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**Bachelor Politics, Psychology, Law and
Economics (PPLE)
University of Amsterdam**

*Report of the limited programme assessment
Assessment for the Distinctive Feature small scale and
intensive education
3-4 June 2019*

Utrecht, The Netherlands
July 2019
www.AeQui.nl
Assessment Agency for Higher Education

Colophon

Programme

University of Amsterdam – PPLE College
Bachelor of Science Politics, Psychology, Law and Economics
Location: Amsterdam
Mode of study: fulltime
Croho: 59312
Result of institutional assessment: positive

Panel

Mrs. Lieke Schreel MA, chair
Prof. dr. Bert Mosselmans, domain expert
Prof. dr. Wim Huisman, domain expert
Prof. dr. Jan-Willem van Prooijen, domain expert
Prof. dr. Rutger Claassen, domain expert
Dr. Martijn Snoep, industry expert
Mr. Perry van Loon, student
Mr. Mark Delmartino MA, secretary and process coordinator

The panel has been approved by NVAO

The assessment was conducted under responsibility of AeQui VBI
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Summary

On 3 and 4 June 2019 an AeQui assessment committee visited the bachelor programme Politics, Psychology, Law and Economics (PPLE) at the University of Amsterdam (UvA). PPLE was established in 2014 as an international and inter-disciplinary programme combining insights from Political science, Psychology, Law and Economics. The full-time three-year programme (180 ECTS) is delivered in English according to the principles of small-scale and intensive education, following selective admission. For this assessment, the committee has used the 2018 NVAO framework for limited programme assessment and the 2017 NVAO publication on the Distinctive Framework small scale and intensive education. The committee judges that the programme meets all NVAO standards and criteria. It therefore issues a **positive** recommendation on the quality of the bachelor programme PPLE at UvA and on its Distinctive Feature small scale and intensive education.

Intended learning outcomes

The PPLE programme lives up to its ambition of offering an interdisciplinary, international, academic and research-based bachelor programme. PPLE students are educated to combine insights from four disciplines - Politics, Psychology, Law and Economics - using an interdisciplinary approach. The programme's international dimension and demanding curriculum offer motivated students ample opportunity for intellectual exchanges among each other and with lecturers and tutors. The intended learning outcomes are formulated clearly and reflect more than adequately the disciplines, level and orientation that can be expected of a bachelor programme at a research university. The committee judges that the bachelor programme PPLE meets the standard.

Teaching-learning environment

The PPLE programme is developed well in terms of learning, teaching and environment. The curriculum structure, which combines interdisciplinary, methodology and specialisation courses, reflects strongly the objectives of the PPLE programme. The course contents ensure that students acquire sufficient interdisciplinary as well as domain-specific competencies. The number of teaching staff is sufficient and the enthusiasm, domain expertise and didactical skills of lecturers and tutors are strong. The PPLE College offers a stimulating environment for students to acquire interdisciplinary skills in an intellectually challenging atmosphere. The committee judges that the bachelor programme PPLE meets the standard.

Student assessment

Student assessment is organised adequately at PPLE. The assessment policy is based on university-wide principles and PPLE-specific provisions such as continuous assessment, immediate feedback and compulsory attendance are properly implemented and contribute to the quality of the learning experience. Assessment is valid, reliable and transparent. Students are very positive about the level and quality of feedback. The PPLE programme has at its disposition an adequate quality control system in which the Examinations Board plays an important role. The thesis assessment as performed in the reviewed sample requires improvement; changes are being undertaken and the current thesis grading rubric constitutes a useful tool for qualitative and accountable assessments. The committee judges that the bachelor programme PPLE meets the standard.

Achieved learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes of the PPLE programme are eventually achieved at the end of the curriculum. The sample of reviewed theses fully meets the quality expectations of a final product at bachelor level and of academic orientation; in some cases the thesis quality is close to what can be expected of a master thesis. Moreover, PPLE graduates are well qualified to pursue a follow-up study. Students are admitted to a wide variety of, sometimes highly reputed, master degree programmes by making their PPLE study trajectory fit the requirements of this follow-up study and/or by convincing admissions committees that their interdisciplinary background and research skills compensate for possible gaps in disciplinary know-how. The committee



judges that the bachelor programme PPLE meets the standard.

Distinctive feature small scale and intensive education

During its five years of operation, PPLE has delivered on its small scale and intensive education ambitions. The intended learning outcomes are formulated at bachelor+ level. The programme includes sufficient extra-curricular activities which are promoted by students and involve both staff and students. The learning environment is particularly suitable for this honours programme and the study load of the curriculum is ambitious yet feasible. A growing number of students applies for PPLE and is selected following a meticulous admissions process. Staffing at PPLE is adequate, both in terms of quantity and quality, and lecturers and tutors teach according to the principles of small scale and intensive education. The facilities at the PPLE College are suitable for an interdisciplinary setting and support efficient and effective learning, as well as community building. The bachelor thesis clearly surpasses baseline quality, and is sometimes close to master level. Moreover, graduating from PPLE constitutes a good basis for a wide variety of follow-up degree programmes, including highly competitive programmes. The committee judges that the bachelor programme PPLE meets the criteria of the Distinctive Feature small-scale and intensive education.

All standards of the NVAO assessment framework are assessed positively and this also applies to all criteria of the Distinctive Feature small scale and intensive education. The assessment committee therefore issues a positive recommendation for the accreditation of the bachelor programme Politics, Psychology, Law and Economics at the University of Amsterdam.

On behalf of the entire assessment committee,

Utrecht, August 2019

Lieke Schreel
Chair

Recommendations

Notwithstanding its positive judgement on the quality of each individual standard of the two evaluation frameworks, the committee sees room for improvement in a number of specific areas of the PPLE programme and therefore issues the following recommendations:

- to establish a domain specific reference framework together with the newly created PPE programmes in the Netherlands;
- to enhance the external exposure of its students and identify more opportunities for study periods abroad within the nominal study period;
- to enhance the career opportunities of tutors;
- to increase variety in the types of assessment;
- to ensure that all thesis evaluation forms are completed fully and in an insightful way;
- to have the thesis evaluation forms reflect better the independent judgement of the respective assessors;
- to revise the Talent Development Programme – or at least link it more effectively to the PPLE curriculum – in order to establish an inseparable connection between both components;
- to stipulate clear criteria for each of the selection instruments that indicate whether a candidate passes (or scores better than other applicants on) the respective assessments;
- to investigate why the drop-out rate at PPLE is relatively high for an honours programme with selective admission, and take appropriate measures.

Mark Delmartino
Secretary

Introduction

PPLE is an international and inter-disciplinary bachelor programme that combines insights from Political science, Psychology, Law and Economics to prepare students for the challenges that modern society faces. The programme is inter-disciplinary in both organisation and delivery, involving three faculties at the University of Amsterdam. Students follow a combination of inter-disciplinary, methodology and specialisation courses. In years two and three, students opt for one of four majors: Politics, Psychology, Law or Economics. At the time of the site visit, the programme is in its fifth year of operation and its third cohort of students is about to graduate. Hence, the committee has focused in its assessment on how the initial intentions of the PPLE programme are being realised paying attention to both the overall quality of implementation and the programme's Distinctive Feature small scale and intensive education.

The institute

The University of Amsterdam (UvA) has a long-standing tradition: its origins date back to 1632 when the *Athenaeum Illustre* was opened. Throughout the centuries, the Athenaeum obtained the status of higher education institution and until 1961, UvA was governed by the City of Amsterdam. Since World War II, the university has grown exponentially and now hosts over 34000 students, 6000 employees and 3000 PhD researchers. The university consists of seven Faculties and offers about 200 degree programmes. Internationalisation is an important dimension of UvA: currently there are more than 5000 international students and almost half of the degree programmes are taught in English. Moreover, there is a growing attention within UvA to inter-disciplinary education and research.

