



B Philosophy, Politics and Economics
Utrecht University

© 2022 Academion

www.academion.nl
info@academion.nl

Project code P2115

Contents

Summary: Limited programme assessment	4
Score table	5
Summary: Distinctive Feature Small-scale and Intensive Education	5
Score table	6
Introduction.....	7
Procedure.....	7
Panel	8
Information on the programme	9
Description of the limited programme assessment.....	10
Organisational context	10
Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes	10
Standard 2. Teaching-learning environment.....	11
Standard 3. Student assessment	17
Standard 4. Achieved learning outcomes	19
General conclusion	19
Development points	20
Description of the practice-based assessment for the Distinctive Feature Small-scale and Intensive Education	21
Standard A. Intended learning outcomes.....	21
Standard B. Curriculum – contents.....	22
Standard C. Curriculum – learning environment.....	23
Standard D. Intake	24
Standard E. Staff	26
Standard F. Facilities	27
Standard G. Achieved learning outcomes.....	28
General conclusion	29
Appendix 1. Intended learning outcomes	30
Appendix 2. Programme curriculum.....	32
Appendix 3. Programme of the site visit.....	34
Appendix 4. Materials	35

Summary: Limited programme assessment

The PPE programme in Utrecht has a convincing interdisciplinary profile, training students in the PPE disciplines philosophy, politics and economy and providing its own distinctive element by adding history as a fourth discipline. The panel praises the programme for teaching its students how to integrate these fields using an interdisciplinary perspective and for offering the skills necessary to achieve this. The intended learning outcomes of the programme reflect this profile, and clearly demonstrate an academic bachelor's level.

PPE has a very well-designed and well-structured curriculum that fully aligns with the intended learning outcomes of the programme. It has a clear interdisciplinary focus as well as clear attention to skills. Students are well-grounded in each of the four founding disciplines of PPE in Utrecht, and are thoroughly trained in applying this foundation in an interdisciplinary perspective. The interdisciplinary co-teaching used in several courses is a strong asset of the programme. Students can shape the curriculum according to their own preferences through the choice of a thematic focus and the Profile Area. The interactive and engaging teaching methods are well-suited to the small-scale and intensive nature of PPE. The choice to offer the programme in English fits the international scope of PPE, and sufficient attention is paid to the quality of English-language education.

The curriculum is challenging yet feasible. Students are provided with extensive personal guidance and support throughout the curriculum. The interactive courses as well as the skills track, tutoring system and extracurricular activities provide students with many opportunities to develop their personal and professional skills in the skills track, helped by the frequent feedback provided by the teaching staff. Students and staff members experience a strong community feeling and a culture of continuous improvement within the programme. This is further aided by the facilities offered in the Descartes Hall, where students can meet for studying or socializing. The teaching staff is very well-qualified, both regarding research expertise and teaching. The core teaching staff constitute a stable basis for the special interdisciplinary, small-scale and intensive nature of the programme. The staff members are very much appreciated by students, due both to their expertise and their guidance and feedback in the courses and on an individual basis as tutors.

To further improve the teaching-learning environment, the panel encourages the programme to keep working on connecting the various aspects of the programme, particularly the courses, skills track, themes and research skills, in order to show students the coherence between the various elements of the curriculum. This includes showing students how the various disciplines interact within the themes and aligning the educational activities related to the development of professional and research skills with the rest of the curriculum. The panel also encourages the programme to keep paying attention to a diversity of viewpoints within the seminars. Also, the programme should reflect on the central role of the core teaching staff in the programme and make sure that the continuity of the programme is safeguarded in case of temporary or permanent replacement of core teaching staff members.

The programme has a valid, transparent and reliable system of assessment in place. The assessment methods are varied and fit the aims of the programme, emphasizing collaborative learning and feedback and paying specific attention to the assessment of interdisciplinarity. During the corona pandemic, the programme successfully made the switch to online assessment. To further improve the system of assessment, the panel encourages the programme to develop programme-specific goals for the internship and find a way to systematically assess these. The Board of Examiners has a professional system of checks

and balances in place and safeguards the quality of assessment. The procedures and assessment forms for the bachelor theses are solid, with an impressive quality and quantity of substantiation of the grades and feedback to the student. The panel recommends dropping the informal practice of integrating the two separate assessment forms after the joint discussion, and recommends considering the addition of an external examiner.

The panel is impressed with the high level of the PPE bachelor's theses. These show that the programme convincingly realizes its highly ambitious, interdisciplinary goals. Alumni of the programme have many opportunities to continue in relevant and often competitive master's programmes, or in companies or political and societal organizations. The panel recommends setting up an alumni network of PPE graduates aimed at providing students with insights in potential careers after graduation.

Score table

The panel assesses the programme as follows:

Bachelor's programme Philosophy, Politics and Economics

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
General conclusion	positive

Summary: Distinctive Feature Small-scale and Intensive Education

Standard A: Intended learning outcomes

The bachelor PPE clearly surpasses the average intended bachelor's level through its interdisciplinary approach and its ambitious aims to train students to integrate four different disciplines when reflecting on societally relevant challenges regarding political and economic institutions. The programme's intended learning outcomes reflect these high ambitions, both with regard to knowledge and understanding and with regard to the broadening and development of personal attitudes and skills.

Standard B: Curriculum – contents

The panel concludes that the curricular and extracurricular activities of the bachelor PPE together match the programme's ambitious aims as formulated in the intended learning outcomes. They provide students with many opportunities to develop their interdisciplinary perspective as well as their professional and personal skills. The portfolio stimulates students to reflect on their skills development in the curriculum and the extracurricular activities, tying these together. Students and staff work together closely in organizing the extracurricular activities. Furthermore, students have (and take) the opportunity to organize extracurricular activities using funding provided by the programme, which stimulates student-initiated activities.

Standard C: Curriculum – learning environment

PPE offers a small-scale and intensive learning environment, as well as a close-knit community. The teaching methods encourage active engagement of students with each other and the teaching staff, and require students to prepare and participate actively in the courses and activities. Most education takes place in groups of 25 students or less, fitting the small-scale set-up of the programme. The programme is set up in

such a way that nominal study progress can be achieved. The extracurricular activities are well-balanced against the curriculum: students report that they feel stimulated by these activities to stay engaged with the programme and the community. The panel considers the community of students and teachers to be effective and working.

Standard D: Intake

The panel considers the selection procedure to be sound, thorough, and suitable for a programme with a small-scale and intensive educational concept in combination with extracurricular activities. The programme is committed to creating a diverse student body, and has several mechanisms in place to promote this.

Standard E: Staff

The teaching staff has the quality and quantity needed for offering a small-scale and intensive programme. The teaching staff is well-qualified regarding both research expertise and teaching. The core teaching staff provides a sufficiently large and stable basis for the special interdisciplinary, small-scale and intensive nature of the programme. They are very much appreciated by students, both for their expertise and for their guidance and feedback in the courses and on an individual basis as tutors. In addition, the programme pays attention to the specific nature of PPE when preparing regular teaching staff members for participation in the programme. The panel encourages the programme to keep investing in support and time allocated for the small-scale and intensive education within PPE.

Standard F: Facilities

The facilities of the programme meet the needs of a small-scale, intensive programme. The programme has its own building that provides ample room for various types of education and collaboration for students as well as staff members, is well-equipped for well as extracurricular social activities, and is like a second home to many students.

Standard G: Achieved learning outcomes

Graduates of the PPE programme clearly demonstrate that they have achieved the ambitious and high level stipulated in the intended learning outcomes. This is evident from the impressive quality of their theses, their study success and their success in entering competitive master's programmes, internships and traineeships. The programme's success rates are on par with other programmes with a distinctive feature, and will probably rise further when the effects of the covid-19 pandemic have diminished.

Score table

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

General conclusion positive

Prof. Joshua Preiss, chair

Peter Hildering MSc, secretary

Date: 30-09-2022

Introduction

Procedure

Assessment

On 12 and 13 May 2022, the bachelor's programme Philosophy, Politics and Economics of Utrecht University was assessed by an independent peer review panel as part of the cluster assessment Philosophy, Politics and Economics. The assessment cluster consisted of three programmes, offered by the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, University of Groningen and Utrecht University. The assessment followed the procedure and standards of the NVAO Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands (September 2018). It also followed the framework for the Distinctive Feature Of "Small-scale and Intensive Education" (January 2018).

Quality assurance agency Academion coordinated the assessment upon request of the cluster Philosophy, Politics and Economics after taking over from Qanu per August 2021. Fiona Schouten acted as coordinator and Peter Hildering acted as secretary in the assessment for the site visit to Utrecht University. They have been certified and registered by the NVAO.

