialisations, and an academic skills trajectory. Students indicated to the panel that they appreciate the set-up of the courses in year one, which constitute a good mixture of plenary lectures and small-scale tutorials led by mentors on the disciplines presented in the lectures. As this mixture of teaching forms has been less prominent in year two, the panel welcomes the programme's intention to make second year courses more interconnected. Moreover, students see PAOS' biggest strength as its combination of public administration and organisation science in one study; courses in which both perspectives are united are evaluated positively.

The profile of the programme is reflected in the curriculum. There is ample attention to research methods and skills, and because governance and organising are studied from multiple perspectives, students acquire knowledge and skills on both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Moreover, it is important for a future PAOS graduate to have knowledge of theories and concepts from different disciplines to understand the complex processes in PAOS, hence the attention in various parts of the curriculum to disciplines such as sociology, law, political science, economics and public finance. Furthermore, the panel learned that the curriculum has been revised since the previous accreditation visit and - based on the discussions with management, staff and students - understands that these changes have been for the better. Students are satisfied with the opportunity to take elective courses that allow for some specialisation in either public administration or organisation science. Moreover, they appreciate the minor subject space in year three.

The panel acknowledges, based on the written materials and its on-site discussions, that the intended learning outcomes of the programme are translated adequately in the different components and individual courses of the bachelor's curriculum. Before the visit, however, the panel had its doubts whether this was the case in the thesis project. On site, the panel learned that in the most recent revision of the curriculum, the set-up of the thesis project has changed. In the view of the panel, the combination of group research and literature study now constitutes a relevant bachelor's thesis trajectory and addresses all intended learning outcomes. The research seminar focuses on knowledge, skills and competences to complete a full research cycle, in which students can individually and in their group transform a complex problem into a research question and a research design, perform empirical research and formulate an answer for their research question. The individual bachelor's thesis requires each student to produce a literature study, which requires the student to develop the competence to assess and use correct references for relevant and complex resources and information, deal critically with the literature and produce a contribution to scientific disciplinary knowledge. Students must also take into account the ethical rules of research. The (new) design for the group research practicum safeguards that the proposal writing, data gathering and data analysis steps of the thesis are both performed and assessed on an individual and collective level.

In addition to compulsory core courses, the programme offers two specialised substantive learning trajectories that allow students to further explore their more specific interests: in year two, students follow four elective courses on either public administration or organisation science. The panel gathered from the discussion with students that they appreciate this opportunity for specialisation, as it offers an opportunity to prepare for the follow-up master's programme in Public Administration. As the student chapter of the self-evaluation report had already voiced the students' concern about the limited guidance towards this specialisation choice, the panel welcomes the feedback of the programme director announcing that mentors will address these opportunities with students, and that an information session will be planned each year at the end of the second semester. Students are also positive about the minor subject space in the fifth semester, as it allows them to study abroad, do an internship or enrol for one of the VU-minors at a different faculty.

The panel spoke to a few students who are following an honours programme: students with an average grade of 7.5 after the first semester are invited to attend in years two and three an additional track of 30 EC. The panel appreciates that honours students have the opportunity to extend their bachelor's thesis research with 12 EC and follow 18 EC electives from a wide range of disciplines at VU, University of Amsterdam or Amsterdam University College.

According to the profile and objectives of the programme, public administration and organisation science should be studied from multiple perspectives, hence the attention to qualitative and quantitative research methods in different courses. Moreover, students are exposed to several disciplines which are supportive of the curriculum, such as macro and micro sociology, law (including the elective 'law for government and companies'), political science, and economics and public finance (including the electives 'economy between markets and government', and 'strategy and decision making'). The panel observed with satisfaction that all core disciplines are covered in the curriculum. However, it was not clear from the written materials and on-site discussions to what extent students were also assessed on their knowledge and understanding of each discipline. The panel suggests that this is checked and properly referenced in the respective course manuals.

Furthermore, the panel was informed that as of spring 2018, three interdisciplinary faculty-wide elective courses are offered in the fourth semester. In these electives, students learn how social sciences contribute to society. Students choose one topic among globalisation, networks, and diversity, and they follow on this subject two courses at faculty level and one PAOS-tutorial related to their own discipline. In the view of the panel, this is a relevant adjustment to the curriculum.

The panel confirms, based on the information materials and the discussion on site, that the bachelor's programme is a three-year full-time programme of 180 EC.

2.5 Relationship to practice and internships

The programme provides adequate training of practical skills in correspondence with the mission and the programme objectives. Therefore it has adequate links to the public administration profession.

Throughout the curriculum students are developing skills that will serve them in their professional career, such as presentation, reflection or (academic) writing skills. They learn about these skills in tutorials and apply these in practica and assignments. In the 'PAOS: practical problems' course, students develop a research question based on a real-life issue in cooperation with the local Academy of the City. Although internships are not a compulsory part of the programme, students may decide to do a research-based internship as part of the minor subject space in the fifth semester.

Following the on-site discussions, the panel thinks highly of the practical problems course. There is, however, room for more exposure to the professional field, both in the framework of the curriculum and as part of the extracurricular activities which the programme and the faculty can organise with the students' organisation. In this regard, the panel welcomes the intentions of the programme to have group sessions on professional orientation as of 2017-2018.

2.6 Structure and didactics of the programme

The programme is coherent in its contents. The didactic concepts are in line with the aims and objectives of the programme. The teaching methods correspond to the didactic philosophy of the programme. The programme is 'doable' in the formal time foreseen for the programme in the respective years.

The programme has three types of learning activities: lectures, tutorials and practica. Students mentioned that they like the mixture of learning types and appreciate the open atmosphere of the university and the programme. They value on the one hand the freedom of choice that is connected with the relatively large scale of the programme and its lectures; on the other hand students also appreciate the small scale tutorials as a means to develop a closer relationship with the subjects studied. These tutorials such as the bachelor's working groups or the tutorial on statistics not only offer a different approach to teaching and learning but are also the basis for social contacts. Practica are small-scale workshops where students address a concrete problem. The panel gathered from its discussions that teaching in the first year is more intensive and that the programme is now arranging for more intensive forms of learning also in year two.

Students are very positive about the mentoring programme, whereby teachers of intensive first year courses take the time to get to know their students and help them integrate in the academic community. Moreover, students have two individual consultations with their mentor to discuss their performance, interests and professional ambitions. At the start of the academic year, senior students also act as a mentor for first-year students. The panel thinks highly of the mentorship programme and welcomes the idea to extend the scheme to the second and third year of the PAOS programme, as well as to other programmes in the FSS. During the visit, students emphasised the commitment of staff to the programme and to the students. The panel gathers that students are being looked after carefully, also by fellow senior students.