The programme

The bachelor programme Politics, Psychology, Law and Economics (PPLE) was established in 2014 as a joint effort of the Faculty of Law, the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences and the Faculty of Economics and Business of the University of Amsterdam. In organizational terms, PPLE College is part of the Faculty of Law. The college has its own building at Roeterseiland Campus, surrounded by its three founding faculties.

PPLE is an international and inter-disciplinary programme that combines insights from Political science, Psychology, Law and Economics to prepare

students for the challenges that modern society faces. The full-time three-year programme (180 ECTS) is delivered in English and according to the principles of small-scale and intensive education, following selective admission.

At the time of the assessment visit (spring 2019), the PPLE programme is in its fifth year of operation. The assessment exercise constitutes the first external review since the initial accreditation when both the programme was accredited and the distinctive feature 'small-scale and intensive education' was awarded.

The assessment

The PPLE College at the University of Amsterdam assigned AeQui VBI to perform a quality assessment of its bachelor programme PPLE, as well as its distinctive feature small scale and intensive education. In close co-operation with the programme management, AeQui convened an independent and competent assessment committee that was eventually validated by NVAO. The assessment committee is presented in Attachment 1 to this report.

AeQui met with representatives of PPLE to exchange information and plan the date and programme of the site-visit. The site visit was carried out on 3 and 4 June 2019 according to the programme presented in Attachment 2.



In the run-up to the site visit, the assessment committee has studied the self-evaluation report on the programme and reviewed a sample of theses accepted during the last two years. The findings of the report and the results of the thesis review were input for discussions during the visit. The materials put at disposition by the PPLE programme prior to and during the visit are listed in Attachment 5.

The committee has assessed the programme in an independent manner; at the end of the visit, the chair of the assessment committee presented the initial findings of the committee to representatives of the programme and the institution. The underlying document was prepared after the site visit and contains in a systematic way the committee's findings, considerations and conclusions

according to the 2018 NVAO framework for limited programme assessment. Moreover, the section on the small-scale and intensive features of the PPLE education programme addresses the assessment criteria of the 2017 NVAO publication on this Distinctive Feature. A draft version of the report was sent to the programme management; its reactions have led to this final version of the report.

The NVAO assessment framework includes a Development Dialogue. The PPLE College has decided that such dialogue will take place a few months after the site visit. The results of this development dialogue have no impact on the findings, considerations and recommendations expressed in this report.

1. Intended learning outcomes

The PPLE programme has been developed in such a way that it lives up to its ambition of offering an interdisciplinary, international, academic and research-based bachelor programme. PPLE students are educated to combine insights from four disciplines - Politics, Psychology, Law and Economics - using an interdisciplinary approach. The programme's international dimension and demanding curriculum offer motivated students plenty of opportunities for intellectual exchanges among each other and with lecturers and tutors. The intended learning outcomes are formulated clearly and reflect more than adequately the disciplines, level and orientation that can be expected of a bachelor programme at a research university. In order to position itself more distinctively within the higher education landscape, the PPLE programme may want to establish a domain specific reference framework together with the newly established PPE programmes in the Netherlands. According to the assessment committee, the bachelor programme PPLE meets this standard.

Findings

The bachelor programme Politics, Psychology, Law and Economics (PPLE) focuses on challenges in science and society at the interface of social and behavioural sciences, law, business and economics. It starts from the assumption that in order to better understand social phenomena one must approach them from several complementary disciplinary directions and analytical frameworks. Hence, PPLE students are educated to combine insights from the different disciplines using an interdisciplinary approach. Since scientific and societal challenges are international, it is the view of the programme that an international community of students and staff will enrich the learning opportunities and experiences. Hence the decision to deliver the programme in the English language for a (geographically) diverse student group. The committee noticed the strong interdisciplinary orientation of the programme with a clear relationship between the disciplines, giving students the opportunity to combine insights from and understand correlations between the different domains. Moreover, the committee found that the programme is preparing students for a role as broad social scientists, which in turn will support them in tackling the societal challenges of our time.

The PPLE programme started in September 2014. Its multidisciplinary set-up is inspired by the concept of PPE (Philosophy, Politics and Economics), which originated at the University of Oxford in the 1920s. Ever since – and notably in the last decade – similar PPE programmes are being delivered around the globe. In recent years, also a number of Dutch universities are setting up PPE-like programmes. PPLE differs from these new programmes by its additional focus on Psychology and Law. While Philosophy is a constituent part of PPE programmes, it is also addressed throughout the PPLE curriculum. Compared to the broad Liberal Arts and Sciences programmes in University Colleges, the curriculum under review is more focused leaving only limited room for electives. Moreover, in addition to its interdisciplinary nature, PPLE prepares students for master programmes in four disciplines.

As a selective honours college, the PPLE programme focuses on attracting ambitious and intellectually talented students who aspire to become critical, reflective, informed and engaged global citizens. The PPLE College therefore offers a demanding bachelor programme with four characteristics: interdisciplinarity, academically demanding, research-based, and international. The committee gathered from the discussions on



site that the programme indeed offers a broad academic training, is embedded in research across the four disciplines, and caters for an international student body. Moreover, the committee noticed in the Student Chapter – and in the sessions with students and alumni – that students are positive about the aims of the programme: they purposefully signed up for an ambitious, demanding programme with plenty of opportunities for intellectual exchange between staff and students.

In order to be successful in PPLE, students need to acquire 20 intended learning outcomes (ILO): a general set of 17 learning outcomes that all students have to meet and a subset of three final qualifications that are specific per discipline major. The ILO are listed in Attachment 3 to this report. PPLE students who acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes described in the ILO will graduate and can enter a range of master programmes at UvA, in the Netherlands and abroad. The committee gathered from the written materials that the PPLE developers had formulated the ILO in full compliance with the Dublin Descriptors for programmes at bachelor level. Moreover, the committee verified the result of this equivalence exercise in an overview table annexed to the Self-Evaluation.

The PPLE programme is an interdisciplinary endeavour offered by an interfaculty College within a University governance structure that is mainly built around Faculties. The committee learned from the written materials and the discussions on site that in organisational terms, PPLE College is a unit within the Faculty of Law: the Dean of the Law Faculty is overall responsible for the PPLE College and the PPLE Dean is connected as programme director to the Law Faculty. Within the College, the Dean is responsible for the day-to-day management and reports to a Steering Committee of the three constituent faculty deans, chaired by the Dean of the Law Faculty. The PPLE Dean, Programme Manager and Facilities Manager form the PPLE Management Team. The Heads of Stud-

ies, one for every major, are the linking pins between PPLE College and the Faculty departments that deliver the lecturers. The committee understood from the discussions that the structure is feasible from an UvA governance perspective; moreover, from a contents point of view, the principles underlying the PPLE programme design and delivery are accepted by all parties concerned. However, the committee also observed that the College is facing challenges in its day-to-day operations, notably when reconciling the demands of the PPLE programme – good quality lecturers and tutors – with the rules and regulations of the respective Faculties and their departments in making these lecturers and tutors available.

Considerations

Based on the written materials and the discussions on site, the committee considers that the PPLE programme has an explicit profile and clear objectives, which are appropriately framed in an extensive set of final qualifications. The programme addresses four disciplines both in an interdisciplinary manner and in their own right, thereby allowing students to combine academic insights and understand correlations between Politics, Psychology, Law and Economics. The programme has a strong international dimension and offers motivated students ample intellectual challenges and opportunities for exchange among each other and with lecturers and tutors. Furthermore, the committee welcomes the efforts of the programme to invite – and incorporate – feedback from students, staff, alumni and the Advisory Board on the relevance of the programme and its adherence to the most recent (inter)national and (inter)disciplinary developments. In this regard, the extension of the Economics major to include economics and business is particularly relevant.

