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ASSESSMENT OF METHODOLOGY AND MATERIALS OF PA TEACHING AND ITS RELEVANCE FOR PRACTICE

Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca

Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences

Department of Public Administration and Management

Master of Public Administration

**The analysis of practical relevance of program competencies
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Note: The report expresses an opinion of the authors. The EC doesn't have responsibility for any utilization of included information.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the project in this IO1 phase is stated as: »to provide data for an analyses how the PA curricula is linked to practice, and analyses of the gap between competencies needed in practical work in public administration and those obtained in the educational programs.« I.e., we should assess the relevance of the competences of our programs for practice – and our programs differentiate substantially, if you scrutinize them, which means that we have also different competences listed. Thus, program competences are starting points. Not to mention, that needs for practice might differentiate. Furthermore, this output of IO1 serves also as **an input for IO5** (Methodological framework for development of competencies relevant for practice), finally as international evaluations of PA programs and feasibility studies for suggested improvements.

Moreover, according to the arrangements, we should scrutinize and review only our own programs, and, furthermore, **PA related programs** exclusively (not as parts of mainly legally or policy or economics oriented but autonomous programs; i.e., a rough benchmark should be EAPAA accreditation eligibility criteria – these criteria should be taken under consideration in advance). Scrutinized should be, if possible, **MA level programs** only, due to the application's theoretical grounds (*Staronova & Gajdushek, 2016*), a more developed PA specifics competences on this level and more convergent state of the art to gain comparable results; and only **program-specific competencies**, that is PA (in general, as stated in accredited programs) are in the core study of this project.

1.1 Program Description

In 1995 Babeş-Bolyai University from Cluj-Napoca was one of the first Romanian universities to consider the development of a higher education program in the field of public administration. Until that moment, public administration was not regarded as an independent field of study and undergraduate programs in the field of public administration were commonly housed within the law school. The development of undergraduate programs in the field of public administration has initially consisted in a minor altering of these preexisting administrative law schools based on a curriculum that consisted mostly of law-based disciplines (72% in 1996).

The establishment of the Department of Public Administration and Management within the Faculty of Political Sciences¹ in 1996 can be considered an important step toward the rethinking of the undergraduate programs in the field of public administration in Romania. The most important change stems from a completely different perspective regarding the role of public administration – while the law-based programs emphasized that the role of public administration is to enforce the laws, the new approach argued that its role is to solve the citizens' demands and problems. As a result of this approach, a substantial altering of the undergraduate curriculum has taken place over the years. Thus, in 2000 the curriculum became based on an interdisciplinary mixture of disciplines (management, political science, sociology, law, research methods, etc.).

¹ Currently the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences.

The Department of Public Administration and Management (DAMP) has tried over the years to disseminate this approach to the study of public administration to the other schools in public administration at the national level. The meetings of the schools in public administration – gathered under the institutional framework of the Association of Schools and Institutes in Public Administration (the organization was created in 2001 mostly as a result of the efforts of the Department of Public Administration and Management at Babeş-Bolyai University) – have contributed to the acknowledgment of the interdisciplinary character of the study of public administration and to the departure from the law ‘dominance’. The Institute is no longer in place as it was replaced by other similar entities. A brief description of these initiatives is presented below.

In 2012, DAMP initiated the Association of Public Administration Master Programs together with the Faculty of Administration and Public Management from Bucharest University of Economic Studies and the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration from UAIC University of Iasi. The Association aims at promoting and developing the Romanian public administration master programs, through research, meetings, and several types of activities.

In 2013 the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences initiated and signed a protocol for the establishment of the ‘Club of the 4’. It brings together the best four undergraduate programs in public administration in Romania. The purpose of this partnership is to develop an elite group of public administration programs that promote common standards of excellence in teaching, research and community involvement in Romania.

The Department of Public Administration and Management at Babeş-Bolyai University strongly believes that the study of public administration is interdisciplinary in nature and should be based on five main domains:

1. **Management** is important as it enhances the good functioning of public administration. Within the contemporary context described by blurred boundaries between the public and the private sector, the transfers from the management to the public sector are becoming increasingly important. Good governance is the key factor for public administration, and because of this, it emerged as a new field of study.
2. **Sociology** - because public administration is part of the broader societal system and also because research in public administration borrows methods and techniques used by sociology.
3. **Economics and public finance** considering that public administration raises and allocates resources in order to meet the citizens’ and society’s needs.
4. **Political sciences** - it is important because public administration cannot be separated from politics, the latter being the one that delineates the tasks to be accomplished by the public administration. The relationship with political science is also consolidated by the fact that public administration functions within a democratic environment whose values and principles have to be understood and appropriated/acquired. However, the relationship with political science explains the concept of ‘public’ rather than the concept of ‘administration’.
5. **Law** - mostly administrative and European law; it is important because public administration can be regarded as the ‘law in action’ and also because the legislative framework defines and constrains the capacity to act of public administration institutions. However, public administration is more than just law – good legislation does not necessarily lead to a good public administration.

The master program is multidisciplinary by virtue of its nature. For example, during the first year, when the curriculum is common for all tracks the students are exposed to the following subjects:

1. Economics and public finances
2. Organizational theories
3. Research methods and techniques in social sciences
4. NGOs management
5. Comparative governance/ Introduction to philanthropy and the development of the non-profit sector
6. Public management
7. Community development
8. Public policy analysis
9. Ethics
10. Comparative European and administrative law
11. Mandatory internship

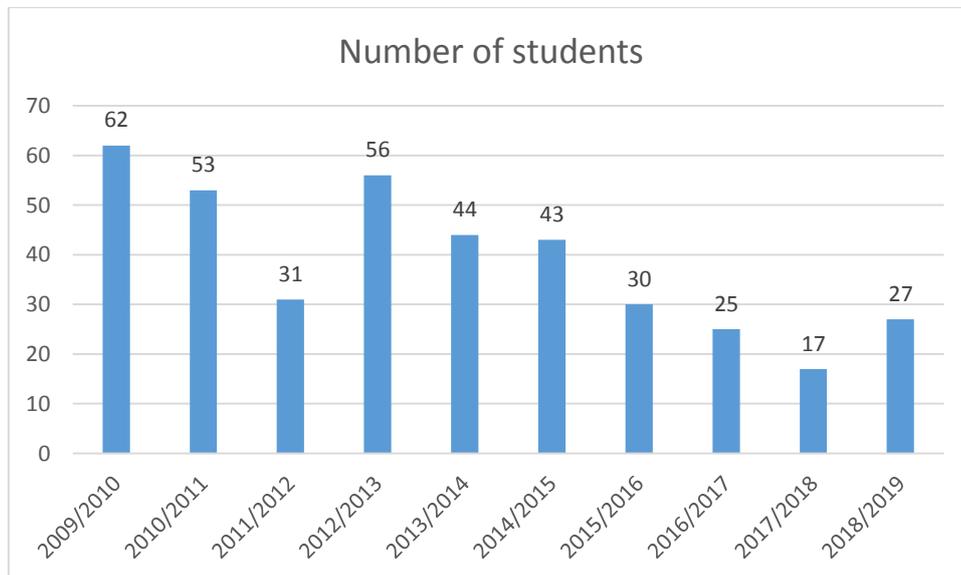
One can easily observe the great diversity of subjects. Furthermore, many courses feature an interdisciplinary approach – for example organizational theories consist of management elements coupled with organizational sociology while community development consists of sociological aspects, economics, and political science; as such, the interdisciplinary approach is not reflected only in the curricula, but also in each course individually. The multi-disciplinary character of the program is also enhanced by the different educational and professional background of the professors. Even though they come from different backgrounds (public administration, political sciences, sociology, law, economics, engineering, etc.) they hold a common vision with regard to the study of public administration and are able, working together, to develop an interdisciplinary approach which has the merit that is not limited to a single, narrow perspective on a specific subject.

In the light of the aforementioned issues, the objective of the Master of Public Administration is to teach public administration according to academic standards based on positive and normative theory and empirical research. The graduates of the program have solid knowledge in management (strategic management, leadership in public organizations, project management), sociology (research methods for social science), economy (public economy, public finance, financial management, local economic development, public investment management), political science (social capital, ethics), law (comparative administrative law) and in this way a broad vision with regard to the field of public administration.

Over the time the master program has developed tremendously, not necessarily in terms of the number of students attracted but rather in terms of quality. The graph below presents the evolution of the number of students enrolled each year in the English MPA. It must be stated that the program started with 19 students in 1999 – a reflection of the limited importance given to master studies at this time. The peak number of students was reached in 2009 (79 students) and starting with this year enrollment gradually declined. This decline needs to be however viewed in a broader context – demographic decline coupled with the diversification of master programs offer from the department - additional master programs in Human Resource Management, Project Management and Program Evaluation, Science, technology and Innovation in PA, Public Policy and Management were created in the last years, in the Romanian and English and Hungarian lines of study.

The total number of master students admitted into our full time programs in the fall of 2018 was 136 (plus 53 in distance learning master program). The Department of Public Administration and Management is currently trying to become more international and to attract both EU and non-EU students (Africa, China, former Soviet states, etc.), an aspect which could further influence the curricula.

Figure 1: Number of MA students (English language track, 2009-2018)



Mission Statement

Within the context of the changes that have occurred since 1989, the transition to democracy and market economy, the need to create a body of well-trained public servants is extremely relevant. Even today, 30 years after the revolution, and 12 years after accession to European Union, this need is far from being completely fulfilled. This is confirmed also by the fact that European Union Commission established for Romania and Bulgaria a Mechanism for Cooperation and Verification (MCV) designed to ensure a harmonious accession process and also to protect European policies and institutions. Even today, Romania and Bulgaria are monitored by EU Commission under that mechanism.

The Master of Public Administration in English was born out of the idea of creating a body of well-trained public servants who will be able to cope with the challenges imposed by the reform process, both at the national and international level. The existing body of civil servants though more professional and trained than in the past still lack a general type education in public administration, one that is multidisciplinary and focused on public management, economics, strategic planning, sociology, ethics, etc. The philosophy of the program is closely linked to the goal of the Department of Public Administration and Management of forming specialists who hold a solid managerial education and a broad vision with regard to the field of public administration.

The formal mission of the program, as stated on the website of the program and various marketing materials is presented below, in the presentation of the two PA master programs (a slight distinction is made between the two degrees).

Master of Public Administration

The Master of Public Administration program offers a professional education designed to prepare students for the challenges and opportunities of a career in the public sector or in related public and private firms. The program is built around two core specializations, each with its own focus: community development and urban planning; and

economic governance of the public sector. Instruction includes the roles, development, and principles of public administration; public policy management and implementation. Throughout the coursework, we emphasize an interdisciplinary approach by drawing from fields such as economics, sociology, law, anthropology, political science, and regional planning in order to equip MPA graduates with skills and knowledge covering a broad range of topics and disciplines relevant to the public sector. Depending on their interest, MPA students can focus their studies during the second year on a variety of public sector fields such as urban planning, transportation, economic development, public finances, local budgeting and investments, urban management, community development, environmental policy, cultural policy etc.

Management of public and non-profit organizations

This master program endeavors to strengthen the provision of public services in the society by preparing students for leadership and management positions in the public and nonprofit sectors. Through the coursework, we emphasize the development of abilities important to the effective and ethical management of governmental and nonprofit organizations. The curriculum is designed to aid students in developing the skills and techniques used by leaders and managers to implement policies, projects, and programs that resolve important societal problems. Our commitment is to prepare the graduate students to be effective leaders and managers in a dynamic and increasingly diverse professional environment, be it public, non-profit or private. We are doing this by offering a strategic approach regarding the study of the public and non-profit sector.

Unique features of the MA program (which apply to both degrees)

- A focus on leadership and strategic planning;
- A practice-oriented and research-based graduate educational experience;
- A focus on research and on involving students in preparing and conducting research studies in accordance with their individual research interests;
- A faculty whose international expertise and professional knowledge is remarkable; in addition part-time faculty of noted professionals at national and local levels;
- Internship opportunities;
- An extensive alumni network;
- An extensive network of foreign partner universities.

The student population targeted by the MPA in English is formed of recent graduates of bachelor programs in social sciences; however, since any student holding a bachelor degree can apply, during the admission process we are targeting candidates who are motivated and likely to catch up, even if they do not have a public administration/social sciences background. The English MPA attracts mostly full time students since the program is extremely demanding, involves instruction in a foreign language, and is rather lengthy for people in-service (who also have other programs at their disposal, even long distance learning). In fact, mid-career people who are interested in furthering their graduate education in public administration usually choose other types of program – post-university programs which are specific and short-term ones (maximum 6 months).

1.2 LIST OF GENERAL COMPETENCIES FOR THE PROGRAM

In order to receive program accreditation/re-accreditation or even provisory authorization from the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, each MA and BA program needs to identify a profession from the Classification of Occupations in Romania (COR) and register it in the National Register of Professional Qualification.

Furthermore, the competencies developed by each study program have to be included/reflected in the official competences and qualifications list of the scientific domain.

As such, program decision makers are formally unable to propose and develop any other professional competences than the official ones in order to ensure continuous legal functioning. Thus, the main competencies proposed as of 2019 for the Master of Public Administration program are:

- Professional competences:
 - C1. Use of the basic concepts and principles regarding the organization and functioning of administrative structures for professional insertion in public and/or private institutions;
 - C2. Identification and use of the legal provisions regarding the administrative system, including the initiation and formulation of proposals for normative and / or administrative acts;
 - C3. Oral and written communication of structured messages related to a problem given by the specialty, in the language of the study program and in an international language;
 - C4. Applying strategic tools for institutional development;
 - C5. Managing specific activities in the field, with respect to the professional ethics and deontology;
 - C6. Identifying, analyzing and solving problems in public administration, in a cooperative, flexible and efficient way.

- Transversal competences:
 - CT1. Achieving, in a rigorous, efficient and responsible manner professional tasks, in compliance with ethical principles and the specific professional deontology;
 - CT2. Applying group techniques, learning and exercising specific roles in a team and developing interpersonal communication skills.
 - CT3. Self-assessment of the need for professional training and identification of resources and ways of training, personal and professional development, for the purpose of insertion and adaptation to the requirements of the labor market.

1.3 LIST OF PROGRAM-SPECIFIC COMPETENCIES FOR THE PROGRAM

Before the 2019 regulations which limited the range of potential competencies and qualifications each MA and BA program could offer/develop, the Master of Public Administration program offered and tried to improve the more specific following competencies:

- Professional competencies:
 - Abilities and knowledge in designing sociological research activities, processing extracted data, and formulating a series of recommendations;
 - Abilities to design public organizations;
 - Abilities to develop, analyze, and interpret various economic actions, programs, and policies, as well as to draw up prognoses;
 - Ability to analyze and interpret the legal framework of public administration;
 - Ability to assess public programs and policies, as well as to draw up impact analyses;
 - Ability to carry out an organizational diagnosis;
 - Ability to carry out and assess various public actions, programs, and policies;
 - Ability to develop and implement a strategic plan;

- Ability to initiate and implement an organizational development program.
 - Ability to set up and implement development strategies in the public and non-profit sectors;
 - Analyzing the legal framework in the field of urbanism and land-use planning;
 - Drawing up econometric prognoses and analyses concerning the socio-demographic and economic evolution of local communities;
 - Expertise in environmental policies and regional development.
 - Setting up and assessing urban development policies; devising a series of measures for local competitiveness enhancement;
 - Setting up strategies and projects for community public utility services;
 - Skills in negotiating and solving conflicts amicably;
 - Specific skills in financial planning and management;
 - Specific skills in human resource management;
 - Specific skills relating to the management of public organizations (leadership, management, and assessment);
- Transversal competencies
 - Capacity to analyze and understand the legal framework related to the field of public administration;
 - Capacity to evaluate programs and public policies; impact assessment;
 - Abilities and knowledge on social research design, data analysis and drafting recommendations;
 - Capacity to develop and implement local development strategies;
 - Skills on analyzing and understanding economic policies and the development of economic forecasts;
 - Negotiation and conflict management skills.

Albeit the initial number and range of specific professional and transversal competencies might prove to be problematic to adequately develop considering the time limitations of a two year MA program, the drastic reduction to six general professional competencies and three general transversal competencies has certainly unnecessarily reduced the professional possibilities of the students and potentially diminished the academic value of the program.

This over-correction imposed by the national legislation will most likely reduce the appeal of the program and make it less competitive on the international education market. The only solution in this case seems to be an informal one, hoping that potential students and employee will disregard the formal competences (which limit their professional opportunities) and base their decision (to enroll in the program or to hire a student/graduate of the program) on the good image of the MPA and on the competencies/skills and abilities actually offered to students beyond the legal limitations currently imposed.

2. COMPETENCE SCREENING HISTORY AT THE DEPARTMENT OR FACULTY LEVEL

2.1 HISTORY OF PREVIOUS COMPETENCE SCREENING ENDEAVOURS

The programs analyzed in this report have undergone multiple competence screening endeavors and different national and international evaluations in the past, thus we will focus only on the most important landmarks. The first EAPAA accreditation report from August 2007 advised the management of the program to be alert vis-à-vis a number of items which are described below. Other national and international review bodies have pointed out similar aspects that needed to be corrected. The measures taken by the Public Administration and Management Department in order to remedy the stated deficiencies are also described below.

The 2007 EAPAA evaluation report stated that the title of the program is somewhat misleading – Master in Public Administration, since the focus of the program is more on public management (EAPAA, 2007). At the national level, the Agency for Accreditation offers as a general domain for accreditation of bachelor and master's programs *Administrative Sciences* and as a subfield *Public Administration*. Within this framework, public administration departments are free to choose their own names for the programs offered. Recently, the Public Administration Department, in an effort to have a title for the master's program which better reflects its content, created two distinct specializations/degrees, each with two tracks. This new structure and the change of the titles of the degrees/tracks is supposed to incorporate all the input received over the time from various stakeholders.

One of the concerns expressed in the 2007 report refers to student intake, and more specifically to the fact that students with very different backgrounds are admitted into the program without any lacuna (shortcomings) repairing procedures being in place. Since 2007, the admission interview is more thoroughly assessing the fit of the candidates with the program. This more rigorous screening is intended to detect students who do not seem to have the potential to catch up with the rest of their peers. Introductory courses from the first year have been restructured in such a way as to have of the first classes dedicated to an overview of main concepts/theories in that field. During the evaluation meetings concerning the master program this aspect has been discussed in depth and instructors are aware of this problem. The statics (grades and graduation rates) do not prove however that students from a different background (outside social sciences) are worse performers than students with a background in social sciences.

Both the EAPAA 2007 report and other external reviews have highlighted the importance of introducing into the curriculum a mandatory internship (at least for those who are not working in the public or non-profit sector). Starting with 2008, a two-week mandatory internship was introduced into the curriculum. The Department has formally acknowledged the importance of the internship by: including it among the core courses in the curriculum and making efforts toward expanding this program. In the previous years, our Department took part in a university-wide EU financed projects meant to improve the quality of internship programs. The grants allowed the Department to pay the tutors from the public and non-private organizations (for the duration of the program). In general this program allowed us as a Department to expand the networks of organizations which are interested in receiving our interns.

