



**Public Administration and Organisation Science
Utrecht University**

© 2024 Academion

www.academion.nl
info@academion.nl

Project code P2219

Contents

Summary	4
Score table	8
Introduction.....	9
Procedure.....	9
Panel	10
Information on the programmes.....	11
Description of the assessment.....	13
Organization	13
Previous accreditation.....	13
Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes	14
Standard 2. Teaching-learning environment.....	17
Standard 3. Student assessment	25
Standard 4. Achieved learning outcomes	28
Standard 5. Diversity	31
Distinctive Feature Small-Scale Intensive Education.....	33
General conclusion NVAO-EAPAA framework.....	35
General conclusion Distinctive Feature Small-scale and Intensive Education	35
Development points	35
Appendix 1. Intended learning outcomes	36
Appendix 2. Programme curricula	42
Appendix 3. Programme of the site visit.....	45
Appendix 4. Materials	46

Summary

Bachelor programme Public Administration and Organisation Science

This evaluation concerns a three-year full-time programme of 180 EC. It is offered in Dutch, with some courses in English, and is selective as it holds the distinctive feature Small-Scale and Intensive Education.

The bachelor programme has a clear and attractive profile, which reflects the educational vision of USG. The exit qualifications are particularly ambitious in their substantive breadth and research depth. They align with the domain-specific reference framework and do justice to the content, level and orientation of the programme. The recently established professional Advisory Council advises on the latest developments in, and expectations of, the professional field.

The teaching-learning environment of the bachelor programme is strong. The curriculum is coherent, the course contents reflect the programme objectives, and the small-scale and intensive education approach is conducive to forming an academic community of staff and students. The curriculum is feasible. Students who encounter academic or personal obstacles are monitored and supported. The selected students prove to be very resourceful. The teaching staff bring substantive, methodological and research expertise to the programme.

The programme has a robust assessment system, which is embedded in the provisions and policies of the school and the university. Since the previous accreditation, the programme has developed a testing plan that links course learning goals to relevant assessment formats. Exams and assignments are transparent, and students receive proper and insightful feedback. The bachelor thesis is assessed meticulously: the sample review showed that assessors take thesis evaluation seriously and put in a lot of effort to ensure that the quality of the thesis is reflected properly in the scores, which in turn are motivated in an insightful way. The programme can also rely on the expertise and operational capacity of the Board of Examiners and the Assessment Committee in assuring the quality of assessment.

Students who eventually graduate the bachelor programme have achieved all learning outcomes. The sample review showed that the overall thesis quality is particularly high. The acquired competencies allow bachelor graduates to pursue demanding master programmes in a wide range of domains.

Diversity is on the radar of the bachelor programme, the school and the university. Since the previous accreditation, several initiatives have been taken to enhance diversity among students, among staff, and in course contents.

Across standards and programmes, the panel thinks highly of the ambition of all stakeholders to continuously improve the quality of education and to stimulate the development of students. It is struck by the enthusiasm of both students and staff for the programme, the courses and each other. The panel commends USG for the extensive attention to, and comprehensive offer on, student wellbeing.

In addition to all positive elements, there is room for improvement on diversity and inclusion. Students and staff at USG do not reflect the potential group of admissible and recruitable candidates, notably those with a migrant background. The panel encourages all responsible bodies to step up their efforts in attracting a more diverse student group and in recruiting more diverse staff. In this regard, the bachelor team could enhance its outreach activities to attract more diverse applicants.

In sum, the panel issues a positive conclusion on the quality of the bachelor programme Public Administration and Organisation Science. The programme is up to standard on all accounts. Moreover, the panel considers that small-scale and intensive education has become an integral part of the bachelor programme, hence its positive assessment of all seven criteria of the distinctive feature.

Master programme Public Administration and Organisation Science

This evaluation concerns a one-year full-time programme of 60 EC. The degree programme consists of eight specializations/programmes. The panel endorses the motivation of USG to offer three programmes in English and five specializations in Dutch.

The master programme has a clear and attractive profile, which reflects the educational vision of USG. The panel thinks highly of this vision and of the way it is leading the choices made when designing and operationalising the programme objectives and learning outcomes. The exit qualifications align with the domain-specific reference framework and do justice to the content, level and orientation of the programme. The recently established Advisory Council advises on the latest developments in, and expectations of, the professional field.

The teaching-learning environment of the master programme is strong. The curricula are coherent, the course contents reflect the objectives of the respective specializations, and the small-scale and intensive education approach is conducive to forming an academic community of staff and students. The curriculum is feasible. Students who encounter academic or personal obstacles are monitored and supported. The teaching staff bring a range of complementary substantive, methodological and research expertise to the programme. The multidisciplinary background of the students allows for vivid and fruitful discussions in class, while some students are better prepared than others when entering the programme. In view of the robust admission requirements, the panel considers that the advantage clearly outweighs the disadvantage of a diverse intake.

The programme has a robust assessment system, which is embedded in the provisions and policies of the school and the university. Since the previous accreditation, the master programme has developed a testing plan that links course learning goals to relevant assessment formats. Exams and assignments are transparent, and students receive proper and insightful feedback. The master thesis is assessed meticulously: the sample review showed that assessors take thesis evaluation seriously and put in a lot of effort to ensure that the quality of the thesis is reflected properly in the scores, which in turn are motivated in an insightful way. The programme can also rely on the expertise and operational capacity of the Board of Examiners and the Assessment Committee in assuring the quality of assessment.

Students who eventually graduate the master programme have achieved all learning outcomes. The sample review showed that the overall thesis quality is good: master theses are well structured, clearly embedded in a theoretically-grounded framework and cover a societally relevant and topical theme. Master graduates invariably find a job that is commensurate with their level and the field of their specialization. Alumni are appreciated in their job because of their social, professional and academic skills.

Diversity is on the radar of the master programme, the school and the university. Since the previous accreditation, several initiatives have been taken to enhance diversity among students, among staff, and in course contents. Each master specialization attracts a particular group of students with different and diverse backgrounds.

Across standards and programmes, the panel thinks highly of the ambition of all stakeholders to continuously improve the quality of education and to stimulate the development of students. It is struck by the enthusiasm of both students and staff for the programme, the courses and each other. The panel commends USG for the extensive attention to, and comprehensive offer on, student wellbeing.

In addition to all positive elements, the panel sees three areas for improvement: first, students and staff at USG do not yet reflect the full range of admissible and recruitable candidates, notably those with a migrant background. Second, lecturers may want to make course contents more inclusive of non-Western viewpoints. Third, the panel encourages USG and its master programme to collect the opportunities offered through the specific networks of individual lecturers in order for all students – and notably the international ones – to benefit in an equal way from an even broader range of opportunities.

In sum, the panel issues a positive conclusion on the quality of the master programme Public Administration and Organisation Science. The programme is up to standard on all accounts.

Executive master programme Public Administration and Organisation Science

This evaluation concerns a two-year part-time programme of 60 EC. The degree programme consists of three specializations that are offered in Dutch.

The executive master programme has a clear and attractive profile, which reflects the educational vision of USG. The panel thinks highly of this vision and of the way it is leading the choices made when designing and operationalising the programme objectives and learning outcomes. The exit qualifications align with the domain-specific reference framework and do justice to the content, level and orientation of the programme. The recently established Advisory Council advises on the latest developments in, and expectations of, the professional field.

The teaching-learning environment of the executive master programme is strong. The curricula are coherent and feasible, the course contents reflect the objectives of the respective specializations, and the small-scale and intensive education approach is conducive to forming an academic community of staff and students. The learning objectives on professional skills and attitude are attained in a different way because executive master students already possess professional skills which they gained in practice. The panel therefore endorses the approach to provide a theoretical basis for professional skills and attitude, and to make the connection between the scientific insights obtained in class and the real-world practice on the job. The teaching staff bring a range of complementary substantive, methodological and research expertise to the programme. The multidisciplinary background of the executive master students allows for vivid and fruitful discussions in class, while some students are better prepared than others when entering the programme. In view of the robust admission requirements, the panel considers that the advantage of a diverse intake clearly outweighs the disadvantage.

The programme has a robust assessment system, which is embedded in the provisions and policies of the school and the university. Since the previous accreditation, the executive master programme has developed a testing plan that links course learning goals to relevant assessment formats. Exams and assignments are transparent, and students receive proper and insightful feedback. The executive master thesis is assessed meticulously: the sample review showed that assessors take thesis evaluation seriously and put in a lot of effort to ensure that the quality of the thesis is reflected properly in the scores, which in turn are motivated in

an insightful way. The programme can also rely on the expertise and operational capacity of the Board of Examiners and the Assessment Committee in assuring the quality of assessment. Students who eventually graduate the executive master programme have achieved all learning outcomes. The sample review showed that the overall thesis quality is adequate: executive master students are expected to pay good attention to the academic quality of their research; the bar for producing the end product was put high. Alumni experience the added value of the programme as it yields a broader perspective on their professional career. After their study, they continue to benefit from their training in academic reflection.

Diversity is on the radar of the executive master programme, the school and the university. Since the previous accreditation, several initiatives have been taken to enhance diversity among students, among staff, and in course contents.

Across standards and programmes, the panel thinks highly of the ambition of all stakeholders to continuously improve the quality of education and to stimulate the development of students. It is struck by the enthusiasm of both students and staff for the programme, the courses and each other. The panel commends USG for the extensive attention to, and comprehensive offer on, student wellbeing.

In addition to all positive elements, the panel sees three areas for improvement: first, the panel encourages all responsible bodies to step up their efforts in recruiting more diverse staff. Second, lecturers may want to make course contents more inclusive of non-Western viewpoints. Third, the panel encourages all executive master students to go out of their comfort zone during their study and produce at least part of their thesis outside their own working environment.

While the panel holds the view that each of the three current curricula allows students to achieve the intended learning outcomes, it does welcome the plans for a more uniform programme structure. In this new structure, USG should maintain the individual 'colour' of each programme, while offering room for cross-programme interaction via common courses and shared electives.

In sum, the panel issues a positive conclusion on the quality of the executive master programme Public Administration and Organisation Science. The programme is up to standard on all accounts.

Score table

The panel assesses the programmes as follows:

B Public Administration and Organisation Science

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes	meets the standard
Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	meets the standard
Standard 3: Student assessment	meets the standard
Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes	meets the standard
Standard 5: Diversity	meets the standard
General conclusion	positive

M Public Administration and Organisation Science

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes	meets the standard
Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	meets the standard
Standard 3: Student assessment	meets the standard
Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes	meets the standard
Standard 5: Diversity	meets the standard
General conclusion	positive

M Public Administration and Organisation Science (executive)

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes	meets the standard
Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	meets the standard
Standard 3: Student assessment	meets the standard
Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes	meets the standard
Standard 5: Diversity	meets the standard
General conclusion	positive

The panel assesses the Distinctive Feature Small-scale and Intensive Education of the B Public Administration and Organisation Science as follows:

Criterion A: Intended learning outcomes	meets the standard
Criterion B: Curriculum – contents	meets the standard
Criterion C: Curriculum – learning environment	meets the standard
Criterion D: Intake	meets the standard
Criterion E: Staff	meets the standard
Criterion F: Facilities	meets the standard
Criterion G: Achieved learning outcomes	meets the standard
General conclusion	positive

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.

Prof. Monique Kremer
Chair

Mark Delmartino
Secretary

Date: 25 January 2024

Introduction

Procedure

Assessment

From 25 to 27 September 2023, an independent peer review panel visited the Utrecht University School of Governance (USG, in Dutch: USBO) to assess the quality of four degree programmes. This visit is part of the cluster assessment Public Administration, involving 20 degree programmes at eight higher education institutions across the Netherlands. The assessment followed the procedure and standards described in the NVAO-EAPAA agreement signed on 18 May 2021. Programmes and institutions participating in this cluster assessment want to obtain accreditation by both the Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Body (NVAO) and the European Association for Public Administration Accreditation (EAPAA).

On request of the cluster Public Administration, quality assurance agency Academion coordinated the assessment of the different programmes. It composed the peer review panel in cooperation with the institutions taking into account the expertise and independence of the members and ensuring consistency within the cluster. The composition of the panel was approved by EAPAA on 11 September 2023 and by the NVAO on 14 September 2023.

The coordinator at Academion, Peter Hilderling, instructed the panel chairs on their role in the site visit according to the Panel chair profile (NVAO 2016) in May, and briefed the cluster panel members on the NVAO-EAPAA assessment procedures in June. On behalf of Academion, Mark Delmartino and Esther Poort - both NVAO-certified secretaries - liaised with the institutions and assisted the panels before and during the site visits. Afterwards, they drafted the assessment reports in close co-operation with the chairs and panels.

Assessment of USG degree programmes

Most programmes at USG are offered in Dutch. Hence, it was agreed that almost all site visit sessions would be held in Dutch and that USG would produce a Dutch-language self-evaluation report, with a translation in English. In view of the procedures at EAPAA, whose working language is English, it was decided that the assessment reports would be drafted in English.

In consultation with the management at USG, it was agreed that the assessment visit would combine elements of the traditional accreditation process with a more development-oriented approach. Hence, USG prepared not only a complete self-evaluation report on the four degree programmes under review, but also added a portfolio of documents that describe the past, current and future programme developments it wanted to discuss with the panel during the visit. Similarly, the site visit programme (see appendix 3) consisted of 'traditional' sessions with students and management, as well as thematic sessions on specific aspects of the respective programmes. Given this set-up, it was determined that the development dialogue would be integrated in the thematic sessions. The development related components of these sessions have been captured in a separate development report.