The intended learning outcomes are formulated clearly and reflect more than adequately the level and orientation that can be expected of a bachelor programme at a research university. In fact, as

will be demonstrated in the section on the Distinctive Framework, the committee considers that the final level to be achieved by PPLE students is higher than in other bachelor degree programmes. The committee finds the subset of intended learning outcomes per major to be appropriate.

Having established that the PPLE programme meets this standard, the committee encourages the programme management to look at the newly established PPE programmes, which it presented in the Self-Evaluation as benchmarks, and design

together with these programmes a domain specific reference framework. By doing so, the PPLE programme can not only point to common features it shares with PPE programmes, but also highlight its own distinctive features that sets PPLE apart from its benchmarks.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee concludes that **the bachelor programme PPLE meets standard 1**, intended learning outcomes.



2. Teaching-learning environment

The PPLE programme is well developed in all three components: learning, teaching, and environment. The curriculum structure, which combines interdisciplinary, methodology and specialisation courses, reflects the objectives of the PPLE programme strongly. The course contents ensure that students acquire sufficient interdisciplinary and domain-specific competencies. The number of teaching staff is sufficient and the enthusiasm, domain expertise and didactical skills of lecturers and tutors is very strong. The PPLE College offers a stimulating environment for students to acquire interdisciplinary skills in an intellectually challenging atmosphere. In the future, the programme may want to enhance the external exposure of its students and identify more opportunities for study periods abroad within the nominal study period. The College should also continue to enhance the career opportunities of tutors who demonstrate enthusiasm, expertise and dedication in teaching at PPLE. According to the assessment committee, the bachelor programme PPLE meets this standard.

Findings

Curriculum

The PPLE curriculum consists of four components: a common academic core of ten interdisciplinary courses, four integrative seminars and three methodology courses (102 EC); the chosen major component (9 courses and the bachelor thesis, 66 EC); two electives (12 EC); and the extra-curricular talent development programme (no credits). The first year consists of common methodology and interdisciplinary courses that offer a broad mindset and grounding in the disciplines; in the second year, students combine common interdisciplinary courses with five major courses (including one skills and research course), the third year features specialisation courses, an interdisciplinary course, a research lab, two electives and the bachelor thesis. An overview of the curriculum as offered in 2018-2019 is presented in Attachment 4 to this report. It contains both a general curriculum outline and the curriculum for each of the four PPLE majors.

Before and during the site visit, the committee has studied the PPLE curriculum in general, as well as the major components and the individual courses. The Self-Evaluation provided an extensive account of the interdisciplinary, methodology and specialisation courses, as well as a detailed rationale for each major component. On site, the committee looked into course materials

of four interdisciplinary and eight specialisation courses. Furthermore, the committee had access to all course materials available on the electronic learning environment CANVAS and was introduced to the curriculum tool which programme management and staff use to safeguard the internal coherence of the course components. Finally, the committee has verified the assessment matrix of PPLE courses linking individual courses to educational methods, assessment types and programme learning outcomes. Combining insights from the different sources, the committee concluded that the programme is well structured and thought through. It contains learning lines that are carried through across the years. The integrative seminars are well designed and achieve their goals, i.e. to have students apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired until that point in the programme. This finding was confirmed by the students who consider the integrative seminars to be very important as they offer room for in-depth study in a different learning mode. The committee also found that research – and the methodology to perform research – is prominently present throughout the three-year programme. In sum, the committee established that the principles underlying the PPLE profile – interdisciplinarity, academic, research-based, and international – are well reflected in the curriculum.

Furthermore, the committee gathered from the discussions with several stakeholders that the

curriculum delivers on both the disciplinary requirements and the interdisciplinary ambitions of the programme. Students appreciate that an interdisciplinary approach is maintained in the curriculum after year one as this enhances the interaction between the different fields. Students can bring in examples from their own major field in other courses. The PPLE programme is demanding: students do not only work on interdisciplinary knowledge and skills, but also prepare for a possible disciplinary master programme afterwards. In this regard, the limited number of elective courses do give students the opportunity to individualise their study trajectory according to their intellectual interests and/or the academic requirements of a graduate programme. Students and alumni have provided several examples of how they designed their study programmes to fit their individual ambitions. These examples showed that in some cases, it is possible to spend a study period abroad or undertake an internship within the nominal duration of the curriculum; in several other cases, however, students had to enrol for a fourth year if they wanted to do an internship or study abroad.

The committee has studied the materials with regard to the extra-curricular components of the programme, as well as the admission, intake and feasibility of the curriculum and discussed these issues at length during the visit. While the overall provisions are adequate, the specific findings and considerations of the committee will be discussed in the section dedicated to the small scale and intensive character of the PPLE programme.

Staff

The courses at PPLE are taught by senior lecturers from the participating faculties and by tutors who are increasingly employed by PPLE. The Heads of Studies are responsible for the content of the programme and the overall coordination of the majors. Senior lecturers design and coordinate the courses, are responsible for the assessments and deliver the theoretical lectures. The contact hours per course are divided in plenary lectures and tutorials; each course has a number of tutors who

complement the theoretical classes with small scale and intensive classes of about 16 students. Students indicated to the committee that they are very satisfied with the quality of the tutors and lecturers. The small tutorial groups constitute a good platform for in-depth learning and allow for more active learning and application of the discipline. Students also valued the role of tutors as student mentors

The committee learned during the visit that a number of courses in the first year feature large-scale frontal teaching; however, the specialisation courses as of year two involve only the major students, and thus plenary lectures address groups of 25 to 60 students. In these courses, lecturers usually manage to teach in an interactive way. Each lecture is complemented by a tutorial. Students think highly of (most) tutors, who challenge the students in their learning and in going beyond average expectations. This is not only the case for experienced tutors, but reportedly also applies to more junior tutors: student interviewees indicated that less experienced but enthusiastic and committed tutors very often go at lengths to perform at the same level as their more senior counterparts.

The committee gathered from the staff overview document in the Self-Evaluation that there are 60 lecturers and 82 tutors. The programme appoints lecturers who are researchers in the domain and have good didactic skills. Almost all lecturers have a university teaching qualification, most have a PhD and 15% is full professor. Several tutors either have or prepare a PhD. Tutors are selected on academic merit and relevant experience. In 2017-2018, 16 new tutors were hired by the programme: they are dedicated to PPLE and strengthen the academic community through mentoring individual students. The committee noticed in the staff overview that a considerable part of the team is international: while 58% of the lecturers has Dutch nationality, a similar share of tutors is non-Dutch. The sheer number of lecturers and tutors, even if operating in the PPLE programme on a small contract, makes the overall



staff-student ratio positive. Depending on the way the ratio is calculated, there is one full-time staff member for every 12 to 16 students.

During the visit, the committee discussed a number of challenges that had been mentioned in the Self-Evaluation, such as staff work pressure, the involvement of lecturers in extra-curricular activities and the turnover of tutors who mostly work on short term contracts. The workload issue is a general challenge across the entire university (and higher education landscape) and not specific to PPLE. In fact, lecturers appreciate the fact that they are challenged in class by motivated and ambitious students. Some lecturers are more involved than others in the extra-curricular activities, but most of them are open to demands from the PPLE study association AIM or for specific one-off events such as lectures or workshops in the framework of the Talent Development Programme. In order to counter the turnover of tutors, which reportedly was a particular challenge in the Business and Economics major, the programme is now working towards more permanent positions for tutors who are hired by – and thus accountable to – the PPLE College rather than the Faculty departments. The committee also understood from the discussions that PPLE is investing in staff quality, offering tutors the opportunity to combine research time (in a faculty) with dedicated teaching time (at PPLE College), whereby the combination of the two assignments provides for a full-time contract. Moreover, tutors are trained by the programme: there is a common induction session before the start of every academic year and new tutors are supported by a more senior tutor ‘buddy’ during their work.

