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PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION EDUCATION IN SLOVENIA

**(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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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 Slovenia 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 summarises findings on

- the national educational system related to present state of PA education,
- system of evaluation,
- findings on accredited PA programmes existing in the country,
- relevancy to practice based on research among alumni and civil servants / employers.

It is based on data available as of first quartile of 2019.

2. NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND PA EDUCATION AND TRAINING

2.1 PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AS A DISCIPLINE IN SLOVENIA

PA is relatively well established discipline in Slovenia. It has started to develop as an autonomous science already **in 1950s mainly at the faculties of law in former Yugoslavia** that Slovenia was part of until 1991. Several schools of thought have been developed, so called Ljubljana (the most progressive one in terms of PA disciplinary progress), Zagreb and Belgrade schools (see Godec, 1993; Kovač, 2013/14).

Several forms of integration can be observed in the development of PA in Yugoslavia (Pusić 2002): from the expansion of individual disciplines, mainly administrative law and administrative techniques, and programs in schools and institutes to balance several disciplines, to comparative analyses of the same administrative institutions in different administrative systems, and the design and confirmation of assumptions regarding the legality of administrative organisations and activities with governance theories. In institutional terms, the beginnings were reflected in the establishment of PA institutes, while the majority of research achievements and the modernisation of study programs dates from the 1970s and 1980s. In 1955, the Yugoslav Administrative Sciences Association was founded. Despite its socialist and self-government regime, Yugoslavia was very close to the level of development in Western Europe as regards independent university departments since the 1950s and the most notable administrative institutions (e.g. ENA or Speyer).

The same period saw the establishment of an independent **School of Public Administration in 1956, which in 2003 transformed into today's Faculty of Public Administration¹, a member of University of Ljubljana**. In addition to professional education and training, ever since the 1960s the School of Public Administration has conducted a series of research studies with an interdisciplinary approach to individual notions in PA (e.g. discretionary or internal administrative acts in PA, municipal self-government, the management of documentary material, the new IT; see Kovač, 2013/14). In the late 1980s, the School began to organise national "Slovene Administration Days", where experiences and advice are shared by academia and practitioners from Slovene and foreign scientific communities, both empirically and normatively.

Nonetheless, certain aspects of PA are taught also at other institutions, mainly public (state) universities, especially University of Ljubljana (UL), Maribor (UM) and Primorska (UP). But none of these programmes nor institution hold EAPAA accreditation. This is the case also since only particular programmes deal with PA holistically. For example, state and administrative law is taught within the faculties of law programmes at the UL and UM and also privately founded New University (NU). Public policy analysis is set within the Faculty of Social Sciences at the UL, while public finance and economics is characteristic for faculties of economics (UL and UM) programmes, as well as at the Faculty of Management at the UP and Faculty of Government and European Studies at the NU. These overlapping occurs also partially due to the discrepancy in the size of the universities in Slovenia in relative comparison to the size of the country.

Regarding its prevailing character, **Slovenian PA has been initially rather legally** oriented. As a response to a need for a more multidisciplinary orientation in PA theory and practice, the changes in study programmes in the last two decades have been conducted much **more in economic and managerial direction, yet political science as another PA mother discipline is rather underdeveloped** in Slovenia (Staronova & Gajduschek, 2016; Kovač & Jukić, 2017; cf. Hajnal, 2003, 2015). Moreover, in the search of more interdisciplinary programmes, legal issues in PA seem recently overlooked (Kovač, 2016).

¹ Till February 2019 the faculty was named as Faculty of Administration.

However, there are ongoing struggles particularly regarding classification of PA study programmes and also regarding connections to PA research. Despite the indicated efforts and results, PA/administrative science **has not (yet) been recognised as an independent science in Slovenia but is categorised subordinately and inconsistently**. PA studies in Slovenia therefore are classified in numerous ways, i.e. according to (see Kovač, 2013/14; ARRS and NAKVIS/SQAA web pages, 2019):

- the field of research classification of ARRS, under 5.04 Administrative and Organisational Sciences, parallel to 5.05 Law or 5.06 Political Sciences;
- the Common European Research Classification Scheme (CERIF – CERCS), under S111 Administrative Law or S170 Political and Administrative Sciences;
- the OECD and Eurostat classification (FOS 2007), under 5.5 Law or 5.6 Political Sciences or 5.9 Other Social Sciences;
- the ISCED, as applied in the national accreditation procedure of study programs, under (34) Business and Administration;
- the Frascati Manual, applied in the national accreditations of study programs, under 5 Social Sciences.

In the field of research, PA is therefore most often associated with organisational-administrative or political sciences, while from the pedagogical point of view, it is classified most often as part of legal science. Hence PA as a discipline has been and still is developed mainly through **interdisciplinary research projects** and through the existence of several **scientific journals** in this field (e.g. *Central European Public Administration Review* – formerly *International Public Administration Review*, *Public Administration*, *Lex Localis*; cf. Kovač & Jukić, 2017). However, authors from and about Slovenian PA publish also in other journals and publishing houses, e.g. NISPAcee (see for instance Kovač & Pevcin, 2017, establishing still ongoing post socialist transitional processes). Nevertheless, scientific publishing is important since only such approach based on universally recognised theories and methods can generate the new knowledge necessary for a true contribution to social progress (Nemec et al., 2012).

Considering the state of the art in contemporary Slovene PA as a discipline, it may be concluded that the initial ambitions regarding integrative PA studies in the 1950s-1980s (the Ljubljana School in former Yugoslavia) resulted in the development of an autonomous administrative science. Owing to a series of reasons – from the politicisation and thus the devaluation of administration, a legalistic approach to the undetermined categorisation of PA in research and the accreditation of study programs in Slovenia and abroad – in the past two decades PA studies in Slovenia have taken a different turn. We can **now speak of a certain degree of integration, yet more in terms of multidisciplinary and the differentiation of specific disciplines** (cf. Pusić, 2002, e.g. public-sector economics, public management, administrative informatics, administrative-legal science) than in terms of an interdisciplinary administrative science. Despite the **notable internationalisation** – both in research and studies – that calls for an interdisciplinary approach, Slovenia has assumed rather a partial approach (Kovač, 2013/14).