Site visit

Preparing for the site visit, the panel studied the self-evaluation report, appendices and portfolio materials USG had put at disposition. An overview of these materials is provided in appendix 4. Furthermore, the panel reviewed a sample of 15 theses per programme, which were representative in terms of final grades and examiners, and where applicable covered the different specializations or variants. The theses were selected by the panel chair in consultation with the secretary. The selection was on anonymized lists of students who

had graduated in the academic years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. The panel wants to thank the USG team for the abundance of high quality materials and for their assistance in making the documents available in time.

The panel members studied the materials and reviewed the theses and their assessments, and reported their initial findings to the secretary. The secretary processed this input in a document, which served as a basis for discussion during the panel's preparatory meeting on 13 September 2023. During this meeting the panel identified the key strengths of the programmes, the issues that required further discussion on site, and pieces of additional information to support the findings and considerations of the panel. On behalf of the panel, the secretary reported the outcome of this meeting to USG on 15 September.

The Open Consultation Hour for students, teaching and support staff involved in the USG programmes under review was scheduled alongside the preparatory meeting. Eventually, nobody used the opportunity to discuss individually and confidentially with the panel.

The site visit consisted of a mixture of internal meetings, stakeholder-specific sessions, multi-stakeholder thematic sessions and a guided tour through the USG building. The panel wants to express its gratitude for the way these sessions were organized by the USG team and for the enthusiasm and openness of the participants towards the panel. The panel has used the internal meetings to prepare sessions and to discuss its findings on the respective degree programmes. At the end of the site visit, the panel chair publicly presented the preliminary findings.

Report

After the site visit, the secretary wrote a draft report based on the panel's findings. This report is structured along the five NVAO-EAPAA standards, and integrates the seven criteria of the distinctive feature Small-Scale and Intensive Education in the discussion of the respective standards for the bachelor programme. The report was first submitted to the coordinator at Academion for peer assessment and then to the panel for feedback. After processing this feedback, the secretary sent the draft report to USG in order to have it checked for factual inaccuracies. The secretary discussed the ensuing comments with the panel chair, implementing changes where relevant. The panel then finalized the report, and the coordinator sent it to Utrecht University.

Panel

The following panel members were involved in the cluster assessment:

- Andrew Massey, professor of Government, King's College London – chair;
- Monique Kremer, professor of Active Citizenship, University of Amsterdam – chair;
- Ellen Wayenberg, professor of Public Governance and Management at Ghent University and member of the EAPAA Accreditation Committee;
- Calin Hintea, professor of Public Administration and Management at Babes-Bolyai University and member of the EAPAA Accreditation Committee;
- Thurid Hustedt, professor of Public Administration and Management at Hertie School Berlin and member of the EAPAA Accreditation Committee;
- Ernst ten Heuvelhof, emeritus professor of Public Administration, Delft University of Technology;
- Peter Bursens, professor of Political Science, University of Antwerp;
- Hester Glasbeek, advisor Leadership Development at Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, and Senior Partner of Reflect Academy: For Leadership in Learning;
- Anje-Margreet Woltjer, director of SPO Utrecht;
- Ria Janvier, professor of Social Law, University of Antwerp;

- Leo Huberts, emeritus professor of Public Administration, Vrije Universiteit;
- Heinrich Winter, professor of Public Administration, University of Groningen;
- Wim de Boer, lecturer Public Administration and Governance at Haagse Hogeschool;
- Tanja Klenk, professor of Public Administration and Public Policies, Helmut-Schmidt-University Hamburg;
- David Van Slyke, professor of Public Administration, The Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs;
- Geske Dijkstra, emeritus professor of Governance and Global Development, Erasmus University Rotterdam;
- Esther Versluis, professor of European Regulatory Governance, Maastricht University;
- Zoe Radnor, professor of Service Operations Management, Aston University;
- Sophie Vanhoonacker, professor of Administrative Governance, Maastricht University;
- Kees van Paridon, emeritus professor of Economics, Erasmus University Rotterdam;
- Tannelie Blom, emeritus professor of European Integration, Maastricht University – referee;
- Tom Hillenaar, master student Engineering and Policy Analysis, Delft University of Technology – student member;
- Sibel Gökbekir, master student of Complex Systems Engineering and Management at Delft University of Technology, and of International and European Union Law at Erasmus University Rotterdam – student member.

The panel assessing the Public Administration and Organisation Science programmes at Utrecht University consisted of the following members:

- Monique Kremer, professor of Active Citizenship, University of Amsterdam – chair;
- Ellen Wayenberg, professor of Public Governance and Management at Ghent University and member of the EAPAA Accreditation Committee;
- Ernst ten Heuvelhof, emeritus professor of Public Administration, Delft University of Technology;
- Hester Glasbeek, advisor Leadership Development at Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, and Senior Partner of Reflect Academy: For Leadership in Learning;
- Anje-Margreet Woltjer, director of SPO Utrecht;
- Tom Hillenaar, master student Engineering and Policy Analysis, Delft University of Technology – student member.

Mark Delmartino assisted the panel and drafted the assessment reports.

The panel assessed four degree programmes at USG: this report covers the bachelor, master and executive master programmes in Public Administration and Organisation Science. The fourth programme, Research in Public Administration and Organisational Science, is reported in a separate document. For the bachelor programme holding the distinctive feature Small-Scale and Intensive Education (SSIE), the panel also assessed this feature according to the criteria in the NVAO framework of January 2018. In the run-up to the site visit, panel member Ernst ten Heuvelhof was trained by NVAO in the assessment of the distinctive feature. The assessment of the criteria related to the distinctive feature are interwoven through the report, and recapitulated in a separate summary.

Information on the programmes

Name of the institution:	Utrecht University
Status of the institution:	Publicly funded institution
Result ITK:	Positive

Programme name: B Public Administration and Organisation Science
CROHO number: 50007
Level: Bachelor
Orientation: Academic
Number of credits: 180 EC
Specializations or tracks: -
Location: Utrecht
Educational minor: Not applicable
Mode(s) of study: Fulltime
Language of instruction: Dutch
Submission date NVAO: 1 May 2024

Programme name: M Public Administration and Organisation Science
CROHO number: 60446
Level: Master
Orientation: Academic
Number of credits: 60 EC
Specializations or tracks: Governance and Policy
European Governance (dual degree)
Public Management
Organisations, Change and Management
Strategic Human Resource Management
Organising Social Impact
Sports Policy and Sports Management
Communications, Policy and Management
Location: Utrecht
Joint programme: Track European Governance (dual degree with Masaryk University Brno, University of Konstanz and University College Dublin)
Mode(s) of study: Fulltime
Language of instruction: Dutch, English
Submission date NVAO: 1 May 2024

Programme name: M Public Administration and Organisation Science
CROHO number: 75057
Level: Master
Orientation: Academic
Number of credits: 60 EC
Specializations or tracks: Governance and Policy
Management of Public Issues
Organisation, Culture and Management
Location: Utrecht
Mode(s) of study: Parttime
Language of instruction: Dutch
Submission date NVAO: 1 May 2024

Description of the assessment

Organization

This report covers three degree programmes offered by the Utrecht University School of Governance as part of the cluster assessment Public Administration. USG is one of three departments in the Faculty of Law, Economics and Governance, which in turn constitutes one of the seven faculties at Utrecht University (UU). The Dean is the head of the Faculty. Many of the powers regarding organization, coordination and quality assurance of teaching are conferred on the Directors of Education at the respective departments. Decisions regarding the content and structure of the degree programmes at USG are taken by the Director of Education in consultation with the bachelor, master, and executive master degree programme boards. Furthermore, USG has a common Degree Programme Committee (DPC) for both bachelor and master degree programmes, which includes lecturer and student delegates. There is a separate DPC for the executive master programme. The Board of Examiners, with the Assessment Committee as a sub-committee, plays a central role in safeguarding the quality of assessment in all USG degree programmes. The department's numerous contacts with the professional field have recently led to the creation of an Advisory Council. In addition to the information it gathered on the organization of USG from an appendix to the self-evaluation report, the panel met during the visit with representatives of most executive and quality assurance bodies. The materials and the discussions have demonstrated convincingly to the panel that the degree programmes at USG are embedded in a relevant organizational environment.

According to the introduction to the self-evaluation report, USG has opted for a single self-evaluation report covering all four programmes under review. It does so because at every level – bachelor, master, research master and executive master – its programmes share not only a single overarching objective, but also a common vision for teaching. All degree programmes are small-scale and interactive, with a focus on collaborative learning. They also boast a strong connection between academic reflection and the real-world practice of public administration and organizations. Furthermore, in each degree programme there is a close relationship between teaching and research that is taking place in the sections and chair groups of the department. The panel gathered from the written materials, and got ample confirmation during the discussions on site, that the degree programmes have indeed many commonalities. Hence its decision to structure this advisory report in a similar way, i.e. by organising its findings and considerations per NVAO-EAPAA standard, thereby paying attention to both common features and programme-specific elements. The assessment of the criteria related to the distinctive feature are interwoven through the report, and summarized in a dedicated section at the end of the report.

Previous accreditation

In the previous accreditation round, the panel issued a positive conclusion on the bachelor, master and executive master programmes. It did not issue any strong recommendations but made a few suggestions for improvement. The current panel noticed that these suggestions have been considered and integrated in the respective programmes. The panel appreciates in particular the initiative to include and monitor these suggestions in a so-called Development Agenda (for the bachelor programme), as well as the improvements made in all three programmes with regard to assessment. These and other developments/adjustments will be reported in the respective standards.

Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes tie in with the level and orientation of the programme; they are geared to the expectations of the professional field, the discipline, and international requirements.

Findings

According to the self-evaluation report, USG trains motivated individuals who are willing and able to apply academic knowledge in order to play a meaningful part in finding solutions for public issues. The key concern that shapes its curricula is the manner in which organizations with a public function address current social issues, implement their own responsibilities and create public value. In all degree programmes, the focus is on the public administration and organization of public issues in mutual interaction with political and societal developments. From this core goal, the programmes derive learning objectives in three domains:

- Substantive knowledge of public administration and the organization of public issues;
- Conducting research into the public administration and organization of public issues;
- Professional skills and attitude in connection with public administration and the organization of public issues.

The panel gathered from the extensive written materials and the discussions on site that the core goal and its learning objectives are incorporated in the profile of the bachelor, master and executive master programmes. Substantive academic knowledge plays a vital role in each programme, and so does the analysis and evaluation of this knowledge/theoretical insights via critical reflection. Research takes up a prominent position in the programmes as it is considered a core competency needed for an academic approach. The three programmes also feature objectives to help students develop professional skills and a professional attitude.

The panel noticed that the central mission and core objectives of the three programmes are in line with the domain-specific reference framework for Public Administration, Public Governance and Governance and Organisation (PAGO), which was drafted in 2010 and adopted once more in 2022. The panel established that the various elements from this framework have been incorporated in the learning objectives of the three degree programmes in a way that befits USG's specific mission, as was convincingly demonstrated in an overview of the relationships between the programme objectives and the PAGO framework elements.

Similarly, the panel observed that these objectives and their 'translation' into the three degree programmes align with the five Dublin Descriptors: knowledge and insight, applying knowledge and insight, making judgements, communication, and learning skills.

Intended learning outcomes

The panel noticed that the three learning objectives have been operationalized in sets of learning outcomes for each of the degree programmes under review. This organization and operationalization has happened in a similar way across the three programmes. Each learning pathway has its own learning objectives, which in turn coincide with the exit qualifications students in the respective programmes are expected to achieve by the time of their graduation. The intended learning outcomes for the bachelor, master and executive master programmes are reported in Appendix 1 to this report.

The panel agrees with the statement in the self-evaluation report that the learning outcomes for the bachelor programme are ambitious. In terms of substantive learning objectives, the programme addresses

the connection between public issues and a broad spectrum of auxiliary disciplines, making the approach truly multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary. The learning objectives underscore the need to increase the depth and breadth of the student's individual knowledge. The research-related learning objectives focus not only on the breadth of qualitative and quantitative research but also envisage that students complete an entire empirical cycle. Students are also expected to acquire professional skills (critical judgement, communication, cooperation, reflection and meta-cognition) and a professional attitude (ethical behaviour and the value of diversity in perspective and background).

The panel established that the intended learning outcomes are adequate in terms of content (public administration and organization science), orientation (academic) and level (bachelor); they are in line with the requirements of the domain-specific reference framework and reflect its specificity as a broad multidisciplinary and research based education programme. Moreover, the panel recognizes that the ambitions expressed in the learning outcomes align with the distinctive features of a programme that offers small-scale and intensive education.

At the time of the accreditation visit, the master degree programme consists of eight programmes, which will be briefly described in the next section. These programmes align with the research chair groups at USG and thus with the research and substantive expertise of the lecturers. All programmes share the same set of learning outcomes. The panel gathered from the written materials and the discussions on site that the learning outcomes follow the common USG structure operationalizing the learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, research and professional skills. While the learning outcomes of the master programme constitute a stand-alone set of exit qualifications, their formulation is such that they build on the foundations laid in the bachelor programme. In this regard, master students develop solid knowledge in the key area of their chosen programme, perform the various steps in the research process in a more independent way and develop their professional and academic skills to an advanced level.

