

Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE)
wo-bachelor
VU University Amsterdam

19 August 2015

Initial accreditation

Panel report

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1 Executive summary

The Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) received a request for an initial accreditation procedure, including programme documents, regarding a proposed bachelor programme in Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) at VU University Amsterdam. NVAO convened an expert panel, which studied the information available and discussed the proposed programme with representatives of the institution and the programme during a site visit.

The following considerations have played an important role in the panel's assessment.

The VU intends to offer a PPE-programme that aims to provide students with the knowledge of core elements of the PPE disciplines and the ability to synthesize these in order to reach an interdisciplinary understanding on contemporary international problems. The panel considers the intended learning outcomes of the programme to be well defined on a disciplinary level and to clearly address the integration of the three PPE disciplines. The learning outcomes are clearly geared towards teaching students to synthesize disciplinary information in order to reach a multi- and interdisciplinary understanding, and to apply these to contemporary real world problems. The panel finds the intended learning outcomes to be ambitious and innovative in an international environment. The work field acknowledges the relevance of this programme. VU University offers PPE-graduates possibilities to enter a number of disciplinary master programmes. The panel recommends that any constraints or additional requirements for entering a master programme should be clearly and proactively communicated to students. The panel concludes that the programme meets standard 1.

The programme consists of three years. The first year consists of disciplinary courses for each of the three PPE disciplines and integrative courses. In the second year, students choose two out of the three disciplinary tracks, take up electives and integrative courses. The third year consists of an internship or stay abroad, two integrative courses and an individual bachelor thesis. The choice of content in the disciplinary courses, the methodology courses and the integrating courses are all geared towards interdisciplinary aspects. Some of the electives also offer an interdisciplinary approach. The panel considers the programme appropriate and comparable to similar innovative international PPE programmes. It is fully coherent, with a clear multi- and interdisciplinary focus. It covers all of the programme's intended learning outcomes.

Most courses comprise of a combination of lectures and seminars. According to the panel, proposed lecturers are highly qualified and well established in their areas, with special expertise in PPE-related subjects. Seminars will be led by junior lecturers, who will be supervised by coordinators.

The panel has spoken extensively about the role and responsibilities of the coordinators, who have an appointment as Assistant Professor. Throughout the site visit, it appeared that the tasks that discussion partners foresee for coordinators are not always consistent and that the role of the coordinator has not yet been defined consistently. In addition, the panel considers the tasks of the coordinator to be underestimated by the programme management, in content, complexity and size (fte). The panel therefore deems it necessary

for management to reconsider its coordination structure. Given the strong ambitions of the programme, the panel considers it crucial to invest more strongly in coordination. Staff policy and structure need to ensure that coordinators have sufficient authority, experience, allocated means and time to adequately develop the programme, which will require a stronger (time) investment than has been envisioned.

Programme management is currently considering possible venues for the College. The panel was shown one of them during the site visit. The panel currently does not consider this accommodation to be fully appropriate for lectures, seminars and working space for students, especially given the emphasis on community formation in the programme. It encourages the university to consider a venue where students will find it easier to develop extracurricular activities. The panel realizes that a decision has not been made on this and it trusts that management will be able to select a suitable venue.

The panel concludes that the programme partially meets standard 2.

The programme's system of student assessment is based on the regular policy of the faculties involved in this regard. The assessment consists of a mixture of evaluation measures and will utilize various assessment types. Assessment criteria will include criteria on interdisciplinary skills. These are assessed by the student's supervisor and a reader from another PPE discipline to ensure an interdisciplinary assessment of the thesis. The panel considers assessment to be an adequate mix of different instruments that address the diverse envisaged learning outcomes. The panel is convinced that there are adequate structures in place to ensure the quality of assessment and regards the Examination Board as qualified for monitoring this. The panel concludes that the programme meets standard 3.

VU University declares that the faculties involved guarantee that students are enabled to complete this programme and that they will provide financial support. The panel considers this guarantee sufficient and considers VU University to be in a position to cover the costs related to the implementation of the programme. The panel concludes that the programme meets standard 4.

Given these considerations, the panel concludes that the educational aims of the PPE-programme are well defined at a high level and that the programme addresses all envisaged learning outcomes. There is a solid concept behind the didactic approach and it is clearly geared towards multi- and interdisciplinarity. Lecturing staff is highly qualified in the areas of PPE and assessment procedures are appropriate. The panel trusts that management will be able to select a suitable venue for the College.