2.2 PA EDUCATION AND ITS SPECIFICS

Regarding PA education system there are **no specifics** in terms of accreditation criteria and procedures on a national scale compared to other scientific fields.

Nevertheless, there has been a **long-lasting tradition of PA HE education** and research in Slovenia, dating back also from socialist period of second Yugoslavia (more above, see Godec, 1993; Pusić, 2002; Kovač, 2016). PA has been developed **initially within (faculties of) law**, however, rather early an autonomous and interdisciplinary designed Faculty of Administration was established along with institutes of PA.

Faculty of Public Administration is the oldest institution in this context, **established in 1956**, before 2003 acting as School of Public Administration, and is a full-member of the University of Ljubljana

since 1975. This institution has been established and has started to deliver its programmes deriving from the necessity to have programmes that would address mainly practical needs of PA employees, working on traditional administrative positions, but has latter on developed also MA and PhD programmes to address also more scientific and multidisciplinary issues plaguing PA. Faculty of Public Administration holds also **EAPAA accreditations since 2008** for majority of its BA and MA study programmes, i.e. BA Public Sector Governance (since 2011), BA Administration (since 2011), and MA Administration – Public Sector (since 2008) programmes.² In fact, all its own programmes are in fact EAPAA accredited – this accreditation is not applied to the faculty's joint study programmes.

There are approximately 100 HE institutions (app. one third privately founded) and 800 study programmes nationally accredited in Slovenia, with **only Faculty of Public Administration (UL) and Faculty of Government and European Studies (NU), which are addressing PA specifically yet systematically**. Faculty of Government and European Studies has hereby shorter tradition and offers only PhD PA focused programmes.

PA education in Slovenia is therefore developed mainly through international cooperation, such as EGPA (cf. Kovač & Stare, 2015) and NISPAcee networking, and naturally under EAPAA auspices.

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

The **Public Employees Act (PEA, *Zakon o javnih uslužbencih, ZJU*)** was adopted in 2002 as one of the reform package legislation, required to be modernised in Slovenia to become a full member of EU. The law is in force since 2003 but often amended. Under its scope falls app. **160.000 public servants**, employed in state administration, municipalities, regulatory and other agencies, public institutes (like schools or hospitals or social centres, etc.; more in Kovač & Pevcin, 2017). This law hence acts as an **anti-fragmentation tool joining up civil service as a professional force** providing public services, or issuing authoritative decisions regardless of a status of an organisational unit where civil servants are formally employed. It is law is complaint to **EU** directives and European Administrative Space harmonisation as a base for PAR, especially regarding a systemic development of professionalism, enhanced capacity and coordination within the civil service system.

Pursuant to PEA, the civil servants or civil-service jobs within the state, municipal, and judicial authorities fall into two major groups (Art. 23) – officials and staff positions. These are differentiated according to their respective principal tasks and entry requirements, rights and duties, and HRM mechanisms. The first group consists of officials or positions of officials in five career classes and 16 ranks. For them implementation of the core (mainly authoritative) tasks of administration is reserved, while the second group comprises support staff or support-related jobs where, in addition to simple administrative tasks, it is mainly supportive clerical and technical work that is performed. Secondly, there are special rules for managerial officials as opposed to expert ones. Generally, the law offers grounds for: reorganisation of human-resource planning and employment by integration in the budgetary procedure, decentralisation of management to the level of individual bodies, greater internal mobility of staff (given that the employer is the same, i.e. the state), setting up top public management as an expert not political force, more objective system of selection, mechanisms to increase flexibility and rationalise operations (project work, reorganisation, reassignment), social partnership, etc. However, **in practice**, especially after 2009, the importance of continuing education and in-service training of civil servants has been underrated as proved by several domestic and SIGMA analyses. Consequently, there have been rare systemic initiatives, like development of holistic model of competences in PA in 2008–2011, but later not put in force due to lack of resources to verify these skills and elements. In sum, it is not surprising to find in the **2015–2020 Strategy for Development of PA** almost the same goals and activities as known but not realised through earlier strategies since the mid-2000s, for instance professionalism, anti-corruption, decentralisation, rationalisation, higher capacity, loyalty, etc.

² On the role and importance of the EAPAA accreditation for the FPA see Pevcin (2015).

Further, one of the key items of reforms was introduction of horizontal training and qualifications at **the Administrative Academy**, established in **1997** as a part of Ministry of Interior. Since 2004, when the Ministry of Public Administration was founded, the Academy is running under the MPA with app. 10 to 20 employees. The Academy developed especially based on the MASTER bilateral project between Switzerland and Slovenia (1995-1996), when it began to pursue two basic lines of activity: (1) carrying out programmes of short trainings (seminars and workshops) to cover the needs of civil servants, as well as some several-week language courses, and (2) implementing various exams determined by the applicable regulations as requirements for getting a certain job or performing certain public administrative tasks. As concerns the content, a special emphasis was at first given to training programmes covering European affairs. Today, the **Academy acts mainly as a mediator between PA and private trainers - instead of a policy unit as regards training. On the other hand, it has a monopoly regarding proficiency exams.** E.g. in 2017, the Academy organised almost 600 trainings and exams with over 13,000 participants.