Facilities

The PPLE College is located on seven floors right at the heart of UvA’s Roeterseiland campus, which also houses the three constituent Faculties. The campus and its surroundings offer all facilities of a modern research university. During the guided tour on the College premises, the committee noticed that the facilities are suitable for an interdis-

ciplinary setting and support efficient and effective learning, as well as community building. Furthermore, students and staff use the digital learning environment CANVAS for course information, assignments and feedback.

From the written materials and the discussions it was clear that student guidance is well developed. Every student is assigned a mentor; during the first year, the mentor schedules at least four meetings to discuss (midterm) results and forward planning while students can always ask for more contacts. Mentors related to the major tracks help first-year students in choosing the most appropriate major and assist second and third year students in identifying possible further trajectories. Furthermore, the PPLE College has at disposition of its students one internship coordinator, two student counsellors and an exchange officer.

Considerations

Based on the written materials and the discussions on site, the committee considers that the teaching and learning environment of the PPLE programme is well developed. This positive appreciation covers the learning, the teaching and the environment alike.

The committee considers that the structure of the programme and the individual curriculum components reflect strongly the objectives and the profile of the PPLE programme. The combination of interdisciplinary, methodology and specialisation courses is highly adequate for this type of programme. The course contents ensure that students work towards the learning outcomes at programme level and will eventually have acquired sufficient interdisciplinary and domain-specific competencies. If anything, the committee recommends the programme to give a more external orientation to the way in which the intended learning outcome 12 (*the knowledge needed to create an active learning and working community, work collaboratively, and enhance partnership with the faculty, members of the aca-*

ademic community and external partners) is currently translated in the curriculum. Furthermore, the committee recommends both the Programme Management and the Heads of Studies to continue their efforts and pro-actively identify opportunities for study abroad within the nominal study programme. For example by allowing students to include study abroad courses in their major.

In terms of teaching, the committee considers that the programme makes serious efforts to ensure that good quality teachers are lecturing and tutoring the PPLE students. Moreover, all teaching staff have adequate English language skills. Based on its own impressions on site and the very positive feedback from students and alumni, the committee thinks highly of the enthusiasm, domain expertise and didactical skills of lecturers and - especially - tutors. The committee supports

the efforts of the programme management to recruit tutors who are contractually linked to PPLE and recommends the College to enhance the career opportunities for tutors.

Finally, the committee considers that the PPLE College offers a strong environment for students to acquire interdisciplinary skills in an intellectually challenging atmosphere. In this regard, the quality of the material environment is matched by good quality digital provisions and highly appreciated mentor schemes.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee concludes that **the bachelor programme PPLE meets standard 2**, teaching-learning environment.



3. Student assessment

Student assessment is organised adequately at PPLE. The assessment policy is based on university-wide principles and PPLE-specific provisions such as continuous assessment, immediate feedback and compulsory attendance are properly implemented and contribute to the quality of the learning experience. Assessment is valid, reliable and transparent and students are very positive about the level and quality of feedback. The PPLE programme has an adequate quality control system in which the Examinations Board plays an important role. However, there could be more variety in the assessment modes. The thesis assessment needs improvement at several points: while the current thesis grading rubric constitutes a useful tool for qualitative and accountable assessments, it is now up to the programme to ensure that all (not merely most) thesis evaluation forms are completed in an insightful way and that the forms better reflect the independent judgement of the respective assessors. According to the assessment committee, the bachelor programme PPLE meets this standard.

Findings

The system of student assessment for the PPLE programme is based on the policy of the UvA in general, and on the document Kader Toetsbeleid (2018) more specifically. The rules for testing and assessment are set out in the Teaching and Examination Regulations and the Rules and Guidelines of the Examinations Board. By doing so assessments are created, conducted and evaluated in a uniform way across UvA. It is university-wide policy that each programme develops a Test Policy Plan. The committee has looked into PPLE's Test Policy Plan, which was added to the Self-Evaluation. The Test Policy Plan of PPLE identifies three main objectives for assessment: (i) to provide students with insight into their learning process; (ii) to promote continuous learning throughout the academic year; and (iii) to monitor whether students meet the learning goals of the courses and the intended learning outcomes of the programme.

The committee understood from the materials and the discussions that student assessment at PPLE aims explicitly at continuous assessment: this means that for every course there are at least two different assessments, that the final grade for a course is based on individual student components of at least 50%, and that one assessment cannot constitute more than 70% of the final

grade. Another feature of student assessment at PPLE is the importance of immediate feedback: in fact, assessment results are returned as soon as possible to enable students to adjust their learning activities if necessary. Finally, PPLE upholds a strict attendance policy: students are expected to attend lectures and are obliged to attend tutorial groups. This provision stimulates the community aspect of the programme and encourages students to engage seriously with their studies.

As mentioned in the previous section, the committee has studied the matrix overview in the Self-Evaluation which lists per course the assessment methods. Moreover, the committee looked into the assessment materials of four interdisciplinary courses and eight specialisation courses. According to the committee, this sample contained valid and reliable assessments. Students indicated to the committee that they were always well and timely informed about the exam contents, the assessment methods and the evaluation criteria. Moreover, students were aware of the exam review, which allows them to see their exam and take notes. In case they do not agree to the grade, students can launch an appeal with the Examinations Board.

Apart from the final exam, continuous assessment consists of several small assignments and tests,

which often take place as part of the tutorial. Students indicated that tutors provide extensive and timely feedback to each assignment, which they acknowledge must be a considerable burden for the individual tutors. This work, however, is much appreciated: students mentioned to the committee that the personalised feedback contributes significantly to their learning process.

The bachelor thesis is graded by two lecturers, the first supervisor and a co-supervisor, from different disciplines to ensure an interdisciplinary reflection when grading. The final grade is based on three components: content and form; process; and oral presentation. As part of the thesis review, the committee reviewed the evaluation forms of fifteen bachelor theses. These forms differ for the various cohorts as the programme has adjusted the thesis evaluation process and tools over time. The most recent version of the form – the Grading rubric PPLE BSc Thesis 2019 – was annexed to the Self-Evaluation. The committee noticed a gradual improvement in the quality of the form as such and in the way in which the form was completed. While all forms contain grades and offer the opportunity for written feedback, the grades were not always motivated. In a few other cases, the feedback was not substantiated to the extent that it explained the grade given. In many other cases, however, the assessors had provided sufficient justification of the score to allow external reviewers to understand their appreciation.

Confronted with these findings, staff mentioned that students receive more feedback than what is provided in the evaluation form. Students confirmed this and indicated that they were generally satisfied with the thesis supervision and the feedback they received during the process and at the final presentation. The committee values the new grading rubric, which offers good opportunities to combine detailed grading with insightful feedback. Based on its overall findings on the thesis evaluation, the committee insisted with the Examinations Board and the programme management that the programme should find a way to ensure – for accountability reasons both internally and

externally - that the current form is completed systematically by all, not merely most, assessor teams.

Furthermore, the committee noticed that PPLE has put clear and written procedures in place to monitor and enhance the quality of assessment. Prior to the start of each course, the coordinator submits the course manual to the programme manager to ensure the assessment scheme complies with the Rules and Regulations. Additionally, an external test expert analyses the final exam component of each PPLE course after the first implementation and then at least once every five years.