The aims and content of the programme, the assessment procedures and the quality of teaching staff are therefore considered to be clearly up to standards and facilities are regarded as sufficient. However, the panel considers a solid supporting coordination structure as crucial for the success of such an innovative and complex programme. The panel regards the current envisaged coordination structure as inappropriate for this programme. The panel therefore advises NVAO to take a conditional decision regarding the quality of the proposed Bachelor of Science programme in Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) at VU University Amsterdam. The following condition applies:

The programme should reconsider its coordination structure. Staff policy and structure need to ensure that coordinators, already at the start of the programme, have sufficient authority, experience, means and allocated time to adequately manage and further develop the programme.

The panel advises the NVAO to take over the institution's proposal for registration of the programme in the Croho-sector Sectoroverstijgend.

The degree offered by the programme is Bachelor of Science.

The Hague, 19 August 2015

On behalf of the Initial Accreditation panel convened to assess the Bachelor of Science programme in Philosophy, Politics and Economics at VU University Amsterdam.

Prof.dr. M. Hooghe
(chair)

drs. S. den Tuinder
(secretary)

2 Introduction

2.1 The procedure

NVAO received a request for an initial accreditation procedure including programme documents regarding a proposed bachelor programme in Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE). The request was received on 3 February 2015 from the VU University Amsterdam. The application dossier was submitted on 16 April 2015. This is the starting date of the procedure.

An initial accreditation procedure is required when a recognised institution wants to offer a programme and award a recognised bachelor or master's degree. To a certain extent, initial accreditation demands a different approach to the accreditation procedure for programmes already being offered. Initial accreditation is in fact an *ex ante* assessment of a programme, and a programme becomes subject to the normal accreditation procedures once initial accreditation has been granted.

NVAO convened an international panel of experts. The panel consisted of:

- Prof.dr. M. Hooghe (chair) is professor of Political Science at the KU Leuven, Belgium
- Prof.dr. L. Bovens, professor of Philosophy at the London School of Economics and Political Science.
- Prof.dr. L. S. Talani is professor of European Political Economy at King's College London.
- Prof.dr.ir. C.A.M. Mouwen is emeritus professor Strategy and Innovation for the non-profit sector, and former member of Board of Tilburg University.
- Prof.dr. J. Muysken is Honorary professor of Economics at Maastricht University
- *Student-member*: L.V.R. van Doremalen BSc, student in the master programme Experimental Physics at Utrecht University.

On behalf of the NVAO, dr. Thomas de Bruijn was responsible for the process-coordination. The external secretary, drs. Suzanne den Tuinder drafted the experts' report.

This composition reflects the expertise deemed necessary by NVAO. (Annex 1: Composition of the panel). All the panel members signed a statement of independence and confidentiality.

The panel has based its assessment on the standards and criteria described in the NVAO Initial Accreditation Framework (Stcrt. 2014, nr 36791).

The following procedure was undertaken. The panel members studied the programme documents (Annex 3: Documents reviewed) regarding the proposed programme. Their first impressions were sent to the secretary of NVAO, in order to outline these remarks within the accreditation framework and detect the items to be clarified during the site visit. The panel requested some additional information, which was received by the NVAO on 17 June 2015.

Based on its first findings, the panel organised a preparatory meeting the day before the site visit. The site visit took place on 24 June 2015 at VU University Amsterdam (Annex 2: Schedule of the site visit).

The panel formulated its preliminary assessments per standard immediately after the site visit. These are based on the findings of the site visit, and building on the assessment of the programme documents.

On 19 August 2015, the draft version of this report was finalised, taking into account the available information and relevant findings of the assessment. It was sent to the VU for a check of factual correctness on 25 August 2015. The VU replied on 28 August 2015. The panel made a few textual corrections and submitted the report to the NVAO on 28 August 2015.

2.2 Panel report

The first chapter of this report is the executive summary of the report, while the current chapter is the introduction.

The third chapter gives a description of the programme including its position within the VU University Amsterdam and within the higher education system of the Netherlands.

The panel presents its assessments in the fourth chapter. The programme is assessed by assessing the standards in the Initial Accreditation Framework. For each standard the panel presents an outline of its findings, considerations and a conclusion.

The *outline of the findings* are the objective facts as found by the panel in the programme documents, in the additional documents and during the site visit. The panel's *considerations* are the panel's subjective evaluations regarding these findings and the importance of each. The *considerations* presented by the panel logically lead to a concluding assessment.

The panel concludes the report with a table containing an overview of its assessments per standard.

3 Description of the programme

3.1 Overview

Country	The Netherlands
Institution	VU University Amsterdam
Programme	Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE)
Level	bachelor
Orientation	academic (wo)
Degree	Bachelor of Science
Location(s)	VU University Amsterdam
Mode of study	Full time
Field of study	Sectoroverstijgend

3.2 Profile of the institution

The “VU” in VU University Amsterdam stands for Vrije Universiteit, which translates literally as Free University. VU University was established in 1880 by Abraham Kuyper. They envisage to stimulate students to develop their own opinion through independent and creative thinking. The basic philosophy of VU is expressed in three core values; responsible, open and personally engaged.