Preparation

Academion composed the peer review panel in cooperation with the institutions and taking into account the expertise and independence of the members as well as consistency within the cluster. On 12 January 2022, the NVAO approved the composition of the panel. The coordinator instructed the panel chair on his role in the site visit according to the Panel chair profile (NVAO 2016). On 21 January 2022, a panel member and the two secretaries were trained by the NVAO in the assessment of the Distinctive Feature of Small-Scale and Intensive Education.

The programme composed a site visit schedule in consultation with the coordinator (see appendix 3). The programme selected representative partners for the various interviews. It also determined that the development dialogue would be made part of the site visit. A separate development report was made based on this dialogue.

The programme provided the coordinator with a list of graduates over the period 2020-2021. In consultation with the coordinator, the panel chair selected 15 theses. He took the diversity of final grades and examiners into account, as well as the various tracks. Prior to the site visit, the programme provided the panel with the theses and the accompanying assessment forms. It also provided the panel with the self-evaluation report and additional materials (see appendix 4).

The panel members studied the information and sent their findings to the secretary. The secretary collected the panel's questions and remarks in a document and shared this with the panel members. In a preliminary meeting, the panel discussed the initial findings on the self-evaluation report and the theses, as well as the division of tasks during the site visit. The panel was also informed on the assessment frameworks, the working method and the planning of the site visits and reports.

Just before the visit to Utrecht University, it became clear that panel member Coen Brummer could not attend the site visit for health reasons. At that time, he had already studied the self-evaluation report as well as the theses, and shared his findings with the panel. The panel took this input into account during the site

visit, and in the composition of the panel report. After the site visit, Coen Brummer provided his feedback on the report and ensured that his contributions were properly incorporated.

Site visit

During the site visit, the panel interviewed various programme representatives (see appendix 3). The panel also offered students and staff members an opportunity for confidential discussion during a consultation hour. No consultation was requested. The panel used the final part of the site visit to discuss its findings in an internal meeting. Afterwards, the panel chair publicly presented the preliminary findings.

Report

The secretary wrote a draft report based on the panel's findings and submitted it for peer assessment within Academion. Subsequently, the secretary sent the report to the panel for feedback. After processing this feedback, the secretary sent the draft report to the Faculty of Humanities in order to have it checked for factual irregularities. The secretary discussed the ensuing comments with the panel chair and changes were implemented accordingly. The panel then finalised the report, and the coordinator sent it to the Faculty of Humanities and Utrecht University.

Panel

The following panel members were involved in the cluster assessment:

- Prof. L. (Luc) Bovens, professor in Philosophy at the London School of Economics and Political Science (UK) and the University of North Carolina (United States) [chair site visit University of Groningen];
- Prof. J. (Joshua) Preiss, Professor of Philosophy at Minnesota State University (United States) [chair site visits Utrecht University and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam];
- Prof. dr. J. (Jutta) Bolt, professor in Global Economic History at the University of Groningen;
- C.C. (Coen) Brummer MA MSc, director of the Mr. Hans van Mierlo Foundation, a think tank affiliated with the Dutch political party Democrats '66;
- Prof. dr. D. (Dirk) De Bièvre, professor in International Politics at Antwerp University (Belgium);
- Prof. dr. M.O. (Madeleine) Hosli, professor of International Relations at Leiden University;
- C. (Carsten) Jung MSc., senior economist at the IPPR's Centre for Economic Justice in London (United Kingdom);
- Prof. R. (Roberto) Veneziani, professor in Economics at Queen Mary University of London (United Kingdom);
- N. (Natalia) Jagolski, bachelor's student Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Utrecht University [student member];
- C.H. (Clara) van Vliet, bachelor's student Economics and Business Economics at the University of Amsterdam [student member].

The panel assessing the bachelor's programme Philosophy, Politics and Economics of Utrecht University consisted of the following members:

- Prof. J. (Joshua) Preiss, professor of Philosophy at Minnesota State University (United States) [chair];
- Prof. dr. J. (Jutta) Bolt, professor in Global Economic History at the University of Groningen;
- C.C. (Coen) Brummer MA MSc, director of the Mr. Hans van Mierlo Foundation, a think tank affiliated with the Dutch political party Democrats '66;
- Prof. dr. D. (Dirk) De Bièvre, professor in International Politics at Antwerp University (Belgium);
- C.H. (Clara) van Vliet, bachelor's student Economics and Business Economics at the University of Amsterdam [student member].

Information on the programme

Name of the institution:	Utrecht University
Status of the institution:	Publicly funded institution
Result institutional quality assurance assessment:	Positive
Programme name:	Philosophy, Politics and Economics
CROHO number:	54999
Level:	Bachelor
Orientation:	Academic
Number of credits:	180 EC
Specialisations or tracks:	Challenges to the Welfare State Markets and Regulators Pathways to a Sustainable Future Democracy and its Discontents
Location:	Utrecht
Mode(s) of study:	Fulltime
Language of instruction:	English
Submission date NVAO:	28-09-2023, extended to 01-01-2024 (art 5.31 lid 3)

Description of the limited programme assessment

Organisational context

The bachelor's programme Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) is a joint programme of the Faculty of Humanities and the Faculty of Law, Economics and Governance of Utrecht University (UU). Within these two faculties, four departments collaborate in running the programme: the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, the Department of History and Art History, the Utrecht University School of Governance and the Utrecht University School of Economics. Of these four departments, the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies is the overall coordinator, having responsibility for finance, content and educational quality. The programme is managed by the PPE Programme Board, a four-person board (one staff member from each department) headed by the PPE programme director. A student representative, the study advisor and the education coordinator take part in all board meetings and are equal participants in its discussions. The programme has its own programme committee (the Curriculum Committee) and Board of Examiners, safeguarding the quality of the programme.

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

Profile

PPE Utrecht finds its inspiration in the PPE programme at Oxford University, which aims to combine politics, philosophy and economics in a single curriculum to train ambitious and broad-minded leaders for the future. The Utrecht programme was established in 2018 as a distinct version of PPE that draws upon the strengths in research and teaching of the UU. In particular, PPE Utrecht adds history as a fourth discipline to the mix, providing a historical perspective to the political and economic institutions central to PPE. In addition, the programme has a distinct interdisciplinary focus. Students study the four disciplines equally throughout the curriculum. They do not specialize in one or two disciplines, but rather choose a thematic focus in their second year (*Challenges to the Welfare State, Markets and Regulators, Pathways to a Sustainable Future or Democracy and its Discontents*) and study this from various disciplinary perspectives. Students are trained in interdisciplinary skills, learning to systematically integrate insights from multiple disciplines. This is supplemented by training in professional skills, addressing personal development of the student in order to train socially responsible professionals and leaders. The programme is offered in an international setting based on the conviction that various intercultural perspectives are crucial in the interdisciplinary training of students.

The panel studied the profile of the programme and discussed it with staff and students during the site visit. It concludes that the programme has an ambitious profile that embraces and builds upon the interdisciplinary PPE profile that was developed in the Anglo-Saxon academic tradition, adding its own distinctive characteristics. Students appreciate the addition of history to PPE, and feel that this perspective adds to their understanding of the other three disciplines. The programme convincingly integrates four disciplines into a coherent, interdisciplinary programme, providing students with the skills necessary to take an interdisciplinary perspective. The panel applauds this, as this is by no means an easy task. The central role of interdisciplinary and professional skills within the programme is an important element to realize this interdisciplinary perspective.

The skills offered by the programme are also very relevant in a variety of professional environments in which alumni of the programme can be expected to work as future leaders. PPE aims to build an alumni network and use their input to further align the goals of the programme with the requirement of the professional field, which the panel fully supports (Standard 4).

Intended learning outcomes

The bachelor PPE translates its goals and aims into a set of five intended learning outcomes (ILOs), formulated along the lines of the Dublin descriptors for bachelor's programmes (see appendix 1). Each ILO contains several objectives that describe the knowledge, skills and attitudes required of students. The panel studied the ILOs and concluded that they clearly demonstrate an academic bachelor's level. Particularly the interdisciplinary and professional skills described show the ambition that the programme formulates in its profile. They are well-aligned with the skills required for the broad-minded future leaders that PPE aims to train, such as responsible citizenship, creativity, self-reflection and integrity.