Another limitation mentioned in the 2007 evaluation report had to do with the existence of a more formal system for quality assurance. Certain procedures were in place even in 2007 but there was no integrated framework. Since 2007, there has been a growing

preoccupation for quality and quality assurance both at the university level and the level of the Public Administration and Management Department. For example, the university introduced a university-wide survey for the evaluation of all courses. If in 2007 it was done on a small sample of courses, nowadays students can evaluate both the courses and the seminars. And they can do it online, using a modern electronic platform. Moreover, the university offers statistical data based on these surveys/evaluations which can provide useful information for quality improvement. At the Department level, studies undertaken (Ticlau et al., 2011) helped in implementing mechanisms regarding quality, which are currently in place. One of the most important accomplishments concerns the completion of a national survey of the employers.

A final concern in the 2007 EAPAA evaluation report referred to a slight gender imbalance at the level of the faculty members (especially in the upper echelons). Since 2007, more women had advanced from junior positions to senior ones. At the Department level, several entities involved in the decision-making process include at least one woman – there is a female faculty member acting as track director/coordinator, a female faculty is member in the council deciding on curriculum issues, and a female faculty member is director of the Public Administration and Management Department, etc.

The second EAPAA accreditation of the program was undertaken in 2014. At that time, EAPAA accreditation Site Visit Team concluded that „the Program has evolved in comparison to the accreditation visit of 2007(EAPAA, 2014). Internships are now included in the Master of Public Administration, and practitioners seem to be actively involved in the teaching process. Therefore, it has adequate links to the public administration profession. However, the Team feels that the curriculum development process could do more to include practitioners, whose views on learning outcomes and the competencies students acquire might be of use to the Department of Public Administration. Although the team appreciates the informal networks between the program faculty and practitioners, it suggest to consolidate these networks through the creation of an Advisory Board, which can then be formally engaged in the development process of the program”.

2.2 MAIN FINDINGS

A self-evaluation conducted by the Public Administration and Management Department in 2014 concluded that the specific strengths and weaknesses of the English MPA include:

Strengths:

- The program has an excellent reputation both in the academic community and among practitioners/public administration and non-governmental organizations. It was ranked in the 1st position by the Ministry of Education at the national level after the 2011 evaluation.
- The core faculty as well the additional faculty and support staff is extremely well trained – most of them have benefited from scholarships abroad and have a sound teaching and/or practical experience. Recognition at the international level includes fellowships, teaching and research awards.
- The quality of the training represents a major strength during the recruitment program. Its approach to the learning process – the focus is placed not merely on accumulating knowledge but also on developing skills that will be needed after graduation, is appealing to students.
- Because the program is fully taught in English, it attracts not only Romanian but also international students; so far, along the years, foreign students were enrolled in the program. This happened in the absence of a market strategy that targets the

international student population. Such a strategy is now in place starting with the fall of 2013.

- The partnerships the MPA program and the Department of Public Administration and Management have with foreign universities provide access to the newest information and to the services of top specialists in the field of public administration. These partnerships led to the creation of two double degree programs. Students enrolled in the regular degree program receive in addition to our degree a certificate from Michigan State University.
- The MPA program offers the students the possibility to become acquainted with different views and perspectives on public administration due to the diverse background of the faculty and the specialists invited to lecture.
- The internship program allows graduate students to build sound contacts and relationships with the public institutions the Department usually cooperates with.
- Students' involvement in research and community outreach activities; students are integrating into the teaching activity applied research projects, the development of best practices, guest speaker series etc.
- The instructional equipment (digital displays in rooms' seminars, thin-clients in the computer lab, up-dated software for statistical processing data, etc.) and the facilities provided (library, e-learning platform, access to journals from international data-bases, etc.) meet the prerequisites of a high quality teaching and learning experience.
- Students enrolled in the MPA program have access to exchange and student mobility programs.
- DPAM received in the last years significant money from EU financed grants for institutional development, which allowed for significant investments in developing all the components of the English master program.

Weak points:

- The involvement of practitioners working in public administration in the teaching process can be improved. The legal framework which require instructors to hold a PhD can represent a major constrain in this sense. Guest lectures are used as a replacement.
- The alumni, though considered an important resource, are not sufficiently utilized. Though efforts are made to survey them with regard to changes in the curriculum and the fit of the program with the job market, formalized mechanisms/procedures should be in place.
- High attrition rate. Aside from the significant number of students who drop out before completing the course work, a rather large number also does not get the degree because they fail to defend their thesis.
- More attention should be paid to the way in which alumni are absorbed and integrated into the job market. While the existence of grants allowed the department to carry out extensive surveys, there are concerns that in the future, without the money from the grant, such research efforts will no longer be possible.
- Some student services such as counseling could be improved. Lack of personnel with responsibilities only in this field (no teaching load) is a major constrain. For the time being core faculty are appointed for these positions and the department also takes advantage of student services provided by the University. In the future the school/department intends to apply for more EU funded grants to develop such services.

The 2014 EAPAA SVT made the following recommendations:

- Sharpen the mission formulation with the engagement of all stakeholders.

- Adapt the learning outcomes to embrace next to skills, also knowledge and the multidisciplinary character of the program.
- Guarantee political science component in NGO –management track
- Guarantee that compulsory internship involves meaningful problem-solving work
- Actively use interviews for expectations management regarding the workload expected from a 130 ETCS program, and advice applicants on extra readings
- Level up graduates from other backgrounds than PA with voluntary add-ons prior or during the first semester, without taking time off from regular classes
- Institutionalize a thesis guidance schedule
- Introduce a fixed script for thesis defenses with equal time allotted to all students.
- Engage employers in suggesting thesis subjects
- Have strong link between internship and thesis
- Have stronger link between staff current research and thesis subject: engage students through dissertation work in current research
- Institutionalize the quality insurance system
- Set up an advisory board with alumni and employers to involve them in the master program development.
- Draft a strategic note on the impact of internationalization on the mission, on levelling up, on contact hours, internships, course materials, thesis subject, extracurricular activities.
- Invest in the research and publication potential of the junior staff.

2.3 CORRECTIVE ACTIONS ALREADY UNDERTAKEN

In the last several years, the management of the Department of Public Administration and Management has placed a lot of emphasis on developing internal mechanisms for quality assurance and improvement. This effort was triggered by two elements: the school's strategy to focus on excellence and to consolidate its position as a leader on the national and regional educational market based on the quality of its programs, staff and students; and the existence of an EU financed grant for enhancing the quality of the master program. Of course, these efforts are not new, since some quality assurance mechanisms were in place even at the initial evaluation in 2007.

Internally, there is a sound quality assurance and quality improvement mechanism in place. Once a year, usually before the start of the academic year, the faculty of the Department of Public Administration and Management, together with the management, meets for 2 days (usually outside Cluj) in order to assess the program's accomplishments and ways to move forward. During these meetings the faculty and the management examine statistical data regarding admission and graduation, attrition rates, level of employment among recent graduates, students' satisfaction vis-à-vis teaching, research, and other student services; structure of the curriculum and possible updates based on students', employers', and alumni' surveys; quality of teaching methods, with an emphasis on incorporating new technologies into teaching/learning; scientific research; and projects/opportunities for institutional development. The main problem with this system is that it relies on data collected through a variety of procedures, none of them permanent. The Department of Public Administration and Management is already collecting certain data in a more orderly and planned fashion than in the past but improvements are still needed.

In 2013, as part of the EU financed grant mentioned above (for the 2010-2013 period) an index for evaluating the quality of master programs pertaining to different universities from Romania was developed and implemented for the first time. Some of the main dimensions included: quality of the faculty members; international opening/dimension of the program; research activity with an emphasis on internationally visible research; community outreach/involvement in community; technical infrastructure; and student

services/relationship with the students. Our master program ranked second among the four master programs evaluated. The Department of Public Administration and Management decided in 2013 to measure annually the quality of the master program based on this index. The strategy is to partner with other universities/departments offering graduate programs in public administration in order to obtain a comparative perspective. The first steps were made in 2013 when several departments of public administration from multiple universities have signed an agreement to form a consortium whose main goal is to promote quality in public administration education.

In the early stages of the development of the master program, the international board of the Department of Public Administration and Management had played an important role. Several meetings of the board were held in Romania (2004, 2006) and enjoyed a broad participation of almost all of its foreign members. The main role of these meetings was to assess the program's accomplishments and to determine ways to move forward. As the program became more established, the board is nowadays consulted only when it comes to strategic decisions. The board is complemented by annual evaluation meetings that take place between faculty members from Michigan State University/SPDC and Babes Bolyai University/Department of Public Administration and Management. Michigan State University is our strategic partner among the US partner universities and because of the double degree program we are currently implementing these annual meetings are a necessity. Thus far two such meetings took place in 2012 (in Cluj, Romania) and in 2013 (in East Lansing, Michigan, USA).

As a result of the first meeting a joint entity – the Transatlantic Institute for Public Management and Sustainable Communities was created. The institute will operate in four areas – education (in close connection with the English master program), training, research, and community outreach. Besides the education dimension, the other dimensions also involve the students from the master program as well as faculty and researchers on both sides.

The numerous changes brought over the years to the structure of the master program (the tracks), changes in the curriculum, updating of the teaching methods, improvement in student services, are all the result of these various quality assurance and monitoring mechanisms.

In 2013, an integrated evaluation framework for the quality management system at the level of the master program was developed and implemented. This framework is the result of the already mentioned EU financed grant. The framework has three main dimensions, as follows:

- Leadership, strategy, and institutional framework – it looks at the strategic component of the quality assurance process, the involvement of the management of the program in the quality management system, and the way in which quality and academic performance/excellence are strategic priorities for the management of the program.
- Procedures and mechanisms for quality assurance – it looks at all the formal mechanisms in place which play a role in maintaining a high quality master program.
- Results - it assesses the way in which the quality management system includes output indicators/learning outcomes and also the way in which the results of the evaluation are used toward decision-making.

For the first dimension discussed, the results are impressive – the leadership clearly supports quality and makes a priority out of it. With regard to procedures, at least in the case of the master program, we need formalization in writing of existing informal procedures. Very often there are no official documents which describe the steps that need to be taken under certain conditions. The results are for the most part used toward making decisions regarding the structure of the curriculum but the connection with the quality management system is not always made clear.

Since its establishment, the Department of Public Administration and Management has played an instrumental role in the process of the public administration curriculum transformation at the national level (at both the bachelor and master level). Immediately after 1989, the field of public administration had been identified with the field of administrative law. As previously mentioned, the Department of Public Administration and Management in Cluj-Napoca was among the first public administration schools to argue in favor of changing this approach and to support the emergence of an interdisciplinary curriculum based on public management, public policy, economics, sociology, law, etc.

Program and curriculum development has been shaped over the time by the influence of and input coming from various stakeholders. In the early stages of the program (early 2000s), the most important role in the process of curriculum development was played by our foreign partner universities from the US. The master program in English from the very beginning has been developed following the curriculum model of these US universities, and only recently best practices from European universities had been incorporated as well.

At that time Public Administration graduate education in Romania was something new, and its role was not clearly understood by employers, students, and even by the universities themselves. There was no consultation relationship at that time between employers and universities. This left the Department of Public Administration and Management with little 'sources of inspiration' regarding program and curriculum development, besides the US models. The track Community development and urban planning (initially just Community development) was developed following the curriculum of the Planning Department from Michigan State University, while the University of Delaware has been a key partner in developing the NGOs management track, due to their expertise in this field.

Starting with the transition to a three year bachelor program (due to the Bologna process) the importance of the master level education gain more acceptance and the relevant stakeholders, including employers, started to realize the importance of the curriculum and that they can shape this process through an active dialogue with the universities. In the recent years, the availability of EU financed grants for increasing the quality of human resources (including students) in the job market and making higher education more compatible with the requests of the market, led to an explosion of studies on how employers perceive the skills and knowledge provided by universities, how alumni evaluate the usefulness of the program graduated, etc. The Department of Public Administration and Management has implemented a three year grant regarding the improvement of the quality of the master programs offered. As part of this grant, a national survey of the likely employers for our students was carried out. In addition students involved in the grant who received scholarship also conducted small scale researches on the compatibility of the curriculum offered with the job market.

As the program grows and becomes more established, input for program and curriculum development is gathered from more varied categories of stakeholders. For example, as the Department is looking to internationalize the student population of the master program, by attracting not only EU but also mostly non-EU students, emphasis is placed also on consulting with the international students who are already enrolled in our program. Based on their input, the content of several courses was changed in terms of the case studies and theories presented, in order to better reflect the geographic coverage of the student population. Also, the international students have offered input with regard to program development, specifically with regard to student services.

There is a semi-formal procedure in place for curriculum development/updates (semi-formal because even though it takes place on a regularly basis, it is not described in any official document or procedures). Each of the four tracks has a director/coordinator responsible for meeting with the relevant stakeholders for the program (or their representatives). He/she is in charge of making sure that data regarding students'

satisfaction are collected at least once a year; that the external partners and the core faculty members are consulted regularly; and that surveys of the alumni and employers (which are usually conducted for all tracks) include relevant questions for that track. The four track coordinators usually meet with students and faculty members twice a year, or more often if there are unpredicted problems/issues. Foreign partners are consulted with when there are strategic issues to be decided.

The coordinators then meet with the management of the Department of Public Administration and Management twice a year, traditionally before the start of each semester (or when the curriculum needs to be approved and sent to the university). This curriculum development process is however flexible and informal discussions take place all the time between the relevant stakeholders and the management of the program. Every opportunity is used in order to gain feedback. For example when the selection interview for the internship process takes place, the civil servants taking part in the selection are always asked about the curriculum of the master program, about the skills our students have, etc. also, every time foreign professors are visiting our Department they are asked about the latest trends in curriculum development, about what their universities do to increase the number of applicants, etc.

2.4 BRIEF SUMMARY

The Master program in PA from the Public Administration and Management went through two EAPAA accreditation procedures. The report from August 2007 (as well as other national and international review bodies) have pointed out several aspects that need to be corrected.

One of the aspects was related to the title of the program itself, which could be misleading – (Master in Public Administration), since the focus of the program was more on public management, while other recommendations were to introduce internships as mandatory activities for students, and to actively involve practitioners in the teaching process. The National agency for accreditation stated as a general domain for accreditation of bachelor and master's programs *Administrative Sciences*, and as a subfield *Public Administration*. Within this framework, public administration departments were free to choose their own names for the programs offered.

In this sense, the Public Administration Department (at that time) took a series of measures in order to remedy the stated deficiencies. In an effort to have a title for the master's program which better reflects its content, created in 2012 two distinct specializations/degrees/programs (Public Administration and Management of Public Services), each with two tracks (similar to the ones from 2007, the names are slightly changed). This new structure and the change of the titles of the degrees/tracks was supposed to incorporate all the input received over the time from various stakeholders. At that time of second accreditation, undertaken in 2014, EAPAA accreditation site visit team concluded that the Program evolved in comparison to the previous accreditation visit - internships were included in the curricula as mandatory, and practitioners seemed to be actively involved in the teaching process. Therefore, the Program had adequate links to the public administration profession.

However, the 2014 EAPAA accreditation Team felt that the curriculum development process could do more to include practitioners, whose views on learning outcomes and the competencies students acquire might be of use to the Department of Public Administration. Although the team appreciated the informal networks between the program faculty and

practitioners, it suggested to consolidate these networks through the creation of an Advisory Board. Unfortunately, most of the recommendations made by the 2014 EAPAA site visit team were not tackled in a systematic and sustained manner so far. Although quality improvements measures were undertaken by the Public Administration and Management Department, until now they do not seem to specifically address the 2014 self-identified weak point or the EAPAA recommendations or were implemented only on a formal level.

3. METHODOLOGY

Application of suggested Methodological Guidelines

Recommendations

“We recommend using the FGs approach for this report; additional data can be obtained later on during the project (for instance, because workshops/seminars are anticipated). We should consider that FGs enable at the same time (i) identification of **problems**, and (ii) planning, implementation and evaluation of **solutions** thereof. Through FGs one can **collect and analyze data** in order to address research questions (RQs) in a structured yet highly representative way, i.e. through parallel FGs, based on different stakeholders. However, FGs **pros & cons** need to be considered in order to achieve the analysis goals.² Thus, typical suggested FG protocol is as follows:

- **Two FGs per each PA MA level program:** A. Alumni/graduates, and B. Employers; to establish their objectives, needs, preferences and experiences, and compare them;
- Each group on individual country level shall consist of **5-8 participants**.
- **Criteria for participants’ selection:**
 - A. **Alumni/Graduates** (5-8): selected based on their willingness to cooperate and prior clear information what is the aim of the respective FG, but taking into account their **segmentation**, e.g. from different programs if accredited in the individual faculty, employed and non-employed (yet), etc.;
 - B. **Employers** (5-8): selected based on their willingness to cooperate and prior clear information what is the aim of the FG, but taking into account their reflection of actual employers of respective program’s graduate; **e.g. 1-2 from ministries or governmental offices, 2 from territorial units, 2 from autonomous agencies and institutes, 2 from municipalities**, etc. However, hereby PA structure in individual country is taken into account but any type of PA body not just the current graduates employers;
- **Procedure to be conducted through the following steps:**
 1. **in advance submission of semi-structured questionnaires** (a Delphi technique);
 2. to verify the results, holding a **half-day workshop** for individual FG; moderated by 1-2 qualified³ and autonomous⁴ project partner representative/s (nominal group technique);
 3. if required to get a minimal consensus, a **final round of questionnaires/survey** among FG participants;”

Methods used

² See literature on FGs methodology. E.g., for brief overview, see, but do not limit yourselves, to <http://www.mmgconnect.com/projects/userfiles/File/FocusGroupBrief.pdf>.

³ In terms of focus groups’ methodology, that is being familiar with this approach and techniques.

⁴ In relation to participants in individual FGs.

The first data collection method used in order to create this report was a **survey**. An on-line questionnaire was used as instrument. The questionnaire was based, as recommended utilizing is the **IQM-HE (2018) approach**, developed under the framework of Erasmus+ co-financed project, due to the fact that the approach was generalist as well as flexible and applicable to the field and implicitly to the program assessed. Thus, we undertake the screening focus on both: a cognitive aspect (knowledge) and a practical aspect (skill/competence).

Two Focus groups were conducted for the analysis of the English language Master program (two programs, each one with two specific tracks) of Public Administration and Management Department of Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca.

First FG was conducted at the level of Alumni / Graduates of the MPA. We invited a number of 6 participants, which were selected taking into account a segmentation based on the program that they graduate – three from each program, covering all four specific tracks of the programs. Also we tried to follow an even distribution of students with respect to the year of graduation, inviting participants from different generations. Two thirds of them were employees, three from the six being PhD candidates. Unfortunately two of them declined the participation at the last moment, so the focus group was organized with only four participants.

