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Intellectual Output 3:

Methodological framework for quality improvement of project partners

Programmes under the evaluation within the project are evaluated by selected project partners based on review of their self-evaluation studies against the EAPAA accreditation criteria. Site visits were not included into the project activities; therefore the evaluation statements are limited to the available written information and discussion among project partners during the Project Transnational Meeting held in Ljubljana on November 15, 2019.

EVALUATION REPORT

Name of the programme: Science, technology and innovation in public governance

Level: Master

Name of the Institution: Department of Public Administration and Management, College of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences, Babes Bolyai University

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The evaluation report expresses an opinion of the authors. The EC doesn't have responsibility for any utilization of included information.

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DATE: January 2020

Part 1: Accreditation Criteria

2. Applicability/Eligibility	
2.1 Domain	The Department of Public Administration and Management at Babes Bolyai University applies for the evaluation of its Science, technology and innovation in public governance (Master level). The programme is eligible for the EAPAA accreditation. It provides professional academic level education leading to a Master's degree. The primary purpose of the programme is to prepare graduates for various roles in the public sector (e.g. managerial and policy-making roles).
2.2 Geography	Romania is a member of the Council of Europe and European Union, therefore the programme falls within the jurisdiction of EAPAA
2.3 Programme longevity	There are two cohorts of graduates to provide adequate data for evaluating programme policies, procedures, and placement of graduates. Formally, the programme can be accredited, however, only five graduates already finished studies, which is too small number to evaluate results.
2.4 Programme variants and locations	The Science, technology and innovation in public governance (Master level) is taught in only one location, namely Cluj-Napoca (Romania), in English, fulltime.
4. Category of accreditation	It is applied for evaluation of the second cycle graduate/master level program.
5. Standards	
5.1 Domain of public administration	<p>The program is multidisciplinary by virtue of its initial design. It covers all important elements of PA education (law, political sciences, economics, management, IT). The programme is multidisciplinary (with some reservations - see curricula part) in character and oriented towards the public sector, and can be considered public administration programme.</p> <p>However, looking at the list of courses it is quite difficult to evaluate the share of public administration incorporated. The programme seems to be more IT and management oriented. The deeper analysis of courses curricula should be needed.</p>
5.2 Mission of the programme	<p>The program was developed in order to respond to changing needs of the public sector. The mission is not clearly defined in the SER. The related text of the SER mentions three pillars of the program, but the mission should be clearly defined. Otherwise it is not possible to evaluate more if the programme is mission-based and if the management is mission-oriented.</p> <p>On the other hand, the learning outcomes are clear and well formulated.</p>

5.3 Level	<p>In order to receive program accreditation/re-accreditation or even provisory authorization from the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, each MA program needs to identify a profession from the Classification of Occupations in Romania (COR) and register it in the National Register of Professional Qualification. Furthermore, the competencies developed by each study program have to be included/reflected in the official competences and qualifications list of the scientific domain. As such, program decision-makers are formally unable to propose and develop any other professional competences than the official ones in order to ensure continuous legal functioning. Nonetheless, the learning outcomes of the programme are well linked to Dublin descriptors and the programme follows the internationally recognised standards equivalent to its level.</p>
5.4 Practice and internships	<p>The information provided in the report confirms that the development of practical skills is one of the main priorities of the program. Together with the fact that majority of the MA students are already working in the public and non-profit, the mandatory internship is two weeks long and the students have to work 8 to 9 hours per day for a minimum of at least 84 hours. Students have flexibility in scheduling the internship – many decide to schedule it during the summer break when they can dedicate two full weeks to this task. Extra optional internship (three weeks) is offered, too. The positive is that based on the experience and the feedback received by the professors involved as supervisors in internship programs, the master program curriculum is updated each year.</p> <p>From the SER it seems that internships are well supervised and connected with the planned learning outcomes.</p> <p>Information about other relations with practice are missing in this part, however such information is implicitly included in other parts of the report (e.g. in the part dedicated to involvement of practitioners). Still, the text of SER should be consolidated more and relevant texts should be in relevant parts in order to improve clarity of the SER.</p> <p>The attention to relations with practice is good and is one of the main strengths of the program.</p>
5.5.1 Curriculum Content	
5.5.1.1 Core components	<p>Because the mission is not clearly stated in the SER, it is hard to assess if the curriculum content is in line with the mission. As already stated, it seems that the programme is rather ICT and management-oriented and improvement of its multidisciplinary nature would be beneficial.</p> <p>The "technology dimension" is represented in curricula very well (courses like ICT innovation in governance, E-governance and sustainable</p>