Considerations

The PPE programme in Utrecht has a convincing interdisciplinary profile, training students in the PPE disciplines philosophy, politics and economy and providing its own distinctive element by adding history as a fourth discipline. The panel praises the programme for teaching its students how to integrate these fields using an interdisciplinary perspective and for offering the skills necessary to achieve this. The intended learning outcomes of the programme reflect this profile, and clearly demonstrate an academic bachelor's level.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard 1.

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.

Findings

Curriculum

The curriculum of PPE (see appendix 2) consists of eight courses per academic year, divided into four blocks of two 7.5 EC courses each. Year 1 consists of fundamental disciplinary training, with two core courses for each of the four disciplines. This provides students with the disciplinary grounding to engage in the training focused more explicitly on interdisciplinarity that they receive in the following years.

In Year 2, students choose one out of four thematic foci (see standard 1), consisting of a package of four courses with increasingly challenging forms of interdisciplinarity. This package contains two duo-disciplinary courses, where two lecturers with a different disciplinary background analyse a topic from their respective expertise; a course on doing interdisciplinary research; and the final course PPE in Society, a community-based learning experience where students put their interdisciplinary thinking into action to create actual societal impact in a self-designed project with societal partners. The other four courses in Year 2 are dedicated to methods training and provide students with skills in quantitative and qualitative methods, reasoning and argumentation and reflection on the nature of knowledge.

In Year 3, students have a Profile Area of 45 EC that they can use for taking electives, one of the minors offered at UU, an internship (15 EC max) or for going abroad in an exchange. Students are encouraged to use this Profile Area to prepare for the master's programme they aim to pursue. The final part of the third year is dedicated to the bachelor's thesis. Students formulate an individual research question connected to one of eight themes provided by the programme. Supervision takes place in project groups for each theme. Students are stimulated to choose two out of the four PPE disciplines to approach this research question, supervised by two staff members representing these disciplines.

Running in parallel with the courses are the skills tracks: learning activities that are integrated into the various courses and teach students interdisciplinary thinking and professional skills. Furthermore, each block ends with a Step-Back Week, a project week in which students participate in projects outside the classroom where they train their skills further. The curriculum is complemented by a wide selection of extracurricular activities. These are organized jointly by PPE staff and students, in particular by study organization METIS, and are aimed at personal development as well as community building. Students are expected to actively contribute to and participate in these activities. Examples are lecture series, an end-of-year conference where students showcase their projects, debates and numerous social activities. The programme has funds especially reserved for student-initiated activities that all students can apply for.

The panel studied the curriculum and discussed its structure and content with various groups during the site visit. It was very impressed by the well-structured and well-designed curriculum, and concludes that it fully aligns with the intended learning outcomes of the programme. The interdisciplinary focus that is maintained throughout the curriculum specifically stood out to the panel. The theoretical grounding in the first year guarantees that students obtain the knowledge and understanding for each of the four disciplines as described in the ILOs. After that, the thematic and skills-based courses provide students with all skills and attitudes necessary to be able to take an interdisciplinary perspective. The panel was particularly impressed with the interdisciplinary co-teaching in the second year, which it considers one of the programme's unique selling points. Students have many opportunities to shape the curriculum according to their own preference, not only in the Profile Area in the third year, but also through the choice of a thematic focus, through the opportunity to design their own projects and through the skills tracks and extracurricular activities.

The panel learnt that some students feel the four themes in the second year tend towards one particular discipline. The panel thinks that this is mainly an issue of communication: a theme such as democracy is indeed political in nature, but is also studied using insights from the other three disciplines. It encourages the programme to keep showing students how the various disciplines interact within the themes.

According to the panel, the attention to professional and personal skills is a very valuable asset of PPE. Students value the opportunity to develop their skills and the freedom to choose their own projects and focus points. The panel learnt that students often receive summative feedback on their skills level throughout the curriculum. This is a strong property of the program which the panel applauds and considers to be very valuable for skills development. At the same time, some students struggled to see the connection between the skills track and the rest of the curriculum. To strengthen this connection, the programme is working on the further development of the skills track. An important element of this development is the redesign of the Step-Back Weeks into Skills Weeks, where the projects will be more explicitly linked to the professional skills that students are required to train. The panel supports this intended change. It also suggests investigating whether this Skills Week could be scheduled mid-term rather than at the end of the block, where it often comes directly after an intensive period of deadlines and exams. The panel understood during the site visit that there are also good arguments for the current set-up, so the panel would like to leave the decision up to the programme management.

PPE provides students with essential qualitative and quantitative research skills in Year 2. Students that want more in-depth research skills can use the elective space in Year 3 to choose additional courses, often related to the entry requirements of their master's programme of choice. Some students experienced a disconnect between the research skills courses and the other courses and would appreciate a better integration of academic skills training in the curriculum. The panel suggests the programme to also take research skills into account in the redesign of the skills education (discussed above) and investigate whether they can be further integrated into the regular courses.

Teaching methods

From the documentation and interviews the panel concludes that the programme uses a wide variety of teaching methods, ranging from lectures and seminars to small-group discussions and community-based activities. Students are actively stimulated to attend and participate in all courses, and based on students and teaching staff remarks, this often results in engaging and stimulating sessions. Some students and teaching staff members remarked on a scheduling issue that sometimes arises in the blocks, resulting in 4-hour long seminars. Several teachers developed their own ways of dealing with this, such as dividing the seminar into two shorter sessions with small groups. The panel encourages the teaching staff and programme management to share these practices (for instance in the handbook for new teachers) to ensure that possibly unavoidable long seminars are used in an effective way.

A particular issue that got discussed during the site visit was the safety to express opinions during the seminars. The student chapter of the self-evaluation report mentioned that some students do not feel safe to express opinions outside of the majority view. In the interviews, programme representatives recognized that there are several very outspoken students in the programme. Students feel that the teaching staff might do more to encourage students to feel safe to express other perspectives and introduce other viewpoints. The panel agrees that such situations can be turned into good learning opportunities and encourages the teaching staff to keep paying attention to a diversity of viewpoints within the seminars.

Language of instruction

The language of instruction in PPE is English. The panel considers this a logical choice due to the programme's international scope: both the academic and the working field are highly international. The panel also agrees with the English programme title. Even though the programme adds history as a fourth discipline, PPE is the brand name that reflects the specific academic PPE tradition that the programme is rooted in. An added benefit of the choice for English in the programme is that it allows PPE to recruit international staff members and attract non-Dutch students, thus creating a 'mixed classroom' which contributes to the quality of education. An international setting with a diversity of intercultural perspectives is to be considered crucial in the interdisciplinary training of students.

English-language proficiency is one of the criteria in the selection procedure for new staff, as well as in the intake procedure for students. The panel learnt from students and alumni that the level of English in PPE is considered fine and clearly sufficient for offering the programme in English. It concludes that PPE staff is well equipped to offer an English-language bachelor's programme.

Guidance and support

Students are supported in an intensive manner and supervised throughout the curriculum. The programme has a tutoring system focused on skills and personal development. This system includes frequent reflection and feedback in individual sessions with the tutor (one of the PPE Core teachers), as well as in peer support group of six students from the same cohort. Students meet with their tutor individually at least once per

block and can request additional meetings when they feel like they can use extra support or reflection. Next to the tutor system, the programme also set up a mentor system during the covid-19 pandemic, during which many students, especially international students new to the Netherlands, struggled with their wellbeing. First-year students are assigned a second-year student as their mentor to help them feel at home in the PPE community and find their way around in the programme. The mentoring programme was so well received that the programme decided to keep it as a feature of the programme. The panel praises the attention to personal guidance and support in the bachelor PPE. Based on the structure of support and the positive feedback it received from students and alumni, the panel concludes that this is one of the strong points of the programme.

The panel learnt that the covid-19 pandemic had a major impact on the community-based bachelor PPE. Both staff and student bodies worked hard to keep up the community feeling with the abovementioned mentor system and online extracurricular activities. Seminar groups were split in several smaller groups of 8-12 students to promote interaction in an online setting, and students were also stimulated to participate in small-group social activities whenever the lockdown measures allowed this. The panel applauds the programme for doing everything in its power to stay close to the community-based education concept during the pandemic.

The Curriculum Committee has an active role in safeguarding the quality of the programme. METIS and individual student feedback also add to the continuous improvement of the curriculum. The panel learnt during the site visit from both students and staff that student feedback often leads to changes in the programme, which the panel applauds. Especially when the curriculum was executed for the first time, student feedback was essential in improving and finetuning the design of the programme. During the covid-19 pandemic, the frequency of student feedback dropped according to staff and students, which was diagnosed to be related to a drop in community feeling due to the forced distant education. The programme is working hard to restore this, which the panel wholeheartedly supports.