The meeting of the Alumni had a series of six questions which tried to cover our research objectives, focusing on knowledge, abilities /skills obtained by students, what and how the current situation could be improved in terms of knowledge /skills, and what measures should be taken to improve the graduates level of employability:

1. What type of knowledge should a PA master graduate obtain?
2. What competencies / abilities / skills should a PA master student hold?
3. What could be improved in terms of knowledge attained by master graduates at this time?
4. What could be improved considering the current situation, from the perspective of competencies and abilities (i.e. practical aspects)?
5. How could we improve the current situation, from the perspective of competencies and abilities (practical aspects)?
6. What other measures could be implemented to increase the employability of master program graduates?

The second Focus Group conducted involved representatives of Employers. The participants were 5 representatives of employers from three different sectors and types of organizations which employ our graduates:

- public sector – Cluj County Council and Cluj-Napoca City Hall,
- a representative from NGO sector (NGO which is also a partner of the Public Administration and Management Department in the internship program, with the role of establishing a link between private firms and students – recruiting, selection and placement),
- a representative of a private firm from the Capital (Bucharest) working in consultancy in management activities (EU funds, policy design, development strategies etc.) and
- a representative of a Foreign institution with activity in Romania (The World Bank).

Similar to the focus group carried out with students, the discussion was centered on a group of questions, but we reduced the number to five, (due to the lack of a direct continuous

connection with the course activities, we eliminated the question related to how the situation could be improved in terms of competencies and abilities):

1. What type of knowledge a PA master graduate should obtain?
2. What competencies / abilities / skills should a PA master student hold?
3. What could be improved in terms of knowledge attained by master graduates at this time?
4. What could be improved considering the current situation, from the perspective of competencies and abilities (practical aspects)?
5. What other measures could be implemented to increase employability of master program graduates?

Through the research undertaken, we aimed at covering the two elements stated in the methodological recommendations: screening of existing competences of specific programs (focusing on the screening of the existing program-specific competences, both cognitive and practical aspects) as well as focusing on missing competences and framework non-alignment (reporting on the missing elements and competences' address in the existing programs). This involved both alumni and employers' perspective, through both methods used – survey and focus group.

4. SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUPS – RESULTS & DISCUSSION

4.1 RESULTS – COMPETENCES SCREENING BY ALUMNI

4.1.1 SURVEY / QUESTIONNAIRE

Since the Master of Public Administration currently has to provide/develop/expand a limited number of general (professional and transversal competencies), we have based our research on these ones and not on the more numerous specific ones.

The initial step consisted in sending the questionnaire (see Appendix) to all the graduates of the Master of Public Administration program. Unfortunately, out of the 170 emails sent, around 70 came back as being invalid email addresses (they were either deleted by students, based on email applications which were disconnected or misspelled)⁵.

Using the IQM-HE (2018) framework we assessed the situation regarding a number of nine competences (the first six being specific and the last three more general):

#1 - Use of the basic concepts and principles regarding the organization and functioning of administrative structures for professional insertion in public and/or private institutions

#2 - Identification and use of the legal provisions regarding the administrative system, including the initiation and formulation of proposals for normative and / or administrative acts

#3 – Oral and written communication of structured messages related to a problem given by the specialty, in the language of the study program and in an international language.

#4 - Applying strategic tools for institutional development.

#5 - Managing specific activities in the field, with respect to the professional ethics and deontology.

#6 - Identifying, analyzing and solving problems in public administration, in a cooperative, flexible and efficient way.

#7 - Achieving, in a rigorous, efficient and responsible manner professional tasks, in compliance with ethical principles and the specific professional deontology.

#8 - Applying group techniques, learning and exercising specific roles in a team and developing interpersonal communication skills.

#9 - Self-assessment of the need for professional training and identification of resources and ways of training, personal and professional development, for the purpose of insertion and adaptation to the requirements of the labor market.

For each competence listed, the respondents were asked to answer to four closed questions:

- On what level is your own knowledge?
- On what level is your own skill?

⁵ We also designed a questionnaire for employers, but we abandoned the idea, choosing to use only the Focus Group in competence screening

- Up to which level did the study program promote knowledge?
- Up to which level did the study program promote skill?

The scale used was from 1 to 7, having the following meaning:

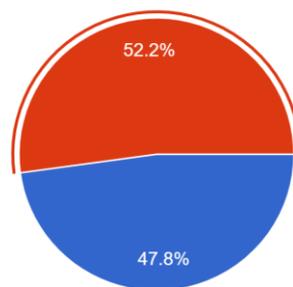
- 1 = None,
- 2 = Threshold,
- 3 = Foundation,
- 4 = Interconnection,
- 5 = Contextualization,
- 6 = Expansion, and
- 7 =. Generation.

Respondent's portrait

As it can be seen in the figure below, 52.2% of those who responded to our survey are working in the private sector and 47.8% in the public one; unfortunately no respondents from the non-governmental sectors or self-employed were included in our sample.

Figure 2: Respondents' employment sector (alumni survey)

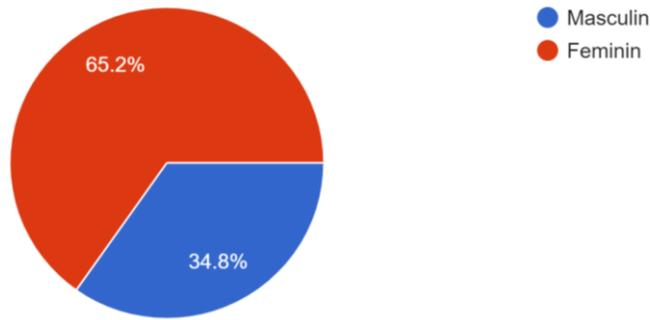
23 responses



65.2% of the respondents are female and only 34.8% are males; this gender ratio is in line with the overall trend in social sciences (and public administration) as there are significantly more females than males enrolled in these programs. A similar ratio of male to female students is also encountered in the case of BA programs or other MA programs offered by DAMP

Figure 3: Respondents' gender (alumni survey)

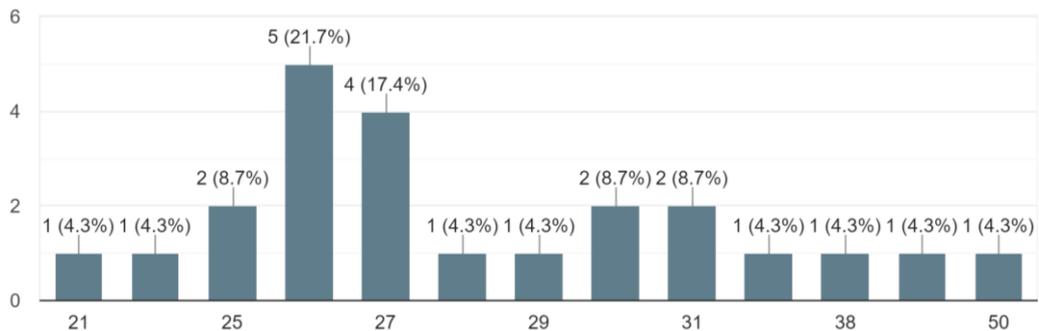
23 responses



The age of the respondents is included in the following table; the most significant group seems to consist of 25 to 27 years old, or as mentioned earlier more recent generations of graduates.

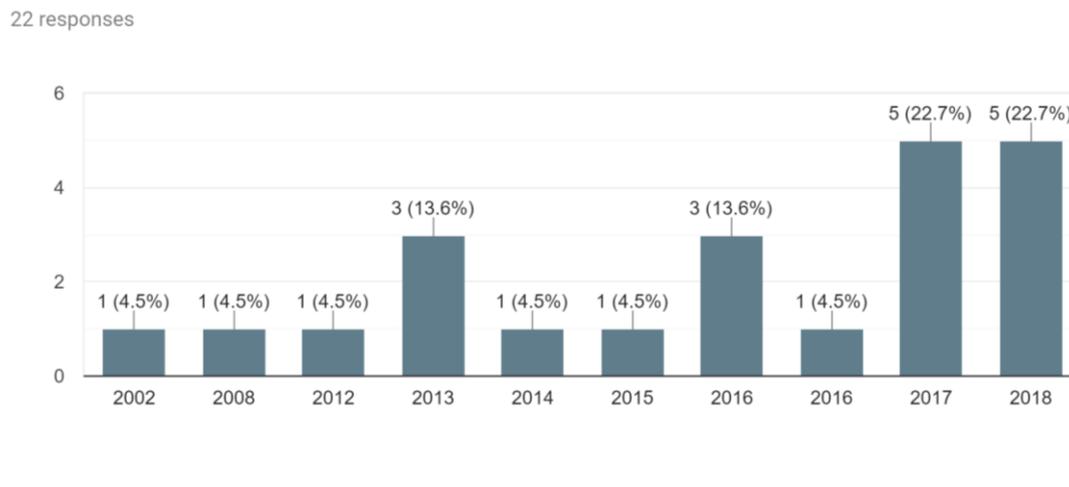
Figure 4: Respondents' age (alumni survey)

23 responses



The respondents of the questionnaire were graduates of different cohorts of students – starting with the first generation of graduates, while most of them graduated in the last two years (see figure below).

Figure 5: Respondents' year of graduation (alumni survey)



As it can be seen in Figure 6 (see Appendix), alumni have a rather good opinion regarding the first professional specific competence developed by the programs analyzed, as most of the responses are on the 5-6-7, and none or very few on levels 1 to 4.

According to Figure 7 (see Appendix), alumni seem to be only moderately satisfied with the 2nd specific professional competency (Identification and use of the legal provisions regarding the administrative system, including the initiation and formulation of proposals for normative and / or administrative acts). Figure 7 also shows a rather problematic situation vis-a-vis the level to which the program have practically developed this skill, as more than half of our respondents indicated level 3 or 4.

Figure 8 (see Appendix) shows moderate level of development for the third specific professional competence (Oral and written communication of structured messages related to a problem given by the specialty, in the language of the study program and in an international language), with the lowest scores being once again for the level to which the program managed to develop/promote skills (although the mean is above average).

Figure 9 (see Appendix) shows relatively high level of skills and knowledge promotion for the fourth specific professional competence (Applying strategic tools for institutional development), but practical abilities seem to be once again less developed.

Figure 10 (see Appendix) shows a rather puzzling image regarding the fifth specific professional competence - Managing specific activities in the field, with respect to the professional ethics and deontology, as the responses are less clearly clustered. However, the practical abilities promoted by the program are once again less developed.

Figure 11 (see Appendix) shows relatively high level of development for the sixth specific professional competence - Identifying, analyzing and solving problems in public administration, in a cooperative, flexible and efficient way, both in regard to knowledge and skills.

Figure 12 (see Appendix) shows the first truly problematic situation in regard to the first transversal/general professional competence (Achieving, in a rigorous, efficient and responsible manner professional tasks, in compliance with ethical principles and the specific professional deontology) as both the knowledge and the skills of alumni seem to surpass, in their opinion, the knowledge and skills promoted by the program. However, this might be influenced by more narrow fields of work which cannot all be accurately covered in depth by

a more generalist program.

Figure 13 (see Appendix) shows above average levels for the second transversal/general professional competence (Applying group techniques, learning and exercising specific roles in a team and developing interpersonal communication skills) for both knowledge and skills/practical abilities.

Figure 14 (see Appendix) presents the analysis of the third transversal/general professional competence: Self-assessment of the need for professional training and identification of resources and ways of training, personal and professional development, for the purpose of insertion and adaptation to the requirements of the labor market. Similar to previous situations, the mean/assessment seems to be above average, with the lowest scores being obtained in the case of program promoted practical skills/abilities.

As it can be seen from the following table (Table 1: Summary of survey results), although the overall scores are quite high, meaning that the program has managed to promote these particular competences both in regard to skills and knowledge, some potentially problematic issues can be identified, as:

- Study program promoted skills have constantly the lowest scores for each competence, both in the case of professional competences (1 to 6) and transversal competences (7 to 9);
- Study Program promoted skill is also evaluated below the own skills of graduates in all cases (regarding all nine competencies);
- Own knowledge of graduates is evaluated above the knowledge promoted by the program in almost all cases, with the exception of [Competence #2] - Identification and use of the legal provisions regarding the administrative system, including the initiation and formulation of proposals for normative and / or administrative acts;

Table 1: Summary of survey results

Competence	Own knowledge	Own skill	SP promoted knowledge	SP promoted skill
[Competence #1] Use of the basic concepts and principles regarding the organization and functioning of administrative structures for professional insertion in public and/or private institutions	5.73	5.69	5.56	4.90
[Competence #2] Identification and use of the legal provisions regarding the administrative system, including the initiation and formulation of proposals for normative and / or administrative acts	4.73	4.39	4.90	4.34
[Competence #3] Oral and written communication of structured messages related to a problem given by the specialty, in the language of the study program and in an international language.	5.47	5.39	5.21	4.95
[Competence #4] Applying strategic tools for institutional development.	5.60	5.26	5.30	4.73

[Competence #5] Managing specific activities in the field, with respect to the professional ethics and deontology.	5.43	5.30	4.95	4.86
[Competence #6] Identifying, analyzing and solving problems in public administration, in a cooperative, flexible and efficient way.	5.52	5.21	5.43	5.00
[Competence #7] Achieving, in a rigorous, efficient and responsible manner professional tasks, in compliance with ethical principles and the specific professional deontology.	6.13	5.73	5.69	5.47
[Competence #8] Applying group techniques, learning and exercising specific roles in a team and developing interpersonal communication skills.	6.21	6.13	5.60	5.56
Competence #9] Self-assessment of the need for professional training and identification of resources and ways of training, personal and professional development, for the purpose of insertion and adaptation to the requirements of the labor market.	5.60	5.43	4.86	4.82

Scale: 1. None 2. Threshold 3. Foundation 4. Interconnection 5. Contextualization 6. Expansion 7. Generation

As mentioned before, the second stage of our research following the quantitative one was a qualitative, namely two focus groups conducted with graduates and representatives of employers.

4.1.2 FOCUS GROUP - ALUMNI

Along with the survey / questionnaire whose results were presented earlier, we chose to also add a focus group to our research. The subjects were PA master graduates from the English line of study, all of them also being previous undergraduates of the PA program in Cluj-Napoca.

The meeting of the Alumni was based on a series of six questions which tried to cover our main research objectives, focusing on the knowledge, abilities and skills obtained by students, what and how the current situation could be improved in terms of knowledge /skills, and what measures should be taken to improve the graduates level of employability. If other issues were raised during the discussion we tried to take them into account and give them due consideration, but always assuring that we do not get sidetracked. As such, the following main issues were discussed:

- What type of knowledge should a PA master graduate obtain?
- What competencies / abilities / skills should a PA master student hold?
- What could be improved in terms of knowledge attained by master graduates at this time?
- What could be improved considering the current situation, from the perspective of competencies and abilities (practical aspects)?
- How could we improve the current situation, from the perspective of competencies and abilities (practical aspects)?

- What other measures could be implemented to increase employability of master program graduates? (see full answers in the Appendix part of this report)

What type of knowledge should a PA master graduate obtain?

Alumni representatives consider that the type of knowledge that a master graduate should hold depends in a great extent on the type of the master program followed/graduated. Due to the fact that each master graduate will own a title of “expert”, he or she should possess knowledge in the general area of analysis and diagnosis, on leadership, on organizational behavior and so on. However basic knowledge in law and economics, and research methods is mandatory for all programs followed. Being more specific, "A master graduate should hold theoretical knowledge connected to the legal framework of public administration" in order to be able identify the legal constraints when evaluating a program or a public policy, or when applying knowledge in local or regional planning efforts, or strategic planning. Operationalizing economics, students see a minimal level knowledge of on economic development as mandatory.

Besides the areas mentioned above, students think that a master graduate should have appropriate knowledge / expertise in Public policy (public policy cycle, stages, and intervention models), European law (treaties, conventions – their transposition in national law etc.), urban planning and strategic planning (this class was seen as was very useful, students effectively learn how to write strategies for local communities).

Former students also identified a small shortfall of the PA program – the first year is a common track – due to this fact, for the students that hold a degree in public administration, the classes are familiar, and some of the information is the same as at the undergraduate level (it might, however, be true that the first year is useful for students that come from outside the department). In the second year, classes become much more applied, which is a strength.

What competencies / abilities / skills should a PA master student should hold?

In the same line as the answers on the first questions, Alumni representatives declared that 'Each graduate should have skills / abilities in analysis and interpretation of the legal framework of public administration, abilities to work in teams, abilities for public speaking and write coherent texts in a foreign language.'

Further on, Graduates of the program should master specific competencies connected with classes studied, so, along the classic transversal competencies – connected with adaptation, critical thinking, analytic thinking, and so on. For the master graduates is important to be able to correlate any theoretical aspect studied with the reality inside the organizational environment in which they work or will work.

Other specific competencies mentioned: “a master graduate should hold practical skills in projecting a sociological research – elaborating a research instrument, applying it, measuring, but also making recommendations, based on research carried out” and “to elaborate a project, a development strategy – either on a simple small organization or at a higher level – a community or something similar”. A graduate should also possess critical thinking, should be able to interpret the law, to be able to draw up a budget and compute cash flows on projects.

An uncommon type of competency (not mentioned before) was referring to public procurement: ‘In my case (working in public procurement) it is clear that I wish we could practice more in this area during the master program, as this area is more specific’

What could be improved in terms of knowledge attained by master graduates at this time?

“At this time I think the program lacks a more applied approach in terms of carrying out research” – is what alumni representatives consider.

Although the curricula includes a class in research methods and techniques, the approach could be more in-depth in their opinion. An accent should be put on the logics of a research design elaboration. The Department could solve the situation by extending the course to a two semester class, not just one – “the students with no background in research should follow a preparatory class first, because the ones with a minimal set of knowledge repeat the same concepts and it is very hard to advance”.

From the perspective of knowledge, Alumni see as necessary adding to the curricula applied things on legislation (either in NGO area or public). Another knowledge pack that could be added is connected with the construction and implementation of different public policies, as “these are analyzed in a rather general degree.”

"From the knowledge/information perspective, I think there should be several references to present/current situations from the public environment" is another recommendation. Also, introducing new disciplines, complementary to those studied develops in order to widen the knowledge horizon of students in several directions – “a class on fiscal policy would be interesting – connected with introduction in accounting” applied knowledge on fiscal code as graduates will be impacted by the activity of fiscal institutions.

What could be improved considering the current situation, from the perspective of competencies and abilities (practical aspects)?

How could we improve the current situation, from the perspective of competencies and abilities (practical aspects)?

Skills and abilities improvement (what and how) is seen possible by former students by "Introducing a higher number of specialized workshops according to the needs expressed by students.", supplying Academic writing and a Public speaking classes for both lines of study – English and Romanian, improving current handbooks, and by using role playing and individual exercises to set the information.

The allocation of one week per semester in which students can practically apply gained knowledge to empirical situations, using role play and individual exercises, improving present course with instruments like GIS or other technologies and working with new / updated examples, are other examples of improvements that could be made to the program.

An option identified (which is to be considered by the department) is the one of allowing that students choose at least two optional courses from other faculties.

