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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: Public Administration and Management – European
Administration**

Level: Master, 2nd cycle

**Name of the Institution: Varna Free University “Chernorizets Hrabar”, Faculty of
International Economics and Administration**

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DATE: December 2019

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

Part 1: Accreditation Criteria

2. Applicability/Eligibility	
2.1 Domain	The orientation of the master of science study programme Public Administration and Management – European Administration (PAM-EA) is in its nature multidisciplinary. A note is that although the domain and the level are clearly stated and aligned with the criteria, they are presented latter on in the document – so a suggestion is that this is explained also here.
2.2 Geography	VFU providing the master study programme PAM-EA is located in Varna, Bulgaria. The geography requirement is clearly observed.
2.3 Programme longevity	The programme brings 60 ECTS, and lasts for 1 academic year. 90 ECTS are required for students from other (non-PA) professional fields. Programme was established in 2004, thus the longevity criterion has been met.
2.4 Programme variants and locations	The programme PAM-EA is provided in one location, in Varna, and is provided only as a part-time study programme in Bulgarian language.
4 Category of accreditation	The programme is eligible for the normal accreditation. The bachelor study programme European Public Administration had first enrollment done in 2004. A note should be given also on the first year of graduates exiting the programme.
5. Standards	
5.1 Domain of public administration	<p>The master study programme PAM-EA is constructed with multidisciplinary and academic focus, what is reflected in the curriculum. Programme is structured in several main sections, public management, political and social sciences, law and legal sciences, European development and integration, contemporary global problems' address etc. European profile of the programme is stressed.</p> <p>The programme clearly states Public Administration in the title, and is multi-disciplinary in nature, where the specific focus is given to the European topics. Thus, domain standard is met. The potential improvement lies in the clearcut presentation of the curriculum in this section, with potential explanations, why specific courses are included and how they relate to the context of the programme.</p>
5.2 Mission of the programme	The mission of the master study programme PAM-EA is to prepare graduates to gain „competence to provide modern PA, flexible, responsible and responsive administration professionals,...“. Mission is 4-points

	<p>specified, where internationalization is also stressed, and this mission is transformed through educational philosophy into four main goals of the programme.</p> <p>The suggestion is that this sub-chapter tries to translate the mission into specific competencies (they are listed under 5.3.), and the recommendation is that these competencies are developed further, in particular to justify the „European“ dimension envisaged by the programme.</p>
5.3 Level	<p>The programme is a 1 year second cycle programme acquiring 60 ECTS, which corresponds to the master level of study. Thus, the accreditation criteria is met.</p>
5.4 Practice and internships	<p>Practice is specified as the semi-formal parts of courses within the programme, as half of the contact hours are conducted through active training methods. Given the EAPAA accreditation criteria, it is highly warranted, but it would be recommended that the report clearly differentiates among contact hours for teaching and contact hours for practical learning, in order to gain an insight how actually the programme is delivered. In addition, these active training methods, their contents, delivery modes are suggested to be explained in detail.</p> <p>Programme also envisages a pre-graduate internship of 90 hours at the end of the second semester. This fulfills the criteria as stressed by EAPAA, and this seems to be one of the strongest parts of the programme. It should be explained what is expected from the graduates, what kind of skills should they obtain from the 90 hours involvement into internship, and how this internship is actually formally included into the structure of the programme.</p>
5.5.1 Curriculum Content	
5.5.1.1 Core components	<p>Compulsory (core) elements of the programme take 30 ECTS minimum, and are oriented towards teaching public administration. Although multidisciplinary of the programme is ensured in very extensive manner, a presentation of the list of courses should be highly warranted, including all relevant information on them. In addition, obviously this programme deviates from the planned VFU programme structure of 33 ECTS in obligatory courses, which should be explained.</p>
5.5.1.2 Other Components	<p>Programme does not offer any specializations. At least 12 ECTS should be acquired by students from compulsory elective courses. A suggestion that the list of elective courses is provided, including all relevant information on them. Furthermore, it seems that there is an option to finish the programme either by comprehensive state exam or by master's defense thesis (see p. 45). If this is the case, it should be explained, how this selection occurs, who selects it, are there any effects on the competences'</p>