Feasibility

In order to ensure that students are equipped to take on the ambitious curriculum, PPE has an extensive selection procedure in place. The procedure is aimed at selecting students with above-average academic potential and a strong interest in studying social, political and economic issues from multiple perspectives. Student selection is not only based on graduation grades, but also on a profile test for study behaviour, a motivation letter, a letter of recommendation and an interview.

The students the panel interviewed reported that they consider the curriculum to be challenging, yet feasible within the allocated time. The study progress results confirm this. The large majority of students (95-100%) receive a positive binding study advice after the first year. The first cohort of students graduated in 2021: 62% of students (excluding dropouts) did so within the allocated three years. The programme notices that this number seems to be impacted by the covid-19 pandemic: several students decided to take longer for activities that were not possible or attractive to do during the covid-19 restrictions, such as going on an exchange. The programme management therefore expects these numbers to rise on the longer term.

The panel concludes that completing the PPE curriculum within the nominal study duration is feasible. The high number of students receiving positive binding study advice is very impressive. Based on interviews with students and alumni, the panel agrees with the observation of the programme that delayed graduation is often the result of individual choices by students to realize their own ambitions after a time of limited possibilities.

Teaching staff

The teaching staff of the bachelor PPE consists of a team of twelve core teachers, supplemented by a larger group of regular teachers. The team of core teachers consists of three teachers for each of the four departments associated with the programme. They feel particular ownership for the PPE programme, and fulfil core tasks in the programme, such as coordinating first year courses and second year thematic foci, supervising theses, tutoring, and serving in the various committees. They can dedicate at least 0.4 fte of their time to teaching in the programme, and are culture carriers regarding the specific nature of PPE-education. The regular teaching staff are involved in specific courses related to their particular expertise. They form a diverse, international and multidisciplinary group, ranging from PhD students to associate and full professors from all departments participating in PPE.

All core teaching staff members hold a PhD and are involved in active research. Several core teachers were appointed in tenure track positions with the PPE programme in mind when the programme was launched and are actively involved in interdisciplinary research in the disciplines related to PPE. All core teachers and the majority of the regular teachers hold a university teaching qualification (BKO). Three regular teachers also hold a senior teaching qualification (SKO). To make regular teaching staff members familiar with the special nature of the programme, they are provided with the PPE's teaching manual that describes the educational philosophy and specific aspects of PPE. They are also invited to regular meetings together with the core teachers, to keep them up to date about developments within the programme.

The panel is very positive about the quality of the teaching staff. Students praise the support and engagement of the PPE staff, in particular with regard to giving and receiving feedback. This creates a culture of continuous improvement between students and staff members. The panel specifically applauds the core teachers, who provide a stable basis to the programme, and are invested in its content and educational principles. Their research aligns very well with the interdisciplinary nature of PPE and is of added value to the programme. The panel also praises the attention the programme pays to making regular teachers familiar with the specific interdisciplinary and small-scale, intensive education within PPE. It thinks this constitutes an essential ingredient for the high quality of education in the program and encourages the programme to keep paying attention to this.

During the site visit, the panel spoke with programme representatives about the role of the core teachers in the programme. According to the panel, the core teachers are the main driving force of the PPE programme and represent a major investment in the programme. It is therefore important that these core teachers are well-positioned to keep dedicating their time and energy to the PPE programme. This can be challenging, in particular for the core teachers in a tenure track/assistant professor position. The requirements set by the faculties in which they are embedded can sometimes compete with their responsibilities as core teacher in the PPE programme. Aligning the goals and responsibilities of the core teaching staff can sometimes be a balancing act for both the core teachers and the programme management. The panel underlines the importance of sufficient time and support to invest in setting up courses and interdisciplinary (research) collaborations and supports the programme in securing this for the core teachers. Furthermore, considering that the majority of the core teachers are at the start of their academic career, the programme management should reflect on how to deal with staff mobility, whether permanent (e.g., changing jobs) or temporary (e.g., parental leave). This is of course a concern for all educational programmes, but the specific nature of PPE and the core staff members' roles as carriers of its culture makes this a special concern for this programme: recruiting and training new core teachers arguably takes more time than for regular bachelor's programmes.

Facilities

PPE has its own building on the International Campus Utrecht: the Descartes Hall. The building offers a mix of classrooms and smaller break-out rooms for project groups, as well as study spaces for students and office spaces for the core teaching staff associated with the programme. The main meeting spaces for students and staff are a large, multifunctional common room, where most of the extracurricular activities are organized, and the room of study association METIS.

The panel had the opportunity to visit the Descartes Hall during the site visit, and was impressed with the diversity of facilities and spaces offered in the building, ranging from quiet rooms to computer facilities and collaborative or social rooms. The building can be used beyond office hours, and, according to students and alumni, feels like a second home for many students for the duration of the programme.

Considerations

PPE has a very well-designed and well-structured curriculum that fully aligns with the intended learning outcomes of the programme. It has a clear interdisciplinary focus as well as clear attention to skills. Students are well-grounded in each of the four founding disciplines of PPE in Utrecht, and are thoroughly trained in applying this foundation in an interdisciplinary perspective. The interdisciplinary co-teaching used in several courses is a strong asset of the programme. Students can shape the curriculum according to their own preferences through the choice of a thematic focus and the Profile Area. The interactive and engaging teaching methods are well-suited to the small-scale and intensive nature of PPE. The choice to offer the programme in English fits the international scope of PPE, and sufficient attention is paid to the quality of English-language education.

The curriculum is challenging yet feasible. Students are provided with extensive personal guidance and support throughout the curriculum. The interactive courses as well as the skills track, tutoring system and extracurricular activities provide students with many opportunities to develop their personal and professional skills in the skills track, helped by the frequent feedback provided by the teaching staff. Students and staff members experience a strong community feeling and a culture of continuous improvement within the programme. This is further aided by the facilities offered in the Descartes Hall, where students can meet for studying or socializing. The teaching staff is very well-qualified, both regarding research expertise and teaching. The core teaching staff constitute a stable basis for the special interdisciplinary, small-scale and intensive nature of the programme. The staff members are very much appreciated by students, due both to their expertise and their guidance and feedback in the courses and on an individual basis as tutors.

To further improve the teaching-learning environment, the panel encourages the programme to keep working on connecting the various aspects of the programme, particularly the courses, skills track, themes and research skills, in order to show students the coherence between the various elements of the curriculum. This includes showing students how the various disciplines interact within the themes and aligning the educational activities related to the development of professional and research skills with the rest of the curriculum. The panel also encourages the programme to keep paying attention to a diversity of viewpoints within the seminars. Also, the programme should reflect on the central role of the core teaching staff in the programme and make sure that the continuity of the programme is safeguarded in case of temporary or permanent replacement of core teaching staff members.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard 2.

Standard 3. Student assessment

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

Findings

Assessment system

PPE's assessment policy is grounded in a collaborative learning culture in which students are stimulated to give, receive and reflect on feedback in order to grow towards fully realizing their potential. Stimulating the learning process is therefore an important goal of assessment. Courses have multiple assignments and assessment moments that allow students to implement earlier feedback within the same course. Most courses have multiple non-graded assignments, as well as two or more graded assessments such as presentations, papers, essays, policy briefs and written exams. The assessment methods are tailored to the specific learning objectives, and always combine group assignments with individual assignments to ensure the individual achievement of learning goals by all students. Interdisciplinary and professional skills are assessed through a portfolio that students build up during each year, which is evaluated through a pass/fail decision.

The programme pays specific attention to the assessment of interdisciplinary assignments, as this requires assessors to judge material from outside their direct disciplinary expertise. This is approached through interdisciplinary co-assessment of courses, and a structured approach for assessing interdisciplinary skills that the programme is currently developing. During the covid-19 pandemic, most assessment could continue as planned, with a few adaptations for presentations and written exams to be held online. The latter were organized in the form of take-home exams wherever possible.

The Board of Examiners monitors the quality of assessment within the programme. This is a board specific to the PPE programme, with members from each of the four participating departments. It annually checks that all assessments are in line with the programme's learning objectives and ILOs, monitors the assessment plans, and evaluates assessment on course and curriculum level. Annually, the Board takes a sample of theses, as well as the accompanying assessment forms, to check whether all theses are assessed properly and are at the required level.