The panel established that the intended learning outcomes are adequate in terms of content (public administration and organization science), orientation (academic) and level (master). Moreover, they are in line with the requirements of the domain-specific reference framework. During the previous accreditation visit, the then panel advised that the programme could sharpen the intended learning outcomes to do justice to the breadth of the master programme and its individual track 'flavours'. The current panel was informed that the programme did not reformulate the entire set of learning outcomes, but has adjusted the connection between programme learning outcomes and course learning goals to emphasize both the common elements across the programmes and the individual flavours. The panel acknowledged these adjustments and found them relevant and appropriate.

The executive master degree programme consists of three programmes, which are aligned to (a combination of) research chair groups in USG and thus to the research and substantive expertise of the lecturers. The three programmes will be described briefly in the next section. They share the same set of learning outcomes, which follow the common USG structure. The panel observed that the learning outcomes of the executive master are similar but not entirely identical to the initial master degree objectives. In terms of substantive goals and research, the link in the learning outcomes between academic analysis/reflection and individual professional practice is specific to the executive master. The executive master student's current and future role as a professional is explicitly stated in the outcomes on professional skills and attitude. The panel was informed that all degree programmes link science and practice: while this generally means making the step from academic reflection to the real-world practice of public administration and organization science, this step is more likely to be the other way around in the executive master: from real-world practice to academic reflection.

The panel established that the intended learning outcomes are adequate in terms of content (public administration and organization science), orientation (academic) and level (master). Moreover, they are in line with the requirements of the domain-specific reference framework. During the previous accreditation visit, the then panel advised that the distinctive character of the programme as an executive degree with individual specialist tracks could be reflected more strongly in the formulation of the intended learning outcomes. The current panel welcomed the above-mentioned 'deviations' that set apart the executive master learning outcomes from those of the initial master programme. Furthermore, it was informed that the programme has adjusted the connection between programme learning outcomes and course learning goals to emphasize both the common elements across the programmes and the individual features of the specialist tracks. The panel acknowledged these adjustments and found them relevant and appropriate.

Professional field

During the previous accreditation visit, the then panel advised that the programme could establish a work-field advisory committee that also includes (potential) employers from consultancy companies, authorities and think tanks. The current panel was informed that USG established an Advisory Council in 2022 to structurally embed the connection between its degree programmes and the professional field. This council consists of USG alumni holding senior positions across all facets of the public administration and organizational science field. The panel welcomes this development, which it was informed should have been established already a few years ago but was put on hold during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The panel noticed during the thematic sessions that the Advisory Council has already provided relevant advice on some USG programmes. The topics that were tabled at these meetings often originated from the USG Development Agenda and were highlighted in the self-evaluation report as issues for discussion with the panel, as well: the skills trajectory, the product thesis, new developments in digitalization. The panel spoke with several council representatives and noticed that the Advisory Council takes its role as sounding board seriously and that the members are well chosen.

Considerations

Based on the written materials and the discussions on site, the panel considers that the objectives and educational vision of USG are very much integrated in the degree programmes under review. The panel thinks highly of this shared vision and of the way it is leading the choices made when designing, operationalising or adjusting the programme objectives and learning outcomes. The panel observed furthermore a clear ambition and interest among all programme stakeholders to continuously improve the quality of the programmes and stimulate the development of students.

All learning outcomes are formulated in an insightful way and reflect the substance, level and orientation of the respective programme. In the case of the bachelor programme, the exit qualifications are particularly ambitious in substantive breadth and research depth. Moreover, the panel noticed that all three sets of learning outcomes are in line with the requirements of the Dutch domain-specific reference framework PAGO and constitute a strong and precise translation of what each of the programmes stands for.

The panel welcomes the recent establishment of an Advisory Council, which has already provided relevant advice on the degree programmes and will be systematically consulted to inform USG and its programmes on the developments in the professional field.

Conclusion

The panel judges that the bachelor, master and executive master programmes meet standard 1 of the NVAO-EAPAA framework.

The panel concludes that the bachelor programme meets standard A of the framework for the Distinctive Feature “Small-scale and Intensive Education”

Standard 2. Teaching-learning environment

The curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

The panel established, based on the written materials and the discussions on site, that the degree programmes operate in a teaching and learning environment that is built around the same USG-wide principles. It will therefore report first on its findings that apply to the teaching-learning environment of all degree programmes and then address topics pertaining to the individual programmes.

Findings

Learning environment

Based on its review of the programme materials prior to the site visit, the panel held a positive view on the learning environment and indicated that the learning environment reflected the educational philosophy of both university and school. In particular, the panel noticed that all degree programmes at USG are selective, which means that the intake is stable and limited. In these small-scale forms of education students know their lecturers, programme coordinators and other staff members. The contacts are informal and teaching/service staff are easy to approach. The programmes are also intensive: student preparation and participation for courses are crucial, while courses combine curricular and extracurricular elements and have particular attention for individual student development. Moreover, students are involved in assuring the quality of their courses and programmes and have a say in important curriculum developments. The study association Perikles is very present at USG and most students are a member of the association. It organizes several extracurricular activities, both subject-related and social - often in cooperation with USG. Lecturers contribute to the subject-related activities, while Perikles is involved in activities of the department, such as organising the Climate Conference for USG staff and students early 2023. The panel also understood that USG aims to create an academic community of students and staff, and encourages students to make connections with each other within and across cohorts. The fact that all education and research takes place within one and the same building with USG as the sole ‘tenant’ facilitates the gradual build-up of a community. Moreover, it contributes to creating a safe learning environment in which experimentation and making mistakes are seen as natural parts of the learning process.

During the visit, the panel noticed that the positive characteristics of the learning environment are part and parcel of the day-to-day educational reality in the USG programmes. While the bachelor programme holds a distinctive feature small-scale and intensive education, the panel established that in fact also the master and the executive master programme follow the same education ‘regime’. The small-scale nature of the education makes it possible to work with didactically innovative and creative teaching methods. In the bachelor programme, seminars constitute the core of the education delivery. Students are divided in seminar groups of around 30 students each, with each group often being subdivided in two smaller groups, which in turn allows to work in an interactive way with students taking up an active role in class. The link to

professional practice is reflected in the research courses, which address topics supplied by organizations that apply its results. The connection to real-world practice is realized through case studies and guest lectures.

Students from all three programmes confirmed to the panel that the persons behind USG and its programmes go at lengths to build an academic community in which both students and staff feel not only involved but also at home. The guided tour through the USG building demonstrated according to the panel that the set-up of the building facilitates small-scale and intensive education and enhances frequent, spontaneous and low-threshold interaction between students, lecturers and service staff. In sum, the panel found that the learning environment at USG is successful in making students motivated, active and involved in their study.

Student guidance

The panel gathered from the written materials that the USG degree programmes are student-centred with strong attention to both academic guidance and personal wellbeing of the individual bachelor, master and executive master student. In terms of academic guidance, every student is assigned a member of the academic staff as a tutor. In each year of the bachelor and master programme, students have individual meetings with their tutor to address the individual aspect of their study, how they function in the group, and the substantive curricular choices they have to make. The panel was informed that the tutor system for master students is a recent development; in the executive master, the respective programme coordinators take up the role of tutor discussing the academic and professional development of the students. Moreover, academic advice is not limited to these formal/systematic meetings; at any time during the study, tutors are the first point of contact for students who encounter problems that affect their studies.

USG has always paid attention to the personal wellbeing of its students. However, the panel noticed in the written materials and the discussions on site that USG stepped up its efforts since the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to optimize its offer. During the pandemic, every opportunity was seized to ensure students could meet each other and their lecturers. The building was opened as a study place for students and in-person teaching was provided as soon as this was permitted. After the various lockdowns, the interpersonal connections often prove not to be as strong as they were before. Notwithstanding the existing support network within and outside USG and the efforts to build an academic community, the panel was informed that there is concern among teaching and service staff about student well-being post-COVID. In fact, USG has allocated a significant part of the tuition advance funding to support additional initiatives on student wellbeing. In this regard, the panel welcomed the recent initiative for a student “confidante” – a low threshold contact / junior staff member not linked to any of the USG programmes who offers a “listening ear” and can advise students to seek (professional) support. Students indicated that they are aware of the opportunities and that they are making use of these services when they need it. Hence, the panel found that the combination of the existing services and the new initiatives together constitutes a comprehensive offer on student wellbeing that is relevant to and appreciated by students. If anything, USG may want to enhance communication on the wellbeing offer towards its international students.

Discussions with students from all three degree programmes revealed that the feasibility of the programmes is appropriate. The bachelor programme is particularly ‘intensive’ given the number of opportunities for curricular and extra-curricular activities. While programme staff indicated that students do not always graduate in time, students emphasized to the panel that their delay is very often a conscious choice, and not the result of specific obstacles in the curriculum. Hence, many students finish after 42 months because they wanted to enlarge their CV and increase their chances on an ambitious follow-up study or an interesting job perspective. The panel noticed that data on study completion provided by USG confirm the statements of

the bachelor students: roughly 30% finishes in time while another 45% does so in four years. The panel established that these nominal completion rates as such are comparable to other programmes with and without the distinctive feature, yet not significantly higher. However, the discussions have convinced the panel that it is feasible for a very large group of students to complete the programme in time, and that study delay can be mainly attributed to individual, non-curriculum related choices by students. Completion data on the master programme shows that about two thirds of the students finish in time, and that hardly anyone needs more than two years to graduate. Students on the executive master programme tend to do even better, with 77% finishing nominally, i.e. in two years.

Staff

The panel gathered from the written materials and the discussions on site that lecturers are key to implementing the substantive and didactic principles of the degree programmes. The lecturer team is interdisciplinary and possesses expertise in fields including political science, law, economics, sociology and anthropology. The courses they teach are in line with their broader expertise. Almost all USG lecturers have both teaching and research tasks. They fulfil different roles teaching classes, overseeing seminars, coordinating and developing courses, supervising research and providing academic guidance as tutors. Moreover, lecturers have the capacity to carry out these tasks in the context of small-scale and intensive education while also making a valuable contribution to the research programme. The panel was informed that all these elements are taken into account when USG recruits new staff. Newly hired lecturers are given time for personal development during their first year in order to get acquainted with the guiding principles of the degree programmes.

The discussions on site have made the panel endorse the statement in the self-evaluation report that USG views education as a core task and values it accordingly. This appreciation is based on the policies and practices mentioned in the materials, as well as on the feedback from students and the enthusiasm and dedication of the staff the panel spoke to during the visit. Each course is developed and taught by a team of lecturers. Within these teams, lecturers demonstrate complementary strengths in terms of substantive and didactic insights. This enhances the quality of the course and its connection to developments in the field. Given the educational model at UU and USG, lecturers continue to develop their teaching skills: all permanent lecturers have a University Teaching Qualification, while all associate professors and full professors need to obtain the senior qualification STQ: currently 91% of the staff holds a UTQ and 33% also have a STQ. According to the panel, the latter figure is remarkably high and demonstrates the commitment of UU and USG to educational excellence.

In its initial impressions prior to the visit, the panel was concerned that the small-scale and intensive form of education puts a high burden on the lecturers. However, the discussions on site have demonstrated that USG manages to attract and retain a wide range of highly qualified lecturers who fulfil both the substantive and didactical ambitions of the programme. In this regard, several staff indicated that working at USG was an explicit choice because of the small-scale intensive education environment with small groups and many student and staff contacts. As one participant mentioned: “you need a big education heart if you work here.” Moreover, programme stakeholders indicated to the panel that USG also looks at the wellbeing of its lecturers and service staff.

Language of instruction

The degree programmes' official language of instruction is Dutch. The panel was informed that this is a conscious choice of USG. In the case of the bachelor programme, the rationale for this decision is that the core focus should be on public issues in a Dutch context. However, in order to expose students also to the international perspective in public issues, it was decided since the previous accreditation visit that all

students must have earned at least 15 EC (the equivalent of two courses) in an international context. The panel endorses the motivation to offer a Dutch language programme featuring a limited (language and international) requirement. This approach will also facilitate those students who wish to pursue a master programme in English and/or with an international orientation.

Within the master degree programme, three specializations – programmes in the USG jargon - are offered in English. The panel acknowledges USG's guiding principle that teaching will take place in Dutch because this is appropriate for the professional field for which students are prepared. Programmes are offered in English, though, when the content clearly includes international components and, as a result, substantive discussion will particularly benefit from an international classroom that brings together a wide range of national and international perspectives in connection with the public issues on which the programme centres. The programmes European Governance, Organising Social Impact and Strategic Human Resource Management are taught in English because their curricula and the labour market have a strong international orientation. Moreover, the public issues in these programmes require students to acquire intercultural skills. Again the panel endorses both the guiding principle of USG and the individual motivation for the three programmes. Where USG chose English as language of instruction, the panel agrees to the decision to have English language programme titles.

In line with USG's guiding principle, the executive master programme is offered in Dutch: the three programmes attract students who are professionally active in the Dutch labour market and will return to - possibly different - positions within the same field.

Bachelor programme

The bachelor Public Administration and Organisation Science is a three-year full-time 180 EC programme, which is taught in Dutch. In line with the overall university policy, each academic year consists of two semesters, which in turn are divided in two periods of ten weeks each. Students usually follow eight courses of 7.5 EC per year. The first year is common for all students; in the second and third year, students can tailor their study programme through electives, a minor period (courses, internship, or a study period abroad) and by choosing a topic of their personal interest for the qualitative research and the graduation trajectory. The bachelor curriculum is presented in Appendix 2 to this report. The panel gathered from the extensive materials on the curriculum that the objectives of the programme are embedded in the courses and their learning goals. Several courses are explicitly dedicated to substantive knowledge and research, while students acquire the envisaged professional skills and attitude as part of regular courses featuring skills training by professional trainers.