The Examinations Board consists of five members plus a secretary: four Faculty members representing the PPLE disciplines and an external member with a special focus on interdisciplinarity. The committee spoke to the entire Examinations Board and noticed that they play an important and active role in the quality assurance of both course assessments and the final thesis. For instance, every year the Board selects a representative sample of bachelor theses to assess both quality and grading. The Examinations Board emphasised that its thesis reviews until now had only been positive as they had found that quality and grading were matching. However, they did understand the position of the assessment committee and agreed that for reasons of accountability more attention should be paid to insightful feedback per thesis rubric.

Considerations

Based on the written materials and the discussions on site, the committee considers that student assessment is organised adequately at PPLE. The assessment policy is based on university-wide principles and the PPLE-specific provisions such as continuous assessment, immediate feedback and compulsory attendance are properly implemented and contribute to the quality of the learning experience.



The committee thinks positively of the way in which assessment is organised and implemented in the different PPLE courses: assessment is valid, reliable and transparent and students are very positive about the level and quality of feedback. It is recommended that the programme looks for ways to include more variety in the assessment forms. In this regard, the committee welcomes the suggestion and expertise from the external member of the Examinations Board.

The thesis assessment is in full development. Based on its review of past thesis evaluation forms, the committee emphasizes that it applauds the extensive feedback students receive either in the thesis document or through separate messages. However, the evaluation form also constitutes an important means to account internally and externally for the final grade and sub-grades. While grades have been given, the motivation of the grades was not always sufficiently clear. The committee therefore welcomes the most recent thesis grading rubric, which invites assessors to motivate their grades per sub-category. It strongly recommends the programme to check that in the future all (not merely most) evaluation forms are completed in an insightful way.

The committee gathered from the evaluation forms and the procedures that two assessors are involved in the thesis grading. However, their individual and independent judgement is not reflected as such in the evaluation form. In order to

ensure such independent judgements, the committee recommends the programme to have each supervisor complete the form separately and to archive both forms and a final cover form reflecting the final grade given. In view of the reportedly intensive involvement of supervisors in the thesis development process, the committee invites the programme to consider adding a third - fully independent - assessor to safeguard the independence of the judgement.

Finally, the committee considers that the programme has an extensive quality control system in place. In this regard, the Examinations Board plays an important role and implements its tasks dutifully. The Board members know the programme very well and have agreed on a relevant division of tasks. Until now, the cooperation with the independent test expert focused on quality reviews at course level. The committee suggests to use the available expertise to also review the quality of assessments at meso-level and establish for instance whether there is an appropriate mixture of assessment modes across courses.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee concludes that the **bachelor programme PPLE meets standard 3**, student assessment.

4. Achieved learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes of the PPLE programme are achieved at the end of the curriculum. The sample of reviewed theses fully meets the quality expectations of a final product at bachelor level and of academic orientation; in some cases the thesis quality is close to what can be expected of a master thesis. PPLE graduates are well qualified to pursue graduate degrees. Students are admitted to a wide variety of sometimes highly reputed master degree programmes by making their PPLE study trajectory fit the requirements of this follow-up study and/or by convincing admissions teams that their interdisciplinary background and research skills compensate for possible gaps in disciplinary know-how. According to the assessment committee, the bachelor programme PPLE meets this standard.

Findings

PPLE students demonstrate that they have achieved the intended learning outcomes through the bachelor thesis. The thesis is part of the student's major and constitutes an assessment of competence and autonomy, completed towards the end of the programme. It is the culmination of a skills development process building up throughout the research methods courses, research based teaching, and the interdisciplinary content of the curriculum. Within a general theme and a broad methodological framework, students develop their own research question and research plan including two disciplines.

In order to establish whether students actually achieve these end level qualifications, the assessment committee has reviewed a sample of 16 theses. In the run-up to the site visit, the programme management provided an overview of the theses that were submitted in the academic years 2016-2017 and 2017-2018. The secretary and chair of the committee made a selection of the theses to be reviewed ensuring a fair distribution across scores, year of submission, and majors. The committee's chair, domain and industry experts were each allocated a number of theses and their respective evaluation forms. For each set of products, the committee answered four questions: (i) Is the thesis of sufficient quality to pass? (ii) Do you agree to the score given by the assessors? (iii) Based on the evaluation form, is the assessment clear and insightful? (iv) Are there any particularly strong or weak elements in the execution of the

thesis? Having reviewed their sample of theses, the committee members provided an overall appreciation at programme level on the quality of the theses and on the quality/transparency of the assessment. The committee findings on the assessment of the bachelor theses have been described in the previous section on student assessment.

The committee members reported that they found each thesis to be of sufficient quality and thus to reflect the academic bachelor level. In most cases, the committee also agreed to the scores: in fact, the thesis that according to the committee was by far the weakest product from an academic point of view, had indeed received the lowest pass score of the supervisors. On the upper end of the continuum, the committee reviewed theses which they thought could have fulfilled the requirements for a thesis at master level. With regard to the thesis execution, the committee noticed that all theses had been written in a clear format and that students used data to carry out their own analyses. Students clearly stated the research question, hypothesis and method. Some theses combined qualitative with quantitative approaches, which underscores the interdisciplinary nature of the programme. The level of English was generally good. In some cases, the committee found that students were not very skilled at integrating interviews as data sources in the thesis and that most students paid little attention to the practical relevance of the thesis. In this regard, a



stronger connection to practice could enhance employability in the future.

In addition to verifying the quality of the final deliverables, the labour market performance of graduates or their preparation for graduate study is another way to establish whether students achieve the intended learning outcomes upon completion of the programme. Given that PPLE is an academic bachelor programme, most graduates are expected to pursue a master degree. The committee understood from the materials and the discussions that most PPLE graduates indeed continue to a master degree. While 64% of the students finish within the nominal period of three years, an additional 20% enrol for another year in order to do an internship or a study period abroad before entering a master programme. Some Dutch law major students are taking a transition year at the Faculty of Law to obtain a Bachelor of Law degree that qualifies them for '*civiel effect*'.

The committee understood from the written materials and from the discussions with alumni and students that PPLE graduates do manage to enter relevant master programmes, provided they make good use of the electives space (e.g. taking specific Dutch law courses to smoothen the transition year towards '*civiel effect*') and inform the prospective master degree of the specific features (such as the interdisciplinary background and the attention to research) of PPLE. During the visit, the committee was particularly impressed by the reflections and hands-on mentality of the third-year PPLE students who had either already arranged for a graduate programme or had ensured several entry opportunities. While students did mention that PPLE is not yet well known beyond UvA, it seems that the programme does allow students to get admitted to strong master degrees (far) beyond the University of Amsterdam.

Considerations

Based on its thesis review and the discussions on site, the committee considers that students who graduate from the PPLE bachelor programme are adequately prepared for a follow-up study. It is fair to state that the intended learning outcomes of the programme are eventually achieved at the end of the bachelor curriculum.

Taking the bachelor thesis as a key performance indicator for this standard, the committee considers that the thesis quality meets the expectations of a final product at bachelor level and of academic orientation. In some cases the quality clearly surpasses this level and is close to what can be expected of a master thesis.

With regard to the other key performance indicator for this standard, the assessment committee considers that PPLE graduates are well qualified to pursue a graduate study. The committee is impressed by the wide range of – sometimes highly reputed - master degree programmes PPLE graduates manage to enter. Students, and their major mentors, pay attention to making their PPLE study trajectory fit the requirements of the graduate study. Moreover, students act as ambassadors of PPLE when they convince potential master degree programmes that they fulfil the admission requirements or can compensate for disciplinary know-how with their own interdisciplinary background and research skills.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee concludes that **the bachelor programme PPLE meets standard 4**, achieved learning outcomes.