	<p>development, SQL, Intellectual property and ICT, Data bases and intelligent systems, Data protection regulation (GDPR), Technology and innovation for improving the quality of life, Technology and innovation, Participative governance using block chain technology and artificial intelligence, Good practices in using technology in governance). However, "(public) governance and innovations dimensions" are under-represented.</p> <p>The public administration related courses are Public Budgets, Performance improvement in public services: Emergency response systems, Performance improvement in public services: Education, Performance improvement in public services: Infrastructure, Urban development, Public-private Partnerships, Compared (Comparative?) Governance (some of them may be too specialised).</p> <p>Social science, political sciences, public administration, economics and law are only indirectly incorporated in the curriculum (and should be).</p> <p>General courses are Strategic planning, Project management and evaluation, Research methods for process analysis, EU funds management, Statistics, Conflict management, Financial management, Applied research, Innovation in society, Project writing and implementation.</p> <p>Although it is written on page 35 that that students are exposed also to sociological aspects of PA, it is not clear from the SER how it is done in this MA programme.</p> <p>The curriculum includes comprehensive international/comparative elements. The report does not provide clear information about electives. In the summary table it is said that 20 ECTS are allocated to electives, but more specific information is missing.</p> <p>To conclude it is necessary to say that curriculum should better represent mission and PA profile of the program. PA elements of the MA programme should be more clearly explained with regards to the MA programme.</p> <p>Some procedures related to the fulfilment of study obligations need to be formalized (the possibility to take additional courses in the bachelor's degree study to supplement the knowledge for students in the master's degree, etc.).</p>
<p>5.5.1.2 Other Components</p>	<p>The program does not offer any further specializations or tracks.</p>
<p>5.5.1.3 Structure and didactics of the programme</p>	<p>The program uses a combination of lectures (knowledge enhancement) and seminars (literature retrieval and practice training on the hand of cases and projects prepared by students). Students have to write and present papers. In the seminars a wide variety of teaching methods is used. The students are actively involved in the courses.</p> <p>This part of SER should define more exactly the used didactical methods, especially to highlight some "special" methods regarding the application of</p>

	IT in public administration.
5.5.1.4 Intake	This part is not correctly written, needs update from the program.
5.5.2 Length	The program's duration is 2 years (4 semesters), in accordance with the Bologna process. This represents the standard legal duration for a master's program under the national law and in accordance with Bologna process (3 years bachelor degree, 2 years master's degree and 3 years PhD degree).
5.5.3 Results	Final MA thesis are written and defended. The results of the program seem to be fully sufficient. Additional information (e.g. on individual topics, examples of final theses) would be necessary to evaluate this criterion.
5.6 Quality Improvement and Innovation	
5.6.1 Programme accomplishment	The management of Department of Public Administration and Management places a lot of emphasis on developing internal mechanisms for quality assurance and improvement. There is a sound quality assurance and quality improvement mechanism in place. As a good tradition can be seen a regular meeting of Department with the faculty management, on the other side, the success of the programme as well as all changes is questionable because of low number of graduates.
5.6.2 Curriculum Development	<p>Inputs for program and curriculum development are gathered from various stakeholders. There is a semi-formal procedure in place for curriculum development/updates that is not described in any official document or procedures. Each BA or MA programme has a director/coordinator responsible for meeting with the relevant stakeholders. The SER indicates that data regarding students' satisfaction are collected at least once a year, external partners and the core faculty members are consulted regularly, and surveys of the alumni and employers include relevant questions. The program coordinator usually meet with students and faculty members twice a year. The curriculum development process is one of main strengths of the program.</p> <p>The SER misses some information on how feedback on their evaluation is given to students after implementation of asked/suggested changes.</p>
5.6.3 External Reviews	The program was reviewed by the national accreditation agency and approved by the University Senate (based on comments by the Center for University Development and Quality Management (CUDQM), part of the Babes-Bolyai University). The program uses the external reviews sufficiently.
5.7 Student Assessment	The individual assessment of students is using a grading scale ranging from 1 to 10. Students need to obtain at least the score 5 in order to pass the course. This grading scale is common from all educational cycles and programs in Romania, starting with elementary school. The types of