	achievement etc.
5.5.1.3 Structure and didactics of the programme	The report presents an insight into delivery of the programme, didactics and teaching methods. We would recommend that a note is given on the content of the programme, in a sense how different courses are horizontally and vertically related to each other. This would be needed to justify the coherence of its contents. Further, it would be recommended that the actual organization of the study process is acknowledged for core and elective courses, i.e. number of contact hours, organization of the programme delivery given the part-time status, acknowledgement on the potential to achieve 60 ECTS in one academic year given the volume of burden etc. In addition, since VFU has a status of private university, a note should be given on potential for public support (if potentially relevant) and the amount of tuition fees.
5.5.1.4 Intake	The entrance requirements are clearly presented in the report. A further note should be given on technical issues, like e.g. deadlines for the applications, how selection procedures are performed and by whom, etc. It should be explained also how does the half of semester extension occur – before or during the programme delivery.
5.5.2 Length	Length of the programme (1 year master) corresponds to the objectives of the programme and would-be applied accreditation category. Since the calculus misses 3 ECTS, this should be explained.
5.5.3 Results	A note on this is given. However, a suggestion is that it should be reported how the evaluation of the actual qualifications' achievements is actually performed, a feedback loop should be presented, how it is scrutinized, if graduates are able to operate in PA environment, etc. This can be further supported by the data evidence, if available and obtainable.
5.6 Quality Improvement and Innovation	
5.6.1 Programme accomplishment	A description of the methodology of monitoring, assessment and evaluation of the programme is provided. A suggestion would be that some evidence is also provided on the improvements implemented so far, the ones that are planned to be implemented etc.
5.6.2 Curriculum Development	Curriculum development procedures are presented, as well as some evidence on changes. A suggestion would be that, given the rather long history of the programme, that the elaboration of the changes implemented so far is presented in more structural manner, in order to observe the development of programme in time more accurately, including also relations among observed suggestions and their subsequent practical implementations, programme improvements, missing topics, courses'

	horizontal and vertical alignments etc.
5.6.3 External Reviews	Since the programme is, for now, only nationally accredited, a suggestion would be that some information is provided on the feedbacks from national accreditation bodies that have been provided so far.
5.7 Student Assessment	Student assessment methodology is provided. A suggestion would be that potentially some of the available statistics is added to the description, e.g., on the success and failure rate of the students within particular courses, drop out rates etc. Moreover, the assessment methods might be specified for the specific courses.
5.8 Programme Jurisdiction	Programme jurisdiction is presented. The suggestion is that relations between faculties and departments concerning jurisdictional matters are elaborated a little bit in detail.
5.9.1 Faculty nucleus	Faculty nucleus description is missing, as tables supporting the evidence are empty. Also some demographical statistics and descriptions on the faculty should be provided, in order to elaborate on the structural elements. Although this is part of Volume 2, where detailed data are presented, a summary should also be provided here, as a suggestion.
5.9.2 Faculty qualifications	Faculty qualifications are presented, although a data on research outputs should be provided, at least as a summarization in this part, as suggestion. A further potential for the improvement exists in specifying the most important publications and achievements. The same goes for the experience part. Furthermore, an explanation should be provided on the quality assurance, when academic and practitioners teaching is done, and how those two relate.
5.9.3 Diversity: gender and minorities	The issue is acknowledged in the report, though it is suggested that gender and minorities representation is also supported with the data, an additional information might be given on the age structure. There is no presumption usually on this, so a suggestion is that explanations are provided for the existence of situation. The reporting has been structured, but the data are missing.
5.10 Admission of Students	The report clearly states the admission procedures, and given the criteria, the gender structure of students should also be presented and explained, as suggestion. A suggestion is that also a discussion is provided on the level of tuition fees in the report, including the rise/development of tuition fees over the recent years. Also, the fact that the university is private and fully paid for by students is not mentioned as a factor in the overall number, drop and development of student population, and the assessment on this should be provided, as a suggestion.

5.11 Supportive Services and Facilities	The services and facilities are described. Though a suggestion is that facilities and budget might be explained more in detail, and photos might not be necessary to be included in the text.
5.12 Student Services	A report provides the description of services. Suggestion is that a note on the policy to deal with the student attrition should be delivered. If this does not represent a problem, it should also be explained in this part of the report, as a suggestion.
5.13 Public Relations	PR activities are acknowledged, though suggestion is that the description is given, how PR is actually done, by whom, how it is monitored etc.
6 Additional Criteria	/

Part 2: Conclusions and recommendations

Besides to the already stated recommendations in the part 1 of the evaluation report, we draft also following conclusions and recommendations for the improvement of the programme and report, that might be optionally considered by the faculty. The following statements should be taken purely as recommendations, in order to get an insight into potential improvements, and to increase the possibility for the successful outcome, if the formal accreditation procedure will take place.

The programme features multi-disciplinary set of courses, in general. From the perspective it seems that obligatory courses listed have dual nature, some are very general and some are very specialized. Taking this into consideration, horizontal/vertical relations and interconnections among them could potentially be assessed, in particular to get an insight how actually each course contributes to the achievement of programme's competencies. Furthermore, there might be an option to get an insight, if the existing courses contribute to the competencies on the research and analytics that might be of need for the master students.

Following, the faculty might consider, if there is a potential for the improvements regarding the organization of the curriculum in these three domains:

- For the volume and longevity of the programme, the list of courses that need to be passed by the students, is rather long, since courses have a rather low amount of ECTS given. Therefore, it might be considered if there is a perspective for the potential merger or integration of the specific courses.
- For the structure of the programme, the faculty might consider how PA-related and BA-related courses add to the general programme achievements, thus assessing if particular courses do add to the competencies, and how much.
- For the title of the programme, where European dimension is highly stressed, the faculty might consider if this dimension is sufficiently stressed, in particular from the PA and PM perspective.