Activating in different public institutions or NGO's should be encouraged, even beyond the mandatory internship period is seen as a solution for the future as well.

What other measures could be implemented to increase employability of master program graduates?)

Increasing employability would be facilitated by introducing the long-term internship program as mandatory for all students (“as the short term internships which are in-place today are not enough to familiarize students with public organizations”), changing the

curricula in order to meet employer's demand, maintaining a tight relation with alumni, and using them as a resource to recommend students/graduates for jobs. Teaching students to "sell" their knowledge and skills ("how to approach a job interview, how to negotiate a salary, how to apply for a job in public administration"), and changing the perception of students towards public administration institutions are the factors of success for that aim.

4.2 RESULTS – COMPETENCES SCREENING BY EMPLOYERS

In the case of Employers we conducted another **Focus Group**, comprising of representatives of employers from the public sector – Cluj County Council and Cluj-Napoca City Hall, a representative from the NGO sector (an NGO which is also a partner of the Public Administration and Management Department in the internship program, with the role of establishing a link between private firms and students – recruitment, selection and placement), a representative of a private firm from the Capital (Bucharest) working in consultancy in management activities (EU funds, policy design, development strategies etc.) and a representative of a foreign institution/organization (The World Bank).

Like in the case of the focus group carried out with alumni, the discussion was centered on a group of questions (main issues), but we reduced the number to five, (due to the lack of direct continuous connection with the course activities, we eliminated the question related to how the situation could be improved in terms of competencies and abilities. If other issues were raised during the discussion we tried to take them into account and give them due consideration, but always assuring that we do not get sidetracked. As such, the following issues were discussed with the employers:

1. What type of knowledge should a PA master graduate obtain?
2. What competencies / abilities / skills should a PA master student hold?
3. What could be improved in terms of knowledge attained by master graduates at this time?
4. What could be improved considering the current situation, from the perspective of competencies and abilities (practical aspects)?
5. What other measures could be implemented to increase employability of master program graduates?

The responses to the questions (*see full answers in the Appendix of this report*) were rather diverse as the FG participants approached each question from the perspective of the organization they represented (and the specific skills they required from employees), but there were a series of common points that the participants agreed on. We considered that is more appropriate to group the answers of each participant, so that the different perspectives of the different sectors are easier to notice.

What type of knowledge should a PA master graduate obtain?

In terms of the *knowledge* a PA master graduate should obtain the employer representatives consider that program graduates are supposed to be equipped with general knowledge on: public administration (organization and functioning of local and central public administration), macroeconomics, and legal public administration framework (specific legislation - transparency in decision-making process, public procurement – planning and ensuring legality, law on civil servants).

Also it is important that students gain specific knowledge on:

- strategic management;
- public policy cycle;
- project management;
- human resource management;

- legislative technique;
- research and analysis methods and techniques;
- functional sectoral areas of public administration (regional development, land zoning, urban development, socio-economic development, regional development, infrastructure, environment, culture, education, health – seen as areas in which the state and public administration intervenes with public policies, and not seen as institutions which, in different configurations, deliver a wider area of services.

What competencies / abilities / skills should a PA master student hold?

Regarding the *abilities / skills needed*, Employer representatives consider a PA master student should possess:

- The capacity to recognize problems, analyze and implement policies that solves problems;
- Negotiation abilities and conflict management skills - amicable settlement of conflicts;
- The capacity to propose and elaborate projects for improving and streamlining services supplied to the general public;
- Team work skills;
- The capacity to achieve complex professional tasks, in a specific time limit;
- The ability to analyze studies, reports, research;
- The capacity to elaborate complex impact analyses, public policy analysis, policy and program evaluation;
- The capacity to plan – strategically and operational planning as well;
- The capacity of managing teams and resources;
- The capacity to initiate and manage change – correlating this with program and reform development;
- The capacity to undertake result-oriented work;
- The capacity to communicate in complex context and environment, interpersonal interaction skills;
- Digital competencies.

Future challenges on developing abilities are connected with several skills we were acknowledged on (and the department did not fully took into consideration when developing curricula), practical skills that need to be emphasized - accountability and citizen engagement.

There is also a specific and essential type of competence (especially for the public service) – integrity and professional ethics (although we put a special emphasis on ethics through classes at undergraduate and masters level as well).

What could be improved in terms of knowledge attained by master graduates at this time?

Improvements in terms of knowledge are, in the opinion of employers, tightly connected with components related with human resources (like recruiting and selection), administrative law and EU law.

According to the employers' opinion, gaining knowledge would be more effective if a parallel / simulation / with a real situation would be created – solving a present case involving the theoretical aspects taught in class.

Encouraging research during studies, emphasizing on research useful for public organizations, and inter-disciplinary correlation of theories and projecting results towards case-studies from community life would be a big step forward.

These things could be facilitated by encouraging students to read a lot, to provide critical analysis / review of readings, and by teaching them to summarize and write scientific papers.

What could be improved considering the current situation, from the perspective of competencies and abilities (practical aspects)?

Skills and abilities could be improved through including more internship sessions in organizations, because employers consider that it is helpful for the organizations to “calibrate” the expectations on junior employees, but this also help students to mold their expectations on their professional life.

Interaction with public authorities, as well as NGOs should be encouraged - for example participating at debates or local council meetings. Involving students in volunteering activities could also help students in developing practical skills.

Other ways of improving skills could be:

- developing individual and group projects;
- continuing practicum and long-term internships;
- developing, in partnership with PA institutions of job shadowing stages;
- creating theme clubs for debates, role playing in order to stimulate diverse practices from the public sector.

A good instrument to implement these recommendations would be the development of an assessment center-type lab, which are commonly used in recruiting by big companies or organizations like EPSO, UN, OECD, WB, in which students can participate in simulations and testing for different types of competencies required by an organization, can make self-assessments and establish a remedy or professional development plan.

What other measures could be implemented to increase employability of master program graduates?

Employers' representatives see *increasing employability of master program graduates* possible through measures like: recognizing internships as work experience (communication and consultation process with companies and PA on this theme should be undertaken), informing the students on the recruitment and selection procedures for occupying civil servant jobs, exposing and integrating students in professional networks, and identifying and promoting of innovative ideas by teachers – disseminating towards diverse interested and influential factors from private and public organizations.

4.3 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Student's competence screening

Survey

As it can be seen from the survey results in the previous part of the report, the overall scores are quite high, generally meaning that the program has managed to promote the competences both in regard to skills and knowledge).

Still, some potentially problematic issues can be identified, as:

- Study program promoted skills have constantly the lowest scores for each competence;
- Study program promoted skill is also evaluated below own skill in all cases;
- Own knowledge is evaluated above study program promoted knowledge in almost all cases, with one exception.

Based on the responses registered at the open-ended questions we could identify what could be the explanation for the issues listed above. Besides the fact that Alumni gain extra knowledge and skills due to their direct day-to-day involvement in working activities, the reasons for the scores registered could be the basics of the recommendations directly mentioned by respondents.

Therefore, main issues highlighted concern the practicum / internship / interaction with public institutions (recommendation: extending the number of stages per program, eventually longer time spent in host institutions), relation with practitioners (increasing the interaction with public sector institutions from local and central level, and with practitioners from different areas), practical classes and activities, elaboration of documents, roleplaying (recommendation: addressing real-life situations from nearby communities, elaboration of law/regulation proposals, roleplaying in this matter), support in terms of coaching as well as other resources (recommendation: supplemental attention for students' academic/research career), structuring of current courses and curricula (recommendation: better documentation and design, more accent put on knowing and applying current legislation, especially regarding core PA).

Focus group

On the type of *knowledge* that PA master graduates should have, the students emphasized the importance of economics, research methods, and law / legal framework (national and European law). Knowledge in leadership, organizational behavior, strategic planning, and public policy were also listed as priorities for the MPA program, from the perspective of the alumni.

Regarding the *abilities / skills* needed, the graduate is supposed to possess critical and analytic, while the capacity of analyzing and interpreting the legal framework of public administration, is also important. The graduate should have the abilities to work in teams, and write coherent texts in a foreign language. Public speaking skills, projecting a sociological research (elaborating a research instrument, applying it, measuring, but also making recommendations, based on research carried out), ability to elaborate a project, a development strategy (either on a simple small organization or at a higher level /community

level) are also of high importance. A graduate should also be able to draw up a budget and compute/calculate cash flows on projects.

One of the future challenges of the master program concerning *improvement in knowledge* transferred to students is connected to research. Students think that a more applied approach in terms of carrying out research is appropriate - the approach could be more in-depth. This could be done by that extending the current one-semester to a two semester class, with an accent put on the logics of a research design elaboration (or maybe even Academic Writing) at first. A knowledge pack that could be added is connected with construction and implementation of policies, also a class on fiscal policy is considered to be interesting (plus introduction in accounting) – applied information on fiscal code as graduates are impacted by the activity of fiscal institutions.

Skills and abilities improvement is seen possible by former students by introducing a higher number of workshops, allocation of one week per semester in which students can practically apply gained knowledge to empirical situations, using role play and individual exercises. Another path would be by improving present course with instruments like GIS or other technologies and working with new / updated examples. In terms of introducing new classes, an advanced academic writing class and a public speaking in the curricula. An option that is to be considered by the department is the one of allowing that students choose at least two optional courses from other faculties.

Increasing employability would be facilitated by introducing the long-term internship program as mandatory for all students, changing the curricula, maintaining a tight relation with alumni, and using them as a resource to recommend students/graduates for jobs, and by teaching students to “sell” their knowledge and skills.

Employers' competence screening

In terms of the *knowledge* a PA master graduate should obtain the employer representatives opinions include and exceed the ones identified by students. Graduates are supposed to be equipped with general knowledge on: public administration, macroeconomics, and legal public administration framework. Employers consider also important that students gain specific knowledge on areas in which the state and public administration intervenes with public policies.

Regarding the *abilities / skills*, the representatives of employers believe that a PA master student should possess different skills in recognizing problems, analyze and implement policies that solves problems; negotiation and conflict management and other specific competencies connected with research and public sector activity.

Future challenges on developing abilities are connected with several skills we were acknowledged on (and the department did not fully took into consideration when developing curricula), practical skills that need to be emphasized: accountability and citizen engagement. There is also a specific and essential type of competence (especially for the public service) – integrity and professional ethics (although we put a special emphasis on ethics through classes at undergraduate and masters level as well).

Improvements in terms of knowledge are, in the opinion of employers, tightly connected with components related with human resources (like recruiting and selection), administrative law and EU law. According to the employers' opinion, gaining knowledge would be more effective if a parallel / simulation / with a real situation would be created – solving a present case involving the theoretical aspects taught in class. Encouraging research during studies, emphasizing on research useful for public organizations, and inter-

disciplinary correlation of theories and projecting results towards case-studies from community life would be a big step forward. These things could be facilitated by encouraging students to read a lot, to provide critical analysis / review of readings, and by teaching them to summarize and write scientific papers.

Skills and abilities could be improved through including more internship sessions in organizations, because employers consider that it is helpful for the organizations to “calibrate” the expectations on junior employees, but this also help students to mold their expectations on their professional life.

Interaction with public authorities, as well as NGOs should be encouraged - for example participating at debates or local council meetings. Involving students in volunteering activities could also help students in developing practical skills.

Other ways of improving skills refer to developing individual and group projects; continuing practicum and long-term internships; developing, in partnership with PA institutions of job shadowing stages; creating theme clubs for debates, role playing in order to stimulate diverse practices from the public sector.

Employers' representatives see *increasing employability of master program graduates* possible through measures like: recognizing internships as work experience (communication and consultation process with companies and PA on this theme should be undertaken), informing the students on the recruitment and selection procedures for occupying civil servant jobs, exposing and integrating students in professional networks, and identifying and promoting of innovative ideas by teachers – disseminating towards diverse interested and influential factors from private and public organizations.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS & CHALLENGES

Basic findings / program shortfalls / improvement proposal

As stated before, one of the future challenges of the master program concerning improvement in graduates' knowledge is connected to research - a more applied approach in terms of carrying out research would be appropriate by extending the current one-semester to a two semester class. Also, a knowledge pack that could be added is connected with the construction and implementation of sectoral public policies.

Skills and abilities improvement is possible by introducing a higher number of workshops, and by using role play and individual exercises at a higher extent in class. Another path would be by improving present course with instruments like GIS or other technologies and working with new / updated examples.

In terms of introducing new courses, an advanced academic writing class, a public speaking class, and one on fiscal policy are considered appropriate to enrich the curricula.

One of the issues that need to be closely tackled is the common track in the first year of study (both programs have almost the same classes – with one exception/semester). For the students that hold a degree in public administration, the classes are quite familiar, and some of the information is similar to the bachelor level, but from the standpoint of students with different background from PA, the first year is considered to be useful as they lack the building blocks on which the second and more specialized year is built upon. An option that should be considered by the department is allowing students to choose at least two optional courses from other faculties.

Increasing employability would be facilitated by introducing a long-term internship program as mandatory for all students, changing the curricula, maintaining a tight relation with alumni, and using them as a resource to recommend students/graduates for jobs.

Another instrument on which the department should focus in the following period is the development of policy labs / change labs – with an advisory role for PA, which will create an active environment and facilitate exchanges of ideas.

Another line of future action would be the development of platforms through which the Faculty/University could publish policy notes or concept notes (assumed by the institution) with regard to strategic problems/needs/areas of public administration.

The faculty should make efforts in creating active networks / establishing partnerships with professional associations and public administration (organizing common events), in order to use the results of the research conducted.

Last, but not least, ample and aggressive communication of attained/developed skills by students – using multiple channels and sponsor-persons that talk about these things should be the focus of the Public Administration and Management Department. Table 2 includes the main findings of the two focus groups (with alumni and representatives of employers) and the initial survey conducted on alumni, focusing on the key findings and potential means to improve the nine specific and transversal professional competences of the programme.

Table 2: *Survey and FG findings – concluding remarks*

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FG	Main sub/issues debated	Key joint findings	Improvement proposals
A.	[Competence #1] Use of the basic concepts and principles regarding the organization and functioning of administrative structures for professional insertion in public and/or private institutions	- Own skill evaluated as being above SP promoted Skill -Own knowledge evaluated above SP promoted knowledge	Competence development methods should be more friendly and applied (applying different tasks on teams) Practicum / internship – at least two stages per program, eventually longer time spent in host institutions Practical classes – addressing real-life situations from nearby communities, elaboration of documents, roleplaying Supplemental attention for students' academic/research career – support in terms of coaching as well as other resources Better documentation / structuring of current courses and curricula
B.	[Competence #2] Identification and use of the legal provisions regarding the administrative system, including the initiation and formulation of proposals for normative and / or administrative acts	- Own skill evaluated as being above SP promoted Skill -only case in which own knowledge was evaluated below SP promoted knowledge	More friendly and applied competence development methods More accent put on knowing and applying current legislation, especially regarding core PA Practical activities: law/regulation proposals, roleplaying in this matter.
C.	[Competence #3] Oral and written communication of structured messages related to a problem given by the specialty, in the language of the study program and in an international language.	- Own skill evaluated as being above SP promoted Skill -Own knowledge evaluated above SP promoted knowledge	Roleplaying, presentation skills, oral/verbal communication improvement Changing approach in terms of grading / evaluation Academic Writing class
D.	[Competence #4] Applying strategic tools for institutional development.	- Own skill evaluated as being above SP promoted Skill -Own knowledge evaluated above SP promoted knowledge	Increasing the interaction with public sector institutions from local and central level Using examples from real –life situations, close follow-up and helping students with class projects / themes Making instruments used in class more applicable and relevant for the current legal / economical / fiscal realities Using relevant innovative resources / methods – well-documented and prepared Involving students in projects with real application in communities to help internalize taught methods / instruments.
E.	[Competence #5] Managing specific activities in the field, with respect to the professional ethics and deontology.	- Own skill evaluated as being above SP promoted Skill -Own knowledge evaluated above SP promoted knowledge	Improving university / faculty / department ethics/ deontology - targeted approach – each class should tackle the issue at least once in 14 weeks of study.

F.	[Competence #6] Identifying, analyzing and solving problems in public administration, in a cooperative, flexible and efficient way.	- Own skill evaluated as being above SP promoted Skill -Own knowledge evaluated above SP promoted knowledge	Exposing a delicate issue / situation in class – Q&A sessions – making students express issues / situations in which they have problems regarding finding solutions for chosen problems.
G.	[Competence #7] Achieving, in a rigorous, efficient and responsible manner professional tasks, in compliance with ethical principles and the specific professional deontology.	- Own skill evaluated as being above SP promoted Skill -Own knowledge evaluated above SP promoted knowledge	Since the graduates of the analyzed programs work in very different fields and domains (from public, to private NGOs or international) it is somehow expected that on they are more 'advanced' in their narrow field of activity than the general programme from which they graduated. However, we believe that exactly the general and transversal/interdisciplinary approach of the programme is what offered them the necessary skills to work in such diverse domains.
H.	[Competence #8] Applying group techniques, learning and exercising specific roles in a team and developing interpersonal communication skills.	- Own skill evaluated as being above SP promoted Skill -Own knowledge evaluated above SP promoted knowledge	Special attention to free-riders in the case of teamwork. Allowing students to migrate / change teams during the semester. Penalizing superficial approaches from students through evaluation procedures. Increasing the number of team work activities and even making them more applied (field work).
I.	Competence #9] Self-assessment of the need for professional training and identification of resources and ways of training, personal and professional development, for the purpose of insertion and adaptation to the requirements of the labor market.	- Own skill evaluated as being above SP promoted Skill -Own knowledge evaluated above SP promoted knowledge	Preparing practitioners for classes – although they are involved in several courses – a better preparation of their intervention is to be wanted. A closer relation students – practitioners, based on implicating students in more of the public administration activities, besides internship stages.