Some **trainings that are offered by the AA**, are: stress management, administrative operations, administrative procedures' conduct, legal drafting and regulatory techniques, public procurement proceedings, negotiations, good communication, motivation, mindfulness, public protocol, integrity in PA, data protection, foreign languages courses, etc. (MPA, 2019), and seminars and workshops, which dedicated to preparation to the obligatory exams. The Academy offered 71 various trainings in 2018, conducted by 184 contractors, selected through public calls, that is app. 400 trainings with app. 11,000 attendees annually (MPA, 2019). Further, there is a **special training for top managerial position** in public administration pursuant to PAR and governmental decree, consisting of obligatory six and elective nine modules, implemented twice a year.

However, some in-house training are also run by MPA but **outside the Academy** (like red tape reduction), and other national authorities (like government office for legislation on regulatory policy, there is also a special Police Academy within Ministry of Interior, etc.) or NGOs (e.g. Transparency International, Chamber of Commerce). The same goes for sector-specific exams that fall under auspices of ministries, for instance tax exams.

PEA provides conditions for appointing public officials also today (Art. 86) but **professional exams were replaced in 2008** with only but obligatory attendance to a training. This change has been strongly criticised since no major reasoning was given and has been proven afterwards that seriousness of attendees has fallen significantly. Historically, a system of in-service professional competence exams was set up in 2003, having at its core two general examinations taken during traineeship in the civil service, i.e. the "national public administration exam" and the "administrative professional competence exam", and it was specified by PEA what other exams were required to be passed to be eligible for particular jobs, i.e. those exams were systemically incorporated into the system of jobs, ranks and positions – until 2008.

The **special three day preparatory training, which is in run instead of a general entry exam since 2008.** It is mandatory for all new civil servants in one year after employment. Pursuant to Rules from 2009 adopted based on PAE, this training includes the following topics in three days: constitutional system, the EU system, local government, public finance, administrative procedures, legislative procedures, personal data protection, etc. (MPA, 2019). There are app. 15 such trainings organised annually with around 700 participants.

The Academy organises also the most of professional exams as required by sector or certain type of activities related specific legislation for public officials. The respective exams are especially, with app. 2,500 candidates applied in 2017 within 157 exams (MPA, 2019):

- administrative procedure professional exam, which is obligatory for all officials employed by state and local authorities, holders of public authorisation and public services, who conduct these procedures (as required by General Administrative Procedure Act, OGRS no 80/99 et seq.); almost 2,000 candidates in 2017;

- professional exam for inspectors (Inspection Act, OGRS 52/02 et seq.), e.g. with almost 100 candidates in 2017;
- health and safety at work professional exam (Health and Safety at Work act, OGRS no 43/11), with around 100 candidates annually;
- exam for a conduct of minor offence procedures (Minor Offences Act, OGRS 7/03 et seq.), with around 300 candidates every year.

Some of these exams were conducted by **concessionaries** (like Faculty of Administration) before the 2008 amendment of PEA, which seems to be an option also for the future.

2.4 SUMMARY

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

<p>3.1 Is PA education in your country specific for some reasons? If yes, why?</p>	<p>PA education in Slovenia is a part of holistic HE system. However, PA education, trainings and exams have a long tradition, based on legal and interdisciplinary PA development. PA HE is explicitly in the domain of state and private universities, while trainings and exams are mostly conducted by Administrative Academy within MPA.</p>
<p>3.2 Is PA a well-established own (inter-) discipline?</p>	<p>PA in Slovenian territory has been developing systematically since WWII as an autonomous discipline under regional faculties of law auspices. The 1956 establishment of School/Faculty of Administration highly contributed to PA progress. However, today Slovenia faces some problems, e.g. inconsistent field categorisation and rather too economically driven programmes.</p>
<p>3.3 Is any formal exam required for entrance to civil service? If yes, what are the requirements?</p>	<p>There are some exams required by general legislation, especially to conduct administrative procedures, but there is no general entry exam. The latter was the case until 2008 but now only obligatory three day training is required pursuant to Public Employee Act for all public servants before or in one year after their employment.</p>

3. EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION SYSTEM AND PA STUDY PROGRAMMES

3.1 EXISTING EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION SYSTEM AND PA STUDY PROGRAMMES

As regards the major changes that occurred in Slovenia since its independence in 1991, the key institutions and certain acts of the national education and research policies should be mentioned. Government policies were supposed to be politically coordinated and directed by the relevant **Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport** of the Republic of Slovenia, both by way of higher-education legislation and strategies for the development of education and research. The two decade-long strategies and resolutions on higher education, research and innovation drafted and adopted by the centre-left government for the period 2011–2020 are today, considering the priorities and measures of the recent streamlining-oriented governments, virtually dead documents (Kovač, 2013/14).

These are intended to be carried out by two independent, yet interrelated agencies for (i) R&D, i.e. **ARRS**, The Slovenian Research Agency, founded in 2003, and (ii) for the quality of higher education, i.e. **NAKVIS/SQAA, The Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education**, founded (only) in 2010, following the Higher Education Act amendments and governmental act on SQAA establishment, adopted in 2009. In principle, these agencies pursue their activities apolitically and professionally by means of implementing regulations, the allocation of funds via public tenders, and evaluation procedures. Both agencies abstractly determine the procedures for co-financing research and scientific publications or meetings, evaluations, program accreditations and habilitations, and implement them in an explicitly formalistic way that is aimed at procedure and rules rather than at the substantive objectives of public policies.

The basic acts on higher education date from 1993, and have frequently yet only partially been amended. The main relevant **statutory laws** regarding HE education and accreditations are (hyperlinks are provided if English translation is available):

- [Higher Education Act](#) (HEA, *Zakon o visokem šolstvu, ZVis*).
- Professional and Academic Titles Act (*Zakon o strokovnih in znanstvenih naslovih, ZSN-1*).
- [Assessment and Recognition of Education Act](#) (*Zakon o vrednotenju in priznavanju izobraževanja, ZVPI*),
- General Administrative Procedure Act (GAPA, *Zakon o splošnem upravnem postopku, ZUP*).