The panel noticed that the curriculum contents have changed since the previous accreditation visit. In line with the societal developments mentioned in USG's Development Agenda, the bachelor programme now pays more attention to sustainability, digitalization and diversity & inclusion. Students are also more exposed in class to ethical issues. The curriculum has a strong focus on research. In fact, one third of all credits are directly connected to research, whereby students do not only learn about research but also conduct research in topics related to public administration and organization science. The panel observed that the graduation track featuring the bachelor thesis amounts to 22.5 EC, which is more substantial than in many other (Public Administration) undergraduate programmes in the Netherlands. Finally, students are trained right from the start to expand their repertoire of professional skills and to cultivate a professional attitude. The panel gathered from the materials and discussions that the programme's efforts in this regard are brought together in the Social and Professional Skills (SPS) programme, which stretches over all three years and a dozen courses where skills and attitude training is aligned to the course content and the course

assignments. The panel welcomes the changes to the curriculum, which are clearly for the better, and commends the programme's trajectory of change using a Development Agenda.

During the visit, the panel discussed at length the admission requirements and the selection procedure. The bachelor programme holding the distinctive feature small-scale and intensive education is entitled to be selective. Data on the past two selection rounds indicate that about 60% of the interested candidates (around 325) submit a complete application file, and that half of these applicants eventually are selected (on average 95). The panel was informed that admission and selection have always had the attention of the programme management and USG, and that based on studies and evaluations on the procedure, the selection mechanism has been refined since the previous accreditation visit. The programme wants to prevent unfair structural bias that could place specific groups of students at a disadvantage. The panel commends the programme for its meticulous selection approach. The "proof of the pudding" – the bachelor students the panel spoke to during the visit and the recent graduates whose bachelor theses it read - shows that the programme succeeds in admitting those students who befit the ambitious objectives of the bachelor programme.

Master programme

The master Public Administration and Organisation Science is a degree programme that consists of eight specializations (also called 'programmes'). The curricula of the respective specializations are presented in Appendix 2 to this report.

- *Governance and Policy* deals with addressing and organising societal issues and the way in which public interests and responsibilities are shaped in a pluralist and changing society;
- *Communications, Policy and Management* focuses on the use of communication for cooperation between organizations and their internal and external stakeholders;
- *Organisations, Change and Management* focuses on the theory and practice of issues relating to the management of change in organizations with a public function;
- *Public Management* pertains to how professionals, professional organizations and social service providers can yield public value within the context of care, justice, education or other sectors;
- *Organising Social Impact* enables students to understand organizing as an action and process to foster institutional transformation, both in theory and in practice. It explores how to have impact and become part of social change;
- *Strategic Human Resource Management* is oriented towards the development of HRM and of knowledge, skills and competencies relating to management;
- *European Governance* concentrates on public issues with European society, including the regulation of financial markets and coping with immigration;
- *Sports Policy and Sports Management* focuses on the organization of the complex and changing world of sports, and on the organizational and policy issues that are relevant in this context.

All specializations have several features in common: they offer small-group teaching using the same didactic principles, courses consist of both substantive specializations and academic and professional skills, the master thesis is a central component in the programme, and each master student is assigned a tutor for academic guidance. Most specializations are set-up as full-time one year programmes of 60 EC featuring substantive courses (22.5 EC), skills courses (15 EC), and a thesis with research seminar (22.5 EC).

The European Governance programme is a dual degree programme. Students follow the first year at a partner university: Masaryk University (Brno, Czech Republic), the University of Konstanz (Germany) or University College Dublin (Ireland). In their second year, students attend Utrecht University and follow 60 EC consisting of three substantive courses, a skills course and a graduation trajectory featuring a research

seminar, research internship and a master thesis. The UU diploma is issued based on this 60 EC taken in Utrecht, and does not include elements taken at the partner universities. The panel therefore only looked at the second year of the specialization, which can be considered a stand-alone 60 EC master programme in the Dutch system.

The Sports Management and Sports Policy programme is a dual programme (*duale opleiding* in Dutch) preparing students for a career in the sports sector. Spread over two years, students combine classes with an internship at a sports (umbrella) association or a local government body dealing with sports policy. The internship, which is not part of the curriculum itself, is woven throughout these two years. The curriculum consists of four substantive courses, one skills course and the master thesis with research seminar that altogether amount to 60 EC. The panel appreciates that the dual programme has created a better integration of the internship and courses since the previous accreditation, and established that this allows students to learn on the job by directly applying knowledge and skills obtained in the curriculum.

In the previous accreditation, the then panel suggested to look for more common ground in the degree programme curriculum, across the specializations. The current panel was informed that this commonality is now visible in the graduation phase where all students receive similar and common support in the methodology workshops of the research seminar. Overall, the panel found the programme curricula to be coherent. It also welcomed the many common features across the specializations, as well as the attempt to streamline the set-up of the programmes, including the master-wide research seminar.

The panel gathered from the extensive materials on the curriculum and the discussions on site that the UGS-wide objectives are embedded in the profile of the master programme and its specializations. Moreover, the common set of intended learning outcomes is translated adequately in the different components and the individual courses of the respective programmes. In every specialization, several courses are explicitly dedicated to substantive knowledge and research, while students acquire the envisaged Academic and Professional Skills (APS) in one or two dedicated courses. In these APS courses, which are designed around the three professional roles consultancy, policy and management, students develop skills that enable them to contribute meaningfully to professional practice based on academic reflection. In the latter half of the curriculum, students complete an independent research project combining substantive and methodological knowledge in order to answer a relevant question of their own choice. During the visit, the panel discussed – both internally and with the programme representatives – the study load allocated to knowledge (22.5 EC), skills (15 EC) and research (22.5 EC). While the panel firmly holds the view that the current curriculum allows students to achieve the intended learning outcomes – as will be elaborated in standard 4 – it also sees room for more extensive attention to substantive (specialist) courses without students missing out on any of the exit qualifications on skills or research. This could for instance take the form of an additional substantive course in exchange for a smaller research component or as part of an integrated skills course.

The panel gathered from the written materials and the discussions on site that the master programme attracts a wide range of students with different educational backgrounds: about 30% of the master students proceed from the BSc programme at USG, others come from other schools at Utrecht University, from different universities in the Netherlands and abroad (notably for the EU Governance programme), or entered the programme with a bachelor degree from a University of Applied Science and a pre-master. The panel noticed that the programme not only has adequate admission and selection procedures, but also a very clear view on the composition of the respective cohorts per specialization in terms of educational background. Students and staff emphasized in their discussions with the panel that this diversity is both a strength and a challenge. The multidisciplinary background of the students on the one hand allows for vivid and fruitful discussions in class, while on the other hand some students are better prepared than others when entering

the programme. In view of the robust admission requirements, however, the panel agrees with the programme management – and the staff and the students - that the advantage clearly outweighs the disadvantage of a diverse intake. Nonetheless, the panel advises the programme to continue reflecting how the entire curriculum of every specialization can be even more attractive for all students, in particular for the ambitious and resourceful USG bachelor graduates.

Executive master programme

The executive master Public Administration and Organisation Science is a degree programme that consists of three two-year part-time programmes of 60 EC. The curricula of the respective programmes are presented in Appendix 2 to this report.

- *Governance and Policy* focuses on societal changes and administrative processes;
- *Organisation, Culture and Management* concentrates on the roles that culture, power and context play in organizations;
- *Management of Public Issues* is about the challenges that organizations with a public function face and how to translate these challenges in a meaningful change approach.

Although each programme has its own profile and (in part) its own target group, the panel noticed that since the previous accreditation, the programmes also have certain aspects in common: they share a common purpose and common learning objectives. In addition, the educational philosophy, the basis of the research methods and the thesis format have been harmonized. The panel welcomes these changes, which are clearly for the better.

The USG-wide objectives on substantive knowledge, research and professional skills and attitude are also an integral part of the executive master programmes. Compared to the bachelor and master programme, however, the learning objectives on professional skills and attitude are attained in a different way because executive master students already possess professional skills which they gained in practice. Hence, the programme provides a theoretical basis for professional skills and attitude, and reflection, and makes the connection between the scientific insights obtained in class and the real-world practice on the job. Following the discussions on site, the panel endorses this approach.

At the time of the site visit, the curriculum set-up of the three programmes was still very different. The Governance & Policy programme consists of ten courses, one oral test and a graduation research project. The Organisation, Culture & Management programme features 8 substantive courses and two research trajectories. The Management of Public Issues programme has six modules, a personal and professional development track and a master thesis. While the panel holds the view that each of the three curricula allows students to achieve the intended learning outcomes – as will be elaborated in standard 4 – it also welcomes the development plans of the programme management for a more uniform structure.

These development plans were discussed in a dedicated thematic session. By streamlining the set-up of the three two-year part-time programmes, students would follow content courses, research methodology classes, professional development skills and work on their thesis more or less during the same periods of the year. Staff and current executive master students indicated that a more common curriculum set-up would potentially enlarge the pool of courses students could benefit from and do away with the disadvantage in the current programmes that courses tend to be quite broad with little room for in-depth investigation of specific themes. Students, however, also emphasized the importance of a cohort feeling as they experience it now. After all, they enrolled for one specific programme and are likely to do so in the future, as well. The panel understands from the discussion that it is important for USG to maintain the individual ‘colour’ of each programme, while also offering room for interaction via (a limited set of) common courses, (a few) electives

and (some) course components. It also advises USG and the programme teams to pay sufficient attention in the preparation phase to the educational aspects of the changes, i.e. that there is alignment between the learning outcomes at programme level and the learning goals at course level, and that students who want to tailor their study programme can eventually demonstrate all learning outcomes.

In line with its findings on the master programme, the panel established that the executive master programmes attract a wide range of students with different educational backgrounds and varying levels of professional experience. This situation gives rise to similar considerations regarding the students' multidisciplinary backgrounds and their previously acquired competencies. Again, the panel is convinced based on the materials and the discussions that the robust admission requirements make the advantage far outweigh the disadvantage of a diverse intake.

Considerations

Based on the written materials and the discussions on site, the panel considers that the teaching-learning environment of the bachelor, master and executive master programmes is strong. This appreciation applies not only to the curriculum, but also to the educational approach, student guidance and staff. The structure of the respective curricula is coherent, the course contents reflect the objectives of the respective programmes and align with the overall learning outcomes, and the teaching approach is conducive to forming a safe learning environment and a community of staff and students. The respective curricula are feasible; students across the three programmes who encounter obstacles in their academic progress are monitored and supported. Moreover, the students are well selected and resourceful, while each of the teaching staff brings a lot of complementary substantive, methodological and research expertise to the programme. The staff's didactical qualifications are exemplary and demonstrate their commitment to educational excellence. In all three programmes the panel was struck by the enthusiasm of both students and staff for the programme, the courses and each other.

The panel endorses the motivation of USG to offer Dutch language programmes which feature a limited (language and international) requirement in the bachelor and three English-language tracks in the master.

While all three degree programmes share the same educational approach, the panel considers that the bachelor programme explicitly fulfils all specific requirements that come with the distinctive feature for a small-scale and intensive teaching and learning environment: content, learning environment, intake, staff, material facilities and success rate.

Furthermore, the panel thought highly of two specific aspects in the USG learning environment: education quality and student wellbeing. All programme stakeholders are involved in delivering good quality education and in continuous reflection on how to make education in general and programmes and courses in particular even better. These quality efforts, in turn, are geared towards the development of the students while keeping an eye on relevant external developments in the field. In addition, the panel wants to commend USG and its staff for the extensive attention to, and comprehensive offer on, student wellbeing.

Finally, the panel wants to acknowledge the many changes that were implemented to the degree programmes since the previous accreditations, as well as the plans that are envisaged for the near future. It thinks the changes are for the better and the plans are well motivated.

Conclusion

The panel judges that the bachelor, master and executive master programmes meet standard 2 of the NVAO-EAPAA framework.

The panel concludes that the bachelor's programme meets standard B, C, D, E and F of the framework for the Distinctive Feature "Small-scale and Intensive Education"

Standard 3. Student assessment

The programme has an adequate system of student assessment in place.

Findings

Assessment system

The panel gathered from the written materials that the system of assessment in the degree programmes is embedded in well-established university-wide policies and practices. Hence, the panel findings and considerations regarding assessment apply equally to the bachelor, master and executive master programmes under review, as well as to the research master. All degree programmes ensure good, reliable and valid assessment using different testing formats for different courses because the learning objectives call for this. Within each degree programme, assessment is based on four key principles: (i) the testing format depends on the knowledge and skills described in the learning objective; (ii) assessment corresponds to the structure of the curriculum; (iii) assessment is an essential part of learning; and (iv) it is vital to have a valid and reliable measurement of students' knowledge and skills.

Since the previous accreditation visit, these principles have led to the elaboration of periodically revised testing plans. The plans establish a link between the course learning goals and assessment; by doing so, they complete the process of constructive alignment from the level of programme outcomes via the individual course learning goals to their translation into assessment. The panel was informed that the elaboration and revision of the testing plans have led in many courses to adjusting the assessment formats. Furthermore, USG finds it important to assess both the potential for cooperation between students and their individual contribution; hence, it upholds the principle that group assessment may not account for more than 50% of the total course grade. The panel has looked into the current testing plan of the bachelor, master and executive master programmes and found these comprehensive and relevant. Each course features several assessment formats and across the curriculum students are exposed to a variety of formats. The most common format differs in the three programmes – written exams in the bachelor, a combination of written exams and group assignments in the master, and essays and papers in the executive master - which according to the panel aligns with the respective focus and purpose of each programme.

