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## **PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION EDUCATION IN HUNGARY**

**(country report prepared for the intellectual output 01 –  
Assessment of methodology and materials of public administration  
teaching and its relevance for practice)**

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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 PAQUALITY projects aims to support changes in the area of public administration (PA) education in conformity with Bologna objectives, mainly:

- Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies, and
- Promotion of the necessary European dimensions in higher education, particularly with regards to curricular development, inter-institutional co-operation, mobility schemes and integrated programs of study, training and research, which haven't been fully applied in the area of the public administration high education in Slovakia and the new EU states yet.

High education public administration programs vary a lot especially in the Central and Eastern European member countries of the EU - in the new EU member states (NMS). From this perspective it is highly relevant to facilitate quality assurance mechanism which would ensure not only comparable quality of education processes but also comparable outcomes of the education (e.g. quality of graduates, their knowledge, skills and experience) in these countries.

In addition, the project aims at tackling skills gaps and mismatches in the area of public administration high education through designing and developing curricula that meet the learning needs of students that are relevant to the labour market and societal needs, including through better use of open and on-line, work based, multi - disciplinary learning and new quality assessment criteria. Simultaneously, with a view of this priority, promoting and rewarding excellence in teaching and skills development, training of academics in new and innovative pedagogical approaches, new curriculum design approaches and sharing of good practices through collaborative platforms will be in the centre of the project.

This report on Hungary represents an input for the intellectual output 01 of the PAQUALITY project. Within this intellectual output country studies developed based on guidelines and surveys are anticipated. The studies will be used in other project phases but also for mutual information of the project partners at the beginning of the project.

This report summarizes findings on

- the national educational system related to present state of PA education,
- system of evaluation
- findings on PA programmes existing in the country
- the programmes' relevance to practice, based on research among alumni and civil servants / employers. This research focused on MSc program in Public Policy and Management at Corvinus University of Budapest (*hereinafter: CUB*) and the BA program and Public Administration Master program launched at the National University of Public Service (*hereinafter: NUPS*).

It is based on data available as of **31/03/2019**.

## 2. NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND PA EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The following section aims to provide an overview on the Hungarian tradition of Public Administration (hereinafter: PA) Education in general, and on the present national educational system related to PA in particular.

The sub-section 2.1 focuses on how the Public Administration as a discipline evolved from a subfield of (administrative) law into a discipline on its own right, with a separate identity and academic recognition in Hungary. Sub-section 2.2 provides a short overview on historical path and evolution of the PA education in Hungary and depicts the present PA education system. One of the key drivers of shaping and developing PA education system and curricula content is the requirements on entrance to the civil service. Hence, the next sub-section (2.3) describes the regulatory framework on entry and promotion criteria of civil servants. The last section (2.4) concludes and provides a short summary of the section.

### 2.1 PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AS A DISCIPLINE IN HUNGARY

In Hungary university programs preparing and enabling students for careers in public administration traditionally heavily dominated by subjects on law, especially on administrative law. This phenomenon can be explained by the historical tradition and evolution of public administration in general, and with the historical path of PA education in particular (Hajnal 2003, Hajnal 2015; see also the next section). There is a special characteristic linked to the understanding and use of the label “public administration” as a field of study in countries with a heritage of continental public law which has a strong linkage to administrative law (German/Prussian tradition), rather than the more managerialistic Anglo-Saxon understanding of MPA programs, where there is a strong belief in and reliance on the use of private/business management ideologies in public administration. Historically, in Hungary only law faculties offered specific PA programs – content-wise dominated by Law subjects – until the end of the socialist era. Or explaining it from the other side, the government and public organizations recruited mainly- if not exclusively- applicants for the civil servant position with either a pure Law or a legally oriented degree.

Traditionally the PA as a (sub-) discipline understood as a subfield of law study -administrative law – which relies heavily on theories from the academic discipline of law. Due to this historically embedded nature of PA studies, the academic field of PA have been backed- or at least over-dominated -by theories and concepts from the law studies. Many observers argued that thus Public Administration couldn't even be said to be a distinct field of study, rather it should be seen as a sub-discipline of law

The own disciplinary identity of PA, and more practically the appropriate form for higher education programs that prepare students for working in the public sector has become a relevant issue among academic actors, in general, and higher education institutions in more special, as well as among government actors since 2010. Increasing the prestige of the profession of the civil servants and reforming the education and training of civil servants have become one of the crucial elements of the overarching public administration reform launched in 2011 (at least on the level of rhetoric).

The most visible and high-impact change observed in the field of PA over the post-2010 period is a grand attempt, initiated and constantly promoted by the highest levels of government, to re-define what PA is and what it is not. To this end, a completely new discipline – “State sciences” – was “founded” and institutionalised. “State sciences” (*államtudományok*) had not existed, in the practical or sociological terms, in Hungarian academia. Rather, it existed only in the names of some long-standing Law faculties, following the Germanic tradition of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century whereby Law as a discipline was conceived of as a broad topic including public law. The identity of this new discipline

was reinforced by several measures vastly transforming the institutional landscape. Most importantly (i) traditional and long-lasting PA training provided by Law faculties was administratively banned; and (ii) a new university operated by three core ministries (rather than fitting into the standard higher education governance framework) called the National University of Public Service (NUPS) was created. Finally, (iii) civil service legislation prescribed the new degree (along with the traditional Law degrees) as a prerequisite for a broad array of managerial positions in the civil service. NUPS was explicitly based on the principle of inseparability of civilian, military and police training for the public service, and on the disciplinary foundation of the (would-be) state sciences (hence the civilian faculty of NUPS was called Faculty of State and Public Administration Sciences). This fundamental transformation – some aspects which will be described in more detail in subsequent sub-sections – impacted, and continue to impact, PA programs and research in many different ways.

