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## FINAL REPORT

**WESTFÄLISCHE WILHELMS-UNIVERSITÄT MÜNSTER (GERMANY)  
AND UNIVERSITEIT TWENTE (THE NETHERLANDS)**

# **PUBLIC GOVERNANCE ACROSS BORDERS (BACHELOR OF SCIENCE)**

JOINT DEGREE PROGRAMME

June 2023



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**DECISION OF THE AQAS STANDING COMMISSION  
ON THE STUDY PROGRAMME  
„PUBLIC GOVERNANCE ACROSS BORDERS“ (B.SC.)  
OFFERED BY UNIVERSITÄT MÜNSTER (DE) AND UNIVERSITEIT TWENTE (NL)**

**Based on the report of the expert panel and the discussions of the AQAS Standing Commission in its 17<sup>th</sup> meeting on 22 May 2023, the AQAS Standing Commission decides:**

1. The study programme “**Public Governance across Borders**” (**Bachelor of Science**) jointly offered by **Universität Münster, Germany**, and **Universiteit Twente, the Netherlands**, is accredited according to the Standards defined in the European Approach for Quality Assurance for Joint Programmes.

The study programme complies with the requirements defined by the criteria and thus the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) in their current version.

2. The accreditation is given for the period of **six years** and is valid until **30 June 2029**.

The following **recommendations** are given for further improvement of the programme:

1. To emphasize the mutuality and cohesion of the programme, an interuniversity coordinator should be appointed.
2. In the programme, the Public Administration angle should be focused on more.
3. Access to information on different issues that may arise at different points in the course of study either at WWU or UT should be facilitated. For this purpose, a central information point should be created and/or other supporting measures (like check lists) should be taken.
4. Teaching and learning methods should be regularly adapted to current developments, for example in the field of digital learning.
5. Data on students and course and programme evaluations' results should be collected regularly and on a comparable level at both universities or, which would even be preferable, the joint quality assurance system should be further developed so that information can be collected more systematically and in a programme-specific way.

With regard to the reasons for this decision the Standing Commission refers to the attached experts' report.

**EXPERTS' REPORT  
ON THE JOINT DEGREE PROGRAMME  
PUBLIC GOVERNANCE ACROSS BORDERS  
(BACHELOR OF SCIENCE)  
OFFERED BY WESTFÄLISCHE WILHELMS-UNIVERSITÄT MÜNSTER (GERMANY)  
AND UNIVERSITEIT TWENTE (THE NETHERLANDS)**

Visit to the university: 28 November 2022

**Panel of experts:**

**Prof. Dr. Michael Kaeding** University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany, Professor for European Integration and European Policy

**Prof. Dr. Frits van der Meer** University of Leiden, The Netherlands, Professor by special appointment Comparative Public Sector and Civil Service Reform

**Hon.-Prof. Dr. Marga Pröhl** honorary professor at German University of Administrative Sciences Speyer; Head (ret.), Sustainability Office, Federal Ministry of the Interior/BAKÖV, Germany (labour market representative)

**Luc Zettl** University of Erfurt, Germany/Andrássy University Budapest, Hungary (student expert)

Coordinator:  
Ninja Fischer AQAS, Cologne, Germany

## Preamble

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AQAS – Agency for Quality Assurance through Accreditation of Study Programmes – is an independent non-profit organisation supported by more than 90 universities, universities of applied sciences and academic associations. Since 2002, the agency has been recognised by the German Accreditation Council (GAC). It is, therefore, a notified body for the accreditation of higher education institutions and programmes in Germany.

AQAS is a full member of ENQA and also listed in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) which confirms that our procedures comply with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), on which all Bologna countries agreed as a basis for internal and external quality assurance.

AQAS is an institution founded by and working for higher education institutions and academic associations. The agency is devoted to quality assurance and quality development of academic studies and higher education institutions' teaching. In line with AQAS' mission statement, the official bodies in Germany and Europe (GAC and EQAR) approved that the activities of AQAS in accreditation are neither limited to specific academic disciplines or degrees nor a particular type of higher education institution.

## 1. General information

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### Basic information on the procedure

This report results from the external review of the study programme “Public Governance across Borders” offered jointly by Universiteit Twente/University of Twente (UT) and Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster/University of Münster (WWU).

### Criteria

The programme is assessed against the criteria defined by the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes. The criteria are based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) 2015.

### Approach and methodology

#### *Initialisation*

The university consortium mandated AQAS to perform the accreditation procedure in March 2022. The university consortium produced a Self-Evaluation Report (SER). In July 2022, the consortium handed in a draft of the SER together with the relevant documentation on the programme and an appendix as well as, in case of a reaccreditation, statistical data on the programme. The appendix included e.g.:

- an overview over statistical data of the student body (e.g., number of applications, beginners, students, graduates, student dropouts),
- information on student services,
- as well as academic regulations.

AQAS checked the SER regarding completeness, comprehensibility, and transparency. The accreditation procedure was officially initialised by a decision of the AQAS Standing Commission on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2022. The final version of the SER was handed in October 2022.

#### *Nomination of the expert panel*

The composition of the panel of experts follows the stakeholder principle. Consequently, representatives from the respective disciplines, the labour market, and students are involved. Furthermore, AQAS follows the principles for the selection of experts defined by the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA). The Standing Commission nominated the aforementioned expert panel in August 2022. AQAS informed the university consortium about the members of the expert panel and the university consortium did not raise any concerns against the composition of the panel.

#### *Preparation of the site visit*

Prior to the site visit, the experts reviewed the SER and submitted a short preliminary statement including open questions and potential needs for additional information. AQAS forwarded these preliminary statements to the university consortium and to all panel members in order to increase transparency in the process and the upcoming discussions during the site visit.

#### *Site visit*

After a review of the SER, a site visit to the university took place on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2022. The experts interviewed different stakeholders, e.g., the management of the higher education institutions, the programme management, teaching and other staff, as well as students and graduates, in separate discussion rounds and consulted additional documentation as well as student work. The visit concluded by the presentation of the preliminary findings of the group of experts to the consortium's representatives.