Students appreciate the way courses are assessed: while tests require a lot of work, they also notice that testing is taken seriously by the teaching staff. At all times, students are informed timely about the requirements, formats and evaluation criteria of the respective tests. Students indicated, moreover, that there is growing attention to formative assessment in all three programmes, and that they are satisfied with the amount and quality of feedback they receive on their assignments and exams. In this regard, they also appreciated that teaching staff members are available to provide additional feedback if students would ask for this.

During the visit, the panel discussed with several stakeholders the way generative Artificial Intelligence – and in particular the chatbot ChatGPT - is affecting teaching and assessment in the USG programmes. The panel was informed that at the time of the site visit, the university is working on a vision and policy plan for implementation. For now, lecturers are at liberty to decide per course and per assignment to what extent

students can use generative AI. In the teacher manual “*Handreiking GenAI voor docenten*”, lecturers are advised to indicate clearly at the start of every course what students are allowed to do and what not. Moreover, if lecturers want to include generative AI as part of a course learning goal, then it is important that students are taught how to use it responsibly. Students from all three degree programmes confirmed that ChatGPT has become an integral part of their personal and professional life. In class, lecturers use and discuss it to very different extents. While most lecturers indicate what students are allowed to do and what not, this is not always entirely clear in every course and for every assignment. Moreover, those students and staff who belong to the ‘early adopters’ of generative AI mentioned that USG could do more to embrace the opportunities rather than focus on the challenges of the new system. The Board of Examiners indicated that since the ‘launch’ of ChatGPT it first focused on fraud prevention, then it reviewed the impact of generative AI on the existing assessment formats, and now it is involved in looking for ways how to include generative AI in education. The panel is aware that the developments in generative AI and the wide availability of ChatGPT have taken the lecturers, programmes and institutions by surprise. It welcomes the various initiatives by different stakeholders and at various levels in the university. The panel advises the programmes to ensure that in all courses and for all assignments, there is clarity among lecturers, examiners and students as to what is allowed and what not.

In the previous section, the panel mentioned that USG is constantly striving to make the (high) quality of its education better. This also applies to assessment. While USG is confident that its programmes rely on proper assessment provisions, it is looking for ways to adjust its rather traditional system of assessment. In a thematic session on the development of assessment, stakeholders across programmes indicated that they are looking for a balanced approach in their assessment methods, to ensure that students focus on the long-term learning experience in their study rather than aiming to meet only short-term goals (i.e. pass an exam). According to the panel, this is certainly a path worth investigating/pursuing, provided it is done so for educational/didactical reasons. At the level of individual courses and assessments, students indicated that some assignments such as skills reflection reports could be assessed by a pass/fail, while it is appropriate to get a score on a written knowledge-oriented test. Hence, the panel advises USG to incorporate development oriented feedback in such a way that students can build on it for future assignments. As part of another discussion, the panel welcomed the recent initiative to pilot so-called product theses in the master programme. However, in order for such theses to constitute a real alternative graduation product, the learning goals and assessment criteria should be adjusted.

Thesis assessment

Students in all degree programmes conclude their studies by carrying out a large graduation research project to demonstrate the achievement of the programme learning outcomes. As part of its external review, the panel studied a representative sample of 15 theses per programme, submitted in the academic years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 and including the various (executive) master specializations. While the quality of the theses is addressed in the next section on Achieved Learning Outcomes, the panel also looked at the completed evaluation forms.

Overall, the panel was satisfied with the way the theses in all three programmes had been assessed. This appreciation covers both the scores students obtained for the overall thesis product and for the individual assessment criteria, and the assessors’ written feedback on the evaluation form. In so far as the bachelor programme is concerned, the panel generally agreed with the final scores and found all evaluation forms to be completed in an insightful way. The outcome for the master programme was similar: the panel agreed to most of the final scores, with only small differences between quality, score and rubric, while all evaluation forms had been completed properly. Although it commented on a few thesis scores in the executive master

programme, the panel agreed to most of the final scores and reported that the large majority of evaluation forms contained a proper motivation.

According to the panel, the bachelor, master and executive master programmes take thesis assessment seriously with almost all assessors putting in good efforts to make feedback extensive, meticulous and insightful. In fact, the feedback informs students – and external reviewers – not only about the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis execution but also provides insight in how assessors arrived at the overall/criteria scores. Furthermore, the panel noticed that the programmes have taken on board the recommendation of the previous assessment committee to ensure that every thesis is assessed independently by the supervisor and by the second reader. For each thesis, separate evaluation forms are now completed before the two assessors meet and converge these into a shared assessment.

Assuring assessment quality

USG has a single Board of Examiners for all four degree programmes. The Board consists of six internal members (USG lecturers) and one external member, an education expert from UU's Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences. The internal members also constitute the Assessment Committee. The panel gathered from the written materials and the discussions on site that the Board of Examiners consists of experienced and dedicated members who fulfil their different tasks as Board and Committee competently and meticulously. The Board of Examiners had a vital role in implementing the testing policy during the COVID-19 period. During the pandemic, the Board of Examiners was very much involved in adjusting the exams to ensure that the quality of assessment remained intact. Also after the lockdown, the Board remained involved in all assessment-related aspects of courses and curriculum adjustments.

During the visit, the Board of Examiners confirmed that - in line with the Annual Reports from previous years – also recently there have been no specific issues to report with regard to ensuring the assessment quality of the three degree programmes. The Board does not have many requests for individual study programme approvals because almost all students take elective courses that have been validated by their programme and the Board of Examiners before.

The panel noticed furthermore that the Assessment Committee plays an important role in safeguarding the quality of assessment and examinations. The Committee systematically monitors the quality of testing in all USG courses by means of a six-year cycle. The panel thought highly of the Committee's practice to review every year the programme theses with the lowest passing grades in terms of quality, grading and completed assessment form. The panel has looked at some of the Assessment Committee reports on the quality of course assessment and thesis assessment and found these elaborate and useful as they point exactly to those flaws an external committee would notice after a sample review. According to the panel, these reports are taken seriously – flaws are reported and suggestions are followed up – because it did not find any flaws in the thesis assessments.

Considerations

Based on the written materials and the discussions on site, the panel considers that the bachelor, master and executive master programmes have a robust assessment system, which is embedded in the provisions and policies of the school and the university. Since the previous accreditation visit, the programmes have elaborated a testing plan to link the course learning goals to relevant assessment formats. These plans have led to some courses adjusting their assessments and to a current practice in which students can demonstrate their competencies in different ways. The course assignments and exams are transparent in terms of requirements, formats and evaluation criteria, and students receive proper and insightful feedback on their tests.

The assessment of the thesis is organized in a similarly transparent and meticulous way. Based on its sample review of 15 theses and their evaluation per programme, the panel considers that assessors take thesis evaluation seriously and put in a lot of effort to ensure that the quality of the thesis is reflected properly in the scores, which in turn are motivated in the insightful written feedback.

Furthermore, the panel thinks highly of the expertise and operational capacity of the Board of Examiners and the Assessment Committee. The Board is clearly on top of issues with regard to the bachelor, master and executive master programmes, while the regular quality reviews of course and thesis assessments by the Assessment Committee ensure that possible flaws are picked up swiftly and repaired accordingly.

In sum, the panel is convinced by the way assessment is organized at USG in general and in the bachelor, master and executive master programmes in particular. Moreover, it highly appreciates the efforts of USG and the programme teams to continuously strive for further quality improvement in assessment. Having read the materials, two panel members shared the following impressions: “there is a constant attention and discussion regarding assessment types, grading and feedback, as well as an acute awareness of the need to ensure connection between course content and the different types of assessment”; and “the institution brings a convincing story about how it assures that assessment fulfils the general quality requirements. Assessment is seen explicitly as a part of education with attention for the learning dimension of assessment. Giving and receiving feedback has its place as part of education and as a professional skill.” These positive impressions have been confirmed during the visit and were eventually validated by the entire panel.

Conclusion

The panel judges that the bachelor, master and executive master programmes meet standard 3 of the NVAO-EAPAA framework.

Standard 4. Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Findings

There are two ways to establish whether the programme learning outcomes have been achieved – through a quality review of the final products and through checking what graduates are doing after they finished the programme. The panel has looked at both elements when assessing the end level qualifications of the bachelor, master and executive master programme.

Thesis quality

As part of its external review, the panel studied a sample of 15 bachelor theses, which had been submitted in the academic year 2021-2022. The sample was representative in terms of final scores and included a variety of thesis supervisors. Overall, the panel found that each thesis fulfilled at least the minimum standards of a final product at academic bachelor level. It agreed in most cases with the final score given by the assessors: theses with a high score were indeed of better quality than those who received a lower (pass) mark.

In most cases the panel found the quality of the bachelor theses to be more than satisfactory, and thought several theses were good to very good. In a few cases, the panel thought that the bachelor theses approached a quality level that was close to the master thesis. Panel members reported, moreover, that the bachelor theses had a good structure and that students formulated clear theoretical and empirical research

questions. Taking into account the level of the three degree programmes under review, the panel thought most highly of the bachelor thesis quality. If anything, the panel noted that the bachelor theses are structured according to a fairly fixed pattern. The programme may want to consider giving (the many good) students some more space to work according to their own structure.

As part of its external review, the panel studied a sample of 15 master theses, which had been submitted in the academic year 2021-2022. The sample was representative in terms of final scores and programme specializations. Overall, the panel found that each thesis fulfilled at least the minimum standards of a final product at academic master level. It agreed in most cases to the final score given by the assessors: theses with a high score were indeed of better quality than those who received a lower (pass) mark.

In several cases, the panel found the quality of the master theses to be more than satisfactory. The master theses are well structured, clearly embedded in a theoretically-grounded framework and cover a societally relevant and topical theme. In comparison to its review of the bachelor theses, however, the panel thought the quality leap between bachelor and master level theses was not always visible. Confronted with these findings, the programme team provided useful clarifications regarding the different programme profiles and varying backgrounds of the master students. Moreover, programme representatives emphasized that bachelor and master theses have different objectives with master students having to meet higher level learning goals. The panel was shown a document in which these goals are spelled out in detail listing both the evaluation criteria and the minimum criteria for a 'sufficient' bachelor and master thesis, respectively. Following these clarifications, the panel concluded that the envisaged quality of a master thesis is definitely higher than the expectations for a bachelor thesis.

As part of its external review, the panel studied a sample of 15 executive master theses, which had been submitted in the academic years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. The sample was representative in terms of final scores and programme specializations. Overall, the panel found that each thesis fulfilled at least the minimum standards of a final product at academic master level. It agreed in almost all cases to the final score given by the assessors: theses with a high score were indeed of better quality than those who received a lower (pass) mark.

The panel noted that also in the lower-scoring theses, it was clear that students were expected to pay good attention to the academic quality of their research and that the bar for producing the end product was put high. Some panel members noticed that in a few cases the research proposal and the thesis work seemed to bring students in an awkward position given their professional connection to the object of research. This finding was discussed during the thematic session on the executive master thesis format with the panel suggesting that all executive master students should go out of their comfort zone and produce at least part of their thesis outside their own working environment.

Performance of graduates

The panel gathered from the written materials and the discussions with recent bachelor graduates that almost all students proceed (immediately) to a master programme. During their bachelor study, students discuss their plans beyond graduation and are supported in finding the right specialization or follow-up programme. The panel was shown an interesting infographic linking two entire cohorts of bachelor graduates to their respective follow-up master programmes. Roughly half of the graduates go on to pursue a (research) master programme at USG. The other half enrolls in a master programmes at Utrecht University, at other Dutch universities or abroad. Several former bachelor students indicated to the panel that their social, professional and academic skills qualified them well for a master programme beyond the immediate comfort zone of public administration and organization science. In this regard, the panel was struck by the sheer

variety of master degrees in the Netherlands and abroad that are open to USG bachelor graduates. It also confirms the viewpoint of the panel that upon finishing their programme at USG, graduates are fully equipped to pursue high-level and demanding follow-up studies. As discussed under Standard 2, completion rates comparable to similar programmes with and without the distinctive feature Small-scale and Intensive Education. Study delay can in most cases be related to individual, non-curriculum related choices by students.

According to data gathered by the programme, all master graduates who actively look for a job manage to find employment. Just over half of the alumni work in the public or semi-public sector and are employed either by national, regional or local governments, or by institutions in the domain of healthcare, education or housing. Other graduates work for private organizations, such as consultancy firms. Finally, some alumni move on to a PhD trajectory. Several former master students indicated to the panel that they are appreciated in their job because of their social, professional and academic skills.

The career trajectories of executive master graduates vary greatly. Alumni indicated that they all experience the added value of the programme in their day-to-day-work as it yields a broader perspective on their professional career. Very often they are offered new opportunities inside or outside their own organization shortly after obtaining their diploma. Graduates emphasized the importance of academic reflection during their study: it causes them to reflect on their professional practice and to adjust their own actions.

Considerations

Based on the written materials, the thesis sample and the discussions on site, the panel considers that students who eventually graduate the bachelor, master and executive master programmes have effectively achieved all learning outcomes. The clear link in the programme set-up between course learning goals and programme learning outcomes also applies to the thesis trajectory where students demonstrate their competencies as bachelor/master level graduates with an academic orientation. In all three programmes, the panel found the thesis quality to be well beyond the minimum requirements. Taking into account the level of the students, the panel found the quality of the bachelor theses particularly strong.