The latter law is a general one, but applied in all HE procedures if sector-specific legislations does not cover procedural issues, since Art. 22 of Slovenian Constitution requires equal protection of rights regardless of the field.

Further, the SQAA accreditation key documents holding a character of general act for public authorities' implementation (regarded as a regulation) were adopted based on HEA (see webpage, SQAA, 2019). The most important among these are [Criteria for the accreditation and external evaluation of higher education institutions and study programmes](#) (**Criteria, Merila za akreditacijo in zunanjo evalvacijo visokošolskih zavodov in študijskih programov**), the last version adopted in **2017**.

There is a **unified system of national accreditation** in place in Slovenia, in force regardless of the field (SQAA, 2019). Since 2004, in accordance with the Bologna reform and Slovenian Higher Education Act novelty in that time, HE institutions and study programs have been accredited, firstly by special Council and since 2009 by SQAA. The national accreditation by NAKVIS/SQAA is a legal condition for an **establishment of accredited HE institution** (institutional accreditation, Art. 14 of HEA), that needs to be prolonged every five years. Further, programme accreditations ensure that graduates receive **publicly recognised education** and title, which is most often required also in labour market by employers, especially all parts of public administration/sector. Second, the

respective accreditation is a formal prerequisite to run for **public funds and gain concessions**, enabling among others enrolment of students without or only partially paying the fees. The Criteria, pursuant to HEA, apply to all public or state and private universities and other HE institutions as well as any study programme that is publicly recognised. **So the factor is not public or private status of HE institution but whether programmes graduates will hold a publicly recognised degree.** Hence, re-accreditations are performed on the institutional level only, while regarding the programmes solely external extra-ordinary (re)evaluations and accreditations in a case of major changes of the programmes are envisaged.

In addition, there are some privately run HE institutions in Slovenia that do not submit their programmes to an accreditation by SQAA (Art. 17 and 32 of HEA) but they are not PA focused nor officially registered so we omit them from this analysis.

The national accreditations are despite some initiatives in several disciplines **fully separated from international** ones, usually disciplinary specialised (cf. Kovač, 2016). However, both accreditations prove to bring some advantages and are simultaneously a subject to some deficiencies, such as lack of PA understanding under country specific tradition and characteristics (cf. Hajnal, 2003; Kovač & Jukić, 2017; Kovač & Pevcin, 2017).

Slovenia follows Bologna system regarding **three cycle study programmes (BA, MA, PhD)**. However, there are two special characteristics of Slovenian HE system that affect also PA programmes. One refers to BA study programmes since there is a differentiation between so called **professional and university (academic) programmes**, with the former supposed to be more practically oriented and the latter more academic, but graduates from both type of programmes can enrol to MA programmes (i.e., binary approach). In Slovenia, there are several possibilities to accredit BA and MA programmes vertically (on the field), i.e. under 3+2, 4+1 or 5+0 formula. Most programmes follow **3+2** system, PA ones included. Second, besides three cycle programmes, also specialisation study programmes can be accredited (e.g. legal knowledge nor non-lawyers, but only managerial ones in connection to PA field).

3.2 EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PA STUDY PROGRAMMES

Based on Art. 51.e of HEA, a Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, **SQAA/NAKVIS was founded in 2010 by the Government of RS**, which is an **independent professional public agency** responsible for accreditation granting and evaluation. SQAA was established as a non-governmental direct budget user and public authorisation holder by a Resolution on the Founding of the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. Since 2013 SQAA has been included in the European Register of Agencies EQAR and is a full member of the ECA Accreditation Consortium, CEENQA Central and Eastern European Quality Assurance Agencies, and the International Association of Quality Assurance Agencies, INQAAHE. Since 2015 SQAA has been a full member of the European Quality Assurance Association for Higher Education, **ENQA**.

In Slovenia, exclusively the SQAA as autonomous agency (not under direct influence of the government) carries out officially recognised accreditations. Other granting organisations and their accreditations can help in reality but are neither legally acknowledged or equivalent nor any part of the official SQAA procedures.

The tasks of SQAA are listed by Art. 51.f of HEA.³

³ The Agency shall:

- oversee the functioning of the system of quality assurance in higher education and short-cycle higher vocational education,
- determine procedures and criteria for external evaluations and accreditations and other criteria and regulations,

SQAA has **three bodies**: Agency Council, the director and the appeals committee (Art. 51.g of HEA). The Council adopts general legislation and confirms individual accreditations while staff supports individual procedures that are also dealt with by appeals commission of accreditation is challenged by an administrative appeal according to GAPA. The council also nominates external evaluators in individual proceedings.

SQAA builds efficient system of external and also reviews inner quality assurance, implements the procedures of quality assurance on institutional and programme levels based on the **Criteria**, in the first version adopted in 2012 (over 50 Articles, regularly amended), now in force the 2017 version with 57 articles and appendixes (like forms of applications and self-reports, etc).

Procedure varies depending on the type of accreditation requested (Art. 51.o of HEA). Basically, there are accreditations procedures in place, divided for

- (i) **institutional, i.e. initial accreditation and re-accreditation, and**
- (ii) **the study programmes accreditation and the accreditation of the transformation thereof, and an additional extraordinary evaluation.**

Institutional accreditation is run before the HE institution establishment and has to be prolonged every **five years** (Art. 14 of HEA). Moreover, HE institution can begin with HE when also at least one study programme is accredited (Art. 15 of HEA). Roughly, there are **several criteria and further standards** to be fulfilled, like strategic background, having prescribed minimal resources, a need for graduates among employers established, internal QA run, etc. (see Criteria, 2017).

The accreditation **ceases to be valid** in certain cases, e.g. if HE removed from the court register or reaccreditation not granted.