#### *Reporting*

After the site visit had taken place, the expert group drafted the following report, assessing the fulfilment of the criteria. The report included a recommendation to the AQAS Standing Commission. The report was sent to the consortium for comments.

#### *Decision*

The report, together with the comments of the university consortium, forms the basis for the AQAS Standing Commission to take a decision regarding the accreditation of the programme. Based on these two documents, the AQAS Standing Commission took its decision on the accreditation on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023. AQAS forwarded the decision to the university consortium. The university consortium had the right to appeal against the decision or any of the imposed conditions.

In June 2023, AQAS published the report and the result of the accreditation as well as the names of the panel of experts.

## General information on the study programme

The joint degree Bachelor's programme "Public Governance across Borders" is designed as a collaborative programme offered by the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster (WWU)/University of Münster in cooperation with the Universiteit Twente (UT)/University of Twente since 2002.

The programme starts from the premise that grand societal challenges emerge at different levels. Public sectors are described as having become increasingly interdependent across the globe, resulting in shocks and crises at different levels. The simultaneous emergence of grand societal challenges at the local, national, European, and global scale are said to fundamentally change the work of scholars and researchers in public governance. Public governance thus is seen as needing to address complex societal challenges. The graduates' experience and competencies should enable them – as future researchers, leaders, policymakers, and public managers – to integrate knowledge about societal challenges at different levels in their research from various disciplines; facilitate the inclusion of different stakeholders in designing and implementing legitimate interventions, governance structures, and public organisations to address societal challenges; closely collaborate in multicultural, interdisciplinary teams based on international, cross-border experience.

Thus, the programme aims at teaching students to understand the logic of the complex institutional development of modern political-administrative systems towards governance in a world that crosses borders. For students, it is seen as crucial to understand the implications of the involvement of new types of actors – private sector actors, actors from multiple scales, network organisations – in the nexus between citizens, civil society, politics, and administration. The public governance approach therefore is to emphasise the multilevel setting in which local, regional, and (inter)national actors from different countries interact for the common good. The supra-national level is supposed to be incorporated in the approach through knowledge of international organisations and institutions, such as the European Union, United Nations, World Trade Organisation and others.

Within the programme, students are supposed to acquire knowledge in the core areas of Political Science, Public Administration, European Studies, and additionally in Sociology, Law and Economics. The programme also is described as focussing on training in methods of the Social Sciences. Students shall learn to work and think according to scientific rules academically. They are also supposed to learn to critically reflect on scientific findings and take responsibility for their actions.

## 2. General overview

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### Status

The institutions that offer a joint programme should be recognised as higher education institutions by the relevant authorities of their countries. Their respective national legal frameworks should enable them to participate in the joint programme and, if applicable, to award a joint degree. The institutions awarding the degree(s) should ensure that the degree(s) belong to the higher education degree systems of the countries in which they are based.

### Description

WWU is an institution of higher education according to paragraph 1 of the “Gesetz über die Hochschulen des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen” (Law on the Universities of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia) from 16 August 2019 in its current version. It is thus legitimised to offer joint programmes together with foreign universities and to award joint degrees according to article 60, § 2 and article 66, § 1 of the above-mentioned law.

UT is a Dutch public university as mentioned in the “Wet op het Hoger Onderwijs en Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek” (Higher Education and Research Act., 1992) in The Netherlands. On institutional level, UT was re-accredited by the NVAO (Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatie Organisatie) on 28 April 2020. UT may give out Bachelor diplomas according to article 7.10a of the above-mentioned law.

### Experts' evaluation

Both higher education institution (HEIs) that offer the Bachelor's programme are recognised by the relevant authorities in Germany and the Netherlands. The legal frameworks mentioned in the description allow them to offer the programme and to award a joint degree. The Bachelor's degree awarded can thus be recognised in the respective country. As a rule, graduates in Germany and the Netherlands acquire a Bachelor's degree in undergraduate studies.

### Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

### Joint design and delivery

The joint programme should be offered jointly, involving all cooperating institutions in the design and delivery of the programme.

### Description

The study programme under review is part of the collaborative study programmes offered by WWU and UT, which also includes the Master's programme “Comparative Public Governance”.

Since 2013, the joint degree Bachelor's programme is offered by both universities together. It offers a common curriculum centred around public governance and problems that transcend geographical and political borders, a bi-national team of lecturers, and a focus on providing practical skills to students. For the joint degree

programme, essential elements of the curriculum must be completed at both partner universities. Upon successfully completing the programme, students receive a German and a Dutch Bachelor's diploma, jointly issued by both universities.

### Experts' evaluation

For ten years, both HEIs are involved in the delivery of the programme with equal rights and duties which are laid down in their cooperation agreement adequately. The jointness of the programme includes not only student and teaching staff's mobility but also co-teaching activities. This shows that the cooperation is not only one based on paper but also "lived out" in practice through joint teaching events and is realized in mutually organized learning activities in a convincing way. The development of the curriculum and the programme as a whole is ensured by programme-specific measures in which representatives of both HEIs are involved. This is adequate to ensure that the programme is regularly reviewed and adjusted, if necessary, by responsible persons from both universities.

### Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

## Cooperation Agreement

The terms and conditions of the joint programme should be laid down in a cooperation agreement. The agreement should in particular cover the following issues:

- Denomination of the degree(s) awarded in the programme
- Coordination and responsibilities of the partners involved regarding management and financial organisation (including funding, sharing of costs and income, etc.)
- Admission and selection procedures for students
- Mobility of students and teachers
- Examination regulations, student assessment methods, recognition of credits and degree awarding procedures in the consortium.

### Description

The joint degree Bachelor's programme "Public Governance across Borders" is designed and offered as a collaborative programme by WWU in cooperation UT. Students of the programme are to acquire professional knowledge in the areas of Political Science, Public Administration, and European Studies as well as Law and Economics.