These changes, practical terms, meant that the disciplinary focus of PA programs provided by NUPS broadened to some extent, and the recent PA programs include a variety of courses on political science, management studies, public policy courses, sociology and economics.

## **2.2 PA EDUCATION AND ITS SPECIFICS**

Regarding the historical path and evolution of the PA education in Hungary Hajnal (1999) identified five major development stages within the evolutionary path of Hungarian PA education.

The first stage took place in the mid – eighteenth century with the introduction of education reform (Act “Ratio Educationis” 1777) that created five law academies in the country with the specific purpose to provide academic level education for practitioners working in Public Administration. In this time, the most important academic centre of Public Administration for the next two centuries, the Department of Administrative Law also established at the Budapest University (Hajnal, 1999, p. 3.).

The second period of PA education evolution can be placed in the period between 1850 and 1930. According to Hajnal (1999) “the first decades of this period were (...) characterised by the efforts of the emerging liberal capitalist state to limit and control the public administration of the ‘Polizeistaat’ within universal and public norms. This movement for the creation of the rule of law had – by and large – similar characteristics as the parallel processes in other absolutist states of the continental Europe. The most important effect of this context on P.A. was the ever-growing importance and dominance of Administrative Law as disciplinary approach within the academic field of P.A.” (Hajnal 1999, p.3.)

The third period of education on the field of PA influenced by the so - called scientific management school and by the leading scientific figure Zoltán Magyary who initiated the scientific management approach and evidence based planning in the public administration. His ideology is backed by Anglo –Saxon type of managerialism and PA tradition and highly relied on the belief that business management principles have the answers to all public administration problems.

The fourth period of PA education is characterised and captured by existing socialism. “After 1949, an entirely new state power structure, along with the underlying theoretical basis in state philosophy and PA had to be created. The rule of ideology and the immediate practical interests of the regime prevented the practitioners of P.A. from creating even a crude theoretical basis for the >>new, socialist<< public administration until the sixties.” In line with this ambition in 1969 a new type of post-secondary education institution was launched in the field of local and regional public administration (“council administration”). Nevertheless, from the late seventies on, efforts were taken to differentiate between Administrative Law and Public Administration. In 1978 a new educational institute named the “College of Public Administration” was created. The College awarded Bachelor-level degrees to future officials of public administration, primarily (but not entirely) to those of territorial and local administration. The curricula of the College tried to strike a balance between Administrative Law, (Public) Management, and basics in social sciences like Political Science and Sociology. (Hajnal, 1999)

After the democratic transition in 1989-90 the entire social, economic, and constitutional-legal framework of both public administration as a set of institutions, practices and human workforce, and PA as an academic field of study changed dramatically. In the post – communist period - the fifth period - the College of Public Administration and law faculties were the biggest Higher Education Institution (hereinafter: HEI) offering specific PA programs.

During the pre-2010 years public administration programs were run mainly at law faculties, largely based on (public) law and related legal courses with a legalistic approach (Hajnal, 2015). According to Hajnal (2015) study on the analyses of PA programs' curricula the proportion of legal subjects in their curricula was about 60–70%.

As already briefly mentioned, major characteristics of the current Hungarian PA education system were, and continue to be, transformed in fundamental ways as a result of the direct government intervention to the PA education system, unfolding from 2011 onwards. In 2012 the Orbán government established the National University of Public Service/NUPS by integrating the National Military Academy, the National Police Academy and the former Faculty of Public Administration from Corvinus University of Budapest /CUB. The new law removed NUPS from the institutional framework of regular higher education institutions and put it directly under the supervisory regime of a ministerial committee including representatives from the Ministry of Public Administration and Justice, the Interior Ministry and Ministry of Defence. At the same time, the law practically abolished the right of any other university to issue the PA degree, which was previously offered by most universities' Law Faculties, and so the state institution became a monopoly for the education of civil servants (Staroňová and Gajduschek 2016). Hajnal (2015) notes that the idea of merging civilian and military/police education into a single higher education institution with monopoly rights of civil service education was highly unusual from an international perspective. However, it fits the institutional reforms of second Orbán government to create a “strong state” with almost unlimited control over various sectors.

According the research result of Hajnal (2015) from 2008 onwards the share of the other (approximately eight) HEIs offering Law based PA degrees was on the increase and NUPS's predecessor, Corvinus Faculty of PA (the predecessor of NUPS Faculty of State and Public Administration Science; nb. it is different from CUB's Department of Public Policy and Management), decreased in weight. From the creation of NUPS this trend sharply reversed and according to the recent study “by 2014 NUPS's share reached almost 80% in both the Bachelor's and the Master's field” (Hajnal, 2015). This process was far from a natural, demand-and-supply-driven one. To the contrary: capitalizing on the exemption possibilities created by earlier legislation the government practically created a monopoly for NUPS in the Law based segment of BA education.

### **2.3 REQUIREMENTS ON ENTRANCE TO CIVIL SERVICE AND ON IN-SERVICE TRAINING**

The minimum requirements – including the educational criteria – for entrance to the public administration as a civil servants regulated by the new civil service law, namely the Act of Public Officials enacted in 2011. (It replaced the first post -soviet Civil Service Code that was in force since 1992). Civil servant status may be given to a Hungarian citizen with a clean criminal record, Hungarian citizenship, legally capable to act and who meets the educational requirements. While some specific educational level might be eligibility criteria, the civil servants position in Hungarian civil service system might be open for applicants with very diverse educational backgrounds.