Programme accreditations is pursuant to Art. 32 of HEA in the jurisdiction of university senate, but has to be accredited before that by SQAA. The **programme accreditation is valid without time limitation**, while before 2017 the law required that accreditation is granted every seven years or even after three years if partially granted. Officially recognised programmes include those accredited in EU MS and implemented by an international association of universities as referred to in paragraph

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- determine the minimum criteria for election to the titles of higher education teacher, researcher and higher education associate at higher education institutions,
 - carry out external evaluations of higher education institutions and study programmes and of higher vocational colleges,
 - implement initial accreditations of higher education institutions, accreditations of study programmes, reaccreditations of higher education institutions and accreditations of transformations of higher education institutions,
 - verify changes to the compulsory components of study programmes and in the event of major deficiencies or inconsistencies, act in accordance with Article 51t of this Act,
 - establish and update the register of experts,
 - appoint expert groups for external evaluations and accreditations, organise their education and participate therein,
 - make public the decisions of the Agency, evaluation reports, annual evaluation and accreditation reports, and analyses of the Agency, which must be transparent and accessible,
 - keep publicly accessible records of accredited higher education institutions and study programmes,
 - keep publicly accessible records of contracts for the provision of transnational higher education,
 - submit to the ministry responsible for higher education the enrolment data for the eVŠ in accordance with Article 81č and Article 81d of this Act,
 - cooperate with higher education institutions and higher vocational colleges, advise them, and promote the implementation of self-evaluations,
 - cooperate with international institutions or bodies for quality assurance in higher education,
 - oversee the conformity of the Agency's operation with EU standards and international principles in the field of quality assurance,
 - collect and analyse reports on self-evaluations and external evaluations of higher education institutions and higher vocational colleges,
 - perform developmental tasks in the field for which it has been established,
 - perform other tasks in accordance with this Act and its memorandum of association.

two of Article 10.a of HEA if their diplomas are considered public documents in the country of accreditation, if they grant an officially recognised level of educational qualification and an officially recognised title in this country, and if they are provided by accredited organisations in the country of accreditation and notified to SQAA. However, when a holder wishes to (significantly) **change** accredited programme, a special (simplified) procedure is required.

The **procedure** is prescribed pursuant to Art. 51.p/ff, the Criteria and subsidiary use of GAPA, ensuring transparent and objective evaluation, e.g. obligatory via expert team and site-visit evaluation. The procedure is conducted as an administrative one, with inclusion of expert commission. If a decision is not granted as requested, the applicant HE institution can file an appeal, resolved by a special SQAA appeal commission. This decision can be challenged in front of Administrative Court.

The evaluation as a professional part of administrative accreditation procedure is pursuant to HEA and SQAA acts conducted by **group of experts**. **Bureaucrats of the SQAA** take care of formal parts of the procedures only. Groups of experts are nominated by Council of the SQAA in one month after application is lodged. Expert groups shall mean groups of experts for accreditation and groups of experts for external evaluation. Experts from the register of experts kept by the Agency shall be appointed to expert groups. They shall consist of at least three members, of whom at least one is a foreign expert and one a student (Art. 51.u of HEA). All experts are registered at the SQAA and are obliged to attend regular trainings, while foreign experts are evaluators of foreign agencies, in principle registered at the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education. Expert groups are independent (also from the Agency) but need to evaluate the HE institution and/or the programme in compliance with the HEA and Agency's Criteria. After the first report written mainly on the basis of all documentation, publicly accessed data and a site visit, the applicant HE institution can submit remarks and after that a final report is prepared and the Agency's decision is issued.

The Criteria in Art. 17 and 18 specifies that there are **five standards that apply when accrediting study programmes**:

- **composition and content of a study programme:**
 1. **standard: The study programme in its composition and content shall offer the students comprehensive knowledge and shall help them achieve the objectives set, and the planned competences or learning outcomes;** assessed shall be the following: a) consistency and the substantial cohesion of individual courses and study plans and the study programme as a whole; b) connectedness (compliance) of objectives, competences or learning outcomes, determined in the study plans, with the objectives and competences of a study programme and its content regarding the type and cycle of the study; c) the programme integrates scientific, professional, research or artistic content; č) the order of subjects or the distribution of subjects to individual semesters and years (horizontal and vertical connectedness) and their credit evaluation;
 2. **standard: The study programme shall be placed to the anticipated field and discipline in accordance with its name, purpose and content;** assessed shall be the connectedness of the study programme content, its relation to the applied or basic knowledge from that field and discipline as well as the conceptual selection of contents, clearly defined and reasonably connected with the current situation and development trends in science, the profession or art.
 3. **standard: The study programme shall relate with the environment in which the higher education institution operates;** assessed shall be the following: a) analyses or research of the needs of the employment environment, job market and the employability of graduates or the needs for knowledge and objectives of the society; b) conditions for the practical training of students. Meeting this standard is not obligatory for third-instance study programmes.

- **concept of the study programme implementation:**

4. **standard: The concept of the study programme implementation shall correspond to its content, composition, type, cycle and purpose (objectives), so that study content, implementation practices and resources (human and material resources) shall be adapted and provided with quality.** Assessed shall be the following: a) anticipated ways, forms and course of education; b) appropriateness of human resources in accordance with Article 13 of the Criteria and: – thematic appropriateness of appointments to titles of higher education teachers and staff; – meeting the conditions for mentorship to doctoral students and the appropriateness of mentors; c) material conditions, connected with the implementation of the study programme, in accordance with Article 15 of the Criteria.
5. **standard: The conditions for the study and obligatory elements of a study programme are determined, clear and understandable. They enable the exercising of rights and meeting the obligations of all stakeholders in the study process.** Assessed shall be the following: a) conditions for enrolment to a study programme and the advancement of students; b) criteria for the acknowledgement of knowledge and skills acquired before enrolling to the study programme; c) methods of evaluation; č) conditions for the completion of studies; d) conditions for the completion of individual parts of the programme if the programme entails them; e) professional or scientific title; f) conditions for the transition between study programmes.