During the visit the panel consulted a sample of course materials and concluded that both the contents and the didactic approach were relevant and interesting to students. It observed that teachers use a variety of methods to give substance to the educational philosophy of the programme. The panel gathered, based on the written materials and its discussions, that the courses are feasible. There are no major individual stumbling blocks in the curriculum. The bachelor's thesis project is organised meticulously and monitored carefully in order to ensure that most students finish the thesis in time. On average about 20% of students drop out of the programme, mainly in the first year after getting a negative Binding Study Advice. This drop-out rate is comparable to that of similar programmes.

2.7 Admission of students

Admission goals, admission policy and admission standards, including academic prerequisites, are in line with the mission and programme objectives. They are clearly and publicly stated, specifying any differences for categories of students.

The panel observed that admission of students to the bachelor's programme is regulated by Dutch law. Admission is possible for everyone with a pre-university qualification and there is no cap on student intake. Students are strongly encouraged to attend the 'matching' programme in which they follow a representative introductory lecture and do a short test that is discussed afterwards. This matching enables students to make a better informed choice about their studies. Although the programme may advise students negatively, such advice is not binding and students are still at liberty to enrol.

2.8 Intake

The structure, contents and the didactics of the programme are in line with the qualifications of the students that enter into the programme.

The panel gathered from the written materials and its discussions that the programme is set up in such a way that difficulties in the transfer from secondary school to university is mitigated as much as possible. In the first year, students combine knowledge-based lectures with skills-based tutorials and challenging yet feasible assignments. Students indicated that the availability of mentors is a particular strength of the programme. It therefore comes as no surprise to the panel that mentorship by teachers will be introduced in all programmes of the faculty.

2.9 Faculty qualifications

A substantial percentage of the professional faculty nucleus actively involved in the programme holds an earned doctorate or other equivalent terminal academic degree in their field. Any faculty lacking the terminal degree must have a record of sufficient professional or academic experience directly relevant to their assigned responsibilities. The field of expertise and experience of the faculty reflects the needed expertise to deliver the programme as intended. All faculty with teaching assignments have at least proven basic educational skills. The educational skills are adapted to the didactics of the programme and its components. Where practitioners teach courses, there is satisfactory evidence of the quality of their academic qualifications, professional experience and teaching ability.

The panel gathered from the written materials and its discussions that most staff members are involved in both research and teaching. Moreover, the expertise of the PAOS staff covers all core areas identified in the domain-specific reference framework. A large part of the curriculum is taught by senior teachers and researchers from the department of Organisation Sciences and the Public Administration section of the department of Political Science and Public Administration. These lecturers are often experienced researchers and are affiliated to research programmes that were assessed positively in the last international research review.

Furthermore, the panel observed in the staff overview of the self-evaluation report that 38 teaching staff are involved in the PAOS programme of which 32 hold a PhD, including four full professors. Furthermore 28 have a teaching qualification, including four staff members with a senior qualification. The panel appreciates the efforts of the faculty to invest in the professionalization of its teaching staff.

Students indicated that they are satisfied with the quality of the staff, both content-wise and in terms of didactics; this appreciation also applies to thesis supervision. Moreover, staff is available and perceived as motivated. Students are very enthusiastic about the intensive education in tutorials in which students and staff know each other well, which in turn promotes the learning process and ensures a pleasant atmosphere.

Based on the written materials and its discussions, the panel thinks that the staff allocated to the programme is sufficiently numerous – the student-staff ratio is reportedly 1:23 - and has adequate didactic skills and good domain-specific knowledge to deliver the bachelor's programme.

Considerations
The panel considers that the teaching and learning environment of the PAOS programme is adequate. While it was initially doubtful about the feasibility of integration of public administration and organisation science, it concludes after the site visit that the programme manages convincingly to combine the two components and turn the integration of PAOS into a distinctive feature of this particular programme. There is a clear link between programme objectives and course content, which results in a strong and coherent programme structure. In line with its profile, the programme pays appropriate attention to the multidisciplinary components of the PAOS domain and its supportive disciplines.

Moreover, the panel considers that both the admission of students and the intake of enrolled students are organised adequately. Furthermore, the number of staff is adequate and their qualifications relevant. The panel shares the enthusiasm of the students for the commitment and motivation of the staff, which is demonstrated in particular through the small-scale and intensive tutorials and the availability of mentoring in the first year.

The panel acknowledges the recent changes to the programme as well as the rationale behind the adjustments and considers that all revisions are for the better. This is certainly the case for the new bachelor's thesis project: the combination of a group research practicum and an individual literature study constitutes in the view of the panel a relevant thesis trajectory. If anything, the panel sees room for enhancing the professional skills that students will need on the labour market. Although the skills are taught, there are only limited opportunities for students to practice these skills in real-life situations.

Conclusion
The panel assesses Standard 2, Teaching-learning environment, of the bachelor's programme Public Administration and Organization Science as 'satisfactory'.

Standard 3: Assessment
The programme has an adequate assessment system in place. The tests and assessments are valid, reliable and transparent to the students. The programme's examining board safeguards the quality of the interim and final tests administered.

Findings
To assess the quality, validity and transparency of assessment in the bachelor's programme, the panel considered the assessment policy, the assessment of the bachelor's theses and the functioning of the Examination Board.

The panel observed that the bachelor's programme has an assessment policy that is in line with the established faculty assessment policy. Assessment has received considerable attention over the past few years from university, faculty and bachelor's programme, and this has led among others to an assessment plan. During the visit, the panel consulted the assessment plan, as well as the assessment matrix, which contains a description of the programme and the main learning trajectories. In the view of the panel, both plan and matrix demonstrate that assessment has been aligned to the learning goals of the courses and the exit qualifications of the programme. Moreover, the panel welcomes the importance given to this assessment plan as it has been assessed by the Examination Board and is now used as a management instrument at programme level.

Based on the description in the self-evaluation report and the sample of tests consulted on site, the panel believes that the assessment system is appropriate. The assessments are valid and reliable;

moreover, students indicated that they are properly informed about the assessment requirements. After each course students are asked to complete a course evaluation which also enquires about the perceived quality of the assessment. Moreover, the panel was informed that further to student comments, the programme will enhance the variety of testing forms and pay more attention to writing skills, mainly in assessments of second year courses. The panel welcomes this development as students indicated during the discussion that too often they are assessed through multiple choice tests and that they would have liked more training in academic writing skills to help them in writing their bachelor's thesis.