VU University Amsterdam is a university with about 25,000 students and 2,500 academic staff. Its eleven faculties share a campus in Amsterdam and cover a wide spectrum of arts, sciences and medicine. VU University offers almost 50 Bachelor's degree programmes (of which 4 English taught) and over 100 Master's degree programmes (over 70 English taught).

3.3 Profile of the programme

The programme document indicates that no other institution of higher education in the Netherlands offers a programme with a similar profile. The envisaged start of the programme is September 2016.

The bachelor programme Philosophy, Politics and Economics is a collaboration between three faculties of VU University Amsterdam; the Faculty of Humanities, the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, with the Faculty of Humanities acting as secretary. The programme will be organized in the form of a college, the J.S. Mill College, and will have its own housing at the university. The Board of the College consists of the Deans of the three Faculties, with the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities acting as chair. The Board bears final responsibility for the education programme, the financial management and personnel decisions. The Dean of the College acts as director of education and in that capacity has a delegated responsibility for the academic programme, the admission process and the College's faculty. The College will be self-supporting and will hire facilities for the management of the (international) admission processes, PR, registration and curriculum management, career development, finances, HR

and secretarial support from the individual faculties. The Dean and three year-coordinators comprise the Management Team of the College.

Instruction in PPE will be conducted exclusively in English. The programme consists of three years, divided into 6 semesters, which each consist of three periods: two periods of 8 weeks and one period of 4 weeks. In the first year, all students follow the same courses, consisting of six disciplinary courses (two for each discipline) and four integrative courses. Two of the integrative courses in the first year are methods courses, preparing the necessary methodological groundwork for the development of the interdisciplinary perspective.

At the beginning of the second year, students choose two out of three possible disciplinary tracks and follow the two compulsory disciplinary courses accordingly. Additionally they take up four courses from the set of electives that are offered within their two chosen tracks. All students take up the second year integrative PPE in Practice (PiP) courses. The courses are scheduled in such a way that students who want to follow an additional third track can do so.

In the first semester of the third year, students either opt for a stay abroad or take up an internship. During the stay abroad, the students have the possibility of taking up specialization courses within their chosen tracks or can opt for integrative courses. The sixth semester consists of two integrative courses (PPE in practice and Policy lab), a tutorial and the writing of an individual bachelor thesis.

4 Assessment per standard

The framework for limited assessments of new programmes is used for institutions that have obtained a positive judgement following an institutional audit. The assessment is based on a discussion with peers regarding the content and quality of the programme. It focuses on five questions:

1. What is the programme aiming for?
2. How does the programme intend to achieve its objectives?
3. How does the programme intend to assess its performance?
4. If applicable, are the objectives achieved?
5. Does the programme have sufficient financial resources?

These five questions have been translated into five standards. Regarding each of these standards, an assessment panel gives a substantiated judgement on a three-point scale: meets, does not meet or partially meets the standard. The panel subsequently gives a substantiated final conclusion regarding the quality of the programme, also on a three-point scale: positive, negative or conditionally positive.

4.1 Intended learning outcomes (standard 1)

The intended learning outcomes of the programme have been concretised with regard to content, level and orientation; they meet international requirements.

Outline of findings

The VU intends to offer a PPE-programme that aims to provide the knowledge of core elements of and approaches within Philosophy, Political Science and Economics as well as teach students to apply the different perspectives in combination with each other. PPE-programmes originated in the 1920s, at Oxford University. Since then, many similar programmes have been developed at leading universities in the US and the UK. On the European continent only a small number of universities currently have a PPE-programme at the Bachelor-level. The PPE-programme at the VU is based on the Oxford programme, but corresponds with recent PPE formulations that have taken a more integrative approach, emphasizing the need to include courses in which students learn to combine knowledge and methods of the three disciplines.

In the VU PPE-programme, important questions will be addressed from a multi- and interdisciplinary perspective. The three disciplines involved constitute the multidisciplinary perspective. For the interdisciplinary perspective, the fundamental education in the three disciplines will be combined in a number of “PPE in Practice” (PiP) courses. These interdisciplinary PiP courses will train students to become aware of the limitations and risks of applying knowledge from a single domain to problems, and will actively teach students to integrate the knowledge and methods of these three disciplines.

The programme emphasizes the development of skills by engaging students with contemporary real-world problems in the context of disciplinary seminars, integrative courses and their thesis project. The PPE programme connects to two of the four central research themes of VU University: Connected World and Governance for Society.