All criteria are determined in detail with further standards and procedural requirements. However, these Criteria are compliant to the (general) international ones, since the SQAA is a member of ENQA, EQAR and ECA. On the other hand, there are no specifics valid for PA field in particular, albeit it might be required so according to PA interdisciplinary character and EAPAA (or Tuning) standards and rules.

Art. 17 of Criteria stipulates **an explicit focus at content-related and didactical features** since it determines that the composition and content of study programmes count together with other detailed content criteria, such as consistency and content wise connectedness of courses in study programme as a whole, its embeddedness in social environment, how are courses structured and which is their sequence, etc.

In accreditation procedure, the SQAA Council usually appoints groups of independent experts that include a site visit as an obligatory part of their evaluation. There are special rules and recommendation for the **site visit** preparation and how to carry it out.

The final decision is issued by the evaluating institution, the SQAA, including a potential appeal resolution. However, experts' reports are fully respected.

There are also **international accreditations** applied in Slovenia but not officially recognised within the aforementioned national system of accreditation (more in Kovač, 2016). Hence, it is up to an individual faculty if and which scheme it is chosen. E.g., Faculty of Public Administration (UL) has opted for the EAPAA accreditation for the majority of its study programmes.

3.3 INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

External evaluation is always conducted based on **self-evaluation/reporting** by applicant HE institutions (Art. 11 of Criteria). Consequently, **self-reporting is highly developed in Slovenia**, since this reports are obligatory parts of accreditation applications, if not the extraordinary evaluation of the programme is initiated, then there are institutional procedures every five years.

Moreover, if the programme holder that submits its programme to SQAA accreditation procedure is the **faculty as part of the university** (e.g. FA within UL), prior to the procedures listed above, internal evaluations are carried out by university commission and specially appointed evaluators (usually from other faculties) since formally in this cases the university is the applicant in front of the SQAA.

This is especially important when study programmes are only changed on this level since they contain **smaller transformations**.

Internal QA at the university level is at the UL, for instance, run *mutatis mutandis* the external one. There is a special study commission, which reviews applications and nominates (usually three) **field experts** to scrutinise the programme according to SQAA Criteria. The final decision is adopted by university senate unless further proceeding in front of SQAA are required.

Moreover, due to the anticipated legal changes there has been an increasing awareness that internal evaluation of the programmes would become one of the priorities for the university to monitor the quality of the content and the implementation of study programmes. This quality assurance integrates the university, faculty as well as the programme level. **Throughout the period 2013-2017** university prepared the criteria for the preparation of the **self-evaluation reports** of study programmes, which should be conducted on annual basis by programme directors.⁴ These reports have to be presented and approved by the faculty senate (before that, the faculty quality committee also has role in putting inputs to the report)⁵ and then submitted to the university. Basically, particular cycle studies committees and quality committees exist both at the university as well as at particular faculty level, being the major stakeholders in internal quality assurance system. However, particular faculty can have also additional bodies focused on quality improvements in teaching and programme development – e.g., FPA has created a decade ago special Centre for the Development of Pedagogical Excellence (CDPE), with activities focusing on students’ and teachers’ competences development, interconnections with alumni and employers etc.

The regular self-evaluation reporting started already in 2013, although the criteria for reporting have been amended during this period. One of the prerequisites to implement this new concept was that each programme should have appointed the **programme director**, which should monitor the quality and make reporting. In 2018, university also started to implement the so-called internal testing evaluations, based on the screening of the reports. Findings are presented then to the university committees for study programmes.

3.4 ANTICIPATED CHANGES

There have been some changes introduced rather recently in Slovenia in terms of debureaucratisation of accreditation procedures and, clearer and internationally oriented evaluation criteria. Therefore, **no major changes are anticipated** in the near future to our knowledge, albeit there are persisting initiatives put forward, like merging national and international (like EAPAA) accreditations. The latter proposals have not been high on the agenda of SQAA nor the Slovenian ministries for education and public administration.

3.5 SUMMARY

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

<p>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?</p>	<p>PA study programmes are subject to a unified accreditation system in force in Slovenia. International nor private accreditations are not eligible within this scheme.</p>
<p>3.2 Which are the main providers of programme accreditation? Is there a</p>	<p>All publicly recognised programmes and HE institutions are required to be accredited by</p>

⁴ More on this see Internal materials of the UL (2018).

⁵ University also prescribes the feedback loop at the faculty level for this procedure.

<p>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 (government authorities, semi-autonomous or independent organisations)?</p>	<p>NAKVIS, Slovene QA Agency (SQAA) pursuant to HEA and agency's Criteria within an administrative procedure. SQAA is an autonomous and independent (regulatory) agency, established based on HEA outside educational ministry.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>In Slovenia, only new study programmes and their major transformation or extraordinary deficient programmes need to be accredited. However, HE institutions are also required to accredit, every five years. All institutions and programmes are to be evaluated that issue publicly recognised degrees regardless of their public/state or private founder.</p>
<p>3.4 Who is allowed to do programme accreditation? Only an official government agency, (like e.g. in Austria) or other (ENQA- or EQAR-) recognised institutions?</p>	<p>See under 3.2, only SQAA is competent to carry on accreditations for any Slovenian HE institutions and programme. However, there are some recognitions allowed, like those accredited in EU MS and implemented by an international association of universities.</p>
<p>3.5 Who are the evaluators (bureaucrats and/or academic peers, are foreign academic peers involved)?</p>	<p>All evaluation are managed by experts, as a rule in external QA by at least five-member group, consisting also by a foreign expert (peer) and a student. Bureaucrats support evaluation proceedings administratively.</p>
<p>3.6 Which methods of accreditation are primarily applied in the respective country?</p>	<p>Methods are prescribed by HEA and SQAA Criteria, with in depth training of experts how to carry these one regarding various criteria and standards. External evaluation is done based on self-evaluation (self-reports provided by HE institution).</p>
<p>3.7 Who takes the decision to accredit a programme? (is it the institution doing the evaluation or a superior government body?)</p>	<p>SQAA as an independent agency, namely its Council, issues an individual administrative act to grant (or reject) the accreditation in question. If an appeal is lodged, SQAA independent commission reconsiders the case.</p>