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<p>[Competence #2] Identification and use of the legal provisions regarding the administrative system, including the initiation and formulation of proposals for normative and / or administrative acts</p> <p>Identificarea și aplicarea dispozițiilor legale cu privire la sistemul administrativ, inclusiv inițierea și formularea de propuneri de acte normative și/sau administrative.</p> <p><u>Standard minim de performanță pentru evaluarea competenței:</u> Elaborarea unei sinteze de acte legislative - normative pe un subiect dat, utilizând principalele baze publice de date din domeniu.</p>	<p>Own knowledge (<i>Cunoștințele dumneavoastră</i>)</p> <p>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○</p>								<p>Taught knowledge</p> <p><i>Cunoștințe învățate în program</i></p> <p>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○</p>							
	<p>Own skill (<i>Aptitudinile dumneavoastră</i>)</p> <p>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○</p>									<p>Taught skill</p> <p><i>Aptitudini deprinse în program</i></p> <p>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○</p>						
<p>[Competence #3] Oral and written communication of structured messages related to a problem given by the specialty, in the language of the study program and in an international language.</p> <p>Comunicarea orală și scrisă, în limba programului de studii și într-o limbă de circulație internațională, a unor mesaje structurate referitoare la o problemă dată de specialitate.</p> <p><u>Standard minim de performanță pentru evaluarea competenței:</u> Redactarea și prezentarea publică, în format doc. sau ppt., în limba programului de studii și într-o limbă de circulație internațională, a unui mesaj structurat către un public țintă dat, cu o privire la o problemă din domeniu</p>	<p>Own knowledge (<i>Cunoștințele dumneavoastră</i>)</p> <p>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○</p>								<p>Taught knowledge</p> <p><i>Cunoștințe învățate în program</i></p> <p>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○</p>							
	<p>Own skill (<i>Aptitudinile dumneavoastră</i>)</p> <p>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○</p>									<p>Taught skill</p> <p><i>Aptitudini deprinse în program</i></p> <p>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○</p>						
<p>[Competence #4] Applying strategic tools for institutional development.</p> <p>Aplicarea instrumentelor strategice pentru dezvoltarea instituțională.</p> <p><u>Standard minim de performanță pentru evaluarea competenței:</u> Întocmirea unui proiect de îmbunătățire a funcționării administrației publice într-o problemă dată.</p>	<p>Own knowledge (<i>Cunoștințele dumneavoastră</i>)</p> <p>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○</p>								<p>Taught knowledge</p> <p><i>Cunoștințe învățate în program</i></p> <p>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○</p>							
	<p>Own skill (<i>Aptitudinile dumneavoastră</i>)</p> <p>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○</p>									<p>Taught skill</p> <p><i>Aptitudini deprinse în program</i></p> <p>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○</p>						
<p>[Competence #5] Managing specific activities in the field, with respect to the professional ethics and deontology.</p> <p>Administrarea activităților specifice din domeniu, cu</p>	<p>Own knowledge (<i>Cunoștințele dumneavoastră</i>)</p> <p>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○</p>								<p>Taught knowledge</p> <p><i>Cunoștințe</i></p> <p>○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○</p>							

[Competence #9] Self-assessment of the need for professional training and identification of resources and ways of training, personal and professional development, for the purpose of insertion and adaptation to the requirements of the labor market. Autoevaluarea nevoii de formare profesională și identificarea resurselor și modalităților de formare și dezvoltare personală și profesională, în scopul inserției și adaptării la cerințele pieței muncii. <u>Standard minim de performanță pentru evaluarea competenței:</u> Realizarea unui plan de dezvoltare personală pentru atingerea unui nivel superior de formare profesională evidențiind explicit conștientizarea motivațiilor intrinseci de continuare a învățării și prin utilizarea eficientă a resurselor de comunicare și formare profesională continuă.	Own knowledge (<i>Cunoștințele dumneavoastră</i>)	<input type="radio"/>	Taught knowledge <i>Cunoștințe învățate în program</i>	<input type="radio"/>												
	Own skill (<i>Aptitudinile dumneavoastră</i>)	<input type="radio"/>	Taught skill <i>Aptitudini deprinse în program</i>	<input type="radio"/>												
Numele programului absolvit / Program name																
Perioada studiilor / Period of your studies																
Genul / Gender																
Angajatorul curent / Current employer																

Table B: IQM-HE-based screening framework restructuring – employers' application (source: adapted from IQM-HE, 2018)

	<p>On what level is the alumni's knowledge? Care este nivelul cunoștințelor absolvenților? On what level is the alumni's skill? Care este nivelul a aptitudinilor (abilităților practice) ale absolvenților?</p> <p>(Think of the level most alumnis have in your view/Gândiți-vă la nivelul caracteristic majorității absolvenților, din punctul d-voastră de vedere)</p>								
		1. None (deloc)	2. Threshold	3. Foundation	4. Interconnection	5. Contextualisation	6. Expansion	7. Generation (maxim)	I do not know
<p>[Competence #1] Use of the basic concepts and principles regarding the organization and functioning of administrative structures for professional insertion in public and/or private institutions Utilizarea conceptelor și principiilor fundamentale de organizare și funcționare a structurilor administrative pentru inserția profesională în instituții publice și/sau private.</p> <p><i>Standard minim de performanță pentru evaluarea competenței:</i> Realizarea unui proiect de cercetare referitor la o problemă de complexitate medie din domeniu, în baza unei documentări proprii, argumentând metodele, tehnicile, procedurile și instrumentele propuse a fi folosite potrivit complexitatea principalelor concepte și teorii înșușite.</p>	<p>Alumni's knowledge <i>Cunoștințele absolvenților</i></p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<p>[Competence #2] Identification and use of the legal provisions regarding the administrative system, including the initiation and formulation of proposals for normative and / or administrative acts Identificarea și aplicarea dispozițiilor legale cu privire la sistemul administrativ, inclusiv inițierea și formularea de propuneri de acte normative și/sau administrative.</p> <p><i>Standard minim de performanță pentru evaluarea competenței:</i> Elaborarea unei sinteze de acte legislativ - normative pe un subiect dat, utilizând principalele baze publice de date din domeniu.</p>	<p>Alumni's knowledge <i>Cunoștințele absolvenților</i></p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<p>[Competence #3] Oral and written communication of structured messages related to a problem given by the specialty, in the language of the study program and in an international language. Comunicarea orală și scrisă, în limba programului de studii și într-o limbă de circulație internațională, a unor mesaje structurate referitoare la o problemă dată de specialitate.</p>	<p>Alumni's knowledge <i>Cunoștințele absolvenților</i></p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	<p>Alumni's skill</p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

<p><u>Standard minim de performanță pentru evaluarea competenței:</u> Redactarea și prezentarea publică, în format doc. sau ppt., în limba programului de studii și într-o limbă de circulație internațională, a unui mesaj structurat către un public țintă dat, cu o privire la o problemă din domeniu</p>	<p><i>Aptitudinile absolvenților</i></p>							
<p>[Competence #4] Applying strategic tools for institutional development. Aplicarea instrumentelor strategice pentru dezvoltarea instituțională.</p> <p><u>Standard minim de performanță pentru evaluarea competenței:</u> Întocmirea unui proiect de îmbunătățire a funcționării administrației publice într-o problemă dată.</p>	<p>Alumni's knowledge</p> <p><i>Cunoștințele absolvenților</i></p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	<p>Alumni's skill</p> <p><i>Aptitudinile absolvenților</i></p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<p>[Competence #5] Managing specific activities in the field, with respect to the professional ethics and deontology. Administrarea activităților specifice din domeniu, cu respectarea eticii și deontologiei profesionale.</p> <p><u>Standard minim de performanță pentru evaluarea competenței:</u> Redactarea, în condiții de limită de timp, a unui act din administrația publică</p>	<p>Alumni's knowledge</p> <p><i>Cunoștințele absolvenților</i></p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	<p>Alumni's skill</p> <p><i>Aptitudinile absolvenților</i></p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<p>[Competence #6] Identifying, analyzing and solving problems in public administration, in a cooperative, flexible and efficient way. Identificarea, analizarea și rezolvarea problemelor din administrația publică, în mod cooperant, flexibil și eficient.</p> <p><u>Standard minim de performanță pentru evaluarea competenței:</u> Elaborarea unei strategii pentru a soluționa o situație deficitară/ defectuoasă, de complexitate medie, din domeniul administrației publice.</p>	<p>Alumni's knowledge</p> <p><i>Cunoștințele absolvenților</i></p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	<p>Alumni's skill</p> <p><i>Aptitudinile absolvenților</i></p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<p>[Competence #7] Achieving, in a rigorous, efficient and responsible manner professional tasks, in compliance with ethical principles and the specific professional deontology. Îndeplinirea la termen, în mod riguros, eficient și responsabil, a sarcinilor profesionale, cu respectare principiilor etice și a deontologiei profesionale.</p> <p><u>Standard minim de performanță pentru evaluarea competenței:</u> Elaborarea și tehnoredactarea în format electronic a unui proiect de specialitate pe o temă dată și în restricții de timp, aplicând principiile, normele și valorile eticii profesionale.</p>	<p>Alumni's knowledge</p> <p><i>Cunoștințele absolvenților</i></p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	<p>Alumni's skill</p> <p><i>Aptitudinile absolvenților</i></p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<p>[Competence #8] Applying group techniques, learning and exercising specific roles in a team and developing interpersonal communication skills. Aplicarea tehnicilor de relaționare în grup, deprinderea și exercitarea rolurilor specifice în muncă de echipă, prin dezvoltarea abilităților de comunicare interpersonală.</p> <p><u>Standard minim de performanță pentru evaluarea competenței:</u> Realizarea unui proiect în echipă, demonstrând abilități de comunicare interpersonală, de asumare și distribuire de roluri specifice.</p>	<p>Alumni's knowledge</p> <p><i>Cunoștințele absolvenților</i></p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	<p>Alumni's skill</p> <p><i>Aptitudinile absolvenților</i></p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
<p>[Competence #9] Self-assessment of the need for professional training and identification of resources and ways of training, personal and professional development, for the purpose of insertion and adaptation to the requirements of the labor market. Autoevaluarea nevoii de formare profesională și identificarea resurselor și modalităților de formare și dezvoltare personală și profesională, în scopul inserției și adaptării la cerințele pieței muncii.</p>	<p>Alumni's knowledge</p> <p><i>Cunoștințele absolvenților</i></p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	<p>Alumni's skill</p>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○



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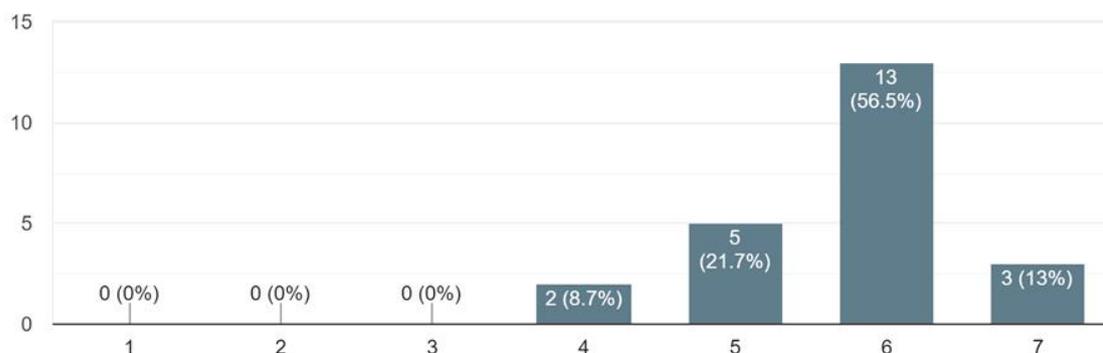
<p><u>Standard minim de performanță pentru evaluarea competenței:</u> Realizarea unui plan de dezvoltare personală pentru atingerea unui nivel superior de formare profesională evidențiind explicit conștientizarea motivațiilor intrinseci de continuare a învățării și prin utilizarea eficientă a resurselor de comunicare și formare profesională continuă.</p>	<p><i>Aptitudinile absolvenților</i></p>								
<p>Here you can add comments: Which measures would you recommend for quality enhancement and quality assurance? <i>Ce măsuri ați recomanda pentru îmbunătățirea calității programului și asigurarea calității?</i></p>									

Figure 6: Alumni survey results - Competence #1] Use of the basic concepts and principles regarding the organization and functioning of administrative structures for professional insertion in public and/or private institutions

[Competence #1] Use of the basic concepts and principles regarding the organization and functioning of administrative structures for professional insertion in public and/or private institutions

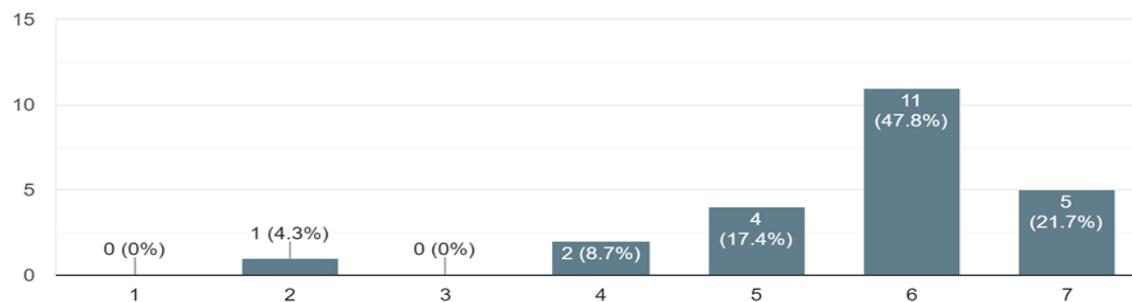
1.1. On what level is your own knowledge?

23 responses



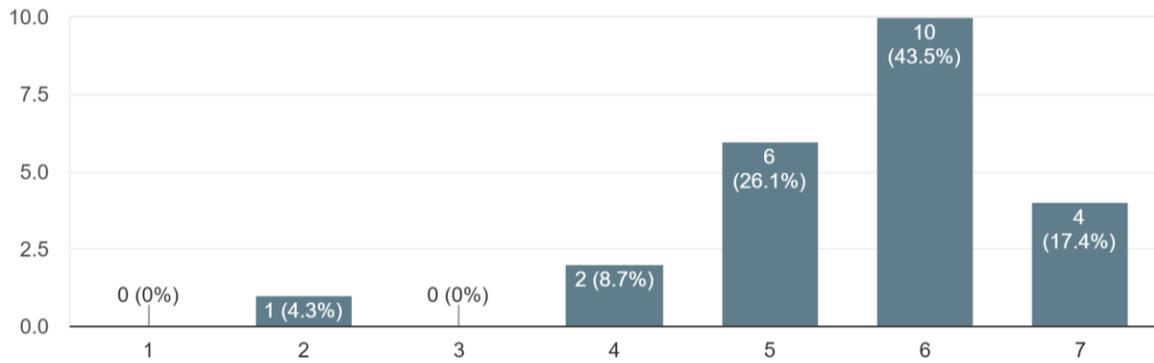
1.2. On what level is your own skill?

23 responses



1.3. Up to which level did the study program promote knowledge?

23 responses



1.4. Up to which level did the study program promote skill?

22 responses

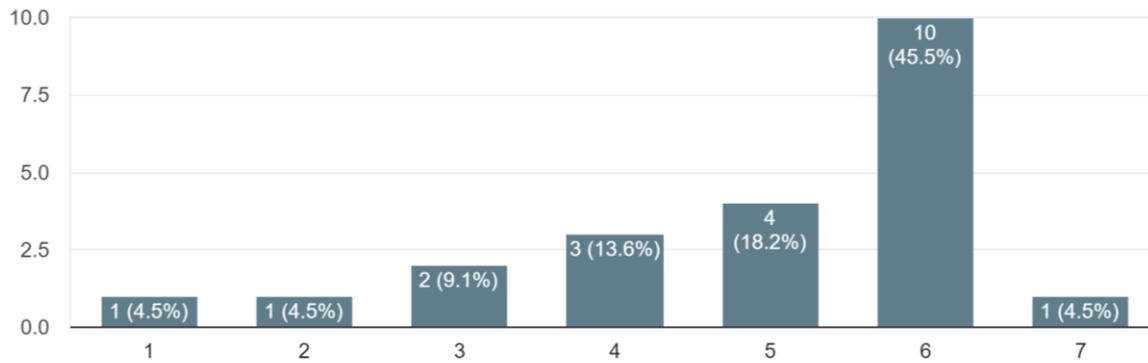
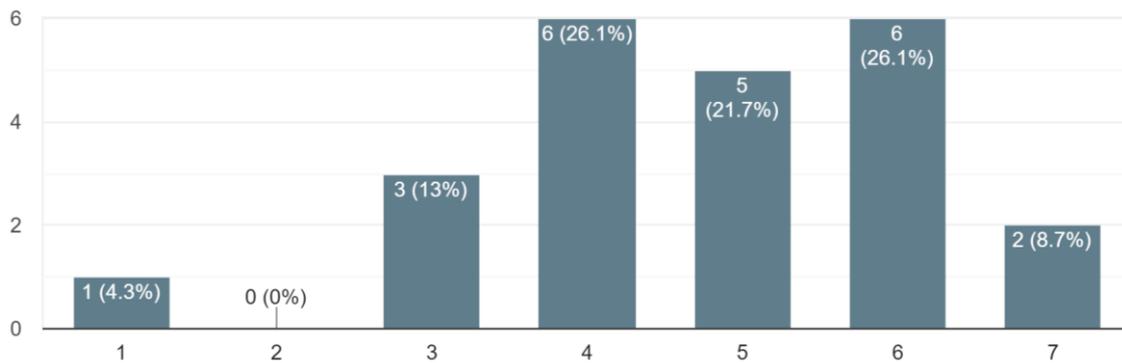


Figure 7: Alumni survey results - [Competence #2] Identification and use of the legal provisions regarding the administrative system, including the initiation and formulation of proposals for normative and / or administrative acts

[Competence #2] Identification and use of the legal provisions regarding the administrative system, including the initiation and formulation of proposals for normative and / or administrative acts

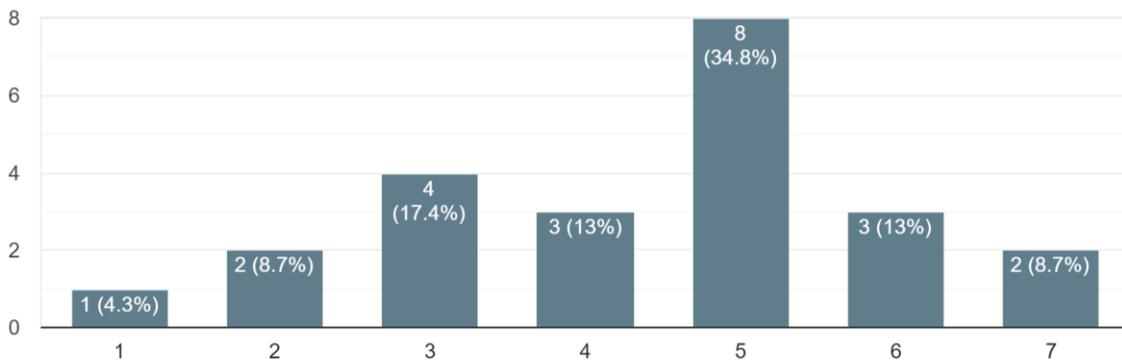
2.1. On what level is your own knowledge?

23 responses



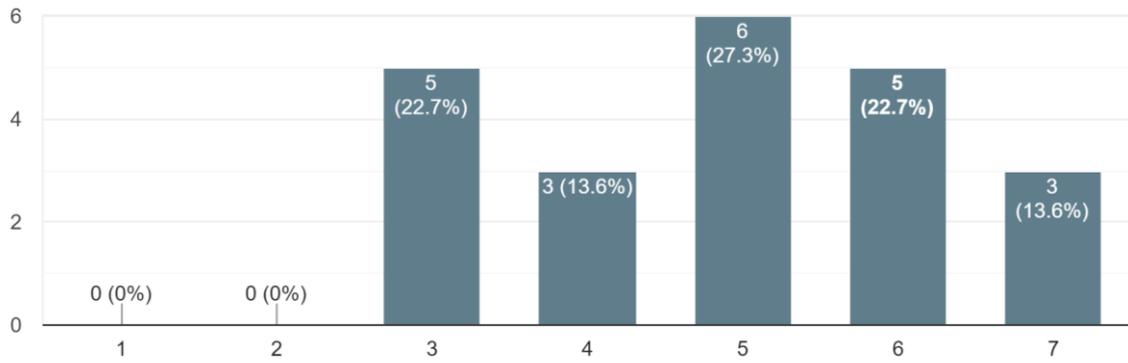
2.2. On what level is your own skill?