As described in the SER, both universities decided on the study programme in its current form which includes a common curriculum to be centred around public governance and problems that transcend geographical and political borders, a bi-national team of lecturers, and a focus on providing practical skills to students. For the joint-degree programme, essential elements of the curriculum must be completed at both partner universities.

In a cooperation agreement, both universities have anchored their cooperation for this joint programme.

The agreement covers aspects such as:

- organisation and content,
- language of tuition,

- the degree awarded in the programme,
- admission requirements,
- student support and counselling,
- tuition fees,
- quality assurance.

In the agreement, both universities declare their intention to continue their cooperation and to take shared responsibility for the programme. Both institutions guarantee the provision of tuition, study counselling, and programme administration, as defined in the SER. The responsibilities are to be distributed equally between both partner institutions. The institution responsible for certain modules and courses is also responsible for providing the necessary resources.

The faculties responsible for the delivery of the programme at WWU and UT jointly appoint an examination board to organise and supervise the examinations within the Examination Regulations, which contains the regulations on the content and organisation of the study programme in detail.

WWU and UT award students with the joint degree “Bachelor of Science” for successful graduation.

Applicants for the study programme must hold a higher education entrance qualification (such as the German Abitur, or the Dutch vwo-diploma, or equivalent). Admission to the programme is regulated by the Admission Office of WWU. Because the programme is taught in English at UT, applicants need to provide proof of their proficiency in the language. The Admission Office of WWU deals with questions regarding the equivalence of qualifications.

The responsibility for student support and counselling as well as student guidance and the coordination of the programme lies with the study/programme coordinators and advisers at both universities. The Bachelor’s thesis is supervised cooperatively by a supervisor of each university under application of the procedure at UT, including official approval of the draft thesis.

Students are enrolled at WWU for the whole period of their studies and are charged the administrative fee. Enrolment at UT is necessary for the second and third year of studies (until graduation) and full tuition fees must be paid.

### **Experts’ evaluation**

The cooperation agreement covers all necessary aspects to fully meet the criterion. For example, the rights and obligations of both universities, the financing and provision of resources as well as the support of student and teacher mobility are regulated in a comprehensible and appropriate manner. The study programme benefits from the cooperation between the two universities, which has been established for ten years, so there is no doubt that the implementation is also appropriate. This was confirmed by the discussions with students, teachers and those responsible for the programme.

The Examination Regulations define in detail and adequately how the programme is conducted. It also covers the denomination of the programme and of the degree awarded, so this is regulated in a binding and transparent manner; both are also mentioned in the cooperation’s agreement.

### **Conclusion**

The criterion is fulfilled.

### 3. Learning Outcomes

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#### Level

The intended learning outcomes should align with the corresponding level in the Framework for Qualifications in the European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA), as well as the applicable national qualifications framework(s).

#### Description

The Bachelor's programme "Public Governance across Borders" is an undergraduate degree course which aims at equipping students with academic as well as professional knowledge and skills so that they can map public issues, analyse their causes, and contribute to the design of effective solutions. Such analyses and problem approaches are described as including different levels of scale (local, regional, national, European and international), while a special focus is supposed to be laid on the European Union and its institutions, and the process of European integration.

The programme's interdisciplinary nature is supposed to provide students with competencies and skills to combine the acquired knowledge from the different disciplines involved (also see the next chapter). In addition, intercultural competencies are to be emphasised due to the bi-national constitution and the international outlook of the programme. Also, the students' ability to think and work autonomously and self-dependently is supposed to be strengthened. They shall learn to work towards goals, showing initiative, commitment, and perseverance, to research information and answer questions raised during seminars or information for presentations and course-work independently or within small groups. Thus, students are to be trained to make up their own minds on the issues at hand and critically reflect theoretical, practical or empirical approaches they come across during their studies. As another leading principle of the programme, it is defined to further the students' competencies concerning independent judgement, communication skills, and expressing themselves adequately.

Following the European Qualifications Framework of lifelong learning (EQF), the programme aims at level 6 of the EQF.

The Bachelor's programme furthermore aims at preparing students for admission to a Master's programme, and successful candidates will be awarded the academic degree "Bachelor of Science" (B.Sc.) with the adjunct "in Public Governance across Borders".

#### Experts' evaluation

On basis of the self-evaluation report, the related documents and the discussion with the Münster and Twente representatives, the team of experts have concluded that the intended learning outcomes do align with the formulated level 6 criteria mentioned in in the Framework for Qualifications in the European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA), and that they also adequately consider the respective national qualification's frameworks. These criteria are successfully met by the study programme.

In addition, the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) encompass adequate aspects in the areas of knowledge, skills, and competencies in the respective disciplinary fields relevant to this Bachelor's programme as they are mentioned above. Going-over the bachelor theses, the team concluded that in the absolute majority of cases these were of a high quality. From a further examination of these theses, it became apparent that they were in accordance with the competences laid down in the framework.

The multilevel governance dimension of the programme turns up in a sufficient manner in the ILOs and the course descriptions. However, since the cross-border perspective was emphasised as an important element, it should be considered (also for the Master's programme, which is not evaluated in this report) whether this could be further strengthened and communicated more clearly at the level of the learning outcomes and content. This cross-border dimension of the programme is to be considered as a unique selling point and could be promoted more actively to potential students than it is already currently the case.

### Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

### Disciplinary field

The intended learning outcomes should comprise knowledge, skills, and competencies in the respective disciplinary field(s).

### Description

Within the programme, students shall acquire interdisciplinary knowledge and skills in the areas of Political Science, Public Administration, European Studies, Law and Economics. The programme is supposed to focus on a methodological training in methods of the Social Sciences, and also professional qualifications. The programmes' approach is described as being particularly based on multi-actor and multi-level analysis of dynamic public problems and aiming at solutions that meet both functional (effectiveness, efficiency) and procedural criteria (rule of law, legitimacy, legality, and democracy). Students shall thus learn to work and think in a target-oriented manner and according to scientific rules. They are also to learn to critically question and debate scientific findings and take responsibility for their own actions.