Entry into the civil service is gained through direct application and interview for a specific post, whereby the process is launched and implemented by the employer organisation. There is no requirement for openings to be published, but all posts might be open to external applicants (specific, though optional / voluntary website for advertising vacant job positions). There is no any special entrance exam required neither to be taken during the selection or appointment process, however different exam and training requirement are part of the civil servant career system.

In the Hungarian public sector there are several categories of public employees. There are civil servants working for the central and territorial levels of public administration as well as at the local level in municipalities and in government district offices. Employment in the two main job types of civil servants (clerical and administrative) is tied to secondary and higher education diploma, respectively. The most important general-scope compulsory in-service training measure is the Basic Public Administration Examination (*közigazgatási alapvizsga*). This has to be taken by all officials within three years from entry to the civil service. Graduates of certain higher education programmes (such as MLAs or MAs in Public Administration) are exempted though. The other type of general scope in-service exam called “Advanced Civil Service Exam” is required to be passed in order to get promotion to managerial positions. Senior civil servants (SCSs) are not defined institutionally as a separate cluster. Correspondingly, there are neither centrally defined skills profiles for senior management nor policies to identify potential senior managers early in their careers. Currently, there is no targeted SCS training scheme either. There is, however, more emphasis on managing their performance and avoiding conflicts of interest.

Regarding the more precise eligible educational background for different positions depending on the policy fields the 29/2012. (III.7.) Government Decree on the qualification requirements for civil servants provides a detailed prescription and overview on the minimum level and type of educational requirements applicable from specific positions. Reflecting on the latest changes of this Government Decree, after the introduction of the new PA higher education program at the NUPS – MA in Science of Public Governance – which was surrounded by significant government attention, the NUPS degrees got a special, prioritized recognition among the other educational degrees. The amendment in 2016 practically has been created an equality between the degrees provided by the MA programs of NUPS and this 5 years PA program (the legal category called administrative qualification/ *közigazgatási szakképzettség*, excluded the Corvinus Msc in PA) and by the traditional law schools degree. There are some positions that can be fulfilled only either with legal degree or one of these MA degrees provided by the NUPS (EUPACK 2019 unpublished country report).

## 2.4 SUMMARY

Based on the above, the key features of the national level systemic framework can be summarised as follows:

<p><b>2.1. Is PA education in your country specific for some reasons? If yes, why?</b></p>	<p>One characteristic originates from the historical tradition, namely the PA as a discipline understood as a subfield of law and dominated by theories and concepts from (public) law studies. The other speciality of the PA education derives from the recent political/policy as well as institutional changes. There have been strong government intentions and actions since 2012 toward monopolizing and centralizing the field of PA HE, and eliminate the alternative suppliers of PA programs. In parallel, the government created and institutionalized, in a top down manner, a purportedly new (though, lacking in actual academic and research base) discipline named “State sciences”.</p>
<p><b>2.2. Is PA a well-established (inter-) discipline?</b></p>	<p>The Public Administration as a discipline evolved from a subfield of (administrative) law into a discipline on its own right, with a separate identity and academic recognition in Hungary.</p>
<p><b>2.3. Is any formal exam required for entrance to civil service? If yes,</b></p>	<p>While some specific educational level might be entry criteria to apply civil service position, there is no special entrance exam during the selection or appointment process. The civil servants position</p>

<p><b>what are the requirements?</b></p>	<p>might be open for applicants with a very diverse educational background, but there are some degree provided by specific HEIs (law schools and NUPS) prioritized and achieved special recognition by the regulation on the qualification requirements.</p>
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### **3. EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION SYSTEM AND PA STUDY PROGRAMMES**

The following section outlines the existing evaluation / accreditation system of higher education programs with the special focus on the PA programs. We also provide a short overview on the presence and relevance of external quality assurance in Hungarian PA education system.

#### **3.1 EXISTING EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION SYSTEM AND PA STUDY PROGRAMMES**

In Hungary in order to receive state recognition and to issue degrees, all higher education institutions (HEI), including foreign and private ones must undergo the same evaluation process conducted by the national central accreditation agency called Hungarian Accreditation Committee (HAC). Consequently, formally the same national accreditation rules and process apply to every PA program as to the other HE programs. However, it's worth to note that there was a recent change in the legal definition of body (bodies) authorized for run the national accreditation process and provide assessment on HE programs beside the HAC. In 2013 the Parliament enacted an amendment that quasi enabled another organization besides the HAC, namely the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (EAQA) to make a program evaluation for accreditation.

#### **3.2 EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF PA STUDY PROGRAMMES BY INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION**

Contrary to the obligatory internal assessment process providing little opportunity for HEIs in choosing the organization or processes of assessment, the external quality assessment is based on HEI's decision whether or not they apply for it and they have a free- choose from a number of internationally recognized external reviewer agencies. Although the HEIs in general seems to be aware of the importance of external quality assurance and it's seems to be a powerful certification in promoting programs worldwide There are two international organizations need to be mentioned those have played significant role in the external assessment and quality assurance of the Hungarian PA programs and HEIs .

The CUB MSc program (Msc in Public Management and Public Policy), has successfully received the accreditation from the European Association for Public Administration Accreditation (EAPAA) in 2012. Back then only four programs had the quality assurance certification from EAPAA in the Central and Eastern European region (including CUB). Since 1999, the EAPAA has helped European academic public administration programs improve their quality of education. In 2019 the CUB applies to renew its certification to the EAPAA. The accreditation process of EAPAA embraced a submission of a very detailed, substantial self – assessment report from the HEI and a site – visit. The EAPPA review was conducted by external, independent experts.