Furthermore, the panel concludes that upon graduation students find a job that is in line with the objective of their respective programme. The competencies acquired by the bachelor graduates allow them to pursue master programmes in a wide range of domains. Completion rates comparable to similar programmes. Study delay can in most cases be related to individual, non-curriculum related choices by students. Master graduates invariably find a job that is commensurate with their level and the field of their specialization. Executive master students often explore new career opportunities shortly after graduation and continue to benefit in their (new) job from the reflective skills they acquired at USG. In sum, the panel considers that every degree programme at USG constituted an important lever for the career of its graduates.

Conclusion

The panel judges that the bachelor, master and executive master programmes meet standard 4 of the NVAO-EAPAA framework.

The panel concludes that the bachelor programme meets standard G of the framework for the Distinctive Feature “Small-scale and Intensive Education”

Standard 5. Diversity

Staff and student populations should adequately reflect society, in various ways. The programme has an adequate strategy for dealing with the diverse backgrounds of students.

Findings

The panel gathers from the written materials and the discussions on site that in terms of diversity, the bachelor, master and executive master programmes are embedded in the principles, policies and provisions of the school and the university.

In as far as students are concerned, the panel noticed that the diversity of the intake differs according to the profile of the respective programmes and their specializations. Across all programmes, it seems that gender diversity among students is not an issue. Moreover, the English-language specializations in the master programme manage to attract a fair share of international students from different nationalities, which in turn boosts the international and intercultural exposure and competencies of Dutch and non-Dutch students alike. International students tend to be European or from the Northern hemisphere.

In terms of cultural diversity, the programme teams indicated that the number of first generation students is growing. While the executive master programmes traditionally attract many students with a professional bachelor degree, the number of master students who enter their programme with a bachelor degree from a University of Applied Science is increasing steadily. The panel was informed that the transition to an academic (executive) master programme is often a sign of (intellectual) emancipation.

Although it is not allowed for universities to record the ethnic background of students, it is clear to the panel that none of the degree programmes so far managed to attract an ethnically diverse group of students. Nonetheless, executive master students indicated that some of their fellow students – notably in the programme Organisation, Culture & Management - have a migrant background. In fact, this particular programme recruits in a professional domain with a more diverse workforce, which in turn is reflected in the student body.

When discussing the admission and selection of bachelor students, the programme management indicated that according to internal analyses, the selection procedure does not structurally eliminate certain groups of students. However, the diversity of the bachelor student population does not accurately reflect the potential group of admissible candidates in all areas, notably students with a migrant background. The panel agrees with the programme team that a student population with greater diversity would be of added value for both the degree programme and the students. Given that diversity is also a key theme of USG research, the panel invites USG and the programme to go the extra mile and invest – even more than before – in branding, outreach and communication, and to take its efforts also beyond (the province of) Utrecht. Moreover, the programme may want to consider adapting the selection procedure to ensure that the enhanced outreach efforts lead to applications from a more diverse group of admissible candidates. .

In as far as staff is concerned, the panel noticed a similar diversity situation as with the students: it seems that gender diversity among staff is not an issue, with male and female staff being fairly equally represented in the different academic and service categories. Given the emphasis on Dutch language programmes, the staff tends to be Dutch (or Dutch-speaking), while the research groups also features international staff. Moreover, the ethnic diversity of the staff team is limited and in this way very much reflects the student body. Also in this case, the panel agrees with the programme stakeholders that a more culturally diverse staff team would be of added value to students and staff alike.

Further to what was mentioned in the section on learning environment, inclusion is at the heart of what USG and its educational philosophy stand for. According to the panel, USG and its small-scale and intensive degree programmes succeed in creating an academic community of students and staff, as well as a safe learning environment. In its discussions with both students and staff, the panel noticed that, notwithstanding individual staff efforts, there is room for a more comprehensive approach to making course contents more inclusive with regard to non-European issues.

Throughout the visit, the panel noticed that students across the degree programmes, and certainly in the initial one-year master programme, are sometimes offered (extra-)curricular opportunities (for a study period abroad, an internship, a conference participation, ...) that stem from personal contacts of individual teaching staff/supervisors. The networks of staff tend to be extensive but also personal. Hence, the opportunities that are eventually offered to students depend partly on the individual staff, as well as on the particular occasion and timing. By mapping these contacts/networks and making them available to the entire student body, the diverse group of (master) students (in terms of their nationality, study background, and institution of origin) could benefit in a more equal way from an even broader range of opportunities.

Considerations

The panel considers that diversity is on the radar of the programmes, the school and the university. It welcomes the initiatives taken so far and acknowledges the progress made since the previous accreditation visit. Moreover, USG is very strong in creating an academic community and a safe learning environment that is inclusive for both students and staff.

According to the panel, the diversity of the student intake reflects the profile of the respective programmes and their specializations. Similarly, the current staff reflects the research topics of the school, as well as its focus on Dutch-language programmes. However, both the students and the staff at USG do not accurately reflect the potential group of admissible and recruitable candidates in all areas, notably regarding students and staff with a migrant background. Hence, the panel encourages all responsible bodies to step up their efforts in attracting a more diverse student group and in recruiting more diverse staff. In this regard, the panel invites in particular the bachelor team to recruit more widely in an attempt to enhance the diversity of the students who apply for – and eventually enrol in – the bachelor programme. It also urges the staff teams to make course contents more inclusive with regard to non-European issues. Finally, USG may want to collect the opportunities offered through the specific networks of individual lecturers in order for all students to benefit in an equal way from an even broader range of opportunities.

Conclusion

The panel judges that the bachelor, master and executive master programmes meet standard 5 of the NVAO-EAPAA framework.

Distinctive Feature Small-Scale Intensive Education

The bachelor programme Public Administration and Organisation Science applied for – and obtained – the distinctive feature Small-Scale and Intensive Education in 2013. Four years later, the panel performing the practice-based assessment considered that further progress had been made, both in terms of the evaluation criteria and with regard to the points of attention raised by the initial review team. Another six years later, in 2023, the bachelor programme and its distinctive feature are up for re-accreditation. The current assessment panel has looked at whether the programme still meets the conditions for granting the distinctive feature. In line with the NVAO Guidelines, the panel checked whether small-scale and intensive education has evolved into a quintessential feature of the bachelor programme. In the core part of this report, the panel has taken into account the criteria of the distinctive feature when assessing the quality of the bachelor programme. In this section, the panel brings together its specific findings and considerations on these criteria and indicates whether an extension of the “Small-scale and intensive education” distinctive feature is justified.

The panel considers that the **intended learning outcomes** for the bachelor programme are ambitious. In terms of substantive learning objectives, the programme addresses the connection between public issues and a broad spectrum of auxiliary disciplines, making the approach truly multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary. The learning objectives underscore the need to increase the depth and breadth of the student’s individual knowledge. The research-related learning objectives focus not only on the breadth of qualitative and quantitative research but also envisage that students complete an entire empirical cycle. In addition, students are expected to acquire professional skills, as well as a professional attitude. According to the panel, the intended learning outcomes are adequate in terms of content, orientation and level, and particularly ambitious in substantive breadth and research depth.

The panel observed that the **curriculum contents** have changed since the previous visit and considers that these changes are for the better. The curriculum now pays attention to a wider variety of domains, including ethics, sustainability, digitalization and diversity. Research takes up considerable credits and all students follow a dedicated social and professional skills programme. Together with USG, the study association Perikles organizes several social and subject-related extra-curricular activities. The objectives of the programme are embedded in the courses and their learning goals.

The panel considers that the bachelor programme features a strong and challenging **learning environment**, which reflects the educational philosophy of the university and the school. The small-scale nature of education allows informal contacts between students and staff, as well as didactically innovative and creative teaching methods in class. The programme is also intensive: student preparation and participation for courses are crucial, while courses combine curricular and extracurricular elements and have particular attention for individual student development. According to the panel, the learning environment contributes to (the creation of) an academic community of students and staff, and ensures that the curriculum is and remains feasible.

As a selective programme, the **intake** is stable and limited. Data on past selection rounds show that about 60% of the interested candidates submit a complete application file, and that half of these applicants eventually are selected. The panel was informed that the selection has been refined since the previous accreditation visit because the programme wants to prevent unfair structural bias that could place specific student groups at a disadvantage. The panel commends the programme for its robust admission procedures and its meticulous selection approach which succeeds in admitting those students who benefit the ambitious objectives of the bachelor programme.

According to the panel, the **staff** is key in implementing the substantive and didactic principles of the programme. The lecturer team is interdisciplinary, possesses a broad substantive expertise and fulfils different roles like teaching classes, overseeing seminars, coordinating and developing courses, supervising research and providing academic guidance as tutors. When recruiting new staff, USG looks for lecturers who have the potential to carry out these different tasks also in the context of small-scale and intensive education. Once employed, staff is given time for personal development to get acquainted with the guiding principles of the degree programmes, while senior colleagues also continue to develop their teaching skills: currently 91% of the staff holds a university teaching qualification and 33% also have a senior qualification. According to the panel, the latter figure is remarkably high and demonstrates the commitment of the programme to educational excellence.

In terms of **facilities**, all education and research, as well as big part of the extra-curricular activities take place within one and the same building where USG is the sole 'tenant'. The guided tour through the building showed the panel that its set-up facilitates small-scale and intensive education and enhances frequent, spontaneous and low-threshold interaction between students, lecturers and service staff. The panel considers that the facilities play an important role in building up an academic community and creating a safe learning space.

In order to assess the **achieved learning outcomes**, the panel studied a sample of 15 bachelor theses and checked what alumni have been doing upon graduation. The graduation track amounts to 22.5 EC, which is considerable. While each thesis fulfilled at least the minimum standards of a final product at academic bachelor level, the panel found many theses to be very good, approaching master thesis quality. Several alumni indicated that their social, professional and academic skills qualified them for a master programme beyond public administration and organization science. Acknowledging the sheer variety of master degrees in the Netherlands and abroad that are open to USG bachelor graduates, the panel considers that graduates are fully equipped to pursue high-level and demanding follow-up studies after they finished the bachelor programme at USG. Nominal completion rates are comparable to other similar programmes, with and without the distinctive feature. Students emphasized to the panel that study delay is very often not related to the curriculum, but a conscious choice by students because they wanted to enlarge their CV and increase their chances on an ambitious follow-up study or an interesting job perspective before graduation. The panel concludes that the completion rates reflect this situation, and that below the surface of these numbers, the programme offers an intensive and feasible curriculum to students.

Based on the findings and considerations in the report and the above summary, the panel considers that the bachelor programme meets all seven criteria of the distinctive feature Small-Scale and Intensive Education. Moreover, the written materials and the discussions on site have convinced the panel that small-scale and intensive education has become an quintessential part of the bachelor programme Public Administration and Organisation Science at USG. As a result, the panel's **overall assessment** of the distinctive feature Small-Scale and Intensive Education in the bachelor programme Public Administration and Organisation Science is **positive**.

General conclusion NVAO-EAPAA framework

The panel has established that the bachelor, master and executive master programmes at USG meet all five NVAO-EAPAA standards under consideration: intended learning outcomes, teaching-learning environment, assessment, achieved learning outcomes and diversity.

As a result, the panel's overall assessment of the quality of the bachelor programme Public Administration and Organisation Science is **positive**.

As a result, the panel's overall assessment of the quality of the master programme Public Administration and Organisation Science is **positive**.

As a result, the panel's overall assessment of the quality of the executive master programme Public Administration and Organisation Science is **positive**.

General conclusion Distinctive Feature Small-scale and Intensive Education

Furthermore, the panel has established that the bachelor programme at USG meets all seven criteria of the distinctive feature Small-Scale and Intensive Education: intended learning outcomes, programme content, learning environment, intake, staff, material facilities, and achieved learning outcomes. It considers that small-scale and intensive education has become an integral part of the bachelor programme.

As a result, the panel's overall assessment of the distinctive feature Small-Scale and Intensive Education in the bachelor programme Public Administration and Organisation Science is **positive**.

Development points

Given its overall positive conclusion, the panel does not issue any strong or binding recommendations. However, the materials and discussions have revealed a number of areas where the panel sees room for improvement. Hence the following suggestions:

1. *All programmes*: Step up efforts in attracting a more diverse student group and in recruiting more diverse staff, for instance by enhancing outreach activities to attract more diverse applicants.
2. *Both master's programmes*: Investigate opportunities to make course contents more inclusive of non-Western viewpoints.
3. *Master's programme*: Collect the opportunities offered through the specific networks of individual lecturers in order for all students – and notably the international ones – to benefit in an equal way from an even broader range of opportunities.
4. *Executive's master programme*: Encourages all executive master students to go out of their comfort zone during their study and produce at least part of their thesis outside their own working environment.
5. *Executive's master programme*: Continue developing the plans for a more uniform programme structure, maintain the individual 'colour' of each programme, while offering room for cross-programme interaction via common courses and shared electives.

Appendix 1. Intended learning outcomes

Bachelor Public Administration and Organisation Science

Kerndoel van de opleiding Bestuurs- en organisatiewetenschap is: Gemotiveerde mensen opleiden die vanuit academische kennis over besturen en organiseren betekenisvol willen en kunnen zijn in het (helpen) oplossen van publieke vraagstukken.