4. EXISTING PA STUDY PROGRAMMES

4.1 DATA, METHODS AND LIMITATIONS

Slovenian profile follows strict eligibility criteria as determined above. **Two-stage reduction procedure** was utilized to get narrower list of study programmes that truly encompass PA and public governance dimension. The first stage of reduction involved the limiting the list in order to exclude the programmes, that are heavily specialized in their content (e.g., programmes like Management and Economics in Health Care, or Management in Health and Social Welfare), because the scrutinization of these programmes revealed that technically and from the content perspective they can be extremely difficult to align with what should be understood under PA programme. By excluding these programmes, the outcome of the first stage was the list of 19 study programmes at all cycle levels that might form the sample.

Next, the second stage of the reduction process was utilized, where three criteria were used for these procedure. These criteria are that programmes are either on the level of a programme broader and not PA focused (like Law, Business Administration or Management⁶), either incorporate only individual modules and/or courses regarding PA but do not represent the separate programme, and or are they too focused and specialized on certain PA subfields (like Social work or Administrative Informatics).

Therefore, only all SQAAC accredited and publicly recognised study programmes **directly addressing PA and/or public governance (but not public law or management primarily)** have been taken into account. In addition, an autonomous level of programme was required as the PA one in any of three cycles possible. Thus, the final list of mainly PA and PG related programmes **includes 10 programmes**, presented in the table below.

Basically, **three important notes** should also be given on this list: (1) considering Slovenia as a small and traditionally rather centralised state, a limited list in the term of numbers was gathered that fully enables us to analyse the respective programmes in terms of PAQUALITY approved project; (2) the development of PA programmes has been heavily influenced by the existence of separate Faculty of Public Administration within public HEI sphere and limited influence of competition in the field from private institutions, which caused that we cannot observe many PA related educational programmes; (3) the amendments of HE legislation have diminished the incentive to create executive study programmes.

4.2 EXISTING PA STUDY PROGRAMMES

Table 1 below presents the list of PA study programmes in Slovenia. Since Slovenia belongs to the group of small states, this is reflected also into the list, as we can observe only 10 such programmes, of which 5 belong to FPA (the faculty specializing in PA programmes and studies), 2 to the FSS (also UL, but specializing more in the political science) and 3 to the NU. It is evident that the majority of programmes are related to public universities (in fact 7, all to the UL), and 3 of the programmes are affiliated to the private university (NU) that was recently established in this form. This list could be further narrowed, as, for instance, upon the utilization of the criteria what is considered under PA programme, there was also a challenge to include the programme Management in Administration (number 4 in the list). Namely, this programme has important

⁶ Moreover, some faculties of UL or UM do offer study programmes (or, specifically modules) related to PA, but these programmes/modules are usually conceptualising PA either from political science and policy analysis, public finance and economic public utilities, or administrative law perspectives, so it is difficult to conceptualize them as PA programmes.

focus on PA, but management focus somehow prevails, also reflected in the title received by the graduate – abbreviated as MPM (Master in Management in Administration).

Table 1 – Existing PA study programmes in Slovenia, as of 2018/2019 academic year

No	Study programme	HEI/s	Type	Length	Additional info
1	Administration	UL, Faculty of Public Administration	BPA	3 y., 180 ECTS	EAPAA accredited; more: http://www.fu.uni-lj.si/en/programs/undergraduate/the-first-cycle-professional-study-programme-in-administration/
2	Public Sector Governance	UL, Faculty of Public Administration	BPA	3 y., 180 ECTS	EAPAA accredited; more: http://www.fu.uni-lj.si/en/programs/undergraduate/university-study-programme-in-public-sector-governance/
3	Administration - Public Sector Governance	UL, Faculty of Public Administration	MPA	2 y., 120 ECTS	EAPAA accredited; more: http://www.fu.uni-lj.si/en/programs/postgraduate/masters-study-programme-in-administration-2nd-cycle/
4	<i>Management in Administration</i>	<i>UL, Faculty of Public Administration & University of Belgrade, Faculty of Organisational Sciences</i>	<i>MPM</i>	<i>2 y., 120 ECTS</i>	<i>Joint degree with Serbian Faculty of Organizational Sciences, more: http://www.fu.uni-lj.si/en/programs/postgraduate/masters-study-programme-in-administration-2nd-cycle/</i>
5	Governance and Economics in the Public Sector	UL, Faculty of Public Administration & University of Rijeka, Faculty of Economics	PhD	3 y., 180 ECTS	Joint degree with Croatian Faculty of Economics, University of Rijeka, more: http://www.fu.uni-lj.si/en/programs/3-stopnja-studija/the-joint-doctoral-study-programme-governance-and-economics-in-the-public-sector-third-cycle/
6	Political Science - Public Policies and Administration	UL, Faculty of Social Sciences	BA	3 y., 180 ECTS	https://www.fdv.uni-lj.si/studij/studij-na-fdv/dodiplomski-studij-1-stopnje/studijski-programi/politologija-javne-politike-in-uprava-1-stopnja-novo
7	Political Science - Policy Analysis and Public Administration	UL, Faculty of Social Sciences	MA	1 year, 60 ECTS	https://www.fdv.uni-lj.si/en/study/study-at-the-FDV/masters-programmes/study-programmes/Master-of-Political-Science-Policy-Analysis-and-Public-Administration-2nd-cycle
8	Public Administration	NU, Faculty of Government and European Studies*	BPA	3 years	http://fds.si/index.php/en/studies/study-programmes/undergraduate-study-public-administration
9	Public Administration	NU, Faculty of Government and European Studies*	MPA	2 years	http://fds.si/index.php/studij/studijski-programi/magistrski-studij-javna-uprava
10	Public Administration	NU, Faculty of Government and European Studies*	PhD	3 years	http://fds.si/index.php/studij/studijski-programi/doktorski-studij-javna-uprava