The Faculty of Social Sciences has one Examination Board for all regular programmes. It consists of five bodies: the secretariat, the central examination board, the core committee, twelve subcommittees for the degree programmes and the chair. The central board is responsible for policy issues at faculty level, while the core committee advises and instructs programme directors. The Examination Board oversees the assessments of all faculty programmes. The panel gathered from the discussion with a delegation of the Examination Board that all members have been trained by the university and that they possess the proper capacity and expertise to perform all tasks in relation to quality assurance and testing according to the requirements set by Dutch law. The existence of subcommittees ensures that enough attention is paid to the particularities of each individual programme. The panel also learned that the subcommittee on PAOS randomly samples bachelor's theses and PAOS tests, judges their quality and informs the programme director accordingly. Assessment is also on the agenda of programme staff meetings which are held four times per year.

The bachelor's thesis is evaluated and marked by two assessors, the supervisor and the co-reader. Both are using an identical evaluation form to evaluate independently the thesis, which consists of a partly collective and partly individual project. Given that the final grade covers both the group and individual part of the thesis, the panel was in doubt whether the thesis allowed students to demonstrate that they had reached each learning outcome individually. The panel has reviewed a sample of 15 bachelor's theses, which were submitted and accepted in the academic years 2014-2015, 2015-2016 and 2016-2017. In the view of the panel, the evaluation of these theses was organised adequately with two assessors using a good quality evaluation form and scoring systematically both the group achievement and the individual accomplishment of the student. The panel did notice, however, that it was not always possible to establish how the graders arrived at the final mark when they did not substantiate their scores. In fact, in only seven out of fifteen cases did the panel think that the evaluation forms had been completed in an insightful way. Moreover, it was not possible for the panel to find out from the evaluation form to what extent the assessors had performed the evaluation independently.

The panel learned that the format of the bachelor's thesis has changed and that the new approach with two separate components – a joint research practicum and an individual literature survey – will be implemented for the first time in Spring 2018. The panel has studied the course guide for both practicum and survey and concludes that their assessment is organised adequately. Moreover, the assessment guidelines seem appropriate for graders to assess whether students have achieved the intended learning outcomes. Nonetheless, the panel observed that arriving at a reliable and valid individual assessment of group work remains a challenge, hence its suggestion to monitor the relative contributions to the writing process, for instance by having students use collaborative writing software. Moreover, the panel advises the programme to further improve the transparency and reliability of the testing procedure for the literature study by using a suitable rubric in the assessment form. Finally, the panel suggests that the programme should discuss in advance with the research practicum supervisors how the individual assignments (and their proposed research questions) relate to the group assignment.

Considerations
The panel considers that the university, the faculty and the bachelor's programme pay good attention to assessment, which is reflected in an adequate assessment system. The assessment plans and

assessment matrix are set up in such a way that each learning outcome is tested in various courses and through different forms of assessment. Individual tests are valid, reliable and transparent.

The panel appreciates that the bachelor's programme looks at assessment as a process of continuous improvement, which also takes into account concerns and suggestions from students. In this respect, the panel is confident that the above-mentioned issues on multiple-choice tests and academic writing will be taken on board. Moreover, the panel is satisfied with the attention and follow-up that is given by programme director, coordinators and staff to assessment results and advice.

The panel has reviewed theses that were organised as one final product with both a group and an individual component. In the view of the panel, the evaluation of these theses was organised adequately with two assessors using a good quality evaluation form and reporting systematically on both the group part and the individual accomplishment of the student. While many individual assessors have made optimal use of the form, several other assessors did not provide feedback or include an insightful justification for the score. The format for the thesis has changed in 2017-2018. The panel considers that the evaluation of the new thesis trajectory is organised in such a way that it will allow a better assessment of whether individual students have achieved the respective learning outcomes of the programme.

The panel thinks highly of the expertise and operational capacity of the Board of Examiners. It encourages the Board to keep on monitoring the quality of the courses and the inclusion of insightful feedback in all (not some) theses. Moreover, the panel would welcome an adjustment to the evaluation form in order to demonstrate the independent assessment of the co-reader.

Conclusion
The panel assesses Standard 3, assessment, of the bachelor's programme Public Administration and Organization Science as 'satisfactory'.

Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes
The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved. The level achieved is demonstrated by interim and final tests, final projects and the performance of graduates in actual practice or in post-graduate programmes.

Findings
To assess the achieved learning outcomes of the bachelor's programme, the panel studied a sample of theses (Appendix 6), and interviewed several alumni, as well as representatives of the work field who employ graduates of the programmes.

The bachelor's thesis accounts for 18 EC and is a partly collective and partly individual project, which is supervised in groups of approximately five students. The groups are formed on the basis of themes that closely match the supervisors' own research but leave students some liberty in choosing a specific topic. In order to establish whether students have effectively achieved the learning outcomes, the panel reviewed a sample of 15 theses from the last three academic years covering the whole range of scores given. While there was no thesis that clearly failed the quality threshold, the panel thought that several theses were of limited quality and on the border of the pass/fail divide. In these cases, the panel observed that the assessors had also noticed the limited quality of the thesis and given it a relatively low score. Sometimes the common part was of higher quality than the individual contribution. In other cases, the panel found that the individual part was adequate, but the group part did not live up to the expectations of a thesis at bachelor's level.

According to the self-evaluation report, the thesis is used to test the ability of a student to meet the exit qualifications. Upon reviewing the thesis sample, however, the panel wondered to what extent this thesis project effectively allows each student to achieve the learning outcomes 11 (conducting a literature survey and reporting on it orally and in writing) and 12 (conducting a simple research

project under supervision). The panel learned that in the meantime and based in part on feedback from students, the programme has revised the bachelor's thesis, which consists as of 2017-2018 of a group research project (12 EC) and an individual thesis based on a literature study (12 EC). Further to what was mentioned in previous sections, the panel has reviewed the course guides and considers that the combination of a group research practicum and the individual literature study should allow each student to reach all intended learning outcomes.

The programme aims to prepare students for a professional life in a PAOS-related work field in which they can display their broad knowledge, state-of-the-art skills, and inquisitive and critical mind-set. Graduates of the bachelor's programme have the opportunity to enter the labour market directly, but the vast majority enter a master's programme either at VU or at another university. The panel gathered from the discussion with alumni that they are satisfied with the education they received during the bachelor's programme as it prepared them adequately for their follow-up study and afterwards for a relevant position on the labour market. Several alumni mentioned that the most important thing they learned was 'structured thinking'. Moreover, they feel they were indeed broadly trained, capable to pursue a career at an appropriate level in different directions, and with enough skills to build a successful career. Several alumni indicated, moreover, that it was important for their professional career that they had studied in Dutch because their employers expected a proper understanding of the Dutch governance system and its vocabulary. Finally, alumni indicated that the values of the university – open, personal and responsible – were embedded in the curriculum and continue to impact on their (professional) behaviour.

Considerations
The panel concludes that the final products of the programme show that the graduates have achieved the programme's intended learning outcomes. However, some of the theses which the panel reviewed were quite weak in either the group or the individual part. The panel considers that this a point of attention for the programme. In some cases where the individual or group component of the thesis was near the pass/fail divide, the assessors had also indicated that the quality was rather low. In these individual cases the panel tended to agree with the scores and comments of the graders.