The other institution providing external quality assurance in Hungary is the European University Association (EUA) represents more than 800 universities and national rectors' conferences in 48 European countries. The NUPS applied for the EUA for external program evaluation in 2018, called Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP). IEP is listed on the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education and is a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher

Education. The evaluation process also consisted of a submission of a very detailed self – assessment report on the program and a site – visit.

The results of these external assessment reports have no any legally binding effects on the operation of PA programs.

### **3.3 NATIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.3.1 STRUCTURAL FRAMEWORK OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HUNGARY**

Quality assurance of university program is commonly guaranteed by a process of evaluation that certifies that the university and the program itself meets the requirements and standards defined by an independent educational entity. As we mentioned above, in Hungary the independent evaluation body is the Hungarian Accreditation Committee (HAC) that defines the standards for HE programs and assures the accomplishment with these quality norms. The HAC was established with the education law of 1993. The recent Act of National Higher Education (2011) describes the general role of HAC as a national body of experts facilitating the control, assurance and evaluation of the scientific quality of education, scientific research and artistic activity at higher education institutions.

Regarding the composition of HAC<sup>1</sup> the number of full members is 18. Members represent the interests of the key stakeholders of national HE education system: half of the members are delegated by the Ministry for National Resources (Emberi Erőforrások Minisztériuma), 3 are delegated by the Hungarian Rectors' Conference, 2 by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 2 by the Churches that have their own higher education institutions, 1 by the Hungarian Academy of Arts, and 1 by the National Union of Doctoral Students. The president is nominated from among the 18 members by the minister in agreement with the president of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The president and members are appointed by the Prime Minister for a six-year term, which is once renewable. The law stipulates a Financial Supervisory Board, and since its inception the HAC has had an International Advisory Board. The Secretariat has a staff of 15; they include the Secretary General, his deputy, and a Financial Director, six program officers, five administrative staff and an IT technician. The program officers are assigned expert committees and they provide support in preparation of evaluation reports and they make proposals in decision making to HAC. In addition they are responsible for attending site-visits and assisting the writing up of evaluation reports.

Regarding the international recognition of HAC, in compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines, the HAC was evaluated by an external team of experts in 2008/09 and consequently has renewed its membership in ENQA, the European Association of Quality Assurance for another five-year term.

According to the Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Educational Authority (Oktatási Hivatal) as a central government agency is entitled to (re)authorize and register HE institutions and HE programs. But during the authorization process, the Educational Authority shall consult the HAC. The Educational Authority's decision was restricted by the assessment report and expert opinions given by the HAC. Moreover in many procedures carried out in relation to the launch of a MA or BA programs or establishing a doctoral school the HAC opinion is binding upon the Educational Authority.

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<sup>1</sup> Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education

### 3.3.2 THE NATIONAL ACCREDITATION PROCESSES

The HAC can be involved as an expert committee in the following types of accreditation and authorization processes:<sup>2 3</sup>

#### **1. Accreditation of higher education institutions**

The HAC issues expert opinions for granting operating licenses of higher education institutions and in procedures to review such operating licenses. In the course of preparing its expert opinion, the HAC assesses education, scientific research and artistic activities against standards set down in legislation and the HAC's assessment criteria. In addition, it assesses for which field of study and/or discipline and educational level the institution the institutions meets the necessary requirements. According to the types of decisions made by the HAC Board the HEI might get positive result that leads accreditation of HEI for five years, the accreditation might be conditional, that means intermediate monitor procedures are required in the following 5 years or in case of negative decision the accreditation can be withdrawn.

#### **2. Accreditation of programs**

**Establishing bachelor and master programs:** The HAC issues expert opinions on applications for establishing new bachelor or master programs. In developing its expert opinion, the HAC examines whether the proposed education and outcome requirements for the new program developed by the applicant institution comply with the legal framework, whether the program provides a suitable basis for designing a study program that will ensure that students are able to attain the knowledge and competences appropriate for the given level and the program meets the needs of the job market.

**Launching new bachelor and master programs:** The HAC issues expert opinions in procedures for licensing or reviewing (or discontinuing) bachelor or master programs at higher education institutions. In developing its expert opinion, the HAC examines whether the institution has worked out an educational plan for the proposed program in accordance with the legal framework and the appropriate education and outcome requirements. The HAC further examines whether the program or proposed program ensures that students are able to attain the knowledge and competences appropriate for the given level that will allow them to advance to a higher qualification level or obtain a scientific degree in the given field, and which meet the needs of the job market. Moreover the HAC examines whether the institution's staff and facilities ensure the quality of education and research.

**Hungarian higher education institutions launching off-site programs abroad:** The HAC issues expert opinions in procedures for licensing or reviewing (or discontinuing) bachelor or master programs offered by higher education institutions off site in a foreign country.