The panel studied the assessment system and spoke with the Board of Examiners. It concludes that the assessment system is valid, reliable and transparent. The panel appreciates the assessment philosophy of PPE. The combination of summative and formative assessment promotes collaborative learning. The assessment methods are sufficiently varied to fit the intended learning outcomes of the programme. The students the panel interviewed appreciate the frequent and useful feedback they receive on their assignments. The panel recognizes the difficulties of assessing interdisciplinary skills and was pleased to hear that the programme is currently developing its own teaching materials with a structured approach for teaching and assessing interdisciplinary skills. The Board of Examiners has a system of checks and balances in place to monitor the quality of the assessment in the courses, as well as the theses.

The panel noted that the programme does not yet have a detailed programme-specific philosophy regarding the assessment of the internship. The internship is a standard element of the Profile Area offered on a faculty level and functions as an introduction to the professional field. It is assessed pass/fail based on the internship report, where the student reflects on his or her learning process during the internship. Programme representatives explained that the programme is still reflecting on the role of the internship within PPE. This is partly because the internship is not yet very popular with students, and partly because there is currently a

university-wide discussion on the goals of the internship and what assessment methods best fit these goals. The panel encourages PPE to formulate more detailed programme-specific goals for the internship and find a way to systematically assess these.

Thesis assessment

The thesis is assessed by two examiners: one from each of the two disciplines that the students has chosen to focus on. After completion of the thesis, the examiners evaluate the thesis independently from each other and fill out an assessment form. They decide on a final mark after joint consultation. When the two examiners cannot agree, or when a thesis is on the border between pass and fail, a third evaluator must be consulted as an arbitrator.

As part of its preparation of the site visits, the panel studied 15 bachelor's theses with the accompanying assessment forms. It concludes that the thesis assessment process is sufficiently independent and transparent. The assessment form has useful sub criteria to evaluate the thesis, including its interdisciplinary character, which fits the focus of PPE. The panel was especially impressed with the substantiation of the grades and the quality and quantity of feedback, detailing the strong points and points of improvement. The panel was initially confused about the fact that forms for both examiners sometimes contained identical text. It learnt during the site visit that examiners sometimes copy the comments of the other examiner into their own form after the joint discussion in order to give the student a more complete picture of the feedback. The Board of Examinees had noted this as well in its annual sample and is discouraging this practice. The panel agrees, as this practice can obscure the view on the original feedback given by the individual examiners.

The panel noticed that both examiners are actively involved in supervising the student. While this is commendable in view of the interdisciplinary character of theses, it makes it harder for examiners to take an external perspective when grading the thesis. While the panel did not encounter any theses in which the double role of supervisor and examiner seems to have influenced the grading, it suggests considering the addition of an external examiner to the process for quality assurance purposes. This could mitigate the risk of personal investment of supervisors influencing the judgment.

Considerations

The programme has a valid, transparent and reliable system of assessment in place. The assessment methods are varied and fit the aims of the programme, emphasizing collaborative learning and feedback and paying specific attention to the assessment of interdisciplinarity. During the corona pandemic, the programme successfully made the switch to online assessment. To further improve the system of assessment, the panel encourages the programme to develop programme-specific goals for the internship and find a way to systematically assess these. The Board of Examiners has a professional system of checks and balances in place and safeguards the quality of assessment. The procedures and assessment forms for the bachelor theses are solid, with an impressive quality and quantity of substantiation of the grades and feedback to the student. The panel recommends dropping the informal practice of integrating the two separate assessment forms after the joint discussion, and recommends considering the addition of an external examiner.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that that the programme meets standard 3.

Standard 4. Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Findings

The panel read a selection of 15 recent theses by PPE graduates. It was impressed with the high level achieved in these bachelor's theses, which were found to be original and clearly interdisciplinary. The panel noted that the theses were generally well-structured, well-argued and original. Students show knowledge and understanding in each of the disciplines, as well as the skills to integrate these disciplines in an interdisciplinary perspective. The panel applauds the programme for realizing its highly ambitious goals.

The first cohort of alumni has been admitted to relevant (often competitive) national and international master's programmes, including research masters in the Netherlands, and prestigious programmes at the London School of Economics and Cambridge. Several of the programme's alumni have entered the professional field, often through traineeships or internships at banks, consultancy firms or government institutions. The panel was impressed with the opportunities that the PPE graduates have, and views these as further proof of the quality of the programme and its graduates.

Although the alumni are in high demand, some indicated in the interview that they struggle with 'branding' their skills. The PPE programmes in the Netherlands are not yet widely known, and students are not always sure what career they can pursue afterwards due to the breadth of the programme. According to the panel, building an alumni network that shows students which careers PPE graduates pursue will be very important to address this. During the site visit, the panel learnt that the programme management aims to launch such an alumni network, but is still struggling to align this with the centralized, university-wide alumni network that the UU is investing in. The panel thinks that having a recognizable group of PPE alumni that students can approach is important due to the nature of the programme, and recommends finding ways to set this up as complementary to the central UU alumni network. The panel expects that cohorts of the programme will keep in touch with each other due to the strong community feeling within PPE; these informal networks could be connected to the programme and its PPE students.

Considerations

The panel is impressed with the high level of the PPE bachelor's theses. These show that the programme convincingly realizes its highly ambitious, interdisciplinary goals. Alumni of the programme have many opportunities to continue in relevant and often competitive master's programmes, or in companies or political and societal organizations. The panel recommends setting up an alumni network of PPE graduates aimed at providing students with insights in potential careers after graduation.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard 4.

General conclusion

The panel's assessment of the bachelor's programme Philosophy, Politics and Economics is positive.

Development points

1. Keep working on connecting the various aspects of the programme, particularly the courses, skills track, themes and research skills, in order to show students the coherence between the various elements of the curriculum.
2. Ensure that core teachers have sufficient time for setting up courses and interdisciplinary collaborations important to the PPE aims and reflect on how to safeguard the continuity of the programme in the case of staff mobility.
3. Formulate more detailed programme-specific goals for the internship and find a way to systematically assess these.
4. Consider adding an external examiner to the thesis assessment process to mitigate the risk of personal investment of supervisors influencing the judgment.
5. Set up a PPE-specific alumni network to show students which careers PPE graduates can pursue to help them discover the value of their knowledge and skills.

Description of the practice-based assessment for the Distinctive Feature Small-scale and Intensive Education

Introduction

The UU bachelor PPE was initially awarded the Distinctive Feature Small-scale and Intensive Education in 2017. The current panel performed a practice-based assessment in combination with the limited programme assessment to verify whether the distinctive, small-scale and intensive character of the bachelor's programme could be reaffirmed. One panel member and the secretary were specifically trained by the NVAO for this purpose.

The previous panel recommended addressing the following issues in the practice-based assessment:

- Safeguarding small scale education in groups of 25 students
- Diversity of the student body
- Maintaining the right balance between extra activities by students and the ambition to finish the programme on time

These questions are addressed in standards C (small-scale education and balance between extra activities and nominal study progress) and D (diversity).

Standard A. Intended learning outcomes

The objectives and intended learning outcomes are aimed at achieving an above-average level in one or more academic disciplines and/or professional practices in the domain concerned. In addition, the programme focuses on the broadening and development of related personal attitudes and skills.

Findings

The bachelor PPE in Utrecht has a distinct interdisciplinary focus, providing students with fundamental knowledge regarding political and economic institutions from four different disciplines: philosophy, political science, economics and history. Students study the four disciplines equally throughout the curriculum. They do not specialize in one or two disciplines, but rather choose a thematic focus in their second year (*Challenges to the Welfare State, Markets and Regulators, Pathways to a Sustainable Future or Democracy and its Discontents*) and study this from various disciplinary perspectives. To support this, students are trained in interdisciplinary skills, learning to systematically integrate insights from multiple disciplines. This is supplemented by training in professional skills, addressing personal development of the student in order to train socially responsible professionals and leaders. The programme is offered in an international setting based on the conviction that various intercultural perspectives are crucial in the interdisciplinary training of students.

According to the panel, the goals of the programme are clearly very ambitious and aim at an above-average level. Students are provided with in-depth knowledge in four different disciplines to be able to take an interdisciplinary perspective regarding political and economic institutions. This requires students to compare and integrate findings and methods from the different disciplines, as well as apply this complex knowledge to make practical judgements in the context of societally relevant challenges. The acquisition of disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge and skills is complemented with that of the professional skills necessary to train students as broadly skilled and socially responsible professionals and leaders. The

programme's high ambitions are clearly reflected in the programme's ILOs (see appendix 1), which elaborate on the knowledge and understanding as well as the attitudes and skills required to realize these objectives.