An Advisory Board will be appointed to guarantee that the programme and the profile of graduates meet the requirements of the labour market. According to PPE Management, generalists, with a sound disciplinary basis, are required who are able to examine complex societal issues from different angles, who can combine different perspectives in a constructive way, and who are aware of the broader social and historical context of the problem in question. During the site visit, future employers from the public and private sector articulated the need for a programme that combines the PPE disciplines. They acknowledge the value of a broad bachelor and are especially enthusiastic about the professional skills, such as writing policy briefs, the ability to analyse a problem from different angles and to develop a normative feel for this. However, they confirm that in the Netherlands candidates are mostly expected to first acquire a master’s degree before entering the labour market. Nevertheless, they see this bachelor programme as a welcome way to gain a wider and international perspective on matters.

Management from the disciplinary faculties emphasize that PPE-graduates are more than welcome to join their master programmes, but that most have a selective admission procedure, that will also count for PPE-candidates. Admission can therefore not be guaranteed beforehand. They do not see any obstacles for admission regarding the content of the PPE-programme. However, for some master programmes potential master candidates are strongly advised to take up additional specialized courses or summer courses, for instance in mathematics or statistics.

Considerations

The panel considers the intended learning outcomes to be well defined and to clearly address the integration of respective disciplines. Students will acquire the skills to analyse and apply tools to complex contemporary policy questions in a changing environment. The knowledge, insight and competencies, both disciplinary and interdisciplinary, are defined at a high level. The panel finds the intended learning outcomes to be ambitious and innovative in an international environment.

The learning outcomes match intake and selection criteria for master programmes in the three disciplines and are considered suitable by the faculties for entering a master programme. The panel emphasizes that any constraints or additional requirements for admission, for instance taking up additional courses or summer courses, should be clearly and proactively communicated to students. Future employers appear highly content with the educational aims. They affirm that they consider the orientation of the programme accurate and that they are keen on hiring a PPE-graduate, although in the Dutch tradition an additional Master's will usually be required.

Conclusion

Meets the standard

4.2 Teaching-learning environment (standard 2)

<i>The curriculum, staff and programme-specific services and facilities enable incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes</i>
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Outline of findings

Programme

The programme's main focus is to ensure that students acquire the knowledge and ability to apply a multidisciplinary and an interdisciplinary perspective to the analysis of contemporary problems. In order to achieve this, the disciplinary courses ensure that students obtain a solid basis of the required knowledge of the three perspectives. Integrative PPE in Practice courses emphasize the interdisciplinary connections between the individual PPE disciplines and help students apply the theory to practical, policy oriented solutions.

In the fifth semester, students either complete a six-month study abroad or opt for an internship. For the stay abroad, the management explains that they are in the process of having special "packages" put together in the different aligned universities, such as an Economic package for the Indira Ghandi Institute of Development Research, UCLA for political science etc. These packages will correspond to specializations within a PPE-track or a combination of PPE-tracks. According to the Dean, these packages also cater for prospective disciplinary master programmes. Internships can be taken up at NGO's, business firms, newspapers or political parties. Students will be offered a choice of internships but can also propose possibilities themselves. The sixth semester consists of two integrative courses, a tutorial and the writing of an individual bachelor thesis.

The choice of content in the disciplinary courses and the methodology courses is geared towards interdisciplinary aspects. The panel wondered whether a multidisciplinary approach to teaching methodology might be too challenging or confusing to students, especially to first year students. The lecturers explain that in the methodology courses, they will offer content that is used equally in all three disciplines. By using the same methods and phrasing in these disciplines for comparable theories, they are of the opinion this will actually avoid confusion. Programme management admits that the content of these methodology courses is very challenging given the time frame, but they are very selective on the subjects they choose to offer. Later on, this same theory will be applied in several follow-up courses, which will increase the learning effect.

To further facilitate moves between disciplines and between theory and practice, the programme will employ a range of pedagogical tools and didactic methods such as case studies, group discussions and projects, and community immersion. PPE in Practice courses offer contemporary interdisciplinary topics and will enable students to connect the tools they have acquired in the disciplinary courses to societal issues in their local environment or beyond. In addition, some of the electives also offer an interdisciplinary approach, such as Public Economics and the Global Political Economy.

The programme has a selective intake of maximal 180 students per year. It aims for a 50:50 Dutch to non-Dutch enrolment ratio, with a minimum of 25% non-Dutch students. Prospective students' prior performance in disciplines foundational to PPE will be considered. Prospective students will also be assessed according to how their future academic interests cohere with the PPE programme. Students should submit a VWO diploma or equivalent with mathematics and an overall GPA of at least 3.0 (7,5 in Dutch marking system), a proof of English language proficiency, a CV and a statement of purpose outlining reasons for applying and academic interests. In addition to the assessment of these materials, student selection will be based on interviews with PPE staff members. Students who are a good match for the programme will enter into an agreement specifying standards and expectations for both students and staff throughout the programme.