#### **3. Issuing opinions on university professor applications**

During the accreditation the HAC shall ensure access to information on the applied professional evaluation criteria, the content of the adopted expert opinions and positions, and the identity of the experts involved. The evaluation criteria of the HAC shall apply, regardless of the HEI, uniformly and equally across the entire Hungarian higher education sector. The HAC conducts ex ante and ex post evaluation of both programs and institutions. Ex ante evaluation of programs comprises giving opinion on the national-level educational and outcome requirements (which are framework requirements for all degree programs in Hungary and appear in a ministerial decree), and new programs to be launched at institutions. Ex post evaluation is conducted in five-year cycles. There are

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<sup>2</sup> Government decree 19/2012 (II. 22.) on quality assurance and quality development in higher education

<sup>3</sup> HAC (2012) The HAC's Tasks. Expert Activity for Public Administration Procedures. [http://www.mab.hu/web/doc/hac/regulations/SZMSZresz\\_angol.pdf](http://www.mab.hu/web/doc/hac/regulations/SZMSZresz_angol.pdf)

separate procedures for institutional and program evaluation. The latter is conducted for entire disciplines, with all programs taught in Hungary in that discipline undergoing a single procedure with external evaluators from a common pool.

Methodologically speaking, evaluation is based primarily on written documents produced in the course of institutional 'Self-assessment'. The documents are submitted to the Hungarian Accreditation Committee (HAC) by the HEI. The most important and essential criteria during the accreditation process of the assessment of teachers' qualification, the qualification of the infrastructure and the assessment of courses and course related teaching materials. The next part involved in the evaluation process is the visit. The Visiting Committee entrusted with the task of examining and evaluating to what extent the program meets the higher education standards and requirements. The initial opinion of the HAC is also revised based on student feedback. Meetings are organized between committee members and students, consultations with the representatives of Students' Councils take place at HEI.

### **3.4 INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM OF HEIS**

This section focuses on those mechanisms, inter-organizational processes of universities those are taken in place in order to guarantee the internal quality management of the educational programs and assure the standard operation of the education.

- The Study and Examination Regulation both in CUB and NUPS defines the rights and duties of individuals and university bodies in the educational process, sets the standards for conducting studies and offering and taking exams and also defines the processes of complaints.
- The Senate is the supreme, formal decision-making and implementation monitoring body of the HEIs and may grant approval for study and research programs, initiate both launching and termination of study programs. One special characteristics of the NUPS that the main decisions of the Senate need to be approved by the so - called maintenance body (Fenntartó Testület) encompassing delegated members from the four parent supervisory ministries of the NUPS (Ministry of Justice, Prime Minister Office, Interior Ministry, Ministry for Defense). As a consequence, the adoption of study program, the institutional regulation on the framework of quality management system or the principles of performance – based payment system need to be verified by the maintenance body.
- According to the University's Rules of Procedure, the programs' Academic Director has a key role in curriculum design and development. (S)he proposes changes, whenever deemed necessary to curricular components of the program.
- The Faculty Council (consisting of elected as well as ex officio faculty members) is entitled to discuss and voice opinion on proposals affecting study programs, including curricular changes.
- A special quality measurement instrument is the comprehensive student evaluation system by which students evaluate courses and teachers' performances every year. At the CUB it has a long -tradition of transparent student evaluation system where the results help leaders of departments and faculties to assess the activities of staff members. As a difference, the openness and accessibility of the results of the student evaluation at the NUPS is rather limited. Only teachers receive the evaluations on their performances and a summary is reported by them to the head of the department.
- Another regular evaluation system at the CUB is the Teachers' Performance Measurement system which is conducted by the Dean's Office every calendar year. This is a fine-tuned point system where all aspects of activities of the staff are measured and compared.
- Both the NUPS and the CUB have adopted Quality Control Manual. In the NUPS it is the faculties' responsibility to prepare self- assessment report encompassing the evaluation of the programs. At the CUB a Program Development Committee for every Bachelor's and

Master's program is established. The Committee is headed by the Academic Director and consists of representatives of the program's core faculty, external experts and employers, present and past students, and a representative of the Students' Self-government. Its non-student members are elected by the Faculty Council. It convenes at least annually, discusses program development issues and reviews the program curriculum. It is a forum for discussing the quality of the overall program, on the basis of available data and, if necessary, suggesting adjustments in the program.

- The Faculty-level Credit Transfer Committee, after consultation with the programs Academic Director, upon a student's entering the program checks the number of credits that (s)he has earned in program-specific disciplinary fields, permits or rejects credit transfers, prescribes students to take additional studies (courses) for missing credits.
- On Department level there are Regular Department Meetings aim to discuss operational issue dealing with teaching, research and administrative tasks. This is the forum to decide operational decisions on courses and lecturers to be announced for the coming academic years.

#### **A. ANTICIPATED CHANGES**

As we mentioned above till 2013 the HAC used to have an exclusive and monopolized authority to issue expert reviews and assessment on higher educational programs as a key element of the accreditation process. In practice, this amendment created a loophole to avoid the HAC assessment and opening an alternative, additional opportunity for get expert review on the same program. Actually, if a program fails – for any reason - to get the HAC's approval, which used to be a necessary and inevitable element of program accreditation process, the HEI still can apply for another assessment to the EAQA. The motivation and main reason of this amendment might be derives from that the HAC refused twice the accreditation of the PhD Program proposal of Law Enforcement Faculty of the National University of Public Service. After the amendment was enacted the Law Enforcement Faculty successfully applied for the approval from the EAQA in the quality assurance process.

The accreditation provided by a quasi-autonomous agency is usually perceived as a mechanism through which the independence of higher education and its institutions can be guaranteed. By the creation of intentional loopholes in the accreditation system – enabling an alternative accreditation body – in order to do favour of one of the HEIs or push through specific interest is undermining or at least questioning the independency of the system.