The programme is described as a practice-oriented scientific education, aiming at preparing students for research- and policy-oriented and managerial positions in the public domain or in private organisations. The Bachelor's programme furthermore aims at preparing students for admission to a Master's programme.

In the second year of the programme, students can choose a specialization in either Public Administration or European Studies to lay a higher focus on a more global or a more European view on governance and governance issues. It is allowed to choose modules in both specialisations, leading to a combination of those two specialisations with no special profile.

Graduates of the joint degree Bachelor's programme should thus have developed and acquired five sets of the following core competencies with the learning outcomes described more in detail as follows:

1. Knowledge-base of the field of Public Governance across Borders: Graduates shall have knowledge and comprehension of the (inter)disciplinary core of public governance. They are supposed to be able to analyse current and future challenges of public governance across borders.
2. Social scientific research in Political Science and public administration: Graduates shall be able to perform, under supervision, all aspects of a social scientific study in the field of public governance. They are supposed to be able to, under supervision, apply a broad range of qualitative and quantitative research methods, interpret and evaluate the results of Social Science research, and form a well-reasoned opinion in the case of missing or incomplete data. They shall have insight into scientific practice,

including the publication system, the importance of integrity, and the use of conclusions and recommendations of the research by politics and society.

3. Academic competencies: Graduates shall be able to analyse a societal problem from the knowledge base of the programme. They are to have the creative skills to design a solution to societal problems in terms of governance, policy, and management.
4. Personal, social, and professional competencies: Graduates are meant to have the personal and social competencies/skills to self-organise and structure their study activities in a national and international setting. They shall have the professional competencies to prepare for a future career in the (inter)national field of public governance.
5. International and intercultural competencies: Graduates shall have experience and be able to live, learn, and work in an international and intercultural setting and institutional context by having gained intercultural and communication skills.

The programme is classified as interdisciplinary in the SER and shall provide essential knowledge of and theoretical insight into:

- Political Science: the history of political thought and development of modern political theory, the development of political systems from a comparative perspective; the functioning and legitimacy of international (i.e., European) organisations and their institutions; political integration processes and theories; international relations theory; political governance in theory and practice on different political levels.
- Public Administration: regional and urban governance systems, the comparative study of political-administrative systems, theories of collective decision-making and policy implementation, moral leadership.
- Economics: economic and monetary governance issues on different political levels, e.g., the common economic policies of the EU, the EU budget; including the functioning of the internal market and the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU); theories about international economic relations.
- Law: legal theory; (international) public law; administrative law; European law and law of international organisations.
- Sociology: sociological integration theories; global challenges to the welfare state; the development of European social politics.

This knowledge shall enable students to analyse and challenge relevant political fields in their contexts and explore issues, events or problems from different perspectives. Furthermore, the Bachelor's programme aims at training students in essential methodological skills of empirical Social Sciences both from a quantitative as well as a qualitative logic. Thus, the graduates shall be familiar with descriptive and analytical statistics as well as with qualitative interview techniques. They shall have the ability to acquire and analyse data, sources and observations and construct their own arguments.

### Experts' evaluation

The knowledge and academic and skills/competencies mentioned above as the Intended Learning Outcomes of the programme are clearly defined and adequate. They sufficiently show up in the module descriptions, the

programme structure, and courses. Information on the programme including the description of the ILOs are published online and are accessible for the interested public as well as students and teaching staff. The disciplinary angles are adequately implemented in the programme and are translated consistently in the courses.

Given the central position of the public governance approach (see also the title of the programme) it deserves a continuous attention for the content and the specificity of this concept. Thus, some extra attention could be given on redefining core approaches and concepts in the programme considering governance and multilevel governance in the future (also see chapter 6.1).

The programme has a longstanding tradition and reputation and both universities are equally involved in the delivery of the programme and the definition of the ILOs. In order to keep that high level and standard, the experts recommend an innovation strategy on programme level, not only on course level, by including such questions in regular mutual discussions of teaching staff of both universities.

### Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

### Achievement

The programme should be able to demonstrate that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

### Description

The essence of the bi-national programme is defined as getting to know different university systems and teaching traditions. Living in two different countries with different cultures is also described in the SER as essential for the study programme. During the pandemic, however, this was only possible to a very limited extent.

Besides this special situation since 2020, the universities emphasize that the specific examination results, the internship evaluations, and the Bachelor theses show that the graduates achieve the intended learning outcomes of the programme. A large number of graduates from the Bachelor's programme continue their studies with a Master's programme.

The evaluation of the curricula vitae of students who are connected to the universities through their alumni associations are delineated as showing that the graduates have made a good start in professional life and occupy positions for which the study programme aims at educating.

The programme's bi-national structure is supposed to foster an intensive intercultural teaching and learning environment, addressing intercultural sensitivity, international mobility, and language acquisition concerns. Also, the programme is supposed to offer several opportunities for students to gain practical and international experience (e.g., internship, ERASMUS semester) as well as to sharpen their academic qualifications (e.g., through the Bachelor thesis). The direct contact between teachers and students and the general support provided by both universities is to ensure that students' learning progress is regularly monitored.

### Experts' evaluation

The universities have provided evidence that the intended learning objectives are met. As already mentioned before, the level of the Bachelor's theses is high and show that the ILOs are achieved. The same applies to

the content of the programme and courses. Also, the positive assessment shall highlight the student's success rate after the first year.

The positions of alumni gained after graduating (however, mostly after a Master's programme) show that graduates are appreciated by employers. Though not all students continue studying in the joint Münster-Twente Master's programme after finishing the Bachelor's. As such, that is a consequence of the BA/MA system in general after the Bologna agreement, not of a single programme. However, graduates of the Bachelor's programme have gained access to Master's programmes of high reputation, either in the Münster-Twente or programmes of other universities, which proves that the high-quality standards are achieved by the programme.

The internship included in the programme and the possibility to gain Erasmus internships and scholarships add to the international nature of the programme and underline the practice-orientation which flanks the scientific education adequately. The data submitted shows that students are not only given the opportunity, but also take it up and do stays at universities under the ERASMUS+ programme as well as internships with public authorities/institutions and in companies.