Staff

Teaching is in many of the courses divided equally between lectures and seminars. The lectures' primary focus is on the transmission of knowledge. Through small group seminars students will get a deeper understanding of the material. Seminars will be led by a pool of instructors, who combine a five year part-time position as a junior lecturer with an appointment as PhD researcher in one of the PPE areas. These joint teaching/researching positions are thought to allow for a mutually beneficial exchange between junior professional academics and bachelor students. Internationally renowned scholars and/or policy makers will be involved as visiting professors in the block seminars of the second and third year.

Lecturers are responsible for students achieving the learning outcomes of their discipline throughout the years and for the coherence within and between courses of the disciplinary learning trajectory. As a minimum requirement, all course lecturers will either have obtained, or be in the process of obtaining, the Basic Teaching Qualification (BKO). The panel notes that proposed teachers for the lectures are mostly internationally renowned researchers. They are often trained in more than one of the programme's disciplines.

The Dean of the College and three year coordinators make up the Management Team (MT) of the College. They are responsible for coordination of the programme, for academic management and for the visibility of the college. Coordinators have an appointment as Assistant Professor, with a contract consisting of 40% research and 60% education time (including coordination tasks). The time allocated exclusively to coordination tasks is estimated in the discussions at 0.3 fte per coordinator. Each coordinator is responsible for the coordination and coherence of the programme within a year. The third year coordinator will be responsible for internship and stay abroad arrangements.

The panel has spoken extensively with management and teachers about the role and responsibilities of the coordinators. It appears that the tasks they foresee for these coordinators are not always consistent between discussion partners. Especially the role in coordinating the content of the modules and seminars seems to lead to confusion. In the application file, it is stated that "PPE-coordinators play an important role in the preparation of the seminars and the guidance and supervision of the seminar instructors. In consultation with the course instructors, the PPE-coordinators will prepare the material that will be used in the seminars of their year".

In the discussions, some say an important role of the coordinator is to prepare seminars together with the lecturers, others inform the panel that lecturers and seminar instructors will primarily prepare this together and the primary responsibility of coordinators is to flag inconsistencies or monodisciplinarity. According to the Dean, the main role of the coordinators is to act as an intermediary between the lecturers and what is happening in the seminars, and to ensure coherence within the several modules within a year. The third year coordinator's primary responsibility will reside in the internship arrangements and stay abroad coordination.

Another responsibility of coordinators is to see to it that tutors are being supervised. The panel found that the faculties involved have no tradition in coordinating such a seminar system with PhD students as tutors. There is no specific training for tutors on how to run and assess seminars, nor for coordinators on how to supervise them. In addition, coordinators take up intake assessment interviews and act as the face of the PPE programme to the outside world. Because of this last task, they are also involved in coordinating and facilitating the extra-curricular activities of their year.

The Dean explains that not all operational tasks will be carried out by the coordinators. They may flag problems, but will be able to make extensive use of the faculties involved, including support from the international offices, the student advisory office, the mentors etc. The time allotted to coordinators is considered feasible by the Dean.

The panel addressed the issue of the relatively junior position of coordinators and wonders what kind of leverage coordinators will have towards other staff in the departments. Some discussion partners tell the committee that coordinators will approach lecturers directly in case they consider changes in content necessary. According to the Dean, the coordinators will flag necessary changes within the MT and the Dean will have the final decision whether changes will be necessary. The Dean will also intervene in case of differences of opinion between coordinators and tutors.

Facilities

Teaching methods will be enhanced by ICT. Web-based systems will be utilized to give students easy access to course material and additional research resources.

The programme is in the process of finding accommodation suitable for lectures, seminars and working space for students and tutors, and offices for the Dean and the coordinators. The panel was shown a possible location for this, the current Duisenberg Institute. The panel ascertains that this venue currently does not facilitate lecture groups of 180 students, seminars of 20 students, nor community building facilities. However, it acknowledges that adjustments could be made to make it more appropriate for teaching, but hardly for community building. Programme management is currently in the midst of deciding whether this venue is suitable for this college.

Considerations

Programme

The panel considers the proposed programme to be overall appropriate and comparable to similar international PPE programmes. It is balanced in terms of the three tracks that are offered and establishes a good grounding in each of the three disciplines. The choice in the second year of two out of three disciplines and the electives in the third year, allow students to specialise towards a master programme. There is a fair balance between lectures, seminars and hands on student involvement in assignments. The panel considers the programme to be fully coherent and to cover all of the programme's intended learning outcomes.

The panel regards the suggested intake assessment methods as appropriate for this programme. The selection of PPE interest and motivation will help select a group of students who are eager and willing to invest in this programme.