Source: Authors. *=privately founded university but publicly accredited and holding a concession

4.3 AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION ON PA STUDY PROGRAMMES

All study programmes scrutinised are in their main features accessible **via internet** (HEIs' webpages). The information that is available for specific programme can be assessed also from the table that supplements this report, where also information on the modules and parts of the programmes that address at least partially PA are included. For the majority of the programmes, the information about graduate profile and learning outcomes of the programme, the information about curriculum structure, list of courses, ECTS of individual courses, as well as the structure of individual courses, literature used and requirements on passing individual courses could be found, although the language and the amount of information depends mainly on the faculty under scrutinisation. For specific information see annex (excel format table).

4.4 SUMMARY

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

<p>4.1 How many relevant PA study programmes have you identified and what is their structure?</p>	<p>There are 10 study programmes focusing on PA in Slovenia. Faculty of Administration (UL) and Faculty of Government and European Studies (NU) offer vertically programmes at all three cycles, hereby FA accrediting two joint degrees, while BA and MA programmes of Faculty of Social Sciences (UL) are provided with predominantly political science oriented aspects of PA.</p> <p>The number of programmes corresponds to the size of the country, and, simultaneously, to the tradition of PA studies, which were for the last six decades heavily influenced by the existence of separate faculty (specializing in PA) within the largest university in Slovenia (UL). Although the development of PA programmes has been initially run under auspices of faculties of law, this specific has led to the heavy influence of multi-disciplinary faculty, which has also historically changed the structure and the content of the programmes, where besides to law, other aspects of PA have been addressed, and their weight has also relatively increased in time.</p> <p>Still, two points are important to address. Although recently the competition of the private HEI's has emerged in the field of PA, this field is still dominated by public HEI's. And, there is rather limited incentive to create executive study programmes, so more or less only classical PA oriented HEI study programmes can be observed in recent years, and this structure is pyramidal, where the number of programmes decreases with the level of higher education.</p>
<p>4.2 What info are available on the study programmes on their web pages?</p>	<p>There is all crucial information available (content, courses, length, ...) in Slovenian language, but most information is also available in English language. The language and the amount of information for the specific programme heavily depends on the faculty under scrutinisation, which reflects mainly institution-specific factors, where some detailed information is available only after the enrolment. Still,</p>

	<p>for the majority of the programmes, the information about graduate profile and learning outcomes of the programme, the information about curriculum structure and ECTS of individual courses, as well as the structure of individual courses, literature used and requirements on passing individual courses could be found.</p>
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5. CONCLUDING REMARKS, POINTS FOR PRACTITIONERS, CHALLENGES FOR FUTURE

5.1 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Regarding the structure of PA programmes in Slovenia, two important institutional specificities should be emphasised. First, since Slovenia belongs to a group of **small states**, the number of programmes and institutions dealing with PA teaching is hence rather limited. However, albeit Slovenia is small comparatively, there is a **missing link** between (i) official stately run QA procedures by SQAA and MPA training and exams for public employees and (ii) HE academic educational programmes.

Second, the development of PA programmes has been **initially run under auspices of faculties of law but in the last decades heavily influenced by the existence of autonomous Faculty of Public Administration (UL)** within public HEI sphere. Given the long tradition of PA teaching within FPA, the majority of the programmes have association with this faculty, which focuses solely on multi-disciplinary teaching and research for PA. There is also recent influence of competition in the field from private institutions, regarding PA exclusively, from the **Faculty of Government and European Studies (NU)**. Hereby, the amendments of HE legislation have diminished the incentive to create executive study programmes, so more or less only classical HEI study programmes can be observed in recent years.

Moreover, the prevailing structure of HE in Slovenia regarding the number of programmes is specific in the sense, that the **pyramidal structure** in the number of programmes could be observed, as there is a large tendency of pupils to enter HE due to the eligibility of studying (mostly publicly financed programmes, also at private institutions).

To finalize, given the framework of the project, **10 HE study programmes directly related to PA** could be identified in Slovenia. This list could be **further narrowed**, if we would put strict EAPAA eligibility criteria on what PA teaching is, and if the programmes and institutions under consideration actually meet the eligibility criteria based on the inspection. In contrast, this list could be **broadened**, if we include also programmes on PM and PA specific subfields, as these are usually conceptualising PA either from political science and policy analysis, public finance and economic public utilities, or administrative law perspectives. Besides, some institutions do offer very specialised programmes, that might be at first glance related to PA (e.g., in fields of Health Care, Social Welfare etc.). However, as our two-stage reduction procedure revealed, it is important to have full programme, not just modules, with multi-disciplinary PA nature, to relate it to the group of eligible PA related programmes.

5.2 POINTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS AND CHALLENGES FOR FUTURE

Following the above stated Slovenian characteristics and trends within the field, there is a need to particularly respond to these issues:

- Systematically define PA as a discipline, both from pedagogical and research aspects;
- Broaden all PA related programmes to interdisciplinary combine legal, economic, managerial, IT, political science related and other issues and methods;
- Interconnect stately run QA schemes, PA trainings and exams with HEI's programmes;
- Consider at least partial recognition of internationally run accreditations (e.g. EAPAA) by SQAA);
- Reconsider the development of more focused PA programmes, in particular at the executive level of education;

- Interconnect more closely content related items of study programmes and employers' needs;
- Creating systematic and sustainable feedback loops with procedures in order to scrutinize and improve the contents of the programmes (regarding the employers' needs as well as the development and trends in the field) and quality of teaching etc.

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