However, supporting facilities for exchange and internships should be a point for attention. This is especially the case at WWU since not all members of administrative staff seem to be proficient in English, especially at the Examination Office, and thus struggle with helping non-German speaking students, or, rather in the programme under review, with students who have a lower level of German language skills. Thus, attention should be paid to ensuring that students can find contact persons in all supporting facilities at WWU who can advise them in English, also at the Examination office.

### Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

### Regulated Professions

The minimum agreed training conditions specified in the European Union Directive 2005/36/EC, or relevant common trainings frameworks established under the Directive are not applicable for the study programme under review.

## 4. Study Programme

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### Curriculum

The structure and content of the curriculum should be fit to enable the students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

### Description

The programme is divided into modules that are defined by topic, content and timeframe. All modules are made up of multiple courses, like lectures and tutorials, seminars covering closely related subjects or courses of which content builds on what has been taught in another course.

The programme combines obligatory elements that are supposed to ensure an equal level of knowledge of all students on the core subjects, complemented by elective elements that shall offer students the possibility for specialisation and following their personal interests, and actively shaping their own educational and academic path.

The first two semesters are studied at WWU, and they contain the following modules of 10 credit points (CP) each: “Public Governance across borders”, “European and Global Governance”, “Political Systems in Comparative Perspective”, “Public Law”, “Methods”, and “Free Electives”. These shall lay the foundations of the different scientific strands combined within the programme.

The programme’s second year is held at UT and is supposed to build on the interdisciplinary knowledge by introducing a governance perspective and the comparative research perspective in two mandatory modules in the first semester. The students then choose between the two tracks “Public Administration” or “European Studies” in the fourth semester. Each track consists of two mandatory modules. Semesters 3 and 4 thus contain the modules “Governance and Sustainability”, “Public Governance in Europe”, and “European Studies: EU Governance and Policy: Shaping Europe” as well as “European Studies: The European Union and the World”, or “Public Administration: Policy-making and Planning” as well as “Public Administration: Behavioural Public Administration”; each module contains 15 CP. Regarding the Dutch university system, the semesters are divided up into quartiles.

In the fifth semester, the students can choose free elective modules at WWU or UT or alternatively can do an internship or participate in an (Erasmus) exchange programme at partner institutions of one of the two universities.

The sixth semester is reserved for the preparation and writing of the Bachelor's thesis.

Both universities explain in the SER that the curriculum is constantly monitored by the programme coordinators and programme directors, supported by the module coordinators, who are regularly to discuss the topicality and relevance of the course content and taking feedback from students into account. Previous evaluation results pointed out that modules offered by the two universities were overlapping, content-wise which – according to the SER – has been adjusted.

It is stated in the SER, that the process of joint discussion and reflection by the UT and WWU programme coordinators and directors resulted in a number of changes in the module plan of the first year of study in Münster which are supposed to clarify the conceptual connection between core courses and electives. Regarding recommendations of the former accreditation, the number of free electives in the first year was reduced and the number of mandatory, core courses was raised in order to ensure a core content for all students.

### **Experts' evaluation**

The structure and the content of the current curriculum are adequate to enable the students to achieve the intended learning outcomes (as already stated above). The changes made to the first-year programme in Münster seem to work adequately. There are ample mechanisms in place to regularly monitor the adequacy of structure and content; thus, the modules and the content of the programme as well as its courses are updated regularly (content- as well as structure-wise). The cooperation between the directors, coordinators and staff in this respect is encouraging and to be highlighted. But given the embedding of the programme in two universities and the pull factors associated with this, continuous attention have to be paid to cooperation at the universities and the programme level. It is not doubted that this can be achieved under the current conditions.

The recommendations of the previous accreditation have thus been taken up satisfactorily with one exception (see below). Changes which were made are well documented. The quality assurance system is kept up to date in order to address specific and issues such as the continuous adjustment of the programme to ensure that the ILOs can be achieved by the students; for example, an open question area was included in the evaluation questionnaire to ask to what extent and in which way Covid-19 had an influence on the outcomes and operation of the QA mechanisms.

The same applies to the cooperation between the programme directors and coordinators at WWU and UT. The regular meetings between the programme directors are adequate, but according to the opinion of the experts, in order to emphasize the mutuality and cohesion of the programme, the appointment of an interuniversity coordinator would have been preferable (**finding 1**). This should be considered in the future, as it was already recommended in the last accreditation.

### Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

### Credits

The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) should be applied properly, and the distribution of credits should be clear.

### Description

In the SER, it is pointed out that the CP are used to assess the overall workload for students quantitatively by including course attendance as well as pre- and post-preparation, examinations and examination preparation as well as the final thesis and work placements. Students gain their credit points by completing the required coursework and degree-relevant examination, which are outlined in the module descriptions.

A workload of 28 hours is taken as a basis for acquiring one credit point according to the ECTS. The distribution of the workload is shown by an exemplary study plan; each semesters contains modules of 30 CP in total.

### Experts' evaluation

The joint Bachelor's programme amounts to a total student workload sum of 180 credit points according to the ECTS which corresponds to the estimated time of six semesters of full-time study.

The individual module descriptions contain a short description of the module objective, the integration into the curriculum as well as a presentation of the teaching content and a definition of the learning outcomes.

Part of the self-evaluation is an exemplary study plan that shows the distribution of credits in the course of the Bachelor's programme. The module descriptions also include a description of the distribution of the workload in terms of participation, degree-relevant examination(s) and required coursework.

Thus, transparency of an equal distribution of workload over the course of study and the correct application of the European Credit Transfer System is given in the programme.

### Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

## Workload

A joint bachelor programme will typically amount to a total student workload of 180–240 ECTS-credits; a joint master programme will typically amount to 90–120 ECTS-credits and should not be less than 60 ECTS-credits at second cycle level (credit ranges according to the FQ-EHEA); for joint doctorates there is no credit range specified.

The workload and the average time to complete the programme should be monitored.