Staff quality

The panel has reviewed the CVs of teaching staff of the PPE programme and believes these to be up to standard. The lecturers involved in the programme are highly qualified and well established in their areas. They have special expertise in PPE-related subjects and on the intersection between the disciplines. The panel considers them highly appropriate for this programme.

Coordination structure

The panel considers thorough and careful implementation of the programme and consequently of its coordination structure, of crucial importance for its success, especially in the first years where there is a steep learning curve. Intensive discussion with the management and coordinators of the programme could not convince the panel that the details of how this coordination structure will work out in practice are sufficiently clear.

The panel sees three main issues. First, the role and responsibilities of coordinators have not been consistently detailed and there were several examples during the discussions of people involved interpreting the role of coordinators differently. In the envisioned triangle between lecturers, coordinators and tutors, it is of the utmost importance that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.

Secondly, there is a heavy burden on the programme coordinator which will be quite a junior position, with no measures in place if things don't work out. For the combination of being responsible for coherence of content, for intake assessment, for setting up extra-curricular activities and acting as the public face for the PPE-programme, a more senior role is considered more appropriate by the panel. The panel acknowledges that there is a lot of enthusiasm amongst coordinators and that other staff members will be able to support them, but it wonders what kind of leverage coordinators have towards more senior professors in the departments. It regards the tasks and responsibilities of coordinators to be currently underestimated by management.

Finally, the panel has concerns whether a 0.3 fte appointment for a coordinator will be sufficient, especially in the start-up phase and especially with a Dean that is appointed for 0.4 fte. The number of staff involved in the programme could suffice if all goes well. However, in case of issues, coordinators and the Dean will see their workload multiply. With such a complex staff structure in a programme that demands substantial coordination both in structure as in content, some spare capacity is needed, especially in the first years.

Summarizing, the panel deems it necessary for the programme to reconsider their coordination structure and to invest more strongly in it. Given the strong ambitions of the programme, the panel is of the opinion that it is crucial to invest more strongly in coordination. Staff policy and structure need to ensure that coordinators have sufficient authority, experience, means and allocated time to adequately manage and further develop the programme.

Facilities

The panel asserts that programme management affirmed the building the panel was shown does currently not quite fit the requirements. The panel trusts that adequate accommodation will be found that is suitable for the envisaged group sizes as well as for community building.

Conclusion

Partially meets the standard.

4.3 Assessment (standard 3)

<i>The programme has an adequate assessment system in place.</i>
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Outline of findings

The programme's system of student assessment is based on the policy of the VU. For each course, the type of assessment and the grading procedure will be explicitly described in the course manual, including the procedure for weighing the different sub-examinations.

According to VU policy, if papers or presentations form part of the course's evaluation forms, the course manual will provide guidelines on how to prepare them. The manual also describes the assessment criteria. Each exam will be assessed on the basis of an assessment model. Papers, the thesis and other written assignments are submitted through Blackboard, which allows automated control for plagiarism.

The assessment consists of a mixture of evaluation measures and will utilize various assessment types such as (computer) exams, papers, projects, problem sets and presentations. Students will receive feedback regularly on each course. In seminars that include team projects, presentations and problem sets, the students will also receive feedback from their fellow students. Lecturers and tutors will be trained to use the appropriate forms of assessment. Discussion partners estimate that on average, final examinations make up approximately 60-70% of a degree, while 30-40% is made up of assignments.

Assessment criteria for developing interdisciplinary skills will include whether the student's focus has indeed been on a theme or topic that is on the intersection of different disciplines and/or whether the student has been able to successfully integrate findings or methods from the different disciplines. Students follow tutorials in small groups of four students to facilitate a proper transition towards their thesis. The thesis is assessed by the student's supervisor and an external reader from another PPE discipline, to ensure an interdisciplinary assessment of the thesis.

The Examination Board consists of three faculty members who are associated with the PPE programme (one member from each discipline). Furthermore, an external expert on testing is added to the Board and an administrative secretary supports it. The Examination Board will monitor the quality of exams and theses through random checks and by analysis of the Programme Examination Plan. The Board is authorized to eliminate any questions that do not meet the requirements of the exam, and to adjust the cut-off score. The members of the Board the panel spoke with, have done this on several occasions.

Considerations

The assessment is considered an adequate mix of different instruments that address the diverse envisaged learning outcomes. Based on the information file and discussions with the Examination Board, the panel is convinced that there are adequate structures in place to ensure the quality of assessment. The panel regards the programme faculty as highly qualified, with extensive experience in assessment.

Conclusion

Meets the standard.

4.4 Graduation guarantee and financial provisions (standard 4)

The institution guarantees students that they can complete the entire curriculum and makes sufficient financial provisions available.

Outline of findings

VU University declares that the Faculty of Humanities, the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration and the Faculty of Social Sciences guarantee that students of this Bachelor's programme are enabled to complete the programme. In order to do so, these faculties will provide financial support.