Considerations

The bachelor PPE clearly surpasses the average intended bachelor's level through its interdisciplinary approach and its ambitious aims to train students to integrate four different disciplines when reflecting on societally relevant challenges regarding political and economic institutions. The programme's intended learning outcomes reflect these high ambitions, both with regard to knowledge and understanding and with regard to the broadening and development of personal attitudes and skills.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard A.

Standard B. Curriculum – contents

The curriculum and the extracurricular activities are inextricably bound. Their contents tie in with the intended level and the broadening as formulated in the intended learning outcomes. Students and staff share responsibility for the organisation of the extracurricular activities.

Findings

PPE's ambitious focus was translated into a curriculum with a strong focus on interdisciplinarity and skills. Year 1 consists of fundamental disciplinary training, whereas Year 2 focuses on the interdisciplinary perspective as well as methods training. In this year, students choose one out of four thematic foci, consisting of a package of four courses with increasingly challenging forms of interdisciplinarity. This package contains two duo-disciplinary courses, where two lecturers from a different disciplinary background analyse a topic from their respective expertise, a course on doing interdisciplinary research, and the final course PPE in Society, a community-based learning experience where students put their interdisciplinary thinking into action to create actual societal impact in a self-designed project with societal partners. Year 3 has a large free elective space (Profile Area) and the bachelor thesis.

Running in parallel to the courses are the skills tracks: learning activities that are integrated into the various courses and teach students interdisciplinary thinking and professional skills. Furthermore, each block ends with a Step-Back Week, a project week in which students participate in projects outside the classroom where they further train their skills. The panel is very positive about the way in which the bachelor PPE has integrated the interdisciplinary approach and ambitious aims as described in standard A into a well-structured and well-design curriculum that fully aligns with the intended learning outcomes of the programme. Students have many opportunities to shape the curriculum to their own preference: not only in the Profile Area in the third year, but also through the choice of a thematic focus, the opportunity to design their own projects and the skills tracks and extracurricular activities.

The curriculum is complemented by a wide selection of extracurricular activities. These are organized jointly by PPE staff and students, in particular by study organization METIS, and are aimed at personal development as well as community building. The programme appointed a coordinator for the extracurricular programme (one of the PPE Board members). The coordinator has regular meetings with the METIS board and the study advisor to monitor the quantity and quality of activities. The programme has funds specifically reserved for student-initiated activities that all students can apply for. Students are expected to actively contribute to and participate in these activities, formalised in a written document where mutual expectations regarding extracurricular activities are formulated annually between students (through METIS) and the teaching staff.

Examples of activities are a lecture series, an end-of-year conference where students showcase their projects, debates and numerous social activities. Students reflect on their learning experiences throughout the programme in a portfolio, which is part of the skills track education. These learning experiences include both curricular and extracurricular activities.

The panel is impressed with the many extracurricular activities organized by as well as the active role of study organization METIS as a major driving force behind student-initiated events. Moreover, the panel learnt during the site visit that initiating and organizing these events itself adds to the development of the personal and professional skills of students. The panel studied an overview of recent extracurricular activities and concludes that they are very relevant to the content of the curriculum as well as to community-building. They reflect the interdisciplinary focus of the programme, and offer a wide diversity of events and perspectives. The portfolio that students make forms a strong connection between the curricular and extracurricular activities, and stimulates students to approach the extracurricular activities as opportunities for skills development.

Considerations

The panel concludes that the curricular and extracurricular activities of the bachelor PPE together match the programme's ambitious aims as formulated in the intended learning outcomes. They provide students with many opportunities to develop their interdisciplinary perspective as well as their professional and personal skills. The portfolio stimulates students to reflect on their skills development in the curriculum and the extracurricular activities, tying these together. Students and staff work together closely in organizing the extracurricular activities. Furthermore, students have (and take) the opportunity to organize extracurricular activities using funding provided by the programme, which stimulates student-initiated activities.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard B.

Standard C. Curriculum – learning environment

The teaching concept is based on a challenging learning environment, education substantiated in a small-scale and intensive manner, and a learning community of students and staff. The small-scale and intense nature of the education is demonstrated by the level of participation and preparation that is expected from students. The curriculum is structured in such a manner as to ensure nominal study progress by the students, including extracurricular activities.

Findings

The bachelor PPE uses an intensive, small-scale education concept with a high number of contact hours (16h per week for courses) with active participation. The programme uses a wide variety of teaching methods, ranging from lectures and seminars to small-group discussions and community-based activities. Students are actively stimulated to attend and participate in all courses, and based on students' and teaching staff's remarks, this usually results in engaging and stimulating sessions. Students often work on projects in small groups, for instance in the PPE in Society course, the Step-Back Weeks and several project groups associated with the courses. The majority of courses are taught in the form of seminars in groups with a maximum size of 25 students. With cohorts of approximately 75 students per year, this means that students are split into 3 separate groups to promote an interactive, small-scale setting. In most seminars, students prepare by reading the course materials, and during the seminar engage in reflection and debate based on the contents.

The panel concludes that PPE has a convincingly small-scale and intensive learning environment. The teaching methods used are small-scale, and require students to engage actively with each other and the teaching staff. For the seminars, students are divided into several smaller groups of 25 students, in line with the recommendations of the previous panel. Beyond the courses, students and staff members interact in the tutor system and the extracurricular activities (see Standard B and E). Students report to the panel that they feel part of a tight-knit learning community of students and staff, that extends beyond the courses and also includes the extracurricular and social activities. Keeping up the community feeling was challenging for a time during the covid-19 restrictions, but with the return on campus this is increasingly coming back. Students appreciate the teaching methods used by the programme, and feel that the seminars in particular offer a challenging and engaging learning environment.

The panel observes that the programme is designed so that students can graduate nominally, combining the curriculum with extracurricular activities. This includes an attendance policy for seminars, calling upon the sense of responsibility of students to attend and participate in the debates, and frequent discussion of study progress in the tutor meetings. In addition, the strong community feeling within the cohorts encourages students to go through the curriculum together.

In accordance with the recommendations of the previous panel, the panel considered the role of extracurricular activities in relation to nominal study progress. It concludes that even though the programme offers many extracurricular activities, students report that this does not interfere with their study progress. On the contrary, students report that the social activities help them stay motivated and engaged with the programme and its community. This is in accordance with the success rates of the programme: most students progress to the third year without delays (see Standard G).

Considerations

PPE offers a small-scale and intensive learning environment, as well as a close-knit community. The teaching methods encourage active engagement of students with each other and the teaching staff, and require students to prepare and participate actively in the courses and activities. Most education takes place in groups of 25 students or less, fitting the small-scale set-up of the programme. The programme is set up in such a way that nominal study progress can be achieved. The extracurricular activities are well-balanced against the curriculum: students report that they feel stimulated by these activities to stay engaged with the programme and the community. The panel considers the community of students and teachers to be effective and working.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard C.

Standard D. Intake

The programme has a sound selection procedure in place, aimed at admitting motivated and academically and/or professionally talented students, in which the criteria include suitability for and interest in the small-scale and intensive educational concept, in combination with extracurricular activities.

Findings

In order to ensure that students are equipped to take on the ambitious curriculum, PPE has an extensive selection procedure in place. The procedure aims at selecting students with above-average academic potential and a strong interest in studying social, political and economic issues from multiple perspectives.

Student selection is not only based on graduation grades, but also on a profile test for study behaviour, a motivation letter, a letter of recommendation and an interview. By making use of these different selection tools, the programme looks for curiosity, openness, a creative and critical attitude, as well as qualities necessary in a small-scale and intensive teaching environment. These include for instance skills and motivation for cooperation, willingness among students to reflect on their own qualities and limitations and general interest in joining a tight-knit international community and extracurricular activities that go beyond the regular curricular activities. All application files are assessed by the PPE Admissions Committee, consisting of four PPE core staff members and several support staff members. Top-ranked applicants are offered a place in the programme directly; other students on the short list may be invited for interviews. Final decisions on admission offers are made by the PPE admissions committee, taking into account the diversity of the full cohort.

The panel approves of the solid intake procedures of PPE. It particularly applauds the fact that the programme considers more than just the students' grades. The selection procedure emphasizes motivation and suitability to the small-scale and intensive context and participation in a close community, which is appropriate given the setting of the programme.