Given the fact that the final grade covers both the group and individual part of the thesis, the panel was in doubt whether the thesis allowed students to demonstrate that they had reached each learning outcome individually. Given the above consideration, the panel strongly welcomes the revision of the thesis process, which will take effect in spring 2018. The discussions on site and the consultation of the new written materials have convinced the panel that the combination of a group research project and an individual literature study will generate better quality products and enhance the students' capacity to achieve all intended learning outcomes.

In the view of the panel, the programme prepares students adequately for their follow-up study and/or a professional career. The panel appreciates the enthusiasm of the alumni who emphasised that the programme had trained them broadly content-wise, turning them into 'academic citizens' who are operating at an appropriate level in different domains relevant to PAOS.

Conclusion
The panel assesses Standard 4, achieved learning outcomes, of the bachelor's programme Public Administration and Organization Science as 'satisfactory'.

> **Standard 5: External input**
> The content of a curriculum and the means of communication and teaching change over time. Flexibility, and the ability to innovate on the basis of adequate information on governance and teaching skills are important features of any educational programme, in order to meet the need of the students and the teaching staff. The programme provides evidence of an adequate process of curriculum development in which all relevant stakeholders are involved.

Findings

> *5.1 Curriculum development*
> *The programme innovates itself, and uses measures of quality in this process, such as summaries of course evaluations, exit interviews, graduate surveys and related information.*

The development of the PAOS programme is a continuous process and is based on the feedback by internal and external parties. The programme management initiates changes in the programme always in consultation with the relevant stakeholders: depending on the proposed change, the faculty portfolio holder for teaching, the Programme Committee, teaching staff, the group of programme directors, the heads of department, and the Examination Board are involved. The panel learned from its meeting with the PAOS Programme Committee that teachers and student members are equally represented and that in addition to monitoring the quality of education and advising on the Teaching and Examination Regulations, it also gives solicited and unsolicited advice to the programme director and faculty board. The Committee usually meets after each teaching period in order to discuss the results of the digital course evaluations. Teaching staff who are not on the Programme Committee discuss the quality of the programme during regular staff meetings.

Furthermore, the panel observed that in terms of curriculum development, there is close contact and fine-tuning between faculty and programme: for instance, the multidisciplinary course Social Sciences for Society will become part of all FSS bachelor's curricula including PAOS. The mentoring programme which was 'invented' at PAOS will be extended as a pilot project to other FSS programmes. The departments linked to PAOS will offer a VU-minor on Public Administration and Organisation Science to non-PAOS students in the framework of their profiling space.

The panel gathered from the written materials and its discussions that alumni are slowly but steadily getting involved in the quality of education through the Field Advisory Board. Last year a new field advisory board was established featuring both alumni and non-alumni. The panel welcomes this initiative and noticed from the discussion with the chair of the Board and the alumni that there is a genuine interest among these stakeholders to operate as a sparring partner for the programme to discuss quality of education and the competencies (to be) acquired by the students/graduates.

> *5.2 External reviews*
> *The programme provides evidence that the recommendations received during previous reviews (by NVAO, EAPAA or any other (inter)national review body) have led to changes in the content or the organisation of the programme.*

The panel observed that the report of the previous accreditation committee (2011) and the findings from the voluntary midterm review by an external VU-committee (2015) were very important sources of feedback for the PAOS programme as they triggered the management to start innovations. Major changes that have been implemented as a follow-up to these reviews include the introduction of two distinct specialisations of five elective courses each, the minor subject space in semester five, the elaboration and use of an assessment plan, and the introduction of digital course dossiers.

Considerations
The panel considers that continuous improvement is a key feature of the PAOS programme. In the view of the panel, the programme not only has the proper bodies and systems in place to monitor, evaluate and improve the quality of its education, but its different stakeholders are also making effective use of the opportunities to enhance the programme in general and the individual courses

and trajectories in particular. In this regard, the panel thinks highly of both Programme Committee and Examination Board, who – each in their own domain – safeguard the quality of education and support quality improvement.

The panel is impressed by the way the recommendations from the previous accreditation committee have been addressed and very much welcomes the mid-term review that was held in between assessment visits. The panel encourages the programme to continue on the same development path: in addition to maintaining the current strengths of its quality assurance system, the programme could usefully enhance the role of the Field Advisory Board in matters of curriculum development, involving alumni and employers in a more systematic way.

Conclusion
The panel assesses Standard 5, external input, of the bachelor's programme Public Administration and Organization Science as 'satisfactory'.

Standard 6: Diversity
Diversity among staff and students is one of the aims of the programme. This reflects the broader appreciation of diversity as a relevant variable in the study and practice of public administration and governance. The programme at least takes steps to increase gender balance among the professional staff of the programme, if necessary.

Findings
According to the self-evaluation report, roughly 30% of the first-year PAOS students have an immigrant background, meaning that at least one of their parents was born in a non-Western country. To accommodate ethnic diversity and facilitate study success for these groups, mentors follow a training programme at university level on diversity sensitive teaching. Similarly, a train-the-trainer programme ensures that the faculty have sufficient expertise to deal with diversity-related issues. Gender diversity among students is reportedly not an issue, with at least 40% of the students being female. Students indicated that diversity is part of the DNA of the university, and this is all the more visible in a faculty such as social sciences.

The panel learned that, content-wise, diversity features in several places in the PAOS curriculum, for instance in the course 'behaviour and communication in organisations' and in the newly created faculty-wide module 'diversity' as part of the Social Sciences for Society programme. Students are satisfied with the attention to diversity in the curriculum. They also mentioned that with such a diversity in background among the Dutch students that enrol on the programme, it is important to stick to a curriculum that is offered (mainly) in Dutch language. Moreover, as familiarity with Dutch public governance is crucial for job recruitment, the programme may want to promote more extensively the relevance of the extra-curricular language courses that are currently offered (only) to students who failed the Dutch language test at the start of the programme. The panel supports this suggestion fully.

The panel spoke to the FSS dean in her capacity as chief diversity officer at VU. She advises the university board on diversity issues, for instance on the results of a diversity scan performed recently at one of the FSS programmes. The diversity among staff is promoted in policies and activities at university, faculty and programme level. For instance, the faculty is empowering relatively junior female staff in their work and career advancement. Moreover, each department has drafted a strategic personnel plan in which diversity is an important topic. Staff, however, are not very ethnically diverse. One of the reasons for this is that, while recruitment policy takes into account diversity, there have not been many opportunities for recruitment lately. According to the self-evaluation report, gender diversity in the Organisation Science department is fine, with 42% of the staff being female, including staff at senior level. At the Political Science and Public Administration department, however, only 13% of the teaching staff are female.