## B. SUMMARY

Based on the above text, the following summary can be made:

<p><b>3.1 What is the general governance structure with regard to external quality assurance of higher education institutions? Is it the same or is it different for PA programmes?</b></p>	<p>The same national accreditation rules and process are applied to every PA program than to other HE programs. The quality assessment process of HE programs and HEI is conducted either by the Hungarian Accreditation Committee or the HEI can decide to request a quality assessment from the external evaluator (the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education).</p>
<p><b>3.2 Which are the main providers of programme accreditation? Is there a national body (regulator etc.), e.g. as an agency under control of the Ministry of Education, responsible for the regulation of accreditation? What is the status of relevant institutions?</b></p>	<p>The Educational Authority is the central government agency entitled to (re)authorize and register HE institutions and HE programs based on the HAC's quality assessment report.</p>
<p><b>3.3 What are the rules and requirements for accreditation (e.g. are all programmes subject of accreditation or only new programmes? Are only state or public universities to be evaluated? etc)?</b></p>	<p>All HEIs and HE programmes are subject of internal accreditation or reaccreditation in every 5 years regardless its ownership (state – owned /public HEI or private HEI).</p>
<p><b>3.4 Who is allowed to do programme accreditation? Only an official government agency, (like e.g. in Austria) or other (ENQA- or EQAR-) recognized institutions?</b></p>	<p>The quality assessment process of HE programs and HEI is conducted either by the Hungarian Accreditation Committee or the HEI can decide to request a quality assessment from the external evaluator (the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education).</p>
<p><b>3.5 Who are the evaluators (bureaucrats and/or academic peers, are foreign academic peers involved)?</b></p>	<p>The evaluators involved into internal quality assessment process are mainly academic peers and program officers (experts, bureaucrats) delegated by HAC.</p>
<p><b>3.6 Which methods of accreditation are primarily applied in the respective country?</b></p>	<p>The internal evaluation is primarily based on written documents, 'Self-assessment' report submitted by HEI. It embraces data on teachers' qualification, the qualification of the infrastructure and the assessment of courses. The next phase is the site- visit. The initial opinion of the HAC also utilize by student feedback.</p>
<p><b>3.7 Who takes the decision to accredit a programme? (is it the institution doing the evaluation or a superior government body?)</b></p>	<p>National Higher Educational Authority based on the HAC assessment report. (HAC opinion is legally binding upon government agency.)</p>

## 4. EXISTING PA STUDY PROGRAMMES

The focus of the project is on the evaluation of academic programmes in the field of Public Administration. Since the report aims to achieve comparable results with other European countries - especially with CEE countries - the same definitions of Public Administration Program need to be applied in many different national contexts. Therefore we apply the following definition of PA program which is also used as selection criteria for analysed programs in our empirical research.

The primary objective of "... academic public administration degree programmes (...) is to provide professional academic level education leading to a formal degree. The purpose of the programme is to prepare persons for academic level roles in the public sector or academic public administration teaching or research positions.

A broad variety of programme titles are considered to be subsumed under the broad term 'Public Administration' such as 'Public Administration', 'Public Administration and Public Policy', 'Public Affairs', 'Public Management', 'Government Studies' etc. The discriminating features are orientation to the public sector and training for practice in the public sector (or public administration education or research). Specialised programmes (e.g. Health Care Management) fall outside this group.

The above mentioned eligibility criteria of considering a HE program as PA program based on EAPAA criteria.

Based on these criteria this section provides an overview on six PA programs. The relatively small number of PA education programs can be seen as a result of the recent changes in regulatory framework and the government intervention. From 2013 the number of HEIs offering PA programs in Hungary tremendously decreased from the number of 11 to 3. The sharp decline of the number of PA programs and the number of HEIs offering them can be explained by the direct and highly restrictive intervention of central government to the education system. Hajnal (2015) notes that the radical change of Hungarian PA higher education arena shows similar motives and directions with other recent reforms from other public policy fields initiated in Hungary. As we mentioned earlier, the newly invented regulatory framework has created an almost monopoly institution in the entire PA higher education and training arena, controlled directly by the uppermost echelon of state power. These regulatory measures included such elements like

- the establishment of the National University of Public Service under the supervision of the Ministry for Public Administration and Justice, the Interior Ministry and the Ministry of Defence,
- unequal distribution of resources among HEIs by prioritizing the NUPS and channeling extra funds to the new institutions,
- Creating a regulatory environment in the favour of NUPS programs: From 2011 only the NUPS is allowed to launch BA in Public Administration (*igazgatásszervező alapszak*).

The NUPS with 5 programs, the CUB with one MSc and the private, German- language Andrassy University with one MA program remained on the Hungarian PA higher educational palette. In the following an overview is provided on these PA programs.

### 4.1 DATA, METHODS AND LIMITATIONS

In order to collect data on the existing PA HE program in Hungary desk research was conducted. The relevant data, such as the program name, description of the program and the content of the curricula were collected from the HEIs' website.

## 4.2 EXISTING PA STUDY PROGRAMMES

**Table 1 – Existing PA study programmes**

Higher Education Institutions	Bachelor SP	Master SP	Unified 5 –years long	PhD	MPA	TOTAL
<b>Public HEIs</b>						
National University of Public Service	1	2	1	1	0	5
Corvinus University of Budapest	0	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Private / Foreign HEIs</b>						
Andrássy University	0	1	0	0	0	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	1	4	1	2	0	7

Source: Authors.

Regarding the executive (MPA/MBA) programs in Hungary, those targeting at professionals working in Public Administration they are not legally special modalities, not separated entities from the general Bachelor and Master programs. The BA or MA program accredited once by the Hungarian agency can be offered even for full – time students or executives in part – time education. However, there are shorter training programs available for executives including specific modules on various specific public administration and public policy related topics. Some of these program are mandatory, but most of them electively offered by the NUPS. Some of these training still organized in class room learning, but there is an increasing trend to extend the portfolio of blended learning courses in the executive programs, which allows executives more flexibility and distance learning. These programs provides shorter (6 – 12 months) learning experiences, mainly focused on one specific topic. So these programs are excluded from the categories of BA or MA programs.