5. Distinctive Feature small scale and intensive education

The PPLE programme meets all the criteria of the Distinctive Feature small scale and intensive education. During its five years of operation, PPLE has been delivering on its small scale and intensive education ambitions. The intended learning outcomes are formulated at bachelor+ level. The programme includes sufficient extra-curricular activities which are promoted by students and involve both staff and students. The learning environment is particularly suitable for this honours programme and the study load of the curriculum is ambitious yet feasible. An increasing number of students applies for PPLE and is selected following a comprehensive admissions process. Staffing at PPLE is adequate, both in terms of quantity and quality, and lecturers and tutors teach according to the principles of small scale and intensive education. The facilities at the PPLE College are suitable for an interdisciplinary setting and support efficient and effective learning, as well as community building. The bachelor thesis surpasses baseline quality, is sometimes close to master level. Moreover, graduating from PPLE constitutes a good basis for a wide variety of graduate degree programmes. In addition to these positive considerations, the committee noticed that three elements require further attention: the Talent Development Programme can be linked more effectively to the PPLE curriculum; the selection instruments for the intake should feature clear criteria to decide whether a candidate passes the test or scores higher than another applicant; and the programme is strongly encouraged to investigate why its drop-out rate is relatively high for an honours scheme with selective admission, and take appropriate measures. According to the assessment committee, the bachelor programme PPLE meets the criteria of the Distinctive Feature small scale and intensive education.

Findings

Intended learning outcomes

The committee noticed that PPLE's learning outcomes are more ambitious than what the Dublin Descriptors for the bachelor level prescribe. The extensive set of 20 learning outcomes is formulated in a way that goes beyond the level expressed in the Dublin Descriptors: 'achieved fundamental knowledge', 'theoretical and empirical overview', 'construct and articulate sound arguments', etc. Moreover, the intended learning outcomes do not only reflect the disciplinary components of the four majors, but also pay explicit attention to the interdisciplinary character of the programme: 'an overview of interdisciplinarity', 'identify new developments in various academic fields', 'contribute towards an interdisciplinary concept or methodology', 'an openness to different approaches across disciplines'. Some PPLE learning outcomes correspond to the second cycle (master level) of the Dublin Descriptors, such as the references to interdisciplinary skills and 'the ability to contribute creatively to academic research'. Finally, the committee noticed that the

intended learning outcomes relating to communication (ILO 8-12) and lifelong learning skills (ILO 13-17) cover more skills and attitude related aspects than what is customary in the bachelor level Dublin Descriptors: leadership skills, demonstrated social engagement, increased awareness of social and civic responsibilities, the capacity to critically evaluate academic knowledge in relation to current events, intellectual integrity, and ascribing to the ethics of scholarship.

Curriculum contents

PPLE students work on development of their academic, professional and social skills both within the curriculum and outside of it. The curriculum related part is judged positively by the committee and is covered in the section on teaching learning environment.

The extra-curricular Talent Development Programme (TDP) is organised by students with support of staff. It is directed at professional and personal skills development and ranges from academic discussions on current affairs, via tips and testimonials of industry leaders, to workshops on



lobbying and CV building. On request of the committee, the programme provided a detailed overview of the TDP activities since September 2017. The committee noticed that a lot of very different activities are incorporated under the broad umbrella of TDP: several actions are clearly relevant to individual course goals (e.g. theatre visit) or the wider ambitions of the programme (workshop on lobbying, debating workshop). Other events seem to advance students' professional future (career events, meeting with Google staff) or reflect the priorities of the moment (several events related to the PPLE student initiative Our Bodies Our Voices) and still other activities promote community building (such as a pubquiz or a bike repair workshop).

All in all, the committee found that there are many activities, that most activities are organised by students and that many events involve both students and staff. The committee does recommend the programme management to evaluate TDP and to investigate with students and the dedicated TDP staff member how the range of TDP activities can be linked more effectively to the learning outcomes of the PPLE programme and the learning goals of the individual courses. While current extra-curricular activities are 'eligible' for a programme with the Distinctive Feature small scale and intensive education, the committee thinks that more can be done by TDP to demonstrate the 'inseparable connection' of its actions with the PPLE curriculum.

Learning environment

The educational concept underlying PPLE is based on four principles: an interdisciplinary environment, small scale and intensive education, research-based learning and internationalisation. Three of these principles have been addressed in the sections on intended learning outcomes and teaching learning environment and constitute important and strong pillars of PPLE, according to the committee.

In terms of small scale and intensive education, the committee understood from the written materials and the discussions on site that students have a considerable number of contact hours, on average 16 hours per week. At least half of these contacts take place in a small-scale setting of intensive and mandatory tutorials with around 16 participants per group. Students also attend larger scale interdisciplinary lectures, while the major-specific specialisation courses feature lectures for class sizes between 25 and 60 students. Students appreciate the variety of education methods. The compulsory attendance and above all the expected preparations for tutorials make the programme intensive and contribute to the community feeling among students and between students and staff, in particular tutors.

The curriculum is structured in such a way that students can finish the entire curriculum within the nominal period. Staff and students confirmed to the committee that the study load of the individual courses and the major tracks is challenging but feasible. The curriculum leaves little room for electives. While a short internship or a study period abroad can be organised as part of the regular trajectory, it is difficult to have part of the major courses replaced by an equivalent set of courses abroad. Hence several students who have finished all courses, decide not to graduate but to enrol for another year and perform an internship and/or a longer study period abroad.

Although feasible, the PPLE programme is demanding. Nonetheless, the drop-out rates are rather low. The Binding Study Advice (BSA) threshold is 54 ECTS. Every year around 11% of the students drop out voluntarily or involuntarily, while another 5% decide to switch to another programme within UvA. While the committee recognises that the drop-out and switch rate is low in comparison to regular bachelor programmes, this rate is not so low compared to other programmes featuring small scale and intensive education where drop-out and switch together are at maximum 10%. Discussions with alumni, students and programme management revealed a whole range

of individual reasons students may have for dropping out or switching programmes: homesickness, housing problems, the temptations of being away from home and living in Amsterdam, finding out that a disciplinary programme better fits the academic interests, etc. However, there was no clear set of reasons that explains why every year more than 30 students leave PPLE. The committee suggests the programme to look into these figures and - upon identifying the causes - to adjust either the information on the programme, the admissions process or the student guidance and counselling.

Intake

The PPLE programme is allowed to select its students. To study at PPLE College, prospective students need to meet four entry requirements: approved diploma level, Grade Point Average, mathematics skills, and English proficiency. Applicants with a Dutch VWO diploma need to have a GPA of 7, Mathematics A or B and English 8. The committee noticed that the programme holds an extensive overview of equivalent entry requirements per diploma type and per country of origin. The committee was told that every year, the number of applications increases (in Spring 2019, 1040 students applied) and that the range of applicants that fulfil the entry requirements is growing. This in turn means that the selection procedure becomes more strict and more competitive. Several alumni indicated to the committee that they would probably not be selected anymore if they were to apply now with the credentials they had at the start of the programme in 2014 or 2015.