Considerations

The panel considers that the diversity in the student body is impressive and so is the attention to diversity issues in the curriculum. The panel, moreover, thinks highly of the policies at university and faculty level to enhance and accommodate diversity. The panel agrees with those it met during that site visit that the programme needs role models. While there are already several students who (can) fulfil this role in respect of ethnic diversity, this is not yet the case for staff. The panel recommends the programme to continue its efforts to attract both more ethnically diverse and more female teaching staff.

Conclusion

The panel assesses Standard 6, diversity, of the bachelor's programme Public Administration and Organization Science as 'good'.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The panel assesses standards 1-5 as 'satisfactory' and standard 6 as 'good'. According to the decision rules of NVAO's Framework for limited programme assessments applied to standards 1 to 4, the panel assesses the bachelor's programme *Public Administration and Organization Science* as 'satisfactory'.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: CURRICULA VITAE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

Prof. dr. T. (Tony) Bovaird (chair) is emeritus professor of the University of Birmingham (United Kingdom). He has previously worked at Aston Business School and Bristol Business School. From 2012 he has held a visiting chair in Meiji University (Japan) and has been visiting professor at various universities and business schools in the UK and abroad, such as the University of Bern, University of Barcelona, the University of Minho (Portugal) and the University of Brasilia. His research covers strategic management of public services, performance measurement in public agencies, evaluation of public management and governance reforms, and user and community co-production of public services. He has carried out research and has been involved in projects for, amongst others, the European Commission, several UK government departments and the Welsh Government. He is on the Governing Council of Local Areas Research and Intelligence Association (LARIA) and has been a member of the Strategy Board of the UK Research Councils' Local Government Initiative (LARCI) and the Local Government Reference Panel of the National Audit Office. He has given keynote speeches for several (inter)national annual conferences. Professor Bovaird is a member of the Editorial Board of the *International Public Management Journal* and co-author of *Public Management and Governance*. Professor Bovaird is a member of the Scientific Advisory Board of the German Institute for Public Administration Research and a non-executive director of Governance International.

Prof. dr. M. (Marleen) Brans (vice-chair) is professor at the KU Leuven Public Governance Institute. At KU Leuven she directs the Master's in European Politics and Policies programme, and the Master's in Public Management and Policy. She currently teaches courses at bachelor's, master's, and advanced master's level, such as Design and Strategy of Policy, Evaluation of Policy, Comparative Public Policies in Europe, and Policy Analysis. In the past she has taught other subjects such as Public Administration, Relations Government-Citizens, Governance and Steering, Research Seminar. Her research interests focus on the production and use of policy advice by academics, civil servants, personal advisors, and strategic advisory bodies. Her publications include the Routledge Handbook of Comparative Policy Analysis (edited with Iris Geva-May and Michael Howlett) and Policy Analysis Belgium (edited with David Aubin, Policy Press). She serves as Vice-President of the International Public Policy Association and as Chair of the Accreditation Committee of the European Association for Public Administration Accreditation. She serves on the board of the Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis, Policy and Society and Halduskultuur.

Prof. dr. P.B. Peter Sloep is professor emeritus in technology enhanced learning with the Open University of the Netherlands. There, he has been involved in the 'Lerarenuniversiteit', an expertise centre in the area of (continuous) teacher professional development in primary, secondary and vocational education. He also headed a unit that researched the use of online social networks for teaching and learning. His main area of expertise is professional development in and with social networks, existing or custom built; but his interests also cover learning design, open learning, massive open online courses (MOOCs), learning technologies in general and learning technology standards more in particular, knowledge sharing and knowledge creation in communities and online networks. Being trained as a theoretical biologist (including a PhD) and having worked as course developer for the OU in this and neighboring areas, Sloep turned his attention ever more towards the learning sciences, in particular towards educational technology.

Prof. E. (Esther) Versluis is professor of European Regulatory Governance at Maastricht University. She obtained her PhD in 2003 from Utrecht University and was awarded the Van Poelje prize for best PhD dissertation in the field of public administration for her dissertation on 'Enforcement Matters. Enforcement and Compliance of European Directives in Four Member States'. Since 2001 she is involved with education at Maastricht University, first as lecturer, as assistant professor and since 2015 as professor. She was member and chair of the Faculty Council and chair of the Graduate Program Committee Arts & Culture. Until 2014 she was director of Studies master's programme European Public Affairs and is currently director of Studies of the bachelor's's programme European

Studies. In 2015 she was awarded the Best PhD supervisor of the year-award by the Netherlands Institute of Government. Professor Versluis' research concentrates on problems and complexities related to European regulatory governance. She is an active member of the Netherlands Institute of Government (NIG), the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR), the European Union Studies Association (EUSA) and the University Association for Contemporary European Studies (UACES).

Drs. H. (Henk) de Jong is Strategy Director and Deputy Commissioner at Police Netherlands. From 2007 to 2012 Henk de Jong served as general director at the city of Amsterdam. He has extensive experience as a senior public sector official, public sector consultant and entrepreneur with leading expertise in Dutch, EU and US government practices, with city, regional and national agencies, educational institutions, international businesses and philanthropies on policy-making, organizational change management, business development and crisis accountability. As a practitioner of public sector management, he serves on the Advisory Boards, works with academic institutions and is engaged in cultural initiatives. He frequently speaks at conferences, seminars, graduate-level and executive training programs that focus on the unique aspects and challenges of the public sector.

J.C. (Jasper) Meijering (student member) is master's student in Engineering and Policy Analysis at the Delft University of Technology. He obtained his bachelor's degree in Systems Engineering, Policy Analysis and Management also from the Delft University of Technology. His research focuses on using quantitative modelling and simulation techniques to address grand global challenges and acting as strategic policy advisor. He is selected for a scholarship program from, and works as Student Ambassador for, the Dutch Energy sector. From January 2016 to January 2017 he was selected to join outreach program Young Future Energy Leaders Program of the Masdar Institute in Abu Dhabi. In this capacity, he was a member of United Arab Emirates' delegation to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP22) in Marrakech, Morocco and attended the World Future Energy Summit 2016.

APPENDIX 2: DOMAIN-SPECIFIC FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE

Domain-specific requirements Public Administration, Public Governance, and Governance and Organization (PAGO) Programmes, 2010

Introduction

The study of public administration has developed and expanded into a broad interdisciplinary body of knowledge, which tackles a variety of themes and practices on public administration, governance and organization (PAGO). The academic community in the Netherlands acknowledges that throughout the years this field has widened and now includes not only public administration but also governance and organization. This entails a diversity of approaches on the one hand, but on the other, the conviction that these approaches are connected and interrelated and worthwhile to keep together. Programmes may share basic components, but also may differ to express their specialisation in this broadened field. This parallels developments in the profession. Alumni are increasingly challenged in a wide variety of fields that put varying demands regarding professional knowledge, skills and attitudes. In this frame of reference we will address this field as the PAGO-field: including public administration, public governance, and governance and organization.