**Table 2 – General overview on the Hungarian PA study programmes**

Institution	Name of the program	Length in years
National University of Public Services (NUPS)	BA in Public Administration	3
Corvinus University of Budapest (CUB)	MsC in Public Policy and Management	2
National University of Public Services (NUPS)	MA in Public Administration	2
National University of Public Services (NUPS)	MA in Public Policy and Management	2
National University of Public Services (NUPS)	MA in State Science and Public Governance	5
Andrássy University Budapest	MA in European and International Administration	2

Source: Authors.

## **4.3 AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION ON PA STUDY PROGRAMMES**

### **4.3.1. BA IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

There is only one BA program on PA which is run by the National University of Public Service. It is called "BA in Public Administration Management". It is a 3-year-long program where students are required to achieve 180 ECTS. The program is only available in Hungarian. Although the study program underwent significant changes in the last years, it can be still considered as the most traditional PA program in the country. Its root originates from the pre-Bologna Higher Education System, when students entered to the civil service usually trained in college's in three years education program. The main thematic focuses of the BA program show some similarities with this college education program like the teaching of different policy fields are mainly based on legal approach or the historical perspective is still relevant in the subjects. Nevertheless there are major transformations also applied to the program. One of those is that the program provides the students with the opportunity of specializations after 2 years in:

- General Administration,
- International Public Administration,
- Tax Administration.

### **4.3.2. MSC IN PUBLIC POLICY AND MANAGEMENT (CORVINUS)**

The master program in Hungarian language (Közgazdálkodás és Közpolitika/KGKP) offered by the BCE aiming to reach Hungarian students, while the PUMA English language program mainly – but not exclusively - advertised for non- Hungarian students. The two programmes (KGKP and PUMA) share many similarities in terms of aims and objectives, design, didactics and administrative and support functions. From a strictly legal perspective KGKP and PUMA are not two separate programmes. Rather, PUMA is the English language variant of KGKP. This lack of legal distinction has significance in the process of Hungarian national accreditation as PUMA is not accredited separately but together with KGKP (actually as a part of it). The large similarity of the two programmes makes it possible that KGKP students can complete most of their KGKP coursework through completing the English language PUMA equivalents of the KGKP courses. Likewise, both programmes take part in international study collaborations (such as double degree or certificate programmes) under identical conditions. The programs provide the students with the following opportunity of specializations:

- Analytical Tools for Public Decisions;
- Public Management;
- Policies for Human Development;
- Market Policy and Economic Regulation.

### **4.3.3. MA IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

The first master program launched by the NUPS called MA in Public Administration 2-year-long program (120 ECTS). The following specialisations might be chosen after the 1 year by the student:

- Executive for Administration,
- International and European Public Administration,
- Science of Public Administration.

According to the program description the MA program aims to enable the graduates of MA in Public Administration to get familiar with the goals, processes and practices of public administration and get knowledge and competence in state sciences, basics of legal disciplinary, law making and law enforcement and prepare the students to understand the operation of the fundamental institutions of the state and public administration. The goal of the programmes is to train graduates capable of

applying their gained knowledge mainly in the areas of public administration in higher /mid – or top management positions where due to their expertise they are capable of leading, overseeing and controlling various tasks and processes, thus supporting decision- making and management activities.

#### **4.3.4. MA IN PUBLIC POLICY AND MANAGEMENT (NUPS)**

The other master program of NUPS named MA in Public Policy and Management 2-year-long program. In 2017 the National University of Public Service (NUPS) made a decision to broaden the educational portfolio of the Faculty of Science of Public Governance and Administration by developing and launching a new MA program called “Public Policy and Management” (120 ECTS) from the academic year 2018/19. The introduction of this new MA program seems to be notable at least for two reasons. First of all, without any deeper analyses on the content of the program, it is worth to note that the NUPS is the only higher education institution that launched the “Public Policy and Management” MA program beyond the Corvinus University of Budapest. (Even though the content of two curricula and the course selections significantly different). The second interesting feature of this program that based on the course portfolio the disciplinary orientation seems to remarkably stand out from the other educational programs run by the NUPS. While the other MA program of the NUPS includes extremely high number, nearly 50 different mandatory courses with high diversity, this program contains only half of it (nearly 25 mandatory courses) with a more homogeneous interest dominated by economics and public finance.

#### **4.3.5. MA IN STATE SCIENCE AND PUBLIC GOVERNANCE (NUPS)**

The unified 5 –years long PA program (300 ECTS) was launched in 2016 with the intention to increase prestige of degrees on the field of public administration and government studies. The program is only available in Hungarian. Only the National University of Public Service is authorized to launch this unified 5 - years educational program, even though the Dean's Committee was opposing this monopoly right and they requested its withdrawal in 2015.

#### **4.3.6. EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL ADMINISTRATION (ANDRÁSSY UNIVERSITY BUDAPEST)**

The “European and International Administration” German-language master's degree programme is aimed at students with a Bachelor's degree who see their professional futures in administration or with international organisations. The focus lies on knowledge about the European Union and administrative sciences, whereby political scientific and public-service study content are woven tightly together. The programme mainly offer courses focusing on EU Law and diplomacy, such as the EU Administrative Law, Public Finance in European Union, Public management in the EU, Diplomacy and international relations, Democracy and the Rule of Law , Comparative Constitutional Law.