23 responses



2.3. Up to which level did the study program promote knowledge?

22 responses



2.4. Up to which level did the study program promote skill?

23 responses

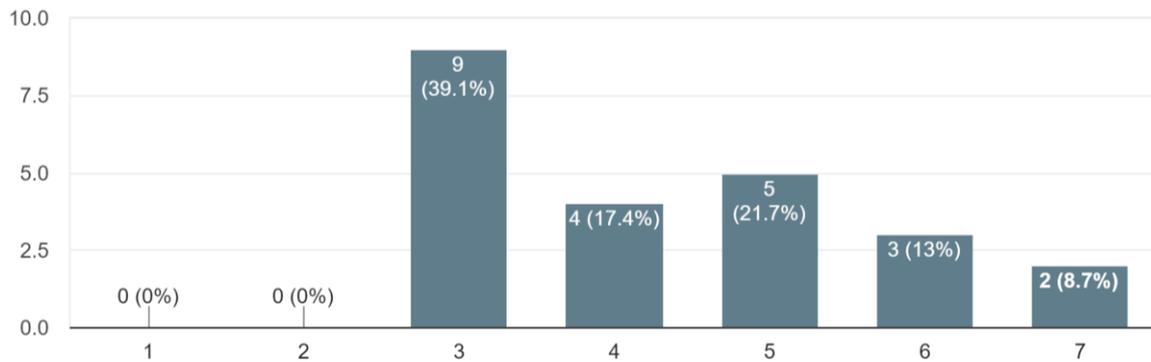
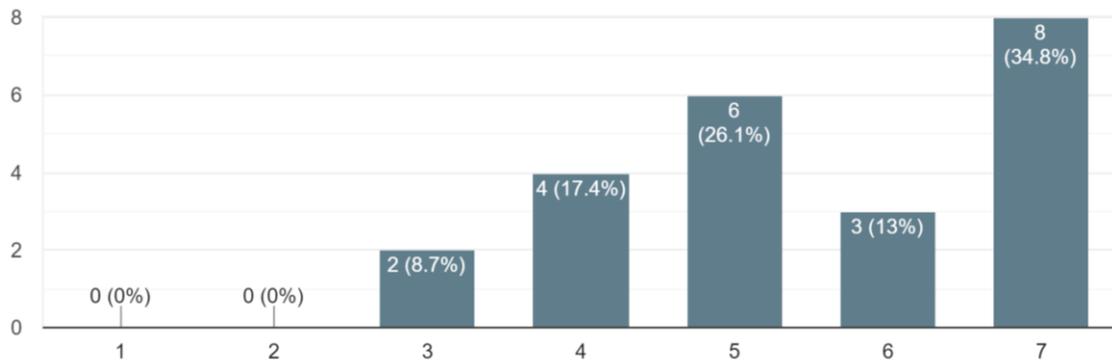


Figure 8: Alumni survey results - [Competence #3] Oral and written communication of structured messages related to a problem given by the specialty, in the language of the study program and in an international language.

[Competence #3] Oral and written communication of structured messages related to a problem given by the specialty, in the language of the study program and in an international language.

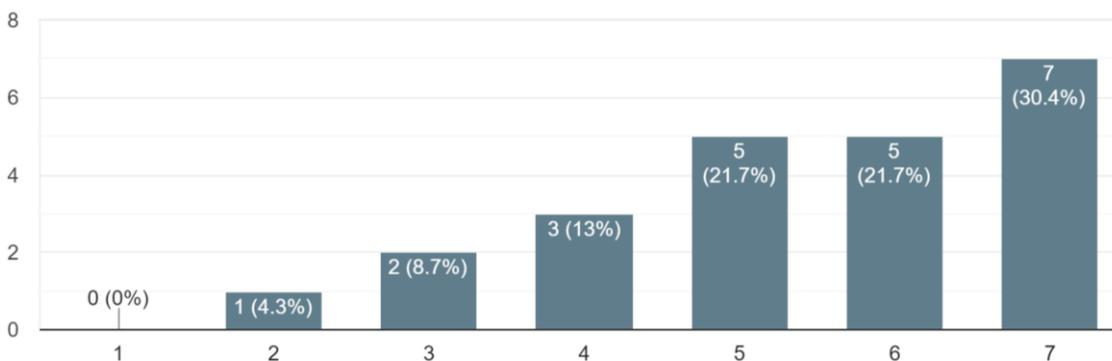
3.1 On what level is your own knowledge?

23 responses



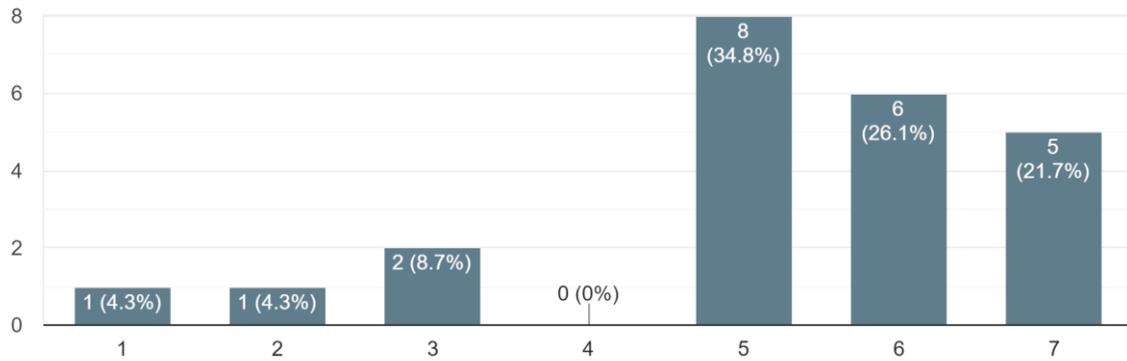
3.2 On what level is your own skill?

23 responses



3.3 Up to which level did the study program promote knowledge?

23 responses



3.4 Up to which level did the study program promote skill?

23 responses

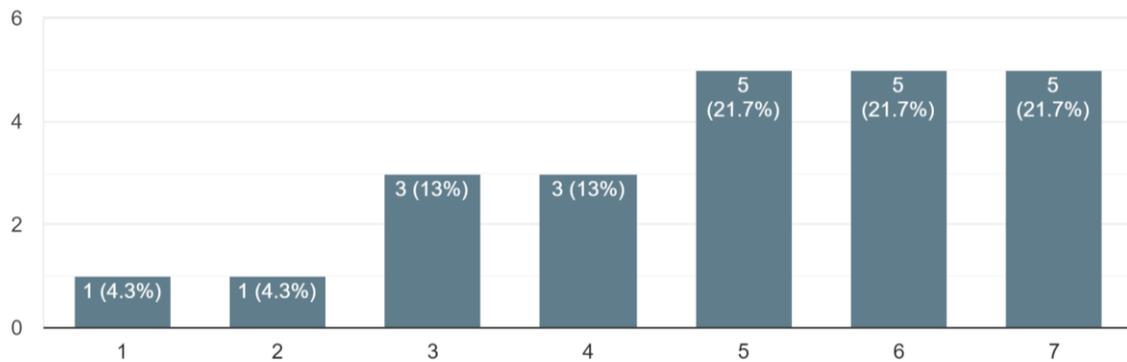
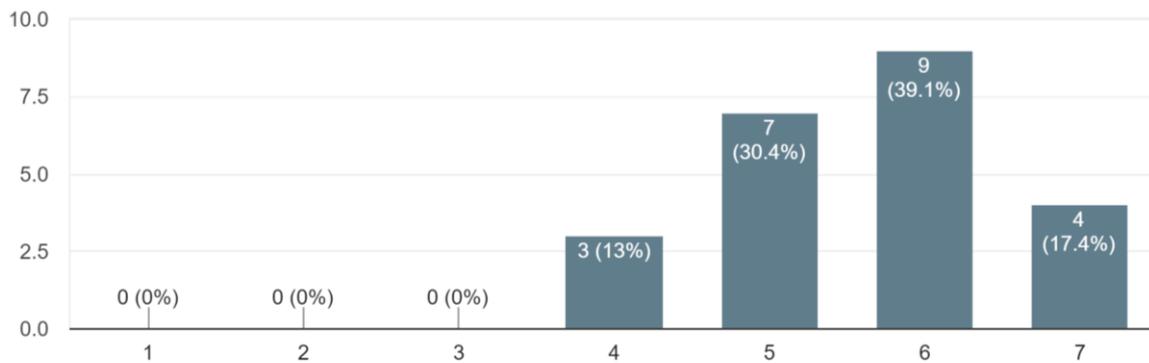


Figure 9: Alumni survey results - [Competence #4] Applying strategic tools for institutional development.

[Competence #4] Applying strategic tools for institutional development.

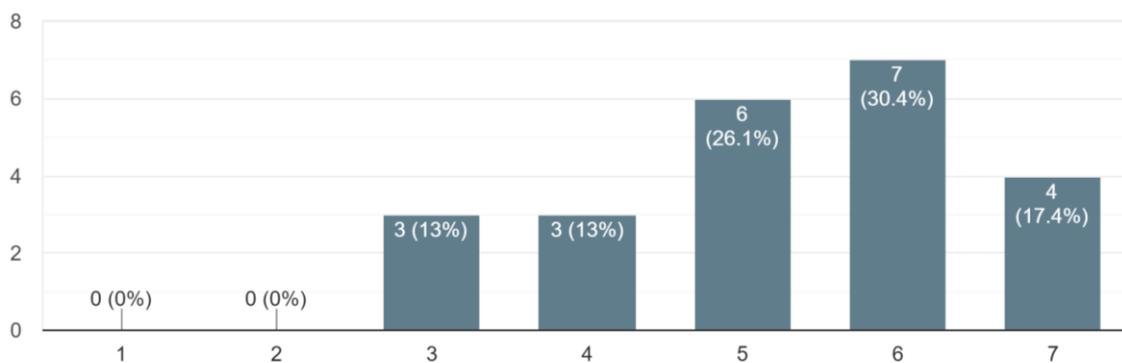
4.1 On what level is your own knowledge?

23 responses



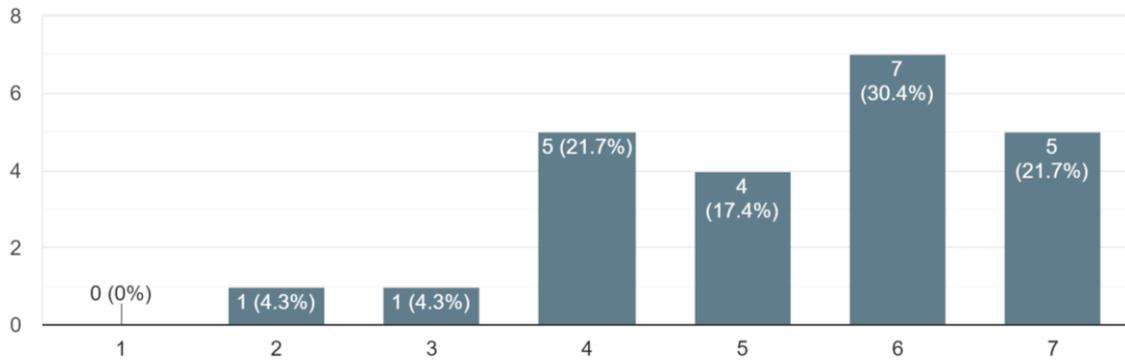
4.2 On what level is your own skill?

23 responses



4.3 Up to which level did the study program promote knowledge?

23 responses



4.4 Up to which level did the study program promote skill?

23 responses

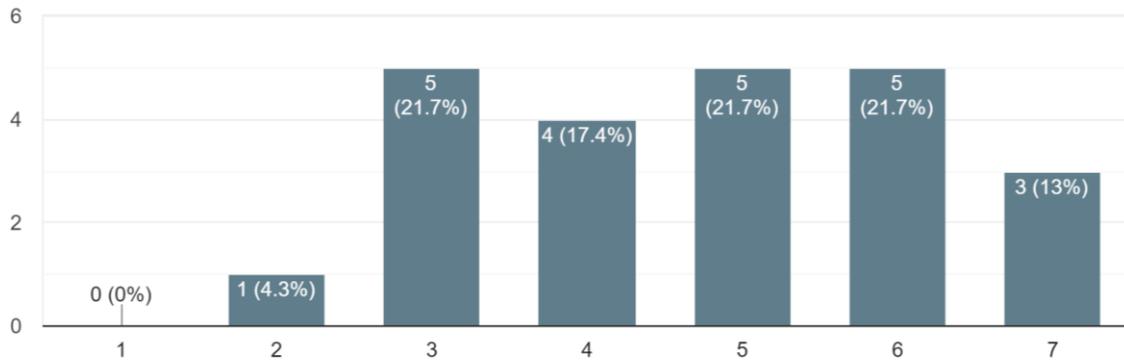
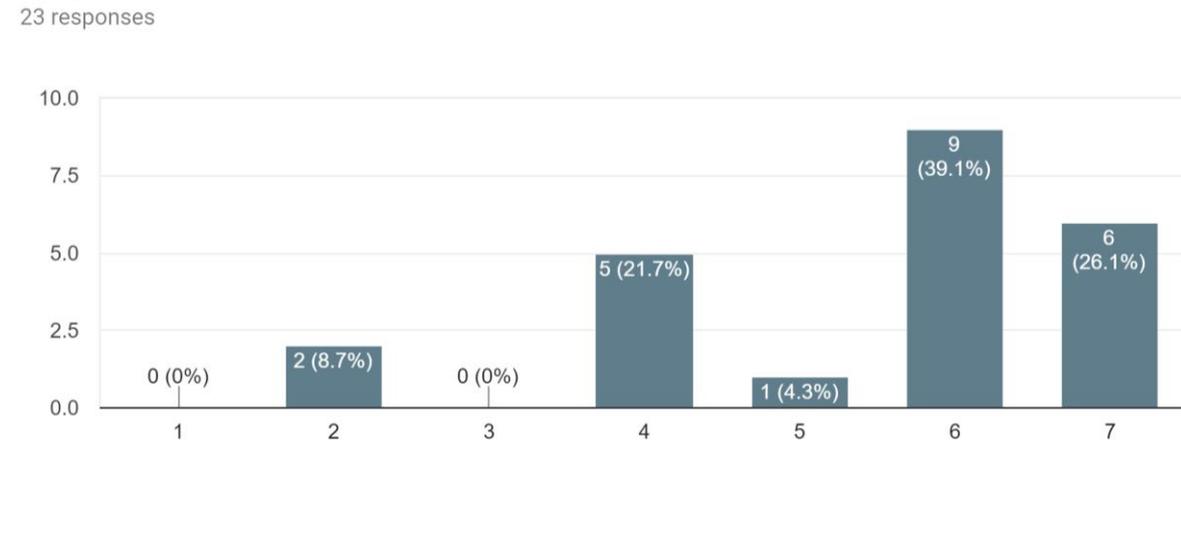


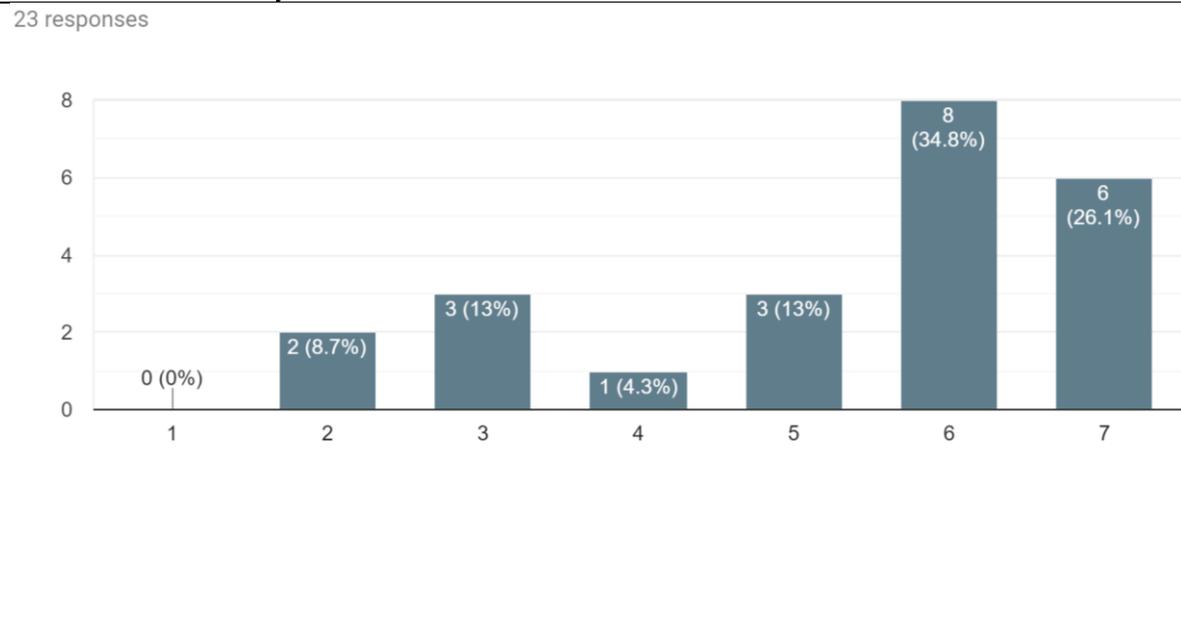
Figure 10: Alumni survey results - [Competence #5] Managing specific activities in the field, with respect to the professional ethics and deontology.

[Competence #5] Managing specific activities in the field, with respect to the professional ethics and deontology.