Once the applicants have been identified who meet the entry requirements, a second round of admissions is organised in which students write an essay, a study plan and a financial plan. In a third round, students are interviewed. The admissions committee of PPLE academic staff chaired by the PPLE Dean makes the final decision whether or not to grant the applicant a conditional offer. The committee noticed that PPLE has

a thorough and well-functioning admissions procedure in place. Besides selection based on academic merit, the programme also looks for motivated students who actively seek a demanding interdisciplinary study in an international community. The committee acknowledges that the essay, cv, interview and study plan are useful instruments in this selection process. However, the committee also noticed that the programme has only very few criteria (apart from formal knock-out elements such as applying after the deadline and submitting incomplete files) to stipulate why one essay is better than the other and why certain applicants deserve more than others to be accepted based on the interview. Hence, it suggests the programme to define clearly the criteria that decide on the quality of the tests, such as the essay, the study plan, the CV or the interview.

Staff

The committee noticed in the previous section on teaching learning environment that the staffing at PPLE is adequate, both in terms of quantity and quality. On request of the committee, the programme has provided a detailed breakdown of the data underpinning the staff-student ratio: PPLE features 7,5 FTE of lecturers (12 FTE if research is included), 23 FTE of tutors and 11 FTE of support staff. Balancing these figures to the total number of 560 students, the staff-student ratio is 1 on 12 (or 1 on 16, if only counting the teaching staff). The committee understands that this ratio is much more favourable than at regular programmes.

Furthermore, the programme appoints teaching staff who has research-based knowledge of the domain and good didactic skills. Very often, tutors are young and ambitious academics with an interdisciplinary background and interest. Where needed, the programme provides opportunities for dedicated training (such as the university teaching qualification) and encourages staff to experiment with new methods and assess the effect of these interventions. Several teaching staff indicated to the committee that they have been



trained on didactical competencies, including assessment skills. Students are very enthusiastic about the lecturers, in particular the tutors who also act as student mentors. A growing number of tutors is contractually linked to the PPLE College, which further enhances the community feeling and the ongoing contact between students and tutors. Finally, the committee noticed that there are several support staff members who facilitate the student's learning experience.

Facilities

The PPLE programme has its own distinctive building, the PPLE College, where staff and students mix easily. The College is spread over seven floors for a total of 2200m² and offers far more study places than other programmes. The building is accessible to UvA staff but reserved to only PPLE students in order to strengthen the community feeling. The College features a central meeting place and tutorial rooms on every floor, next to offices and study places. In fact, all functions are mixed in order for support staff, teaching staff and students to meet and see each other. The College also houses the study association AIM; the students coordinating the extra-curricular Talent Development Programme also have their own dedicated room. During the guided tour on the College premises, the committee noticed that the facilities are suitable for an interdisciplinary setting and support efficient and effective learning, as well as community building.

Achieved learning outcomes

The committee has established in the previous sections that the courses, the assessments and the bachelor thesis are in line with the objectives of PPLE as an international, interdisciplinary, academic and research-based programme. The course contents ensure according to the committee that students work towards the learning outcomes at programme level and will eventually have acquired sufficient interdisciplinary and domain-specific competencies. Moreover, on the basis of its review of a sample of bachelor theses, the committee considers that the thesis quality does not only meet the expectations of a final

product at bachelor level and of academic orientation, but in some cases clearly surpasses this baseline quality and is close to what can be expected of a master thesis.

The written materials and the discussions on site have provided ample evidence to the committee that PPLE constitutes a good basis for a wide variety of follow-up degree programmes at master level. Discussions with recent alumni and third-year bachelor students demonstrated that the interdisciplinary character of the programme, its well-developed research component and the ambition of the individual students/graduates form a very strong combination to get accepted in, sometimes highly reputed and competitive, master programmes within the Netherlands and abroad.

The share of students that graduate after three or four years is considerably higher than in regular bachelor programmes and similar to other small scale and intensive programmes such as the Liberal Arts and Sciences degree at the University College Amsterdam. Based on the detailed figures for the first two cohorts, 64% of students who entered year 2 finished the degree in time, while 96% finished within four years. The committee understood from the discussions on site that several students could have finished in three years but decided to enrol for a fourth year in order to undertake an internship or a study period abroad. The committee therefore encourages both the Programme Management and the Heads of Studies to continue their efforts and pro-actively identify opportunities for study periods abroad within the nominal study period.

Considerations

Based on the written materials and the discussions on site, the committee judges that the PPLE programme meets all the criteria of the Distinctive Feature small scale and intensive education. Combining its findings and considerations from the previous sections on the overall programme quality with the elements that address in particu-

lar the small scale and intensive education components, the committee considers that in its five years of operation, the bachelor programme PPLE has delivered on its ambitions.

In so far as the criteria of the Distinctive Feature are concerned, the committee considers that:

- the intended learning outcomes are formulated at bachelor+ level;
- the programme includes sufficient extra-curricular activities which are organised by students and involve both staff and students;
- the learning environment is particularly suitable for this honours programme and that the study load of the curriculum is ambitious yet feasible;
- a growing number of students applies for PPLE and is selected following a comprehensive admissions process. The selection results in cohorts of motivated and talented students;
- staffing at PPLE is adequate, both in terms of quantity and quality. Lecturers and tutors deliver teaching according to the principles of small scale and intensive education;
- the facilities at PPLE College fit the interdisciplinary setting and support efficient and effective learning, as well as community building;
- the bachelor thesis clearly surpasses baseline quality and is often close to master level;
- PPLE constitutes a good basis for a wide variety of follow-up degree programmes.

In addition to these positive considerations and having established that PPLE meets each criterion of the Distinctive Feature evaluation framework, the committee noticed that three elements require further attention. First and foremost, the Talent Development Programme in general and its broad range of activities in particular can be

linked more effectively to the learning outcomes of the PPLE programme and the learning goals of the individual courses. According to the committee, more can be done to demonstrate the inseparable connection between the TDP actions and the PPLE curriculum.

Secondly, the growing interest in the PPLE programme results in more high quality applications which require an equally robust selection procedure. While the selection instruments are appropriate, the programme should define clearly the criteria that decide whether a candidate passes (or scores higher than another applicant) on the essay, the motivation/study plan, the CV and the interview.

Finally, the committee acknowledges that the drop-out and success rates of PPLE students are considerably better than in regular bachelor programmes. However, in comparison to other Honours programmes featuring small scale intensive education and selective admission, the PPLE success rate after the nominal period of three years is average and its drop-out (+ switch) rate relatively high. The committee strongly encourages the programme to look into these figures and - upon identifying the causes - to adjust either the information on the programme, the admission process or the student guidance and counselling.

Based on the interviews and examination of the underlying documentation, the assessment committee concludes that **the bachelor programme PPLE meets all criteria of the Distinctive Feature small scale and intensive education.**



Attachments

Attachment 1. Assessment committee

Lieke Schreel is onderwijsdirecteur van Leiden University College The Hague.

Bert Mosselmans is verbonden aan het University College Roosevelt in Middelburg, waar hij micro-economie en industriële organisatie doceert.

Rutger Claassen is Professor of Political Philosophy & Economic Ethics, Department of Philosophy & Religious Studies, aan de Universiteit Utrecht.

Wim Huisman is Professor of Criminology en hoofd van de VU School of Criminology.

Jan-Willem van Prooijen is Associate professor bij het Departement Experimental and Applied Psychology aan de VU Amsterdam en senior researcher bij NSCR (Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement).

Martijn Snoep is bestuursvoorzitter Autoriteit Consument & Markt (portefeuilles Strategie & Communicatie, Mededinging, Zorg).

Perry van Loon studeert Bestuur & Organisatiewetenschap aan de Universiteit Utrecht (minor: Onderwijs-wetenschap).

The panel was supported by Mark Delmartino MA, secretary and process coordinator. All panel-members signed a declaration of independence and confidentiality, which were submitted to NVAO.