In this domain-specific frame of reference we start with a brief summary regarding the development of the PAGO-field and argue that the broadening of the field is due to various exogenous and endogenous changes. Accordingly we will outline the programme principles of PAGO-studies as well as related learning outcomes.

Developments

The societal impact of processes like globalization, individualization and ICT has altered the nature of public problems. Issues like risk and security, environment and ecology, economics and welfare, and nationality and culture are high on the societal and political agenda. The impact of such problems has consequences for the abilities of (national) governments. It challenges them to reach beyond traditional approaches. This has led to manifold changes in political and administrative landscapes. New expectations and demands are expressed towards politics and administration, including moral standards. New criteria for performance have emerged that aim at 'value for money', new business-like concepts of management, and reformed public service delivery. There have been new interpretations of democracy and accountability, and of relations between state, civil society and the market.

Government and public administration not only changed its own practices, it also changed its relationship with society. Public administration thus moved towards governance, i.e. dealing with public problems through dispersed networks of organizations and actors, including social institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGO's), and private companies. Government and public policy are still relevant, but new outlooks and mechanisms are designed and used to make things work.

These developments have also changed the field of study of PA. Scholars started to use new concepts to understand developments, broadening categories such as 'government-governance', and crossing boundaries between the public and private world. These concepts include focused attention to issues like interdependence, ambiguity, networks, contextuality, governance, and the role of institutions, trust and integrity. These developments invited researchers to cross disciplinary borders and take aboard theories, concepts, methods and ideas, from organization studies (structure, culture, management, strategy, networks, et cetera) as well as other bodies of knowledge (new fields within economics, political science and sociology, communication theory, ethics and philosophy, geography, international relations and law, et cetera).

Another issue that needs to be highlighted is that the study of Public Administration in the Netherlands includes several fields that elsewhere are situated in political science. The PAGO-studies not only focus on classical PA issues, but also on public organization and management issues, as well as on subfields like 'public policy', 'policy making', 'public governance', 'public culture and ethics'.

Scholars of these issues are part of the broad 'PA' community, in research as well as in educational programmes.

Resulting Fields of Study

This PAGO-community consists of three fields of study. The first embodies the classical features of the discipline, concentrating on politics, administration and the public sector. Public administration often started within the context of (departments of) politics and/or law, with an emphasis on the study of government and bureaucracy as well as public policy-making and implementation.

The second emerged through the fact that public interests and public problems are increasingly tackled by a multitude of public and private actors. It broadened the scope of study to include nongovernmental actors, as part of the often complex public-private, multi-actor networks that deal with collective and public interests.

The third field focuses on questions of governance and organization that surpass the traditional public-private boundaries. It includes the study of private actors in social contexts. This orientation links the worlds of business administration and public administration and pays attention to what we know about management, strategy and behaviour in corporations. This approach can be labelled as 'governance and organization'.

PAGO today is a broad multi- and interdisciplinary field of science. The classical core disciplines of political science, law, sociology and economics are important, and there is an increasing involvement of disciplines that focus on organization, culture, and communication. Also, challenging new interchanges with bodies of knowledge in (for example) social and organizational psychology, planning studies and geography, philosophy and ethics and history have demonstrated added value.

The PAGO-community acknowledges that there are different views regarding object and focus of the field of study. For instance: is PAGO about knowledge by description, explanation and prediction, or is evaluation and improvement the prime goal? Or, how do we relate to and communicate with practitioners in public (and private) administration, governance and organization? Rather than excluding certain views, the PAGO-community welcomes a variety in approaches, ideas and outlook. This variety is also visible in the PAGO-programmes.

Defining programme principles

PAGO-programmes are academic programmes aiming at the development of academic knowledge, skills and attitude in students that are relevant for understanding public administration, governance and organization. They pay particular attention to social and political contexts and developments, relevant (interdisciplinary) bodies of knowledge, aim at developing research capacities, and contribute to working professionally in public and private domains. In this frame of reference we have listed elements that are to be seen as building blocks for academic programmes. As far as knowledge is concerned, contemporary programmes encompass various disciplinary views supporting the PAGO-domain, and various sorts of domain-specific knowledge. As far as skills are concerned, they encompass skills for applying and reflecting on scientific methods and approaches, integrating knowledge and skills for working in public domains/organizations. As far as attitude is concerned, it encompasses critical stances and moral stature. Each of these subfields is briefly elaborated in order to circumscribe specific learning outcomes at Bachelor's and Master's levels (see next paragraph).

Knowledge

Knowledge of society and changing contexts

Activities in public domains influence, are influenced by, and interact with social systems and developments. On the one hand, they constrain public sectors, as they reproduce values, traditions and culture(s). On the other hand, they call for public action; (new) facts, events and problems, fuelled by new technologies, pose new challenges. PAGO-programmes enhance understandings of

social structures and behaviours, societal trends and changes. This calls for an awareness of political, sociological, cultural, historical, philosophical, ethical, economic and judicial contexts.

Knowledge of political and administrative systems
The organization, processes and activities in public domains are shaped by and within political systems. PAGO-programmes should devote attention to the institutions, structure, organization and activities of such political systems, at different levels (local, regional, national, transnational). PAGO-programmes encompass political and social theories, including those regarding legitimacy and the democratic design and functioning of organizations in public domains. They also pay attention to the application of these theories in everyday practice.

Knowledge of (public) policy, decision making and implementation
Governance for societal problems includes many insights derived from various bodies of knowledge, ranging from high-level decision-making to everyday service delivery. PAGO-programmes address both classic and contemporary theories, methods and techniques of policy-making, management, decision-making, and their implementation in everyday practice.

Knowledge of organizations and organizing principles
Public domains entail a variety of organizations, some organized as classical government bodies, some as between the public and private sectors, while others have been influenced by and/or have taken on the characteristics of private organizations. There is a growing awareness that policies and service delivery must be organized and require well-trained and motivated professionals. This leads to a more explicit emphasis on organizational studies. PAGO programmes entail knowledge of organizational concepts/perspectives on organizing, domains of managerial activities, insights in organizational change and management tools.

Knowledge of governance and networks
The powers and authorities to intervene have become less governmental and more distributed. Due to organizational fragmentation, the rise of network relations, and the spread of (normative) governance models – e.g., 'joined up government', 'public-private partnerships', and 'corporate social responsibility' (CSR) – multiple parties have become active in dealing with public problems and representing public interests. PAGO-programmes pay attention to new relations and new governance regimes, having both theoretical and empirical consequences.