5.1 On what level is your own knowledge?

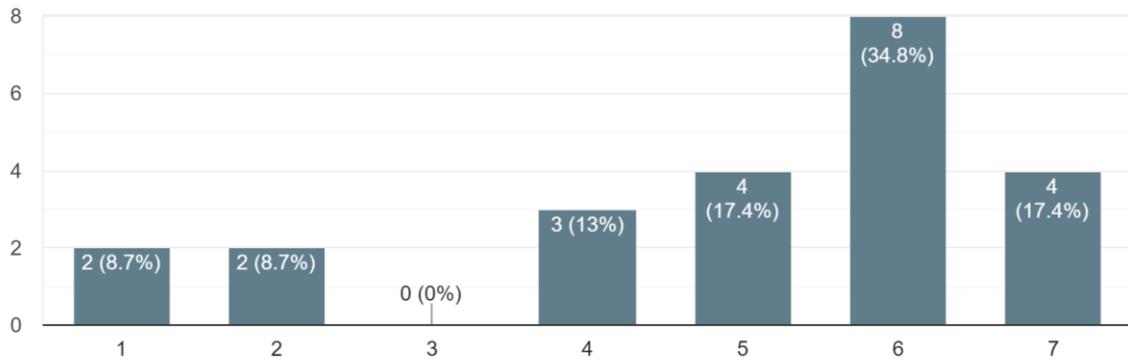


5.2 On what level is your own skill?



5.3 Up to which level did the study program promote knowledge?

23 responses



5.4 Up to which level did the study program promote skill?

23 responses

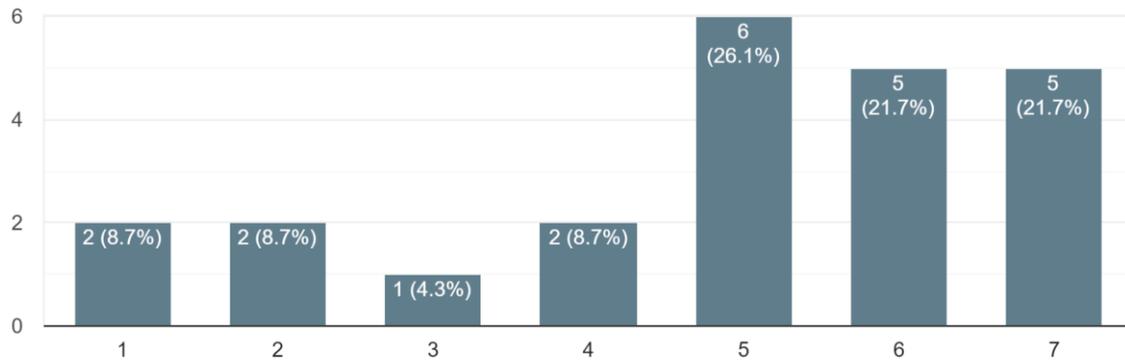
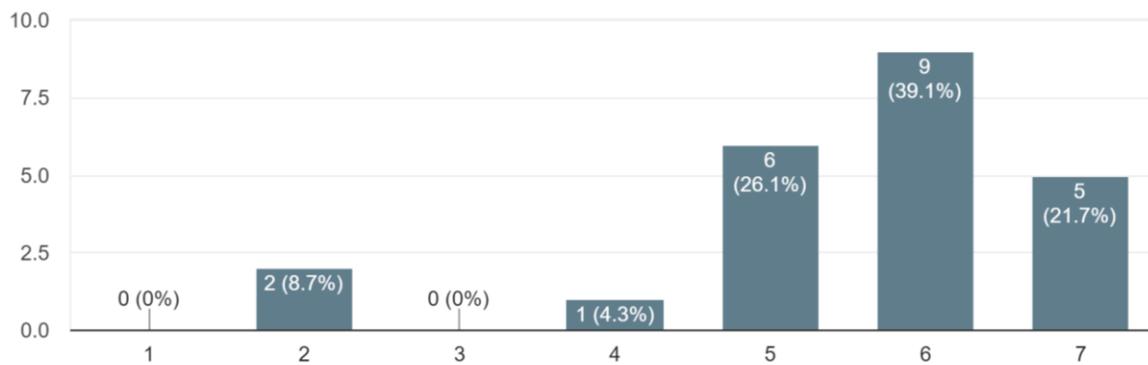


Figure 11: Alumni survey results - [Competence #6] Identifying, analyzing and solving problems in public administration, in a cooperative, flexible and efficient way.

[Competence #6] Identifying, analyzing and solving problems in public administration, in a cooperative, flexible and efficient way.

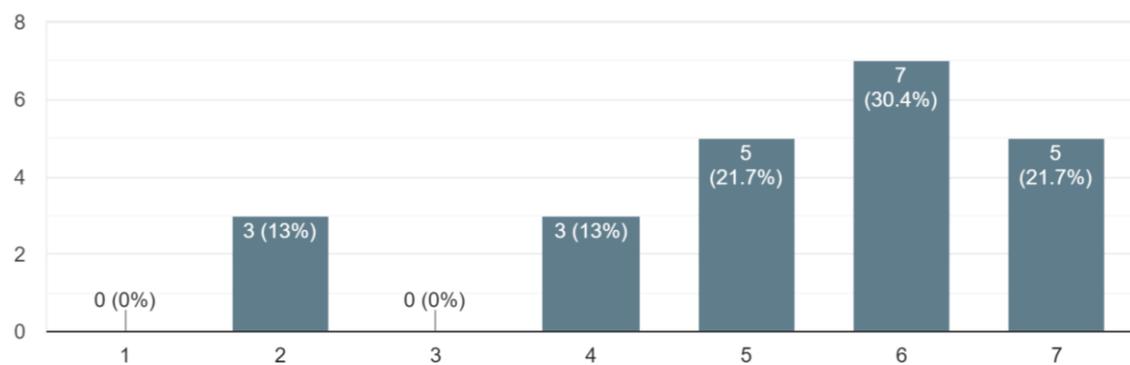
6.1 On what level is your own knowledge?

23 responses



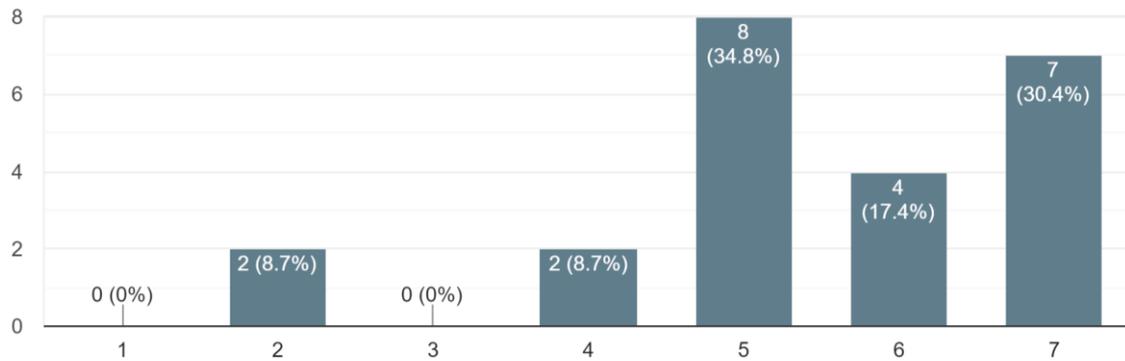
6.2 On what level is your own skill?

23 responses



6.3 Up to which level did the study program promote knowledge?

23 responses



6.4 Up to which level did the study program promote skill?

23 responses

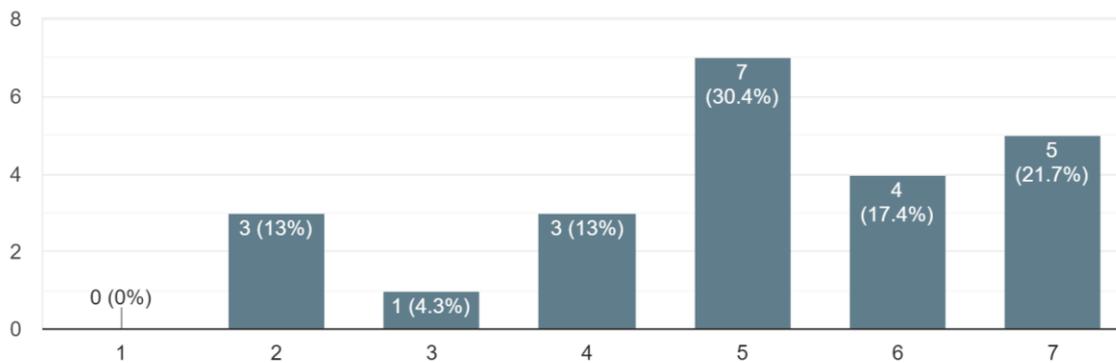
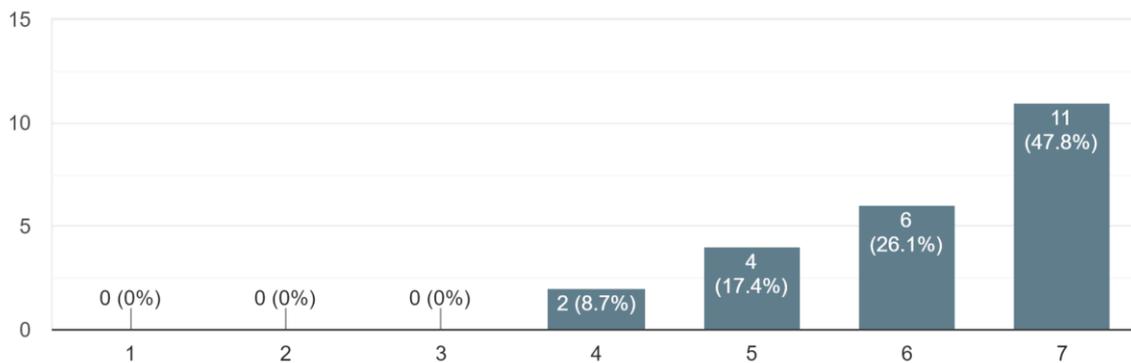


Figure 12: Alumni survey results - [Competence #7] Achieving, in a rigorous, efficient and responsible manner professional tasks, in compliance with ethical principles and the specific professional deontology.

[Competence #7] Achieving, in a rigorous, efficient and responsible manner professional tasks, in compliance with ethical principles and the specific professional deontology.

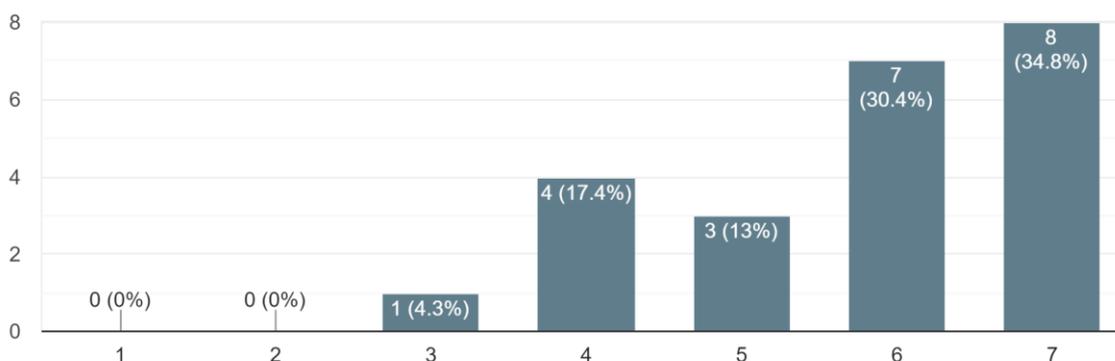
7.1 On what level is your own knowledge?

23 responses



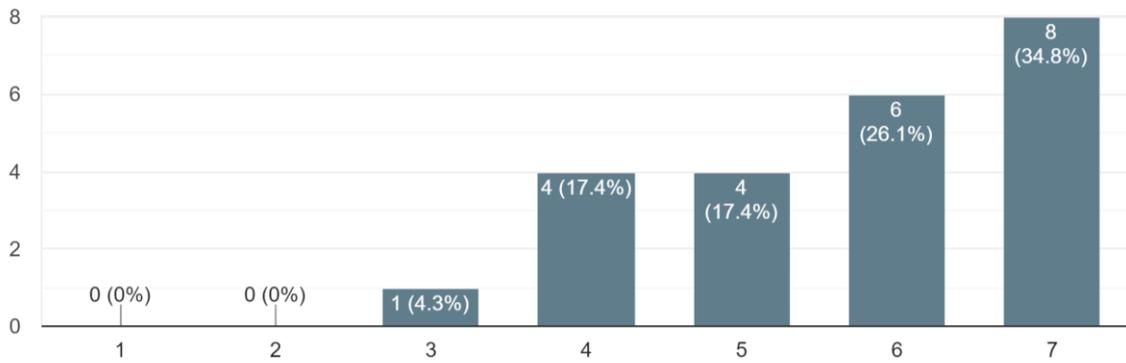
7.2 On what level is your own skill?

23 responses



7.3 Up to which level did the study program promote knowledge?

23 responses



7.4 Up to which level did the study program promote skill?

23 responses

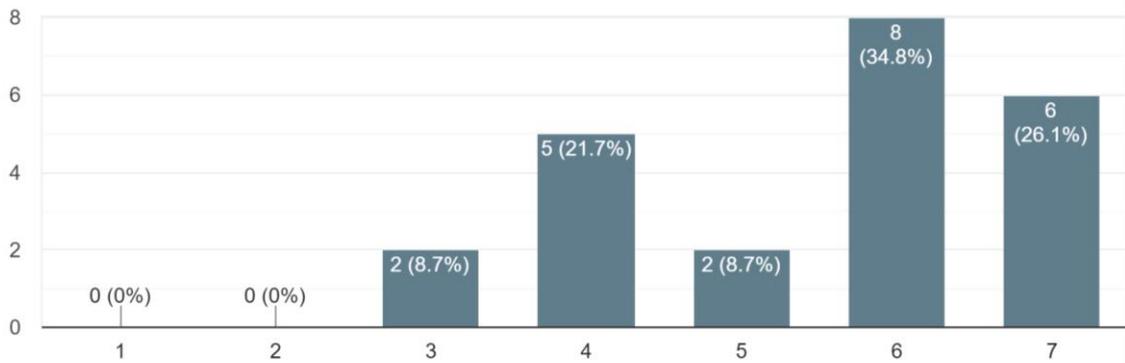
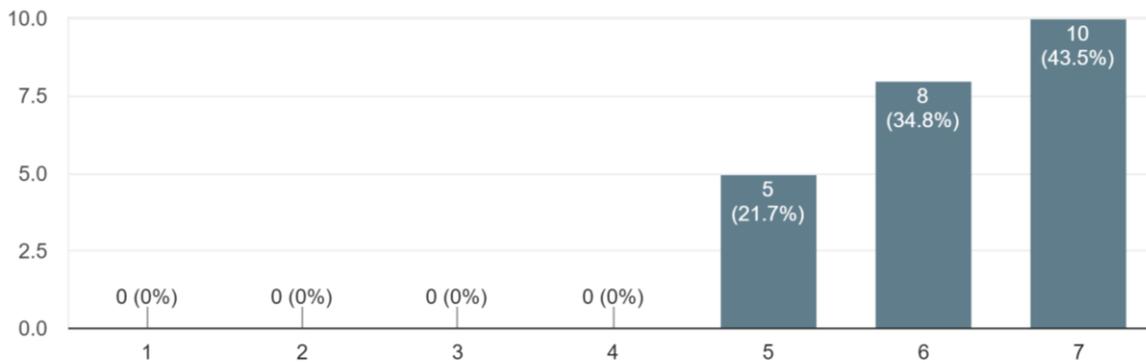


Figure 13: Alumni survey results - [Competence #8] Applying group techniques, learning and exercising specific roles in a team and developing interpersonal communication skills.

[Competence #8] Applying group techniques, learning and exercising specific roles in a team and developing interpersonal communication skills.

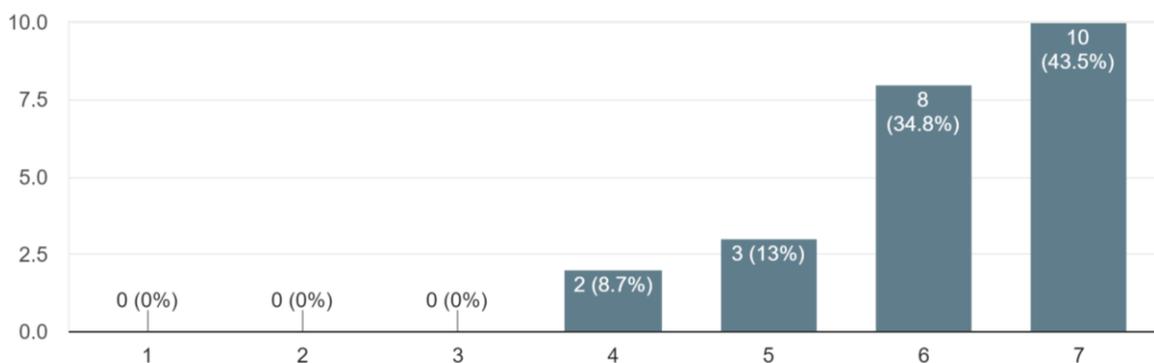
8.1 On what level is your own knowledge?

23 responses



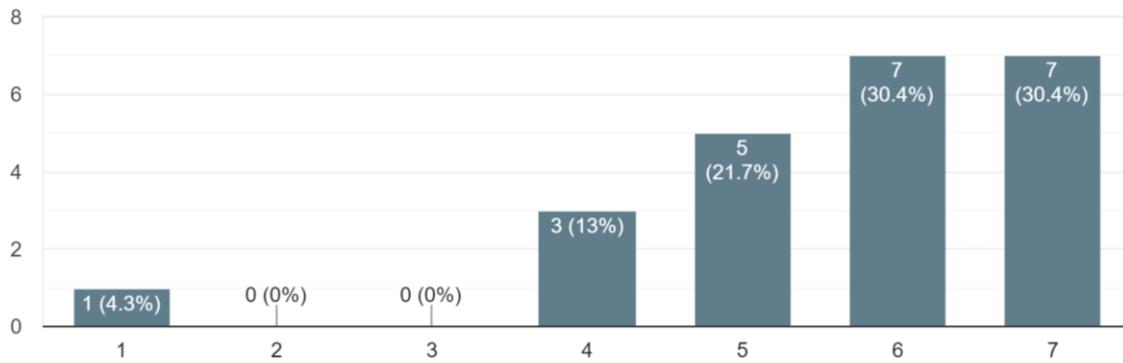
8.2 On what level is your own skill?