Considerations

The panel is convinced that VU University is in a position to cover the costs related to the implementation of the programme. The panel considers the above mentioned guarantee sufficient.

Conclusion

Meets the standard

4.5 Achieved learning outcomes (standard 5)¹

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

As the programme does not contain any students yet, the panel has not considered this standard.

5 Overview of the assessments

The panel considers the envisaged learning outcomes and the content of the programme to be ambitious and up to standards. There is a solid concept behind the didactic approach and it is clearly geared towards multi- and interdisciplinarity. Lecturing staff is highly qualified in the areas of PPE. The panel considers the aims and content of the programme, the assessment procedures and the quality of teaching staff to be clearly up to standards. Facilities are regarded as sufficient. However, the panel regards a solid supporting coordination structure to be crucial for the success of such an innovative and complex programme. The panel regards the current envisaged coordination structure for this programme as inappropriate. The panel therefore sets the condition that:

- the programme should reconsider its coordination structure. Staff policy and structure need to ensure that coordinators have sufficient authority, experience, means and allocated time to adequately manage and further develop the programme within the time limit of two years.

The panel presents its assessments per standard, as outlined in chapter 4, in the following table.

¹ If the programme has already produced graduates, the panel assesses the achieved learning outcomes.

Standard	Assessment
1 Intended learning outcomes	Satisfactory
2 Teaching-learning environment	Partially Satisfactory
3 Assessment	Satisfactory
4 Graduation guarantee and financial provisions	Satisfactory
Conclusion	Conditional

Annex 1: Composition of the panel

Chair

Prof.dr. M. Hooghe is professor of Political Science at the University of Leuven, Belgium

Members

Prof.dr. L. Bovens, professor of Philosophy at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Prof.dr. L. S. Talani is professor of European Political Economy at King's College London.

Prof.dr.ir. C.A.M. Mouwen is emeritus professor Strategy and Innovation for the non-profit sector, and former member of Board of Tilburg University.

Prof.dr. J. Muysken is Honorary professor of Economics at Maastricht University

Student-member

L.V.R. van Doremalen, student in the master programme Experimental Physics at Utrecht University.

Secretary

Drs. Suzanne den Tuinder, Odion Evaluatieonderzoek

Coordinator on behalf of NVAO

Dr. Thomas de Bruijn

Marc Hooghe is a Professor of Political Science at the University of Leuven. He has published mainly on social capital, political participation and social cohesion. He holds an ERC Advanced Grant to investigate the democratic linkage between citizens and the state in Western Europe. His work has been published in various international journals, including the British Journal of Political Science, Electoral Studies, Party Politics, International Political Science Review, European Journal of Political Research, and Political Behavior. He has also written or (co-)edited twenty books, in Dutch or English. Marc Hooghe obtained Ph.D's in political science and in sociology, while he also holds an MA in History. He is, or has been a visiting professor at the universities of Darmstadt, Mannheim, Åbo (Finland) and Lille-II (France).

Luc Bovens did his undergraduate and MA studies in Social Sciences and graduated with a PhD in Philosophy from the University of Minnesota in 1990. He taught in the University of Colorado at Boulder from 1990-2003 and in the London School of Economics and Political Science from 2003 till now, where he has been Head of the Department of Philosophy, Logic and Scientific Method and Coordinator of the MSc Programme Philosophy and Public Policy. His research deals with the tools of analytic philosophy combined with modelling techniques in economics, which he sets to work on various areas in philosophy, ranging from philosophy of science and epistemology to rationality and value theory, as well as on topics in political science. In political philosophy and philosophy of economics, he developed a probabilistic angle to the discursive dilemma (with Rabinowicz). In political science, he published a range of articles on voting power and the representation in federal assemblies,

such as the US Electoral College or the EU Council of Ministers. He has also published and blogged on fairness and equal burden-sharing in EU asylum policies analysing UNHCR data.

Leila Simona Talani was appointed as Jean Monnet Chair of European Political Economy in the department of European and International Studies at King's College London in 2012. She was previously at the European Institute of the London School of Economics and in the department of European studies of the University of Bath since the year 2001. From November 2000 until September 2001 she held the position of Associate Expert for the United Nations Regional Office for Drug control and Crime Prevention based in Cairo working on illegal migration from the Middle East and Northern Africa to EU countries. In the academic year 1999-2000 she taught "The political Economy of European Integration" at the European Institute of the London School of Economics where she had previously held a research and teaching fellowship for the academic year 1998-1999.

Leila Simona Talani got her PhD with distinction at the European University Institute of Florence in 1998.