Skills
Research skills
The role of knowledge in (public) policies and organizations is crucial for its effectiveness, especially for understanding the complexity of contexts, structures, outcomes and behaviours. PAGO-programmes include methods of quantitative and qualitative social-scientific research to analyse and also emphasise a clear understanding of contextual aspects.

Integrative skills
Public domains can be analysed from different angles; theories are grounded in various disciplines. The quality of research and capacities of civil servants and other functionaries in public domains depend on integrative skills, i.e. abilities to combine, integrate and apply different bodies of knowledge. PAGO-programmes devote attention to and provide opportunities to practice integrative skills.

Cooperation and communication skills
The functioning of the public domain largely depends on the skills of actors to exchange ideas, to negotiate when necessary, and to cooperate in constructive ways. Civil servants and other functionaries use a repertoire of skills and attitudes to communicate ideas to audiences of experts as well as laymen. Cooperation is at the heart of PAGO and includes a sense of responsibility and leadership. PAGO-programmes devote attention to and provide opportunities to practice cooperative and communicative skills.

Attitude

Critical stances

PAGO programmes are academic programmes that not only facilitate cognitive learning and skill development, they also develop critical powers. Students are taught how to critically analyze arguments used by others, how to relate 'fashionable' statements, e.g. by politicians, to more traditional as well as to scientific insights, and how to reflect upon political and normative implications of policy choices and organizational design. PAGO-programmes devote attention to the development of a constructive, critical attitude.

Moral stature and professionalism

The eloquence and credibility of PAGO has two features. First is its ability to approach societal problems in effective ways, but second is the degree to which government and governance principles serves as a moral compass. PAGO-programmes train students in this respect for occupying positions in governance regimes (public and private), they also train students in developing appropriate or 'professional' conduct. This is a matter of guarding values, such as accountability and integrity, and of practicing values, such as entrepreneurship and innovation.

Academic learning outcomes for PAGO studies

The broad fields identified and circumscribed in the above are to be seen as programme criteria and, thus, as the building blocks of a programme. Each programme will emphasize a specific selection of these building blocks to impose specific learning outcomes on students. In the table below we list such learning outcomes. This is a generic list, both applicable for bachelor's and master's programmes.

The difference between both studies is in the degree of complexity; in the level of analysis; and in the independence of the student. Here we follow the distinctions made in the so-called Dublin descriptors. In this system a distinction is made between first cycle learning for bachelors and second cycle learning for masters. First cycle learning involves an introduction to the field of study. It aims at the acquisition and understanding of knowledge, ideas, methods and theories, elementary research activities, and basic skills regarding communication and learning competences. At second cycle learning we find a deeper understanding of knowledge; problem solving skills are developed for new and unexpected environments and broader contexts. Here students can apply knowledge in various environments. At the master's level we also expect a well-developed level of autonomy regarding the direction and choices in a study.

In generic bachelor's PAGO-programmes most of the learning outcomes will apply that are listed below. Master's programmes, however, usually have a much stronger thematic focus and may especially focus on a particular set of these learning outcomes that are best suited for that specialisation, but not covering all the learning outcomes listed below. We propose that the learning outcomes for the bachelor's level, apply for the master's level in the sense that students demonstrate that they are capable of:

- dealing with increased situational, theoretical and methodological complexity;
- demonstrating increased levels of autonomy and self-management;
- applying ideas, methods, theories in research and problem solving;
- mastering the complexity that is inherent to the field of specialisation.

In the table below we have organized the learning outcomes according to the Dublin descriptors. We present the main components of the Dublin descriptors in italics, and accordingly the proposed learning outcomes.

Knowledge and understanding

1 (Bachelor's) [Is] supported by advanced text books [with] some aspects informed by knowledge at the forefront of their field of study

2 (Master's) provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing or applying ideas often in a research context

- (Basic) knowledge of (changing) societal contexts
- (Basic) knowledge and understanding of the distinctive nature of organization, policy making, management, service delivery and governance in PAGO domains
- (Basic) awareness of political traditions and politics
- (Basic) knowledge and understanding of the discipline, PAGO-paradigms, intellectual tradition, theories and approaches
- (Basic) knowledge and understanding of multi-actor and multi-level concepts
- A general (basic) understanding regarding the dynamics and processes of actors in public domains, how these processes influence society and vice versa

Applying knowledge and understanding

1 (Bachelor's) [through] devising and sustaining arguments

2 (Master's) [through] problem solving abilities [applied] in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts

- (Basic) capacity to work at different levels of abstraction
- (Basic) skills in problem definition and problem solving in the PAGO domain
- (Basic) ability to distinguish normative preferences and empirical evidence
- (Basic) skills in combining, integrating and applying knowledge
- (Basic) insight into the scientific practice
- (Basic) capacity to select a suitable theoretical framework for a given empirical problem
- (Basic) skills in combining normative and empirical aspects
- (Basic) capacity to build arguments and reflect upon the arguments of others
- (Basic) awareness of relevant social, ethical, academic and practical issues

Making judgments

1 (Bachelor's) [involves] gathering and interpreting relevant data

2 (Master's) [demonstrates] the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, and formulate judgements with incomplete data

- (Basic) ability to formulate research questions on problems in the PAGO-domain
- (Basic) knowledge regarding research on social-scientific positions and thinking
- (Basic) training in and application of quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods social science research
- (Basic) abilities to collect data and to derive judgments thereof

Communication

1 (Bachelor's) [of] information, ideas, problems and solutions

2 (Master's) [of] their conclusions and the underpinning knowledge and rationale (restricted scope) to specialist and non-specialist audiences (monologue)

- (Basic) capacity to use argumentative skills effectively
- (Basic) capacity to function in multi- and interdisciplinary teams in several roles
- (Basic) capacity to function effectively in governance, organization, management, policy and advocacy settings
- (Basic) capacity to use communicative skills effectively in oral and written presentation

Learning skills

1 (Bachelor's) have developed those skills needed to study further with a high level of autonomy

2 (Master's) study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous

- Learning attitude
- (Basic) capacity to reflect upon one's own conceptual and professional capacities and conduct

APPENDIX 3: INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

The graduate of the Bachelor's programme in Administration and Organization has knowledge and understanding of:

1. the basic concepts, theories and approaches to the academic disciplines of political science, sociology, economics, law and communication science;
2. the basic concepts and theories involved in policy and decision-making, organization and management, communication, the relationships and interactions between public and private organizations and the environments in which they operate;
3. the structure of administration in daily practice in the environment in which it operates;
4. the principles behind the social sciences and suitable approaches to studying them;
5. methods and techniques in social science research.