#### 4.3.7. SUMMARY

Based on the above text, the following summary can be made:

<b>4.1 How many relevant PA study programmes have you identified and what is their structure?</b>	The NUPS with 5 programs (1 BA, 2 MA, 1 5- years program and 1 PhD program) and , the CUB with one MA and one PhD program and the private, German- language Andrásy University with one MA program constitute the Hungarian PA higher educational system.
<b>4.2 What information are available on the study programmes on their web pages?</b>	The available information from the HEIs' website are the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The program statement and description ,</li><li>- the program curricula including the type of the course (mandatory or facultative courses), the name of the teacher who is the course leader, the number of credits of the courses and the type and number of the class (lectures or seminars) related to the courses,</li><li>- at the CUB website the course descriptions were also available.</li></ul>

## **5. CONCLUDING REMARKS, POINTS FOR PRACTITIONERS, CHALLENGES FOR FUTURE**

### **5.1 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Traditionally the university programs preparing and enabling students for careers in public administration heavily dominated by subjects on law, especially on administrative law. This phenomenon can be explained by the historical tradition and evolution of public administration in general, and with the historical path of PA education in particular.

Over the post-2010 period the most visible characteristics in the field of PA is a grand attempt, initiated and constantly promoted by the highest levels of government, to re-define what PA and increase the prestige of civil servant as a profession and achieve a widespread respect for PA HE in general. To change and reshape the field of PA education several, mainly centrally invented measures initiated those vastly transformed the institutional landscape:

- A new university operated by three core ministries (rather than fitting into the standard higher education governance framework) called the National University of Public Service (NUPS) was created.
- NUPS was explicitly based on the principle of inseparability of civilian, military and police training for the public service, and on the disciplinary foundation of the state sciences. This fundamental transformation impacted, and continues to impact, PA program content and research in many different ways
- The civil service legislation prescribed the NUPS degree (along with the traditional Law degrees) as a prerequisite for a broad array of managerial positions in the civil service
- A completely new discipline – “State sciences” – was “founded” and institutionalised. The identity of this new discipline was reinforced by several measures.
- The traditional and long-lasting PA training provided by Law faculties were administratively banned.
- Besides the NUPS there are two other HEIs remained on the Hungarian PA Education System, namely the CUB with the Msc in Public Policy and Management and the Andrassy University with the MA program called European and International Administration.

### **5.2 POINTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS**

On the basis of the limited evidence available an important lesson to be drawn is that – much more as in the case of public administration organisations – it is very difficult to change Public Administration academic practices. A second lesson to be drawn that scientific evolution, and in particular the evolution and creation of new disciplinary fields, is a bottom-up and organic process. It can happen through the long-term interaction between highly engaged academics, and top-down directives are of limited effect only.

### **5.3 CHALLENGES FOR FUTURE**

One of the main challenges for Hungarian PA Education system to preserve some diversity regarding the type of PA educational programs because it seems that the different HEIs’ programs meet different market needs either from the employer/ labour market perspective or from the customer ‘student’ perspective. The different PA programs offered by the three institutions prepare their graduates to different position and to different organizations / various sector of the public sphere by

offering different course portfolio and developing highly different skills and competencies of their graduates.

Another key challenge acknowledged by also the managements of PA programs is the decreasing number of student application to the PA programs in general. Although from 2011 there has been a clear government intention and action to increase the prestige of the profession of the civil servants and giving outstanding attention and resources to the education and training of civil servants , at the same time - especially from 2016- contradictory NPM -types measures were implemented aiming to implement “debureaucratization” in the public sector. Those measures including decreasing the number of public organizations, ordering mandatory downsizing ratio for every government agency, shifting from the more carrier based civil servants model towards more position based model, which undermines the stability and life- long image of civil servant profession, and increasing the tension between the private and the public sector by introducing civil service pay freeze plan , whereby the mean salary in the public sector increasingly lags behind that of the private sector. We assume that that there is significant connection between the disruption of stability of civil servant career path and the attractiveness of PA program in higher education.

The third challenge for the academic sector and HEIs in general are the recent policy measures those create uncertainty in academic and research area. According to the recent study of European University Association (EUA, 2017) Hungarian higher education institutions are in the lowest range out of the EU countries regarding the financial autonomy. In addition, the April 2017 amendment of the Higher Education Act raised further concerns regarding academic autonomy. This amendment requires foreign colleges and universities in Hungary to operate under an intergovernmental agreement and to have a campus in the country in which they are based. The bill that was passed in a speeded-up procedure called as Lex CEU, because the minister responsible for higher education made it clear in his proposal that the amendment aims to eliminate the „privileges” of Central European University (CEU), that gradually built up a strong, internationally highly visible profile in public policy research and education in Hungary. Partly building on its track record in policy research and education at its Department of Political Science, in 2000 it founded its Center for Policy Studies (and in 2006 its Department of Public Policy), and in 2004 it launched its first Master level program in public policy.

Another conflict started in 2018, when the government started to target the network of research institutes of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences by criticizing of being “too political” and announcing a plan to reform R&D financing in order to boost innovation performance. The Hungarian Academy of Sciences has rejected the proposed changes to its financing and closing its selected institutions for fear of breaching academic independence. It now faces financial difficulties as the funding of non-wage expenditure by the central budget has been cut from January 2019.

According to the European Commission (2019) country report these policy-related uncertainties may result in losing top research talent to abroad and risk a persistent decline in research quality.

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