As recommended by the previous panel, the panel paid extra attention to the efforts of the programme to create a diverse student body. It learnt that diversity of the full cohort is always taken into account when finalizing decisions on admission. This includes at least gender diversity and a diversity of European and non-European nationalities. Other groups that the programme would like to have represented in the student cohorts, such as students from underprivileged groups, are harder to select, as this is not readily apparent from CVs. For such students, the programme reserves a number of 'wild card' interview invitations for slightly lower ranking students who meet all programme requirements and demonstrate in their cv and motivation letter that they have had to overcome particular challenges to end up where they are now. These students are also invited for interviews and, if there is a match, admitted to the programme. Additionally, the programme has a number of scholarships aimed at improving diversity in the programme. Students can apply for a scholarship by arguing how they would add to the diversity of the programme. Another challenge related to the diversity of the student body are the limited opportunities to attract non-European students to the programme, in particular from the Global South, as the costs of living in the Netherlands are often too high for these students compared to their home country. The programme has only one UU scholarship for which non-EU students are eligible.

According to the panel, the programme is devoted to creating a diverse student body. The panel applauds the efforts and creativity of the programme to improve the participation of underprivileged students and students from the Global South. It noted with appreciation that PPE is currently trying to attract private funding to create extra scholarship positions for these groups of students. The panel supports this wholeheartedly.

Considerations

The panel considers the selection procedure to be sound, thorough, and suitable for a programme with a small-scale and intensive educational concept in combination with extracurricular activities. The programme is committed to creating a diverse student body, and has several mechanisms in place to promote this.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard D.

Standard E. Staff

The number of staff is sufficient in terms of providing small-scale and intensive education, substantiating close contact between staff and students, and providing individual counselling to students outside the educational context. The staff demonstrably command the specific expertise and skills required to achieve the objectives of small-scale and intensive education. The programme actively monitors that teachers hold the required qualifications and, if necessary, ensures that teachers are trained in these aspects.

Findings

The teaching staff of the bachelor PPE consists of a team of twelve core teachers, supplemented by a larger group of regular teachers. The team of core teachers consists of three teachers for each of the four departments associated with the programme. They feel particular ownership of the PPE programme, and fulfil core tasks in the programme such as coordinating first year courses and second-year thematic foci, supervising theses, tutoring, and serving in the various committees. They can dedicate at least 0.4 fte of their time to teaching in the programme, and are culture carriers regarding the specific nature of PPE education. The regular teaching staff is involved in specific courses related to their particular expertise. They form a diverse, multidisciplinary group, ranging from PhD students to associate and full professors from all departments participating in PPE. Apart from the course-related activities, students are intensively tutored. This tutoring is focused on skills and personal development, and includes frequent reflection and feedback in individual sessions with the tutor, as well as in peer support groups of six students from the same cohort.

All core teaching staff members hold a PhD and are involved in active research. Several core teachers were appointed in a tenure track position with the PPE programme in mind when the programme was launched, and are actively involved in interdisciplinary research in the disciplines related to PPE. All core teachers and the majority of the regular teachers hold a university teaching qualification (BKO). Three regular teachers also hold a senior teaching qualification (SKO). In order to make regular teaching staff members familiar with the special nature of the programme, they are provided with PPE's teaching manual that describes the educational philosophy and specific aspects of PPE. They are also invited to regular meetings together with the core teachers, to keep them up to date about developments within the programme. Furthermore, the programme has support from educational consultants for particular projects, such as the further development of interdisciplinary and professional skills training.

The panel is very positive about the quantity and quality of the teaching staff, as well as the specific attention paid to expertise required for small-scale and intensive education. The team of 12 core teachers ensures a sufficiently large, interdisciplinary core team that feels ownership and responsibility for the programme and functions as carriers of culture for regular staff members. They provide the programme with a stable basis and are invested in the PPE's content and educational principles. Their research aligns very well with the interdisciplinary nature of PPE and is of an added value to the programme.

The core teachers the panel interviewed felt well-supported in setting up courses and tracks in the first years of the programme, and can spend extra time on teaching compared to regular programmes due to the small-scale and intensive nature of PPE. The panel also praises the attention the programme pays to making regular teachers familiar with the specific interdisciplinary and small-scale, intensive education within PPE. It thinks that this constitutes an essential ingredient to keep for the high quality of education high in the program, and encourages the programme to keep paying attention to this.

Students praise the support and engagement of the PPE staff, in particular in giving and receiving feedback in the courses and as tutors. This creates a culture of continuous improvement among students and staff members. The panel learnt that the core teaching staff, and occasionally the regular teaching staff, are actively engaged in extracurricular activities as well, adding to the community feeling within the programme.

Considerations

The panel considers the teaching staff to have the quality and quantity needed for offering a small-scale and intensive programme. The teaching staff is well-qualified regarding both research expertise and teaching. The core teaching staff provides a sufficiently large and stable basis for the special interdisciplinary, small-scale and intensive nature of the programme. They are very much appreciated by students, both for their expertise and for their guidance and feedback in the courses and on an individual basis as tutors. In addition, the programme pays attention to the specific nature of PPE when preparing regular teaching staff members for participation in the programme. The panel encourages the programme to keep investing in support and time allocated for the small-scale and intensive education within PPE.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard E.

Standard F. Facilities

The programme has its own infrastructure with facilities for small-scale and intensive education and common extra-curricular social activities.

Findings

PPE has its own building on the International Campus Utrecht: the Descartes Hall. The building offers a mix of classrooms and smaller break-out rooms for project groups, as well as study spaces for students and office spaces for the core teaching staff associated with the programme. The main meeting spaces for students and staff are a large, multifunctional common room, where most of the extracurricular activities are organized, and the room of study association METIS.

The panel had the opportunity to visit the Descartes Hall during the site visit, and was impressed with the diversity of facilities and spaces offered in the building, ranging from quiet rooms to computer facilities and collaborative or social rooms. The building can be used beyond office hours, and, according to students and alumni, feels like a second home for many students for the duration of the programme.

Considerations

The facilities of the programme meet the needs of a small-scale, intensive programme. The programme has its own building that provides ample room for various types of education and collaboration for students as well as staff members, is well-equipped for well as extracurricular social activities, and is like a second home to many students.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard F.

Standard G. Achieved learning outcomes

The content and the level of the tests and final projects are in line with the level and the broadening as set down in the intended learning outcomes. Graduates are admitted to demanding postgraduate programmes and/or jobs. The success rates are substantially higher than those of other relevant programmes that do not carry the distinctive feature, and are at least on a par with other relevant programmes that have been granted this distinctive feature.

Findings

The panel ascertained that student assessment in PPE matches the objectives of the programme, and that particular attention is paid to the assessment of interdisciplinary skills in both the courses and the thesis. The panel read a selection of bachelor's theses and concludes that the level achieved here is clearly higher than that of regular bachelor's theses. Students show knowledge and understanding in each of the disciplines, as well as the skills to integrate these disciplines in a broad interdisciplinary perspective. The panel applauds the programme for realizing its highly ambitious goals. Graduates from the first cohort have been admitted to a broad variety of often competitive master's programmes, traineeships and internships, for instance in research masters, banks, consultancy firms and governmental organizations. According to the panel, this is further proof of the high level and broad orientation of PPE's graduates.

Even though only one cohort (2018-2021) has graduated so far, the programme already shows very favourable success rates. The large majority of students (95-100%) of the cohort receives a positive binding study advice after the first year. Of the first cohort of students that graduated in 2021, 62% of students (excluding dropouts) did so within the allocated three years. The programme noticed that this number seems to be impacted by the covid-19 pandemic: several students decided to take longer to do activities such as going on an exchange, that were not possible or attractive to do during the covid-19 restrictions. Only a small number of students are delayed because they take longer to finish or retake their courses. The programme management therefore expects the success rates to rise further in the longer term. Furthermore, the number is slightly distorted by a number of students that do a board year at METIS: they are allowed and compensated to take an extra year to finish the programme.

In conclusion, the panel is convinced that the success rates of the programme are structurally on a high level. The high number of students with a positive binding study advice is impressive, and the success rates of 62% in three years are similar to those of other programmes with the same distinctive feature. Based on interviews with students and alumni, the panel agrees with the observation of the programme that delayed graduation is often the result of individual choices by students to realize their own ambitions after a time of limited possibilities. The panel is confident that the high success rates of the new cohorts in the first and second year will translate into a success rate that is substantially higher than that of similar programmes with the distinctive feature.

Considerations

The panel concludes that graduates of the PPE programme clearly demonstrate that they have achieved the ambitious and high level stipulated in the intended learning outcomes. This is evident from the impressive quality of their theses, their study success and their success in entering competitive master's programmes, internships and traineeships. The programme's success rates are on par with other programmes with a distinctive feature, and will probably rise further when the effects of the covid-19 pandemic have diminished.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the programme meets standard G.