Kees Mouwen studied Physics. After having occupied several positions in management and governance at universities of applied sciences, he became member and vice-chairman of the Board of Tilburg University. He studied Management Sciences at Wharton Business School, University of Pennsylvania and the John. F. Kennedy School of Harvard University. From 1992 to 2001 he was Visiting Professor at Glasgow University. From 2001 he was parttime professor of 'Strategy and governance for the non-profit sector' at Tilburg University. In 2005 he retired from the Board of Tilburg University and became Professor-director of the Centrum voor het Bestuur van de Maatschappelijke Onderneming at TiasNimbas Business School of Tilburg University. He retired from this position in 2012. He is chairman of the Board of Supervisors of a large hospital and member of the Board of Supervisors of Avans Hogeschool.

Joan Muysken is Honorary Professor of Economics at the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Universiteit Maastricht. Until recently, he has been Full Professor of Economics. He had many administrative positions at the Faculty, amongst which dean of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration. He studied quantitative economics at the University of Groningen and obtained his PhD degree from the University of Groningen on the aggregation of production functions. Joan was a visiting researcher at the University of Oslo, SUNY Buffalo (USA), the Catholic University of Louvain-la-Neuve (Belgium), the University of Newcastle (Australia) and the Centre of European Studies, Australian National University, Canberra. He is also Director of CofFEE-Europe. Joan published in international journals and books on various aspects of labour economics, unemployment and wage formation and theories of economic growth.

Lennart van Doremalen is student in the master programme Experimental Physics of Utrecht University. He was member of the University Council for two years. From 2009 to 2010 he was Student member in the Board of the Department of Physics and Astronomy of Utrecht University. He is also one of the founding members of the party Student & Starter for the municipal council of Utrecht.

Annex 2: Schedule of the site visit

The panel undertook a site visit on 24 June 2015 as part of the external assessment procedure regarding the Bachelor of Science Programme Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) at VU University Amsterdam, De Boelelaan 1105, Amsterdam.

Agenda:

8.30-9.00	<i>Meeting with management (Board & Dean)</i> Prof. dr. Michel ter Hark Prof. dr. Karen van Oudenhoven – van der Zee Prof. dr. Willem Verschoor Prof. dr. Martin van Hees
9.00-9.45	<i>Meeting with programme management and designers</i> Prof. dr. Martin van Hees Prof. dr. Marjan Hofkes Prof. dr. Willem Trommel Prof. dr. Lieven Decock
9.45-10.00	<i>Break</i>
10.00-11.15	<i>Teaching staff (envisaged) members of the programme committee</i> Dr. Helen de Cruz Dr. Nana de Graaf Prof.dr. Jan Kleinnijenhuis Prof. dr. Eric Bartelsman Dr. Roland Lutzens Dr. Ben Ferguson
11.15-11.30	<i>Break (small snack)</i>
11.30-12.00	<i>Meeting with students</i> Kees Buitendijk Sandra van der Schaaf Mark Zonnenberg Aya Polderman Jasper Lelijveld Deborah Bakker
12.00- 12.45	<i>Meeting with future employers (board of Advice) and/or representatives of receiving master's programmes (Philosophy, Political Science, Economics)</i> Dr. Michel Heijdra (Deputy Director Financial Markets Directorate at Ministry of Finance of the Netherlands) Drs. Harry Starren (Chairman of Federation Dutch Creative

	Industries (FDCI); Former Director of De Baak) Dr. Bastiaan van Apeldoorn (Programme Director Political Science) Dr. Stefan Hochguertel (Programme Director Economics) Prof. dr. Reinier Munk (Programme Director Philosophy)
12.45-13.45	<i>Lunch at location of facilities designated for the PPE programme; 10 min walk from De Boelelaan</i>
13.45-14.15	<i>Meeting with examining board</i> Prof. René van Woudenberg Trineke Palm MSc Mr. Greetje Gorens
14.15-14.30	<i>Short panelmeeting</i>
14.30-14.45	<i>Provisional: Second meeting with programme management for questions that arose from the talks.</i>
14.45 - ca. 17.00	<i>Concluding panel meeting</i>
ca. 17.15-17.30	<i>Short presentation of results.</i>

Annex 3: Documents reviewed

Programme documents presented by the institution:

- Application for initial accreditation, including appendices,
- Exams and assignments;
- Syllabi selection;
- Style guide

Documents made available on request of the panel, prior to the site visit:

- Examples of class room involvement of external partners;
- Breakdown FTE per year in steady state

Annex 4: List of abbreviations

BKO	Basic Teaching Qualification
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
fte	full-time equivalent
NVAO	Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie
PiP	PPE in Practice
PPE	Philosophy, Politics and Economics
VU	Vrije Universiteit

The panel report has been ordered by NVAO for the initial accreditation of the programme Philosophy, Politics and Economics of VU University Amsterdam.

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