### Description

Structurally, the standard duration of studies until graduation, including all examinations and the Bachelor's thesis, is three academic years. As determined in the Examination regulations, the student workload of the programme amounts to a total of 180 CP. Each academic year is divided into two semesters; the semesters at UT are additionally divided into two quartiles of ten weeks each.

The contact between students and teachers in small groups and a feedback culture in the programme that is pointed out in the SER, it is stated that there are constant checks whether the actual workload corresponds to the calculated one. In some cases, evaluation results showed that students experienced the overall workload as being too high. Some students further perceived the workload to increase over time during the programme, especially between the first year in Münster and the second year in Twente. According to the SER, the programme directors and coordinators discussed these assessments and analysed the individual module's workload but came to the conclusion that no results pointed towards any actual cases of workloads being too high. One interpretation derived is that the impression of being overburdened may be driven by the general strain on students' wellbeing caused by the Covid pandemic. The perception that the workload of the modules offered in Twente were higher than those offered in Münster could also be due to the different teaching systems. In Münster, the main work to be done tends to accumulate towards the end of the semester, whereas in Twente, the year is divided into quartiles and includes more deadlines throughout the semester. To this end, both sides agreed that the efforts to prepare students for the transfer from Münster to Twente should be increased.

According to the SER, the majority of the programme's students stated in evaluations that they could complete their studies within the given timeframe of three years. Among the 5 % who said that they could not, the most common reasons given were personal commitments outside of the university rather than excessive workload. Internal statistics collected from summer semester 2015 to 2021 show that on average 95 % of students graduate within the regular period. In the summer semester of 2020, 6 % of the students had to extend their time of study, while one year later it was already 15 %. In the SER, this is said to be the case due to the Corona pandemic, since in the previous years the average was 2,6 %.

### Experts' evaluation

As already evaluated in chapter 4.2., the total amount of student workload of the programme in full-time of six semesters is 180 CP, and thus corresponds adequately to the requirements of the Qualifications Frameworks in the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA).

As shown in the SER, the workload and average time of students to complete the programme are continuously monitored. However, as it became apparent, the "standard monitoring mechanisms" used by both universities do not fully manage to capture the unique necessities of the programme. This will be further discussed in Chapter 10.

The necessity for students to adapt to two different study systems and teaching cultures during their studies means some challenge for the students. However, both universities are aware of this, have established reasonable resources and are planning to smoothen the transition more, as explained in the description above. If these planned changes do not redeem fruitful it can be expected that the programme directors and coordinators will adapt the programme if necessary.

The data provided demonstrated that nearly every student is able to complete the programme in the estimated time. Even during the corona pandemic only 15% needed to extend their studies; which, taking into account the difficulties especially in cross-border-regions, e.g., due to travel restrictions, can be considered a good result.

### Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

## 5. Admission and Recognition

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### Admission

The admission requirements and selection procedures should be appropriate in light of the programme's level and discipline.

### Description

Since the programme starts at WWU in Münster and new students are only admitted in the winter term, application for the programme is only possible at WWU. Admission to the programme is regulated by the Admissions Office. A university entrance qualification is usually sufficient (i.e., a general university entrance qualification, a subject-specific university entrance qualification or a certificate recognised as equivalent). The selection process is subject to admission restrictions in the university's internal selection process based on the criteria of performance (average grade of university entrance qualification) and waiting time.

Furthermore, it is a formal requirement that anyone wishing to attend a German-taught study programme at WWU must provide evidence of adequate German language skills. Since the first year of study within the programme in Münster is offered mainly in German, foreign students need to present proof of German language proficiency by passing the DSH-2 level of the German language examination for university entrance.

Because the programme is taught in English at UT, applicants also need to prove their English proficiency, either by proving that English has been part of their school education and that they have acquired one of the following diplomas: VWO (Voorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs); AHR (Allgemeine Hochschulreife, generally the Abitur); EB (European Baccalaureate); IB (International Baccalaureate); or applicants can provide proof of their English language skills by one of the following certificates: IELTS (minimum overall score: 6.0); TOEFL (minimum overall score: 80) or the Cambridge CAE.

A separate application and admission procedure applies to international applicants who do not come from the countries of the European Union or Iceland, Liechtenstein, or Norway.

### Experts' evaluation

The two universities have different language requirements regarding the successful completion of the study programme, i.e., German language skills for the mainly German-based programme in Münster and English language skills for the studies in Twente. These are the special requirements in addition to the university-specific selection requirements of the two universities. These requirements are clearly indicated, defined and communicated.

The selection procedure follows the general rules of the University of Münster and seems adequate for the study programme. The low drop-out rates support the impression that the selection process is adequate for the programme.

### Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

## Recognition

Recognition of qualifications and of periods of studies (including recognition of prior learning) should be applied in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention and subsidiary documents.

### Description

The procedure and related criteria for recognition are outlined in § 15 of the Examination Regulations of the programme. The jointly appointed Examination Board organises and supervises the examinations within these Examination Regulations and is responsible for the recognition.

The Examination Regulations cover the following aspects, among others:

Coursework and required examinations completed within the same programme at other German or Dutch universities (or in another programme at WWU or UT) are recognized upon request unless there are substantial differences concerning the competencies to be acquired; verification of equivalence does not take place. Substantial differences exist if a comparison of content, workload and level required for the study achievements completed reveals that they do not correspond to those required for the coursework and examinations they are to be recognised for. This comparison is not to be undertaken schematically but as an overall assessment.

Upon providing substantiating documentation, the student may request recognition for up to half of the programme's degree-relevant examinations and required coursework for additional skills and qualifications obtained in ways other than academic study. Recognition of CP can only be granted on the condition that the student's skills and knowledge are equivalent to the coursework and degree-relevant examinations they replace in terms of content and level.

The Examination Board is responsible for recognition and the placing in a higher semester. Before comparability or substantial difference can be determined, members of staff representing the subjects in question must be consulted.

### Experts' evaluation

The regulations regarding recognition of courses taken at other universities and prior learning are supervised and evaluated by the jointly appointed Evaluation Board of the two partner universities. The regulations are transparent and clear. The regulations of the Lisbon Convention are adequately taken into account.

### Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

## 6. Learning, Teaching and Assessment

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### Learning and teaching

The programme should be designed to correspond with the intended learning outcomes, and the learning and teaching approaches applied should be adequate to achieve those.

The diversity of students and their needs should be respected and attended to, especially in view of potential different cultural backgrounds of the students.

### Description

The curriculum is described as interdisciplinary in the SER. It shall convey questions of political, legal and economic governance as well as central concepts, theories and methods of Political Science and public administration. In addition, basic concepts of Economics, Law and Sociology are also to be taught. The subject-specific content is to be particularly applied to the process of European integration.

In the SER, six aspects are highlighted which ought to help achieving the programme's learning outcomes.

1. Two disciplinary cores: The public governance approach is described as departing from a solid introduction in Political Science and Public Law. The core modules of the first semester lead to the jointly developed core module "Public Governance across Borders" with tuition from staff of both universities during the first year of study in Münster. These modules are defined as the backbone of the entire programme.
2. Interdisciplinary fields: The (inter)disciplinary knowledge base provided during the first year is to be further integrated in the second and third year with knowledge from other disciplines in the study of the field of public administration (with public governance, public policy, and public management as its cores). Project-based work and integrating (inter)disciplinary knowledge are defined to be key to the "Twente Education Model", which is said to emphasise learning by doing by students.
3. Interdisciplinary specialisations: The track on public administration shall give students the possibility to further specialise in public governance questions from a top-down stakeholder approach and a bottom-up street-level professionals' approach. The track on global and European governance shall give further specialisation in public governance on questions from a critical perspective on the functioning of the EU and a global studies approach to public governance issues.
4. Social Science methods: Research methods and statistics are to be considered from a general Social Sciences perspective. In Münster, basic skills and competencies are to be taught, while, after the first

year in Twente, these skills and competencies are said to be integrated in the project work at a more advanced level as well as in the Bachelor's thesis.

5. Student-driven learning: This shall mainly be supported by free electives in Münster in the first and Twente in the second year to focus on specific topics, questions and problems in aspects of public governance in areas of the student's interests.
6. Structured thesis work: Students shall be supported in so-called "Bachelor circles" which are groups of students who, under guidance of two supervisors, work on a related research problem. First, the students write a proposal, then the research work is conducted and the Bachelor's thesis is written. The "Bachelor circles" are supposed to require and support students to integrate theory and empirical research in their final theses.

Besides the mandatory courses, compulsory courses are integrated in the curriculum and shall allow students to set emphasis on certain fields of their studies. Introductory modules (mostly lectures, basic methodology courses and tutorials) are taught at the beginning of the programme, courses providing more specific knowledge and skills follow. The possibility for an internship can give students the option to apply their theoretical knowledge in practice outside university.

Lectures and tutorials, especially during the first and second year of study, are said to lay down the basic knowledge necessary for students to delve deeper into European issues later on in the programme. Once the foundations have been laid, importance is said to be laid on a seminar style course form to support research-oriented learning. In seminars, the basic knowledge is supposed to be put to a more practical test as they deal with subareas as well as scientific and methodological problems of the subject. In the form of discussions, oral presentations and/or written coursework, students are asked to work independently and self-reliantly under the guideline of the lecturer.

The bi-national, multidisciplinary orientation of the programme is to be reflected in the character of teaching with both lecturers and students having multicultural backgrounds. The international component is described as underlined by studying at two different universities in different countries and in two different languages, but also by the possibility of doing an additional (Erasmus) exchange or an international internship.

Teaching staff is expected to activate students through different exercises and projects. Individual work shall promote time management and independence, while projects in teams ought to support the development of cooperative and social skills. During the Covid pandemic, more digital teaching formats were established.

### Experts' evaluation

The curriculum is described as an interdisciplinary programme in the SER. As already stated above, there is ample evidence of this interdisciplinary nature as well as evidence by the Bachelor's theses that the learning outcomes of the programme can be achieved; this is also supported by the teaching and learning activities in the programme. Questions of political, legal and economic governance are standing central in the programme. In the courses, central concepts, theories and methods of Political Science and Public Administration are discussed. Thus, students are supported to gain knowledge and skills in the disciplinary fields as well as cross-subject competences such as abilities in communication, teamwork and cooperation are fostered in an adequate manner. This also applies to student-centred learning that is focused on in the course of study increasingly. The seminar form of teaching and learning supports this as well as the possibilities to choose compulsory

courses and activating forms as described above. The needs of the international student body are given due consideration; specific needs and wishes as well as obstacles of students can be addressed in small learning groups on an individual level.

A bit confusing is the following statement of the universities involved in the programme, which can be found in the programme's documentation: "The public governance approach departs from a solid introduction in two main disciplinary areas: Political Science and Public Law". Given recent developments regarding various administrative and societal crises, the role of the state within the public governance system could merit a renewed attention within the programme.

The same applies to the issue of the multilevel governance system that is closely related. Again, the cross-border aspects are most interesting. In relation to the interdisciplinary approach of this programme, extra attention to interdisciplinary and methodology could be an asset. Relatedly, the Public Administration (PA) perspective could thus be emphasized. This PA perspective is inherently interdisciplinary and not so much multidisciplinary in nature. This would be an addition to rather monodisciplinary Political and Legal Science perspectives and would keep the programme more up to date; for this, the Public Administration angle should be focused on more (**finding 2**). Studying Law and Political Science without mentioning PA in Public Governance seems to be a bit outdated from a comparative perspective.

### Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

### Assessment of students

The examination regulations and the assessment of the achieved learning outcomes should correspond with the intended learning outcomes. They should be applied consistently among partner institutions.

### Description

The examination board is responsible to ensure that the requirements set out in the Examination Regulations are met. Students are usually required to pass one required examination (WWU: Prüfungsleistung; UT: examen) in each module. Courses usually also involve additional coursework (WWU: Studienleistung; UT: examenonderdelen), which is a required element but does not count towards the final grade.