	<p>individual assessment of students vary, depending on the course type, the number of students enrolled in that course, the preference of the instructor for a certain evaluation type, etc. The program offers a comprehensive set of rules for a balanced and well-structured assessment process.</p>
5.8 Programme Jurisdiction	<p>The program is administratively steered in achieving its mission and subsequent objectives by the Department. The governance of the programme is well arranged, with a clear mandate for all main players, the core responsibility is with the head of the Department. Seems that there is no official (extra) program guarantor.</p>
5.9.1 Faculty nucleus	<p>There is an identifiable faculty nucleus (employed full-time). The report introduces 19 core staff persons, but does not show the percentage of their devotement to the programme. The volume two does not show directly the structure of age groups within the faculty, but it seems to be feasible. Foreign professors and practitioners are involved, too.</p> <p>In any case from the SER it seems that the program complies with the criterion.</p>
5.9.2 Faculty qualifications	<p>The core faculty involved in the programme is well qualified for this task as all faculty members hold a PhD title in their field and must be involved in research in their area. Most of the faculty has direct contact with what is happening in the field of public administration. Some faculty members are well known in the international academic public administration community as they attend relevant conferences and serve in positions in international organisations.</p> <p>However, the faculty is short of publications in high-level PA journals; their publishing outlets are mostly national or regional. The participation of the faculty staff at conferences is rich, but in many conferences is not clear connection with the public administration issues.</p> <p>The SER could structure more research projects and research outputs of core faculty members.</p>
5.9.3 Diversity: gender and minorities	<p>The faculty is balanced according to gender and age. No specific gender policies are necessary.</p>
5.10 Admission of Students	<p>Overall, the admission goals and policies, as well as the admission standards of are in line with the mission and programmes objectives. The admission procedures and the registration periods are established and made public at the beginning of every academic year. The strengths of the admission process is a structural interview with the candidates. The information about the admission process and admission requirements is available online and on site, through the Permanent Bureau of Admission, at the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences.</p>
5.11 Supportive	<p>The supportive services and facilities provided are sufficient and functional.</p>

Services and Facilities	The library seems to have an adequate number of publications and electronic sources; the classrooms are adequately equipped with electronics and the campus provides an adequate environment for students and academics altogether.
5.12 Student Services	Student advisement and guidance occur at several levels: Faculty, Department and individual. The student services are adequate and effective in the career development of the students. Also thanks to this the program manages to retain a significant number of students from admission until graduation.
5.13 Public Relations	This part deals mainly with recruitment connected PRs, however, the full report signalled that the program provides future students and all other stakeholders with adequate information on the program.
6 Additional Criteria	None.

Part 2: Conclusions and recommendations

The program has a clear academic stature and most accreditation standards are reflected at least on the adequate level. However, it is not recommended to submit it in the current stage of its development for EAPAA accreditation for the following reasons:

- the curricula is not sufficiently balanced;
- the programme has only five graduates.

Few other recommendations can also be formulated:

1. The program should think about more explicit formulation of its mission.
2. The leaderships of the program should more effectively motivate the staff to publish in top public administration journals and especially to try to decrease the differences between the level of publication scale and scope of the staff.