Om dat te bereiken heeft de opleiding drie leerlijnen:

1. Inhoud van het besturen en organiseren van publieke vraagstukken: Kennis en begrip die belangrijk zijn voor het begrijpen en analyseren van besturen en organiseren van publieke vraagstukken in context. Daarnaast de cognitieve vaardigheden om deze kennis te gebruiken in concrete situaties en voor het kritisch beschouwen van theorie en praktijk.
2. Onderzoek naar het besturen en organiseren van publieke vraagstukken: De vaardigheden om het besturen en organiseren van publieke vraagstukken, vanuit verschillende onderzoeksbenaderingen, te onderzoeken en daarmee inzichten te genereren die zowel wetenschappelijk als maatschappelijk relevant zijn.
3. Professioneel handelen bij het besturen en organiseren van publieke vraagstukken: De vaardigheden en houding die nodig zijn om, vanuit inhoudelijke kennis en onderzoeksvaardigheden, een betekenisvolle en professionele rol te kunnen spelen bij het oplossen van publieke vraagstukken.

Voor de Bacheloropleiding Bestuurs- en organisatiewetenschap betekent dit voor elk van de leerlijnen de volgende opleidingsdoelen.

Inhoud van het besturen en organiseren van publieke vraagstukken

De afgestudeerde:

1. heeft kennis en begrip van de basistheorieën van de Bestuurs- en organisatiewetenschap, in het bijzonder op het gebied van (a) bestuur, beleid, besluitvorming en implementatie, (b) organisaties en organisatieprincipes en (c) de samenwerkingsvormen tussen organisaties voor het oplossen van publieke vraagstukken en kan op deze theorieën op een basis niveau kritisch reflecteren;
2. heeft kennis en begrip van de voor besturen en organiseren relevante basis van de steundisciplines sociologie, psychologie, politicologie, economie, recht en filosofie en heeft inzicht in het belang van deze basis voor publieke vraagstukken;
3. heeft inzicht in de maatschappelijke, politieke, historische, internationale en interculturele dimensies van het besturen en organiseren van publieke vraagstukken en heeft oog voor de diversiteit aan benaderingen en achtergronden die hierbij een rol spelen;
4. heeft zich in aspecten van het besturen en organiseren van publieke vraagstukken in het bijzonder verdiept en heeft zich verbreed door inzicht in zelfgekozen thema's binnen en/of buiten het vakgebied van Bestuurs- en organisatiewetenschap;
5. kan deze theoretische ondergrond en de reflectie daarop in delen en in zijn geheel gebruiken bij het analyseren van praktijksituaties op het gebied van besturen en organiseren van publieke vraagstukken en deze analyse omzetten in theoretisch onderbouwde handelingsrichtingen.

Onderzoek naar het besturen en organiseren van publieke vraagstukken

De afgestudeerde:

1. heeft kennis en begrip van, en inzicht in de basis van kwalitatieve en kwantitatieve methoden voor onderzoek naar het besturen en organiseren van publieke vraagstukken;
2. heeft inzicht in de fundamentele wetenschapsfilosofische veronderstellingen van onderzoek en onderzoeksmethoden en kan dit inzicht toepassen op eigen onderzoek en onderzoek van anderen;
3. kan een duidelijke en onderzoekbare probleemstelling formuleren voor onderzoek naar maatschappelijke en wetenschappelijk relevante elementen van het besturen en organiseren van publieke vraagstukken vanuit een lokaal, nationaal, internationaal en vergelijkend perspectief;
4. kan in een probleemstelling vervatte begrippen op adequate wijze operationaliseren; een onderwerp zowel theoretisch als empirisch bestuderen, in onderlinge samenhang; daarover een heldere, synthetiserende conclusie trekken; en de resultaten gebruiken voor het beantwoorden van de vraag of het bijdragen aan verheldering en zo mogelijk oplossing van een publiek vraagstuk.

Professioneel handelen bij het besturen en organiseren van publieke vraagstukken

Voor professionele vaardigheden:

De afgestudeerde:

1. kan een kritisch oordeel vormen dat mede gebaseerd is op relevante sociaal-maatschappelijke, wetenschappelijke en ethische aspecten, zoals verantwoordelijkheid en integriteit;
2. is in staat om over de basis van het besturen en organiseren van publieke vraagstukken en over onderzoek daarnaar in de Nederlandse en Engelse taal zowel schriftelijk als mondeling adequaat te communiceren met een publiek bestaande uit specialisten en/of niet-specialisten en daarbij oog te hebben voor de maatschappelijke gevolgen van die communicatie. De opleiding is zodanig ingericht dat de student kennis en vaardigheden met betrekking tot Engelse taalvaardigheid verwerft waarmee de student na afronding van de bachelor voldoet aan de toelatingseisen met betrekking tot Engelse taalvaardigheid van een masteropleiding in Nederland;
3. bezit de vaardigheden om constructief ideeën uit te wisselen en samen te werken en heeft daarvoor in het bijzonder het vermogen om op de eigen rol en eigen sterktes en zwaktes bij samenwerken te reflecteren, inzicht in de basis van dynamiek van groepen en in belangentegenstellingen en heeft de belangrijkste competenties om deze belangen op een constructieve manier uit te onderhandelen;
4. kan gefundeerde, constructieve feedback op gedrag en prestaties van anderen geven en kan ontvangen feedback gebruiken voor het ontwikkelen van eigen handelen;
5. bezit de zelfstandige meta-cognitieve vaardigheden die noodzakelijk zijn om te beginnen aan een Nederlandstalige of Engelstalige masteropleiding.

Voor een professionele houding:

De afgestudeerde heeft zich ontwikkeld richting een houding die getuigt van:

1. oog voor de waarde van diversiteit in benaderingen van vraagstukken en waardering voor de rol die diverse achtergronden daarin spelen in zowel nationale als internationale contexten;
2. kritische reflectie op eigen waarden en handelen in relatie tot mensen met andere (culturele) achtergronden en inlevingsvermogen in de situatie van anderen om van daaruit op een waardevolle manier te kunnen samenwerken en verbindingen te maken;
3. sensitiviteit voor de omgeving van professioneel handelen en bewustzijn van de eigen rol daarin en de gevolgen van het eigen handelen;
4. een gevoel voor de ethische verantwoordelijkheden en het belang van integriteit die horen bij het besturen en organiseren van publieke vraagstukken en het onderzoeken daarvan.

Master Public Administration and Organisation Science

Primary aim of the Public Administration and Organisation Science Master's degree programme is to educate motivated people who are able and willing to use their academic knowledge in the field of public administration and organisation to make a useful contribution to the solution of public issues.

To this end, the degree programme has three learning pathways:

1. The substance of the public administration and organisation of public issues: Knowledge and understanding which are important for the contextualised understanding and analysis of the public administration and organisation of public issues. The cognitive skills to use this knowledge in concrete situations and to look critically at both the theory and practice.
2. Research into the public administration and organisation of public issues: The skills to research the public administration and organisation of public issues using various approaches in order to generate both scientifically and socially relevant insights.
3. Professional actions in the public administration and organisation of public issues: The necessary skills and attitude to play a useful and professional role in solving public issues based on relevant knowledge and research skills.

Building on the educational aims of the Bachelor's programme Public Administration and Organisation Science, this leads to the following educational aims for each of the learning pathways in the Master's programme Public Administration and Organisation Science.

The substance of the public administration and organisation of public issues:

The graduate:

1. has a thorough knowledge of and insight into the public administration and organisation of public issues in interaction with the national and international political and societal context, specifically in one of the following core areas: Public Governance; Communication, Policy and Management; European Governance; Organisations, Change and Management; Public Management; Strategic Human Resource Management, Organising Social Impact, or Sports Policy and Sports Management;
2. can make use of 'state of the art' theoretical insights alongside their own knowledge of empirical studies in Public Administration and Organisational Science and related disciplines to independently identify, formulate and analyse relevant problems and can provide solutions to these;
3. can critically reflect on the dominant views on the public administration and organisation of public issues in international scientific literature and professional practice, as well as the central concepts on which these views are based in one of the core areas;
4. can carefully distinguish between analysis, solution and effect and relate them to each other;
5. can design or choose between solutions and implementation strategies for public administration and organisation based on scientific analysis.

Research into the public administration and organisation of public issues

The graduate:

1. has the ability to independently set up, conduct and report on a research project in Public Administration and Organisational Science in a manner than meets accepted disciplinary standards;
2. can make a methodologically argued choice for a particular research strategy relevant to the specific problem, keeping in mind the scientific-philosophical insights into reality, and knowledge about that reality;
3. can make use of theoretical concepts to analyse and interpret the results of an empirical study and use these to draw substantiated conclusions;

4. shows a degree of originality in the study and contemplation of public issues in the light of existing literature and new empirical facts;
5. can critically reflect on research results in the light of the research strategy used and relevant theoretical concepts;
6. can operationalise theoretical insights and convert these into practical action perspectives.

Professional actions in the public administration and organisation of public issues:

For professional skills:

The graduate

1. possesses advanced professional and academic skills in the area of advice, policy, management and/or research which will prepare them in their professional life;
2. can take a well-founded view on a scientific discourse in relation to practical public administration and organisational issues, can estimate both their theoretical and practical value and translate this into professional practice whilst keeping social and ethical aspects such as responsibility and integrity in mind;
3. can give substantiated and constructive feedback and is able to use received feedback in a professional context;
4. is able to independently apply knowledge, insights and problem-solving skills to new or unknown situations within a broader, multidisciplinary or international context related to their field of study;
5. is able to provide clear and unambiguous verbal and written communication, in Dutch and/or English, about the acquired knowledge and insights, including the motives and considerations on which these are based, to a specialist and/or non-specialist audience whilst keeping the social consequences of this communication in mind.

For a professional attitude:

The graduate

1. has an awareness of the value of a diversity of approaches to issues and can value the role that various backgrounds play in both a national and international context;
2. critically reflects on their own values and behaviour in relation to people from a different (cultural) background and shows empathy for others, enabling them to cooperate well and make useful connections with others;
3. is sensitive to the context of professional behaviour and is aware of their own role in this;
4. takes an open attitude to the ambiguity and uncertainty of processes in organisations and public administration.
5. has a sense of the ethical responsibilities and the importance of integrity in relation to public administration and organising public issues and in researching them.

Executive Master Public Administration and Organisation Science

Kerndoel van de opleiding Bestuurs- en Organisatiewetenschap is: Gemotiveerde mensen opleiden die vanuit academische kennis over besturen en organiseren betekenisvol willen en kunnen zijn in het (helpen) oplossen van publieke vraagstukken.

Om dat te bereiken heeft de opleiding drie leerlijnen:

1. Inhoud van het besturen en organiseren van publieke vraagstukken: Kennis en begrip die belangrijk zijn voor het begrijpen en analyseren van besturen en organiseren van publieke vraagstukken in context. Daarnaast de cognitieve vaardigheden om deze kennis te gebruiken in concrete situaties en voor het kritisch beschouwen van theorie en praktijk.
2. Onderzoek naar het besturen en organiseren van publieke vraagstukken: De vaardigheden om het besturen en organiseren van publieke vraagstukken, vanuit verschillende onderzoeksbenaderingen, te onderzoeken en daarmee inzichten te genereren die zowel wetenschappelijk als maatschappelijk relevant zijn.
3. Professioneel handelen bij het besturen en organiseren van publieke vraagstukken: De vaardigheden en houding die nodig zijn om, vanuit inhoudelijke kennis en onderzoeksvaardigheden, een betekenisvolle en professionele rol te kunnen spelen bij het oplossen van publieke vraagstukken.

Voor de Masteropleiding Bestuurs- en Organisatiewetenschap betekent dit voor elk van de leerlijnen de volgende opleidingsdoelen, voortbouwend op de opleidingsdoelen van de Bacheloropleiding Bestuurs- en Organisatiewetenschap.

Inhoud van het besturen en organiseren van publieke vraagstukken

De afgestudeerde:

1. heeft gedegen kennis van en inzicht in het besturen en organiseren van publieke vraagstukken in wisselwerking met de politieke en maatschappelijke nationale en internationale context, in het bijzonder op één van de volgende kerngebieden: Bestuur en Beleid; Organisatie, Cultuur en Management en Management van Publieke vraagstukken;
2. kan met behulp van 'state of the art' theoretische inzichten en met kennis van empirisch onderzoek uit de Bestuurs- en Organisatiewetenschap alsmede verwante disciplines zelfstandig problemen op het vakgebied signaleren, formuleren en analyseren en hiervoor oplossingen aandragen en deze in verbinding brengen met vraagstukken uit het eigen werkveld;
3. kan binnen één van deze kerngebieden kritisch reflecteren op dominante opvattingen over besturen en organiseren van publieke vraagstukken in de internationale wetenschappelijke literatuur en professionele praktijk en de centrale concepten die hierin worden gehanteerd;
4. kan op zorgvuldige wijze analyse, oplossing en effect van elkaar onderscheiden en met elkaar in verband brengen;
5. kan vanuit wetenschappelijke analyse komen tot het ontwerpen dan wel het maken van een keuze uit probleemoplossingen en implementatiestrategieën in bestuur en organisatie, in het bijzonder probleemoplossingen en implementatiestrategieën in de eigen professionele praktijk.