23 responses



8.3 Up to which level did the study program promote knowledge?

23 responses



8.4 Up to which level did the study program promote skill?

23 responses

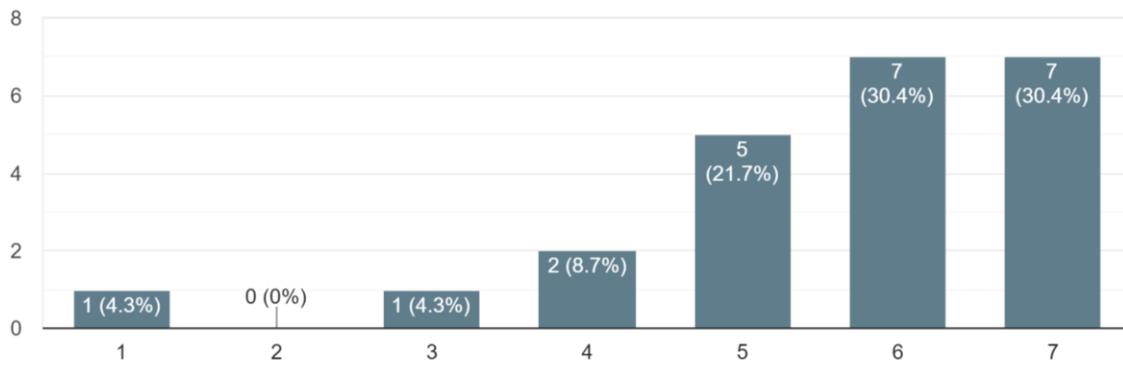
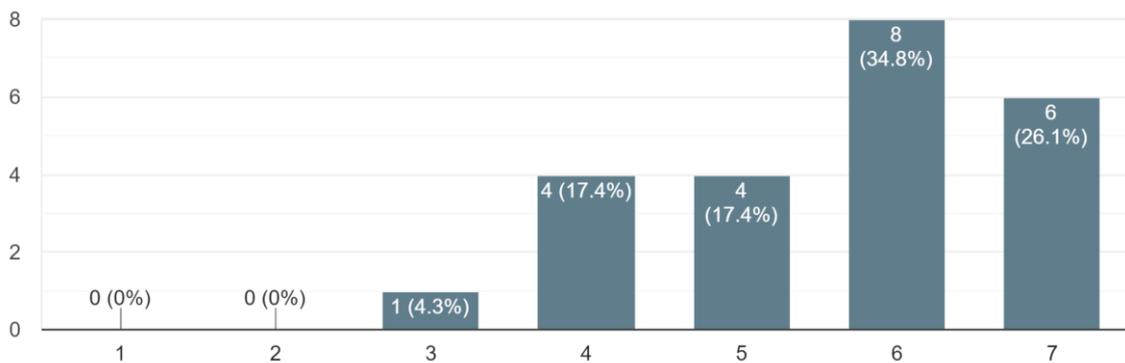


Figure 14: Alumni survey results - [Competence #9] Self-assessment of the need for professional training and identification of resources and ways of training, personal and professional development, for the purpose of insertion and adaptation to the requirements of the labor market.

[Competence #9] Self-assessment of the need for professional training and identification of resources and ways of training, personal and professional development, for the purpose of insertion and adaptation to the requirements of the labor market.

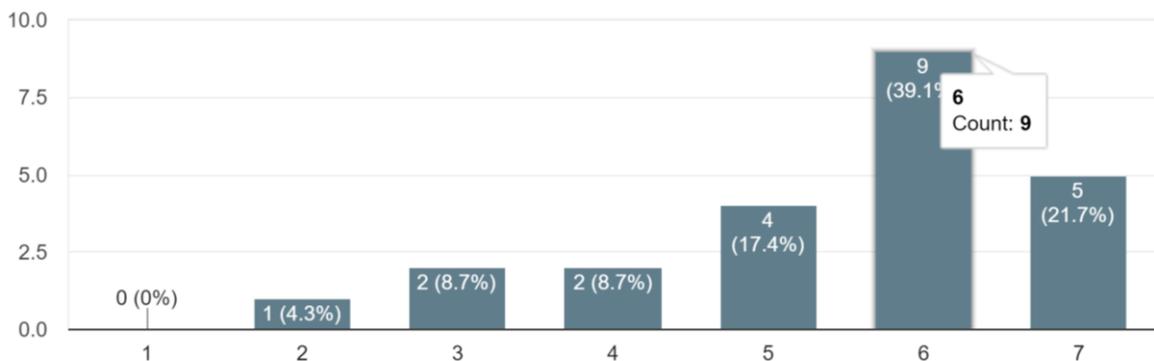
9.1 On what level is your own knowledge?

23 responses



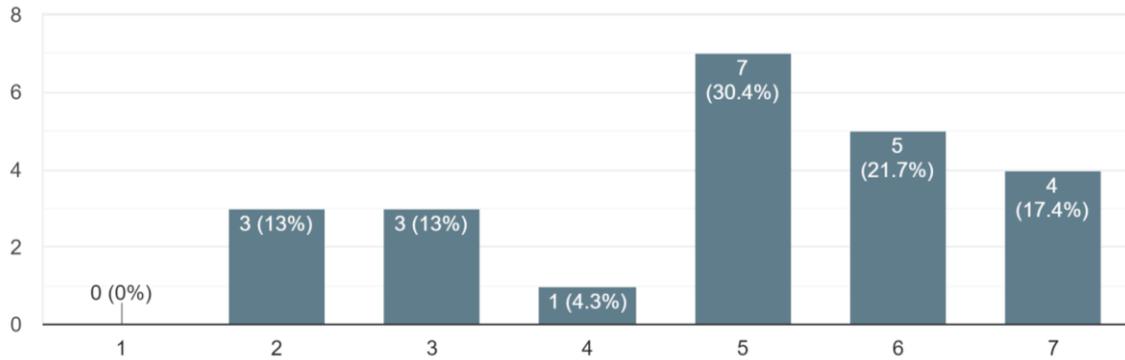
9.2 On what level is your own skill?

23 responses



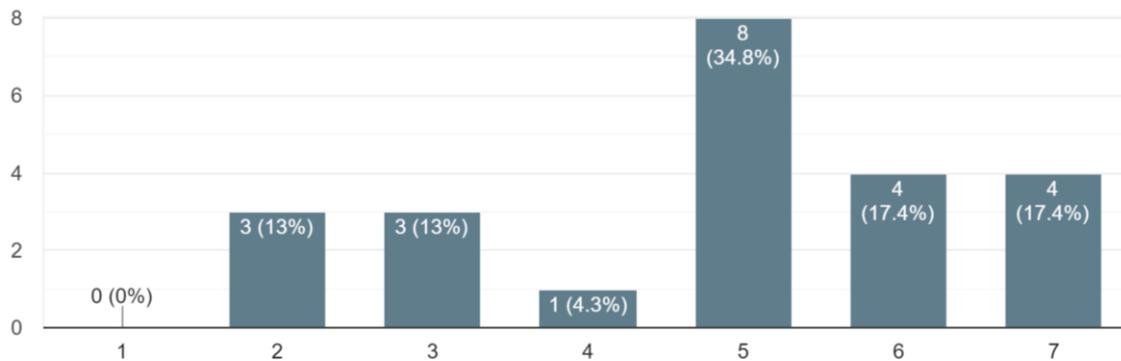
9.3 Up to which level did the study program promote knowledge?

23 responses



9.4 Up to which level did the study program promote skill?

23 responses



ALUMNI FOCUS GROUP ANSWERS

Question no. 1 (What type of knowledge should a PA master graduate obtain?)

- "The knowledge that a master graduate should hold depends in a great extent on the type of the master program followed/graduated. There is, however, a basic knowledge that all students should obtain – law and economics as well as how to do research."
- "I think that every master graduate should master thorough knowledge connected to the inside processes of each area they study. Due to the fact that each master graduate will own a title of "expert", he or she should possess knowledge in the general area of analysis and diagnosis, on leadership, on organizational behavior and so on."
- "A master graduate should hold theoretical knowledge connected to the legal framework of public administration so that he could know / identify the legal constraints when evaluating a program or a public policy, or when he/she practically applies the knowledge in local or regional planning efforts, or strategic planning. A master graduate should also have at least minimal knowledge on economics – economic development."
- "A master graduate should have appropriate knowledge / expertise in:
 - Public policies, cycle, stages, intervention models;
 - European law – treaties, conventions – transposition in national law etc.. "
- "In my opinion the master program has a small shortfall – the first year is a common track – for the students that hold a degree in public administration, the classes are familiar, and some of the information is the same as at the undergraduate level – it might, however, be true that the first year is useful for students that come from outside the department. In the second year, classes become much more applied, and I think that urban planning should be emphasized. The class on strategic planning was very useful, we effectively learn how to write strategies for local communities."

Question no. 2 (What competencies / abilities / skills should a PA master student should hold?):

- "Each graduate should have skills / abilities in analysis and interpretation of the legal framework of public administration, abilities to work in teams, abilities for public speaking and write coherent texts in a foreign language."
- "Graduates should master specific competencies connected with classes studied, so, along the classic transversal competencies – connected with adaptation, critical thinking, analytic thinking, and so on, for the master graduates is important to be able to correlate any theoretical aspect inside the organizational environment in which he/she works or will work."
- "To add something to what my colleagues said, I think a master graduate should hold practical skills in projecting a sociological research – elaborating a research instrument, applying it, measuring, but also making recommendations, based on research carried out."
- "It depends on each graduate interest. In my case (working in public procurement) it is clear that I wish we could practice more in this area during the master program, as this area is more specific. I think a master graduate should be able to elaborate a project, a development strategy – either on a simple small organization or at a higher level – a community or something similar. A graduate should possess critical thinking,

should be able to interpret the law, to be able to draw up a budget and compute cash flows on projects. I am talking about real employee life situations, as the things connected to academic writing, citing and other stuff are learned in the undergraduate program."

Question no. 3 (What could be improved in terms of knowledge attained by master graduates at this time?):

- "At this time I think the program lacks a more applied approach in terms of carrying out research. Although the curricula includes a class in research methods and techniques, the approach could be more in-depth. An accent should be put on the logics of a research design elaboration."
- "From the perspective of knowledge it is necessary to insert in the curricula applied things on legislation, either in NGO area or public. Another knowledge pack that could be added is connected with the construction and implementation of different public policies, as these are analyzed in a rather general degree."
- "From the knowledge/information perspective, I think there should be several references to present/current situations from the public environment. Also, introducing new disciplines, complementary to those studied develops not only critical thinking, but also widens the knowledge horizon of students in several directions."
- "I think there is an issue with the research methods class. I think it would be best for everyone that this would be a two semester class, not just one. The students with no background in research should follow a preparatory class first, because the ones with a minimal set of knowledge repeat the same concepts and it is very hard to advance. Also, a class on fiscal policy would be interesting – connected with introduction in accounting – something applied on fiscal code as each one of us will be impacted by the activity of fiscal institutions."

Question no. 4 (What could be improved considering the current situation, from the perspective of competencies and abilities (practical aspects?):

- "To introduce an Academic Writing class in the curricula, for both – Romanian and English lines of study as well."
- "Introducing a higher number of specialized workshops according to the needs expressed by students."
7. "There should be as many specific examples as possible, and certain disciplines should work with new / updated examples, so that students know the present situation, not the past one. Also a period of one week or so, in which students practically apply gained knowledge from the semester to practical situations."
8. "I would like several add-ons to the present classes – like working with GIS or something similar."

Question no. 5 (How could we improve the current situation, from the perspective of competencies and abilities (practical aspects?):

- "Course handbooks should be better connected with today's realities, using role playing and individual exercises to set the information. Activating in different public institutions or NGO's should be encouraged, even beyond the mandatory internship period."
- "A public speaking class would be an interesting addition to the curricula, and theoretical concepts should always be accompanied by practical use."

- "I think that it would help if each semester there would be the possibility that students choose at least two optional courses from other faculties."

Question no. 6 (What other measures could be implemented to increase employability of master program graduates?):

- "Mandatory long-term internship program should be implemented, as the short term internships which are in-place today are not enough to familiarize students with public organizations."
- "Changing the curricula for several master programs, to better meet employer's demand."
- "Recommendation from alumni that are already working in public or private institutions / or NGO's. Recommending students to other companies – to be made by the teachers."
- "Teaching students to sell their knowledge and abilities – how to approach a job interview, how to negotiate a salary, how to apply for a job in public administration, and changing the perception of students towards public administration institutions."

EMPLOYER REPRESENTATIVES FOCUS GROUP ANSWERS

Question no. 1 - What type of knowledge should a PA master graduate obtain?

Private Firm representative

"I think the students should go deeper into applying the knowledge gained during the master program by selecting the classes with the highest practical application in their field of work"

City Hall representative

- "Knowledge on legal public administration framework
- Knowledge on the organization and functioning of local public institutions – organizations' structure, administrative procedures, and the documents issued (decisions etc.)
- Capacity to recognize, analyze and implement public policies
- The capacity to recognize possible problems and to react in order to prevent or solve them
- Negotiation abilities and amicable settlement of conflicts
- The capacity to propose and elaborate projects for improving and streamlining services supplied to the general public
- Knowledge in land zoning / urban development area and regional development"

World Bank representative

General knowledge on: public administration, macroeconomics, general law

Specific knowledge on:

- strategic management
- public policy cycle
- project management
- human resource management
- legislative technique
- research and analysis methods and techniques
- functional sectoral areas of public administration (regional development, urban development, socio-economic development, infrastructure, environment, culture, education, health – seen as areas in which the state and public administration intervenes with public policies, and not seen as institutions which, in different configurations, deliver a wider area of services)

NGO representative

To be able to access (find, analyze and select) information that can be used for practical things

County Council representative:

- specific area legislation, for example: transparency in decision-making process, public procurement – planning and ensuring legality, human resource management, law on civil servants

Question no. 2 - What competencies / abilities / skills should a PA master student should hold?

Private Firm representative

If we are considering a master in public administration, I think that the competences / abilities related with the public policy cycle, strategic planning and project management. Those will be helpful in a job in public administration.

City Hall representative

In the public sector, I think it is important that the master graduates attain the following practical skills:

- Team work skills
- The capacity to achieve complex professional tasks, in a specific time limit
- Good communication skills and interpersonal interaction
- Conflict management skills

World Bank representative

- The ability to analyze studies, reports, research
- The capacity to elaborate complex impact analyses, public policy analysis, policy and program evaluation
- The capacity to plan – strategically and operational planning as well
- The capacity of managing teams and resources
- The capacity to initiate and manage change – correlating this with program and reform development
- The capacity to undertake result-oriented work
- The capacity to communicate in complex context and environment
- Negotiation skills

We can add also the following:

- Ability to analyze and interpret the legal framework of public administration;
- Ability to assess public programs and policies, as well as to draw up impact analyses;
- Abilities to and knowledge of designing sociological research activities, processing extracted data, and formulating a series of recommendations;
- Ability to set up and implement local development strategies;
- Abilities to analyze and interpret various economic policies, as well as to draw up prognoses;
- Skills in negotiating and solving conflicts amicably;
- Setting up and assessing urban development policies; devising a series of measures for local competitiveness enhancement;
- Drawing up econometric prognoses and analyses concerning the socio-demographic and economic evolution of local communities;
- Analyzing the legal framework in the field of urbanism and land-use planning;
- Setting up strategies and projects for community public utility services;
- Expertise in environmental policies and regional development⁶.

"Summing all those, I want to stress that there are two practical skills that need to be emphasized: **accountability and citizen engagement**.

⁶ Those competencies are drawn from the diploma supplement that accompanies the proof of graduation – during the meeting we supplied participants this type of information in order to ease discussions.

There is also a specific and essential type of competence (especially for the public service) – **integrity and professional ethics**. Trying to identify the best ways to measure and develop such a competence, I realized that the answer does not lie in the instruments that the public administration has at its disposal (if so, maybe to a small extent). This type of competence is developed inside a family, a second source could be the school, as it supposes a long and constant intervention. This could be considered a transversal competence, and has a critical role in drawing a PA graduate profile."

NGO representative

Digital competencies, communication skills, writing and evaluating projects

County Council representative:

The capacity to implement tasks, the capacity to elaborate and implement development strategies in public administration, analysis skills, teamwork skills, planning and strategic action, communication skills.

Question no. 3 - What could be improved in terms of knowledge attained by master graduates at this time?

Private Firm representative

"Of course, ethics in public administration and conflict management are useful, but with less practical use than other courses. I think that components connected with human resources like recruiting and selection are useful in working in and with teams. I am not sure about classes on different branches of law, it depends on the type of job – some of them, like administrative law and EU law are now useful, others, like civil law are more helpful for the general knowledge of the student."

City Hall representative

"In what regards the theoretical aspects, we consider that gaining knowledge would be more effective if a parallel with a real situation would be created – solving a present case involving the theoretical aspects taught in class are more appropriate. This process should then facilitate applying the theoretical knowledge gained during the master program in the case that the graduate will be employed."

World Bank representative

"Encouraging research during studies, emphasizing on research useful for public organizations. An inter-disciplinary correlation of theories and projecting results towards case-studies from community life would be a step forward.

It is also important to create active networks between universities and public administration, in order to use the results of the research undertaken – for example the development of policy labs / change labs – with an advisory role for PA, which will create an active environment and facilitate exchanges of ideas.

Another line of future action would be the development of platforms through which the Faculty/University to publish policy notes or concept notes (assumed by the institution) with regard to strategic problems/needs/areas of public administration."

NGO representative

"I think that students should be encouraged to read a lot, to be able provide critical analysis / review of readings, to learn to summarize and writhe scientific papers."

Question no. 4 - What could be improved considering the current situation, from the perspective of competencies and abilities (practical aspects)?

Private Firm representative

"Maybe including more internship sessions in organizations. It is helpful for the organizations to "calibrate" the expectations on junior employees, but also help students to mold their expectations on their professional life, and decide the area that they are interested in choosing for the future."

City Hall representative

"From the practical skills perspective we consider that interaction with public authorities as well as NGOs should be encouraged, in elaborating projects or public policies, and by participating at debates or local council meetings. Involving students in volunteering activities could help students in developing practical skills."

World Bank representative

"On this theme, I see connections with the previous topic / answers:

- Developing individual and group projects for each competence mentioned before – whether we discuss competencies / knowledge, skills or attitudes / behavior – absolutely necessary in real cases from public sector
- Continuing practicum and long-term internships
- Developing, in partnership with PA institutions of job shadowing stages
- Creating theme clubs for debates, role playing in order to stimulate diverse practices from the public sector. A good example would be the development of an assessment center-type lab, which are commonly used in recruiting by big companies or organizations like EPSO, UN, OECD, WB. In these types of labs the students can participate in simulations and testing for different types of competencies required by an organization, can make self-assessments and establish a remedy or professional development plan“.

NGO representative

Debate abilities, writing and evaluating projects.

County Council representative

Emphasizing on practicum / internship stages in public institutions, through which practical abilities needed in public sector.

Question no. 5 - What other measures could be implemented to increase employability of master program graduates?

Private Firm representative

"Internship – including here a form of recognizing it as work experience. Maybe the university could start a communication and consultation process with companies and public institutions

on this theme. There is a policy initiative of a NGO called "Asociatia se Poate" which involves other 9 EU countries, that could be useful in that respect and it should be followed."

City Hall representative

"I guess a first step could be informing the students on the recruitment and selection procedures for occupying civil servant jobs. Knowing the conditions and selection procedures might increase the number of participants for public service jobs."

World Bank representative

- Exposing and integrating students in professional networks.
- Identifying and promoting of innovative ideas by teachers – disseminating towards diverse interested and influential factors from private and public organizations
- Establishing partnerships between the faculty and professional associations – organizing common events
- Ample and aggressive communication of attained/developed skills – using multiple channels and sponsor-persons that talk about these things

NGO representative

- To increase the number of internships, and diversify them, at least one of the stages should be made in the private sector;
- Development of cooperation programs in national/international institutions which allow as many international experiences as possible, which will help students develop work skills and entrepreneurial abilities.

County Council representative

"Due to the legal provisions in recruitment and selection in PA, restrictive conditions cannot be applied, but, in public owned companies the employer could establish specific requests tightly connected with the competencies of PA master program graduates."