The graduate of the Bachelor's programme in Administration and Organization is capable of:

6. analysing administrative and organizational problems and phenomena by using scientific concepts and theories;
7. reframing practical problems as questions suitable for research;
8. applying scientific knowledge and insights to solve basic practical problems of administration and organization;
9. collecting and processing scientific sources and research literature;
10. effectively using computer technology for academic applications;
11. conducting a literature survey and reporting on it orally and in writing;
12. conducting a simple research project under supervision.

The graduate of the Bachelor's programme in Administration and Organization demonstrates:

13. inquisitiveness about backgrounds, causes, implications and solutions to administrative and organizational problems and phenomena;
14. an attitude characterized by critical reflection on administrative and organizational problems, and on the analysis and resolution of these problems;
15. integrity and awareness of ethical and normative aspects of management and organization.

Dublin descriptors	Knowledge and Understanding	Applying knowledge and Understanding	Making Judgements	Communication	Learning skills
Exit qualifications	1-5	6-12	13-15	7,11	7,9,10

APPENDIX 4: OVERVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM

Periode 1 31-8-2015 t/m 23-10-2015   Periode 4 1-2-2016 t/m 24-3-2016   Niveau 100
Periode 2 26-10-2015 t/m 18-12-2015 Periode 5 29-3-2016 t/m 27-5-2016   Niveau 200
Periode 3 4-1-2016 t/m 29-1-2016   Periode 6 30-5-2016 t/m 24-6-2016   Niveau 300

	Periode 1	Periode 2	Periode 3	Periode 4	Periode 5	Periode 6
Jaar 1 Cohort 2015	Kernthema's organisatiewetenschappen (S_KO)	Bestuur, politiek en samenleving (S_BPS)	Bachelorproject bestuurs- en organisatiewetenschap 1 (S_BPbo1)	Gedrag en communicatie in organisaties (S_GCO)	Bestuur en beleid (S_BBL)	
	Bachelorwerkgroep bestuurs- en organisatiewetenschap 1 (S_BWbo1)	Methodologie van sociaal-wetenschappelijk onderzoek (S_MTSWO)		Beschrijvende en inferentiële statistiek (S_BIS)	Wetenschapsgeschiedenis: instituties (S_WGI)	
				Bachelorwerkgroep bestuurs- en organisatiewetenschap 2 (S_BWbo2)		

Alle vakken zijn 6 EC, tenzij in het schema een ander aantal is aangegeven.

Afstudeerrichting Bestuurswetenschap

	Periode 1	Periode 2	Periode 3	Periode 4	Periode 5	Periode 6
Jaar 2 Cohort 2014	Beleid en besluitvorming (S_BLB)	Sociaal kapitaal en netwerken (S_SKN)	Bachelorproject bestuurs- en organisatiewetenschap 2 (S_Bpobo2)	Recht voor overheid en bedrijf (S_ROB)	Economie, markt en overheid (S_EMO)	Oefening bestuur, beleid en organisatie (S_OBBO)
	Public Management (S_PM)	Methoden en technieken van kwalitatief organisatieonderzoek (S_MTKOORG)		EU Governance in an International Context (S_EUGIC)	Filosofie van management en organisatie (S_FMO)	

	Periode 1	Periode 2	Periode 3	Periode 4	Periode 5	Periode 6
Jaar 3 Cohort 2013	Profileringsruimte (meerdere niveaus)		30 EC	Besturen van de samenleving (S_BS)	Bachelorthesis bestuurs- en organisatiewetenschap (S_BTbo)	
				Bestuurs- en organisatiewetenschap: praktijkproblemen (S_BOP)	18 EC	

Alle vakken zijn 6 EC, tenzij in het schema een ander aantal EC is aangegeven.

Afstudeerrichting Organisatiewetenschap

	Periode 1	Periode 2	Periode 3	Periode 4	Periode 5	Periode 6
Jaar 2 Cohort 2014	Beleid en besluitvorming (S_BLB)	Sociaal kapitaal en netwerken (S_SKN)	Bachelor-project be-stuurs- en organisatie-wetenschap 2 (S_Bpobo2)	Organizational Culture and Change (S_OCC)	Public Relations and Reputation Management (S_PRRM)	Cases in organisatiedynamiek (S_COD)
	Public Management (S_PM)	Methoden en technieken van kwalitatief organisatieonderzoek (S_MTKOORG)		Strategie en besluitvorming (S_SB)	Filosofie van management en organisatie (S_FMO)	

	Periode 1	Periode 2	Periode 3	Periode 4	Periode 5	Periode 6
Jaar 3 Cohort 2013	Profileringsruimte *(meerdere niveaus)*			Organizations in the 21st Century (S_O21C)	Bachelorthesis bestuurs- en organisatiewetenschap (S_BTbo)	
			30 EC	Bestuurs- en organisatiewetenschap: praktijkproblemen (S_BOP)		*18 EC*

Alle vakken zijn 6 EC, tenzij in het schema een ander aantal EC is aangegeven.

APPENDIX 5: PROGRAMME OF THE SITE VISIT

Thursday 14 December 2017

09.00   Arrival of panel
09.15   Internal panel meeting
11.00   Meeting with management
11.50   Lunch and internal panel meeting
12.30   Meeting with bachelor's students
13.20   Meeting with bachelor's lecturers
14.00   Open consultation hour
14.40   Meeting with master's students
15.30   Meeting with master's lecturers
16.30   Meeting with bachelor's Programme Committee
17.05   Meeting with master's Programme Committee
17.40   Meeting with Alumni and Professional Field (bachelor's/master's)
18.30   Internal panel meeting

Friday 15 December 2017

09.15   Meeting with Examination Board (bachelor's/master's)
10.00   Internal panel meeting
10.45   Meeting with management
11.30   Internal panel meeting + lunch
13.30   Feedback on key panel findings
14.00   Development dialogue
15.00   End of site visit

APPENDIX 6: THESES AND DOCUMENTS STUDIED BY THE PANEL

Prior to the site visit, the panel studied 15 theses of the bachelor's programme Public Administration and Organization Science. The associated student numbers are available through QANU upon request.

In the framework of the site visit, the panel studied, among other things, the following documents:
- Critical Reflection, Bachelor's Public Administration and Organization Science, VU Amsterdam, September 2017.
- Appendices to the Critical Reflection of the bachelor's programme, September 2017.

Course materials, evaluations and assessments bachelor's programme PAOS:
- Kernthema's Organisatiewetenschappen
- Public Management
- Methoden en Technieken van Sociaal Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek
- EU Governance

Other materials
- Course materials – literature, manuals, etc.
- Manual research practicum (Handleiding onderzoekspracticum)
- Manual bachelor's thesis (Handleiding bachelorthesis)
- Assessment plan and matrix (Toetsplan/toetsmatrix Ba Bestuurs- en Organisatiewetenschap)
- Annual Report Programme Committee
- Annual Report Examination Board
- Staff Student Ratio