Onderzoek naar het besturen en organiseren van publieke vraagstukken

De afgestudeerde:

1. heeft de vaardigheid om zelfstandig onderzoek op het terrein van Bestuurs- en Organisatiewetenschap op te zetten, uit te voeren en hierover te rapporteren op een wijze die voldoet aan de gebruikelijke disciplinaire normen;

2. kan een methodologisch beargumenteerde keuze maken voor een onderzoeksstrategie die passend is bij de probleemstelling en rekenschap geeft van wetenschapsfilosofische inzichten over werkelijkheid en kennis van die werkelijkheid;
3. kan resultaten van empirisch onderzoek met behulp van theoretische concepten analyseren en interpreteren en hieruit onderbouwde conclusies trekken;
4. geeft blijk van originaliteit in het onderzoeken en doordenken van publieke vraagstukken in het licht van bestaande literatuur en nieuwe empirische gegevens en praktische eisen die in het eigen werkveld worden gesteld;
5. kan kritisch reflecteren op onderzoeksresultaten in het licht van de gevolgde onderzoeksstrategie en gehanteerde theoretische concepten;
6. kan theoretische inzichten operationaliseren en praktisch omzetten in concrete handelingsperspectieven en die bruikbaar maken in de eigen professionele praktijk.

Professioneel handelen bij het besturen en organiseren van publieke vraagstukken

Voor professionele vaardigheden:

De afgestudeerde:

1. beschikt over gevorderde professionele en academische vaardigheden op het gebied van advies, beleid, management en/of onderzoek die ondersteunen in de rol als professional;
2. kan een gefundeerd standpunt innemen ten aanzien van wetenschappelijke verhandelingen over praktische bestuurs- en organisatiewetenschappelijke vraagstukken, deze op zowel theoretische als op praktische waarde schatten en dit standpunt vertalen naar professioneel handelen waarbij rekening wordt gehouden met sociaal maatschappelijke en ethische verantwoordelijkheden;
3. kan op onderbouwde en opbouwende wijze feedback geven en weet feedback van anderen productief te maken in het professioneel handelen;
4. is in staat om kennis, inzicht en probleemoplossende vermogens zelfstandig toe te passen in nieuwe of onbekende omstandigheden binnen een bredere, multidisciplinaire en internationale context die gerelateerd is aan het vakgebied;
5. is in staat om verworven kennis en inzicht, alsmede motieven en overwegingen die hieraan ten grondslag liggen, duidelijk en ondubbelzinnig in de Nederlandse en Engelse taal zowel mondeling als schriftelijk te communiceren met een publiek bestaande uit specialisten en/of niet-specialisten.

Voor een professionele houding:

De afgestudeerde:

1. heeft oog voor de waarde van diversiteit in benaderingen van vraagstukken en waardering voor de rol die diverse achtergronden daarin spelen in zowel nationale als internationale contexten;
2. reflecteert kritisch op eigen waarden en handelen in relatie tot mensen met andere (culturele) achtergronden en leeft zich in de situatie van anderen in om van daaruit op een waardevolle manier te kunnen samenwerken en verbindingen te maken;
3. is sensitief voor de omgeving van professioneel handelen en is zich bewust van de eigen rol daarin;
4. heeft gevoel voor de ethische verantwoordelijkheid en het belang van integriteit die horen bij het besturen en organiseren van publieke vraagstukken en het onderzoeken daarvan.

Appendix 2. Programme curricula

Bachelor Public Administration and Organisation Science

Year 1	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Period 4
	7.5 ECTS	7.5 ECTS	7.5 ECTS	7.5 ECTS
	Public Administration: Governance, Policy and Organisation	PA&OS Classics	Introduction to PA&OS research: methods and statistics	Quantitative Research into Public Organisations
	7.5 ECTS	7.5 ECTS	7.5 ECTS	7.5 ECTS
	Developments in Dutch Society	Organisation Science: Perspectives on Organisation	Management Studies: management of services	Economics and Public Finance
Year 2	7.5 ECTS	7.5 ECTS	7.5 ECTS	15 ECTS
	Organisations and Organising	Comparative Analysis Of Political Institutions	Philosophy of Science	Qualitative research
	7.5 ECTS	7.5 ECTS	7.5 ECTS	
	Constitutional and Administrative Law	Elective	Perception, Rationality and Power	
Year 3	7.5 ECTS	7.5 ECTS	22,5 ECTS	
	Elective	Elective	Graduation track	
	7.5 ECTS	7.5 ECTS	7.5 ECTS	Graduation track
	Elective	Elective	Public Administration and Organisation of Public Issues	

Master Public Administration and Organisation Science

Programmes Governance and Policy; Public Management; Organisations, Change and Management; Strategic Human Resource Management; Organising Social Impact; Communications, Policy and Management

Period 1 (15 ECTS)	Period 2 (15 ECTS)	Period 3 (15 ECTS)	Period 4 (15 ECTS)
Programme-specific course 1	Programme-specific course 2	Programme-specific course 3	Master's-wide research seminar + Master thesis
APS elective course 1	APS elective course 2		

Programme European Governance

Period 1 (15 ECTS)	Period 2 (15 ECTS)	Periods 3 & 4 (30 ECTS)
Regulating Markets	European Union: by and for the people?	Research seminar, Research internship & Master thesis
Labour Markets and Welfare States in Europe	European Governance: Professional Skills	

Programme Sports Policy and Sports Management

Period 1 (7.5 ECTS)	Period 2 (7.5 ECTS)	Period 3 (7.5 ECTS)	Period 4 (7.5 ECTS)
Organising Sports in Transition	Inclusiveness and Social Responsibility in Sports	Governance Issues in Theory and Sports Practice	Policy Development and Leadership in Sports
Period 5 (7.5 ECTS)	Periods 6, 7 & 8 (22.5 ECTS)		
Academic and Professional Skills	Research seminar and Master thesis: Public Administration and Organisation Science		

Executive Master Public Administration and Organisation Science

Programme Governance and Policy for Professionals

Course 1	Course 2	Course 3	Course 4	Oral test	Course 5
Public Governance in Motion (4 ECTS)	Organising and Organisations (5 ECTS)	Current Classics (5 ECTS)	Making and Guiding Policy (5 ECTS)	Governance & Policy: Synthesis (2 ECTS)	Research and Philosophy of Science (5 ECTS)
Course 6	Course 7	Course 8	Course 9	Course 10	
Public Management (4 ECTS)	Control and Change in Organisations (4 ECTS)	Governing in an International Perspective (4 ECTS)	Normative and Ethical Dilemmas (4 ECTS)	Public Accountability (3 ECTS)	
Graduation research project – September through February (15 ECTS)					

Programme Organisation, Culture and Management

Semester 1		Semester 2	
Course 1	Course 2	Course 3	Course 4
Perspectives on Organising (3.5 ECTS)	Culture and Power in Organisations (7 ECTS)	Organising and public administration in context (5 ECTS)	Research(er) in Discussion (3 ECTS)
Organisational research project (9 ECTS) + Introduction to Research Methods and Techniques (2 ECTS)			
Semester 3		Semester 4	
Course 5	Course 6	Course 7	Course 8
Managing Organisational Change (6 ECTS)	Multiple Management in Public Domains (3.5 ECTS)	The Anatomy of Successful Public Organisations (3 ECTS)	Theory and Intervention (3 ECTS)
Graduation research project (including Methods and Techniques) (15 ECTS)			

Programme Management of Public Issues

Module 1	Module 2	Module 3	Module 4
Developments in the Public Domain (6.5 ECTS)	Management of Public Issues (6.5 ECTS)	Leadership in Perspective (6.5 ECTS)	Organising to Promote Achievement (6.5 ECTS)
Module 5	Module 6	Thesis Module	
Innovation and Change (6.5 ECTS)	Research Lab (6.5 ECTS)	Master's Thesis (15 ECTS)	
Personal and professional development track (6.0 ECTS)			

Appendix 3. Programme of the site visit

Monday 25 September

- 09h30: Arrival of the panel and internal meeting to prepare the morning sessions
- 10h30: Session with management Utrecht School of Governance (USG)
- 11h30: Thematic session: *Bestuurskunde van de toekomst in de BK-opleidingen van nu* (Public administration of the future in the public administration programmes of today)
- 12h30: Lunch and internal panel meeting to prepare the afternoon sessions
- 13h30: Session with students of the bachelor programme
- 14h30: Thematic session: *Betrokken bij studentenwelzijn* (Involved in student wellbeing)
- 16h00: Thematic session: *Studenten voorbereiden op hun bijdrage aan het oplossen van publieke vraagstukken* (Preparing students for their contribution to solving public issues)
- 17h00: Internal panel meeting and wrap-up of the day with the USG Director of Education
- 17h30: End of day 1

Tuesday 26 September

- 09h00: Arrival of the panel and internal meeting to prepare the morning sessions
- 09h45: Session with students of the master programme
- 10h45: Thematic session: *Ontwikkeling van toetsing* (Development of assessment)
- 11h45: Session with Exam Committee and Assessment Committee
- 12h30: Lunch and internal panel deliberation on the bachelor and master programmes
- 13h30: Guided tour through USG building
- 14h15: Internal panel meeting to prepare the sessions on the research master programme
- 15h00: Session with management of the research master programme
- 15h45: Session with students of the research master programme
- 16h30: Session with teaching staff of the research master programme
- 17h15: Internal panel deliberation on the research master programme
- 17h45: Wrap-up of the day with the USG Director of Education
- 18h00: End of day 2

Wednesday 27 September

- 09h00: Arrival of the panel and internal meeting to prepare the morning sessions
- 09h45: Session with management of the executive master programme
- 10h30: Session with students of the executive master programme
- 11h30: Thematic session: *Ontwikkeling executive programma's* (Development of executive programmes)
- 12h15: Thematic session: *Doel en opzet afstudeerscriptie* (Scope and format of the thesis)
- 13h00: Lunch and internal panel deliberation on the executive master programme and preparation of the USG management session
- 15h00: Final session with USG management
- 16h00: Internal panel deliberation
- 16h30: Plenary feedback
- 17h00: End of site visit

Appendix 4. Materials

Prior to the site visit, the panel studied 15 theses for each of the four programmes under review. Information on the selected theses is available from Academion upon request.

In the run-up to the site-visit USG put at disposition the following materials:

- Leren bij USBO. Zelfevaluatie onderwijs Bestuurs- en Organisationswetenschap 2023.
- Learning at USG 2023. Self-evaluation of education at Utrecht University School of Governance

The self-evaluation report contained the following annexes:

- Organogram faculteit REBO en samenstelling opleidingsbesturen en overlegorganen van USBO
- Onderzoeksevaluaties USBO en EUR / Research review USG and EUR
- Bijdrage Research Master vanuit EUR / Contribution Research Master EUR
- Opleidingsdoelen OER art. 3.1 / Aim of the programme EER article 3.1
- Koppeling leerdoelen aan Dublin descriptoren, PAGO en Anderson & Krathwohl /
- Aim programme – Dublin descriptors, PAGO framework and Anderson & Krathwohl
- Domeinspecifiek referentiekader (PAGO framework) / Domain specific Frame of Reference PAGO
- Onderzoeksprogramma USBO 2021-2026 / Research Strategy USG 2021-2026
- Overzicht keuzecursussen en minoronderwijs USBO 2022
- Regeling selectiecriteria en selectieprocedure bacheloropleiding B&O
- Publicaties ResMa studenten / Publications by Research Master students
- Toetsplannen/Assessment plans Bachelor, Master, Executive Master en Research Master programmes
- Begeleiding en beoordeling eindwerkstukken B&O / Supervision and assessment of BA and MA theses
- Samenstelling adviesraad (composition of Advisory Council)
- Curriculumoverzichten B&O opleidingen / Curriculum overviews PAOS programmes
- Cursusteksten per opleiding / Course descriptions per programme
- Kerndocenten USBO – TiU EUR en VU tbv research master / Core lecturers USG – TiU, EUR, and VU concerning Research Master
- Onderwijs- en Examenreglement / Education and Examination Regulation
- Overzicht bespreking diversiteit in zelfstudie / Overview diversity in self-evaluation report
- Scripties en beoordelingen BO 2019-2022 / Theses and assessments PAOS 2019-2022
- Studentenbijdragen / Student contributions
- Docent-student ratio USBO / Lecturer to student ratio USG
- EAPAA completion tables
- English translation self-evaluation report
- BKKI criteria in Leren bij USBO zelfevaluatierapport 2023

The self-evaluation report also included a portfolio of documents to illustrate and clarify the report contents:

- Tutoraat in de master; inventarisatie en afspraken
- Betrokken bij ontwikkelingen ontwikkelagenda Bachelor 2019-2024
- Doorontwikkeling SPV programma: vaardighedenontwikkeling en versterking tutoraat
- Evaluatie internationalisering in de bachelor
- B&O Academie en activiteiten 21-22 en 22-23
- Ontwikkeling APV in de master
- Studentenbrochure onderzoeksseminarie en afstuderen in de master

- Ontwikkelagenda executive masterprogramma's
- Productscripties en beoordeling in de master
- Jaarverslagen Examencommissie

Following its preparatory meeting, the panel asked for USG for the following additional materials to be made available on site:

- Regeling selectiecriteria en -procedure bachelor
- Toelating en selectie executive master
- Voldoende vereisten bachelor- en masterscripties (minimum criteria bachelor and master theses)
- Three examples of Product theses and their assessment
- Mastervolgopleidingen van bachelorafgestudeerden 2020-2021 en 2021-2022
- Intake bachelor- and research master cohorts 2022 and 2023
- Bachelor rendement USG en landelijk
- Diploma's en uitval in bacheloropleidingen USG en landelijk