Attachment 2. Programme of the assessment visit

Venue: Amsterdam Law School (ALS), mock trial auditorium, room 03.15

Monday 3 June 2019

- 12.00 Arrival of the committee
- 12.15 Internal preparatory meeting and lunch
- 14.00 Meet & Greet at PPLE college
 - Welcome by ALS Dean and PPLE Dean
 - Guided tour of premises by PPLE Dean
 - PPLE movie and career event – PPLE student association AIM
 - Presentation of curriculum tool – PPLE programme manager
 - Tutorial
- 15.30 Session with PPLE management
- 16.30 Session focusing on the small-scale and intensive character of PPLE
- 17.30 Session with alumni
- 18.15 Internal meeting
- 18.45 End of day one

Tuesday 4 June 2019

- 08.30 Open consultation hour
- 09.30 Session with PPLE teachers
- 10.45 Session with PPLE students
- 12.00 Session with PPLE Exam Board
- 12.45 Lunch
- 13.15 Internal meeting
- 14.00 Meeting with management
- 14.45 Internal meeting committee
- 16.45 Plenary feedback
- 17.00 End of site visit

A list of the interviewees is available.

Attachment 3. Final qualifications

PPLE Learning Outcomes

The programme aims to:

- a. Provide knowledge, skills and understanding in the areas of Politics, Psychology, Law and Economics and achieve the exit qualifications listed below.
- b. Provide an academic education, which includes the acquisition of academic skills such as logical discourse; developing writing, speaking, and research skills; correctly citing and attributing sources; learning to solve complex problems independently and creatively; and learning to engage in critical reflection.

Knowledge and understanding

PPLE graduates will have:

1. Achieved fundamental knowledge of central concepts, models, methods, and applied theoretical and empirical techniques within Politics, Psychology, Law, and Economics.
2. A general theoretical and empirical overview of interdisciplinarity, which provides the student with a framework to understand, evaluate, and put their own academic activities in perspective.

Applying knowledge and understanding

PPLE graduates will have:

3. The ability to contribute creatively to academic research, and to analyse and solve the complex problems that arise in society (both independently and collaboratively), which requires an integration of knowledge.
4. The ability to identify new developments in various academic fields, to relate these developments to established theories, and to place them in a broader (social) context.
5. The ability to know how to translate an actual problem into a problem suited for academic research and how to translate the theoretical findings into recommendations (for the factual problems).

Making judgments

PPLE graduates will have:

6. The capacity to find relevant information, and to organize, analyse and present these findings with clarity and precision.
7. The ability to assess which research methods are most suitable for a specific situation and to contribute towards an interdisciplinary concept or methodology that cannot be confined to a specific discipline.

Communication

PPLE graduates will have:

8. The ability to construct and articulate sound arguments (in oral and written modes) about social issues and current events, in both professional and academic settings.



9. An openness to different approaches across disciplines and to an analytical approach in which disciplinary boundaries are no longer obstacles.
10. Demonstrated social engagement and increased awareness of social and civic responsibilities.
11. An understanding and appreciation of social and cultural diversity, and the ability to reflect on their own expertise.
12. The knowledge needed to create an active learning and working community, work collaboratively, and enhance partnership with the faculty, members of the academic community, and external partners (such as representatives from business, industry, government, and professional associations).

Learning skills

PPL graduate will have:

13. The capacity to efficiently learn a paradigm and related terminology of a particular discipline.
14. The capacity to constantly critically evaluate their acquired academic knowledge in relation to current events.
15. Leadership skills, including a willingness to engage in constructive public discourse.
16. Come to appreciate the importance of the practice of life-long learning, either in their academic or professional lives.
17. Respect for truth and intellectual integrity and for ascribing to the ethics of scholarship.

Major – Political Science

PPL graduate will have:

- a. Knowledge of key areas of Political Science, including policy-making processes and governance in national, transnational and supranational settings, international relations and European politics, and dynamics of conflictuality and cooperation in global politics, and core concepts in contemporary political science such as democracy, legitimacy, and citizenship.
- b. Knowledge of and the ability to apply the most prominent theories and methodological foundations of Political Science.
- c. An understanding of the broader context in which the research in Political Science is based.

Major – Psychology

PPL graduate will have:

- a. Knowledge of the key areas of Psychology, including fundamental processes in psychology, decision-making, cognitive and motivational processes, intra- and intergroup processes and the influence of these processes on human behaviours in various contexts.
- b. Knowledge of and the ability to apply the most prominent theories and methodological foundations of Psychology.
- c. An understanding of the broader context in which the research in Psychology is based.

Major – Law

PPLE graduates will have:

- a. Knowledge of the key areas of Law, including legal theory & history and core topics in public and private law from an international, European and comparative perspective.
- b. Knowledge of and the ability to apply the most prominent theories and methodological foundations of Law.
- c. An understanding of the broader context in which the research in Law is based.

Major – Economics and Business

PPLE graduates will have:

1. Knowledge of the key areas of Economics, including micro- and macroeconomics, functions of markets and organizations, accountancy, marketing management, (corporate) finance, banking and monetary economics, and econometrics.
2. Knowledge of and the ability to apply the most prominent theories and methodological foundations of Economics.
3. An understanding of the broader context in which the research in Economics is positioned.



Attachment 4. Overview of the programme

PPLE Curriculum 2018-2019

Year 1

Semester 1	Doing Research, an Introduction	Rhetoric	Integrative seminar I: Human Rights	Talent Development Programme
	Politics, Power and Governance I	Law, Justice and Morality I		
Semester 2	Philosophy of the Social Sciences	Introduction to Statistical Analysis	Integrative seminar II: Solidarity	
	Economics, Markets and Organisations I	Decision Making I		

- Interdisciplinary courses
- Methodology courses
- Specialisation and thesis

Year 2

Semester 3	Major course 1	Major course 2	Integrative seminar III: Security	Talent Development Programme
	Law, Justice and Morality II	Economics, Markets and Organisations II		
Semester 4	Major course 3	Major course 4	Integrative seminar IV: Societal Challenges	
	Major specific course on Skills and Research Methods	Politics, Power and Governance II		

Year 3

Semester 5	Major course 5	Major course 7	Elective	Talent Development Programme
	Major course 6	Elective		
Semester 6	Decision Making II	Major course 8	Thesis	
	Research Lab	Thesis		

8-week block

8-week block

4-week block

Attachment 5. Documents

Information Report

- Self-Evaluation Politics, Psychology, Law and Economics, University of Amsterdam. Amsterdam Law School, April 2019.
- Appendices to Self-Evaluation:
 - o Intended learning outcomes
 - o Curriculum overview and Major descriptions
 - o Matrix learning outcomes versus courses
 - o Course catalogue
 - o Curriculum evaluation 2017-2018
 - o Teaching and Examination Rules
 - o Recommendations previous panel and actions taken
 - o Grading rubric thesis
 - o PPLE Test policy plan
 - o Overview of staff
 - o Members Examination Board, Programme Committee and Advisory Board

Materials made available electronically and/or on site

- Publication PPLE Class 2017
- Publication PPLE Class 2018
- PPLE College: Student Handbook 2018-2019
- PPLE College: Faculty Handbook, September 2018
- Rules & Regulations PPLE College
- PPLE Entry requirements and admissions procedure
- Information on applications, conditional offers and enrolment
- Information on student/staff ratio
- Information on intake, student numbers per Major, and drop-out/switch
- PPLE extra-curricular events 2017-2018 and 2018-2019
- PPLE course manual internship
- Rhetorics course reader
- Law, Justice and Morality course reader
- Materials on integrative seminars I and II
- Assessment materials on eight Major courses
- Detailed course outlines (through learning environment CANVAS)
- Sample of handbooks
- Publicity materials

Thesis review

15 theses and their evaluation forms from PPLE students who graduated in 2016-2017 and 2017-2018