General conclusion

Based on the practice-based assessment of the UU bachelor's programme Philosophy, Politics and Economics, the panel advises **positively** on the extension of the distinct feature for small-scale and intensive education.

Appendix 1. Intended learning outcomes

A) Knowledge, understanding, and application.

PPE graduates will

1. have a basic knowledge and understanding of the four constitutive disciplines, in particular:
 - philosophical theories and methods about normative evaluations of political and economic institutions;
 - historical theories and methods about the historical origins and development of political and economic institutions;
 - economic theories and methods about the functioning of economic institutions and the positive evaluation of economic phenomena;
 - governance theories and methods about the functioning of political institutions and the positive evaluation of political phenomena.
2. be able to interpret and analyse problems and challenges for political and economic institutions in terms of the theories and methods available in philosophy, history, economics and governance; to evaluate various real-world situations and be able to use conceptual models representing empirical reality for the purposes of analysis, evaluation and prediction.

B) Making judgments and taking responsibility.

PPE graduates will have the ability

1. to find, organise and present information with an aim to make judgments about complex problems and their possible resolutions.
2. To make ethical judgments with respect to political and economic institutions, while balancing these with social and scientific considerations.
3. to reflect critically, independently, and creatively on the quality of political and economic institutions, on societal and scientific proposals for improvements of these institutions, as well as to design innovative solutions and proposals.
4. to integrate knowledge with personal experience and reflection; students make commitment to values that matter to them and learn to take responsibility for these commitments and take initiatives to realise them in practice.

C) Interdisciplinary skills.

PPE graduates will have the ability

1. to appreciate the ways in which disciplinary knowledge is constructed and communicated, to address the limitations of current knowledge from these disciplines and to recognise that often no single best answer is available.
2. to integrate theories and methods from the disciplines of philosophy, history, economics, and governance in the study of problems and challenges for political and economic institutions.
3. to be aware of one's own biases and assumptions, and to value different perspectives.

D) Research skills.

PPE graduates will have the ability

1. to process information; the ability to gather, organise and deploy evidence, data, and information from a wide variety of sources; good practices in citation.
2. to conduct a research plan: the ability to make a research plan and determine the research approach aligned with the research question.
3. to conduct, analyse and interpret data (quantitative and qualitative), and make valid interpretations and conclusions with sensitivity to the context.

4. to construct and articulate sound arguments in a debate, and to assess critically the arguments presented by others and by oneself.
5. to communicate their own research in written and verbal form according to the standards of the disciplinary and interdisciplinary training offered in the programme.

E) Professional skills.

PPE graduates will have the ability

1. to reflect critically upon their own progress, abilities, and deficiencies in their academic career, both in academic terms and in terms of their wider personal development.
2. to cooperate productively with others, to be a team player, who takes initiatives and is able to combine these with the ideas of others, and the ability to provide and receive feedback.
3. to communicate about economic and political problems and institutional responses to these problems with audiences with various backgrounds.
4. to reflect upon the norms of academic integrity which are required in doing academic research, as well as the norms of professional integrity which are required when working in professional life.
5. to contribute with these professional skills to society, driven by curiosity into complex social contexts and by an attitude of social responsibility.

Appendix 2. Programme curriculum

PART I: BASIC COURSES (YEAR 1, 60 EC)	Level	EC	Entry requirements
Comparative Democratic Institutions	1	7.5	none
Major Debates in Global Economic History	1	7.5	none
Ethics & Public Policy	1	7.5	none
Microeconomics	1	7.5	none
Macroeconomics	2	7.5	none
The Politics of Policy-Making	2	7.5	none
Political Philosophy	2	7.5	none
The History of Politics	2	7.5	none
PART II METHODS AND ACADEMIC SKILLS (YEAR 2, 30 EC)	Level	EC	Entry requirements
Doing Research (1): Qualitative Methods	2	7.5	none
Doing Research (2): Quantitative Methods	2	7.5	none
Reasoning & Argumentation	3	7.5	none
Knowledge in Debate	3	7.5	none
PART III THEMATIC PACKAGES (YEAR 2, 30 EC)	Level	EC	Entry requirements
<i>Package A: The Welfare State</i>			
A.1 The Welfare State. Past and Present	2	7.5	45 EC of Part I
A.2 Principles of the Welfare State	2	7.5	45 EC of Part I
A.3 Integrating Insights (Welfare State)	3	7.5	45 EC of Part I, courses A1 and A2, and the Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods courses
A.4 PPE in Society (Welfare State)	3	7.5	45 EC of Part I, courses A1 and A2, and the Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods courses
<i>Package B: Markets and Regulators</i>			
B.1 Regulatory Responses to Market Failures	2	7.5	45 EC of Part I
B.2 Politics and History of Market Governance	2	7.5	45 EC of Part I
B.3 Integrating Insights (Markets and Regulators)	3	7.5	45 EC of Part I, courses B1 and B2, and the Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods courses
B.4 PPE in Society (Markets and Regulators)	3	7.5	45 EC of Part I, courses B1 and B2, and the Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods courses
<i>Package C: Sustainability</i>			
C.1 Institutions for Sustainability	2	7.5	45 EC of Part I
C.2 Crafting Effective and Fair Sustainable Policies	2	7.5	45 EC of Part I
C.3 Integrating Insights (Sustainability)	3	7.5	45 EC of Part I, and courses C1 and C2, and the Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods courses
C.4 PPE in Society (Sustainability)	3	7.5	45 EC of Part I, and courses C1 and C2, and the Qualitative and

			Quantitative Research Methods courses
<i>Package D: Democracy and its Discontents</i>			
D.1 Foundations of Democracy	2	7.5	45 EC of Part I
D.2 Challenges to Liberal Democracy	2	7.5	45 EC of Part I
D.3 Integrating Insights (Democracy)	3	7.5	45 EC of Part I, and courses D1 and D2, and the Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods courses
D.4 PPE in Society (Democracy)	3	7.5	45 EC of Part I, and courses D1 and D2, and the Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods courses
PART IV PROFILE AREA (YEAR 3, 45 EC)	Level	EC	Entry requirements
Profile area	1/2/3	45	Depends on the supplier of the courses
PART V THESIS	Level	EC	Entry requirements
PPE BSc Thesis	3	15	90 EC of Parts I, II and III and one course at level 3
PART VI SKILLS TRACKS	Level	EC	Entry requirements
Interdisciplinary Skills	1-3	0	
Professional Skills	1-3	0	

Appendix 3. Programme of the site visit

Thursday 12 May 2022	
13.30 - 14.00	Welcome
14.00 - 14.45	Tour of the facilities by students of PPE
14.45 - 16.15	Preliminary meeting panel & office hour
16.15 - 17.00	Interview with programme and faculty management
17.00 - 17.45	Interview with alumni

Friday 13 May 2022	
09.00 - 09.45	Interview with PPE Board
09.45 - 10.30	Interview with Board of examiners
10.30 - 11.00	Internal meeting panel/break
11.00 - 11.45	Interview with students
11.45 - 12.30	Internal meeting panel/break
12.30 - 13.15	Lunch
13.15 - 14.00	Interview with teaching staff
14.00 - 14.30	Internal meeting panel/break
14.30 - 15.15	Final interview with programme and faculty management
15.15 - 16.45	Preparation of preliminary findings and oral report (internal panel meeting)
16.45 - 18.00	Oral report preliminary findings + drinks (in Common Room, Descartes Hall)
17.00 - 17.45	Development dialogue (in Descartes Hall)

Appendix 4. Materials

Prior to the site visit, the panel studied 15 theses of the bachelor's programme Philosophy, Politics and Economics. Information on the theses is available from Academion upon request. The panel also studied other materials, which included:

- Education and Examination Regulations
- Curriculum Overview
- Assessment Plan
- Course results 2020-2021
- Teaching staff overview
- Admission and selection criteria
- Teacher's Manual & Student Guide
- Student Survey 2021 & Teacher Survey 2021
- Skills Course Manuals
- Course manuals for courses focusing on interdisciplinary research projects
- Selection of Step Back Week Assignments/Activities
- Crash Course Program
- End of Year Conference Programme (2021)
- Selection of Speaker Series
- Overview of Extracurricular activities
- Metis (selected activities/items)
- Internship (student guides & assessment forms)
- Notes from Curriculum Committee meetings
- PPE Jaarverslag 2019 -2020
- Course materials from selected courses (course manuals and selected assessments)