As stated in the Examination Regulations and the module descriptions, required coursework and examinations may be written and oral examinations, presentations, term papers, oral exams or assessments such as reviews, research reports, case studies or briefing papers. The forms and scope of examinations are to be observed by the lecturer, who is responsible for defining the components of required examinations or coursework and the criteria for grading. These conditions are to be announced at the beginning of each course. Instructors may make the successful completion of coursework conditional for admission to the examination. The module descriptions shall provide information on the required coursework and examination of each module as to their type, duration and scope.

The examiners determine the grades of single examinations and their components using their national grading system. The results are transferred to the other grading system by applying a scheme given in the Examination Regulations, which according to the SER rests on an analysis of distribution tables of UT and

WWU grades from several years, with grade conversion seeking to match the relative distributions of grades in both grading systems.

The final thesis is supervised cooperatively by supervisors from each university, including official approval of the thesis proposal.

### Experts' evaluation

The examinations and assessments used in the programme are appropriate so that students can achieve the learning outcomes of the programme. The grading system rooted in both academic systems works suitably. However, one aspect that should be addressed in a timely manner – by Münster's university management – concerns the staff of the Examination Office. Even though the university as a whole seems to be striving to expand international study programmes and relations, the language skills in this administrative unit are apparently not yet sufficient to support non-German-speaking students (also see chapter 3.3.). Therefore, English language competences among the staff of the Examination Office should quickly be improved.

The feasibility of the programme with a special focus on assessment has been a topic for consideration; see the changes in the size of papers and the involvement of students in addressing this issue, which also proves the involvement of students in the development of teaching, learning and assessment. The assessments used in the programme are adequate to demonstrate that each module's learning outcomes are achieved. The examination regulations determine that these examinations are carried out accordingly. The final thesis is supervised cooperatively by supervisors from each university, including official approval of the thesis proposal.

As a result, students are enabled to organise and produce scientific papers and final theses on theoretical, methodological, or practical topics. The results of individual module examinations, internship assessments, and, finally, the Bachelor's theses demonstrate that the graduates have achieved the programme's ILOs.

### Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

## 7. Student Support

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The student support services should contribute to the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. They should take into account specific challenges of mobile students.

### Description

The main points of contact for students are the programme coordinators, who are also responsible for course planning and organisation, and study advisers at the Institute of Political Science of WWU and the Educational Support Centre at the Faculty BMS at UT. Furthermore, the student secretariats of both universities are responsible for advice on administrative issues (e.g., enrolment procedures).

The Student Admissions Office at WWU is responsible for providing general administrative services around course admission while the Student Advice and Counselling Centre (Zentrale Studienberatung/ZSB) advises and informs prospective and current students in questions regarding choosing, starting and coping with a study programme. Services include advice on learning techniques, decision-making support, study completion advice, and offering workshops on learning techniques and coping with stress. ZSB offers free counselling and

support to students. For all questions regarding studying at the Institute of Political Science, students can also contact the team of sic! (Service- und Informationscenter Politikwissenschaft/Service and Information Centre Political Science). At the same time, the International Office supports students, researchers and university staff who wish to work or study abroad, or who are planning a visit to WWU.

At UT, new students are approached by a study adviser who is responsible for keeping in touch with students, monitoring study progress, and who is also the first person to contact when a student has personal problems or needs any support. The study adviser may advise teachers and the programme management on what to do in special circumstances or help students to access other supporting services on university level, like the Counselling Office. The Study Association Sirius offers help to students facing an issue that they do not want to discuss with a teacher directly. The Education Commissioner of Sirius regularly meets with the programme management and the study adviser, which can lead to a change in, e.g., a deadline. Sirius also wants to make sure students have an easy approach to fellow students in informal ways. Additionally, tutors especially are to focus on the student group dynamics and project work at both universities.

When choosing an additional (Erasmus) exchange semester during their studies, students can approach the international offices of both universities. Both the Institute of Political Science and the Faculty BMS maintain ERASMUS/international offices, where students are said to receive information and general help. A learning agreement is to be formulated together with the student advisers to ensure the performance at the foreign university is recognised. Students who decide to do an internship during their studies are to be supported by an internship coordinator when searching for and defining an internship or any questions regarding such.

It is explained in the SER that regular meetings of the programme coordinators have been established, and student representatives are invited to participate in meetings to identify any problems at an early stage and develop suitable solutions. For example, an event for students in the first semester during their trip to Enschede was developed to inform about bureaucratic procedures to be followed by students when transitioning from WWU to UT.

### Experts' evaluation

The study programme counts with student support services not only from one, but two universities, as shown in the description above. While this makes for an extremely tight support network, which mainly works, it also appears to create a few problems in the coordination. As it became obvious during the on-site inspection with the students and alumni, it is sometimes not clear to the students which person/institution to contact in which phase of their studies at which university for certain topics; accordingly, responsibilities for students have not yet been clear in all matters that questions might arise on during their studies. As the students reported, this uncertainty/unawareness about the correct contact person in the different study phases, universities and topics also exists at the support level that is adequately installed at both universities. This problem should be addressed by both universities together, as it was already discussed during the on-site visit. Maybe the problem could be tackled even by installing the position of an interuniversity coordinator (as already recommended in chapter 4.2.), but at least by gathering information and presenting it at a specific place like the programme's website. It is recommended to seek exchange with the students on which questions information is needed or which questions arise regularly. A wiki could be set up for this purpose, for example. Through a clear documentation of who is responsible at which university for which questions at which point of the course both students and the support level can be relieved (**finding 3**). More information on this topic can be found in chapter 9.

Additionally, it became clear during the audit that the Examination Office of the University of Münster does not count with personal with adequate knowledge of the English language (also see chapters 3.3. and 6.2.) which can negatively affect the feasibility for students who are not fluent in German.

Besides this, in general the feasibility is guaranteed by the support system that is implemented at both universities for the programme, especially by the coordinators at WWU and UT and the different supporting facilities mentioned in the description. This creates surroundings that allow students to achieve the ILOs of the programme and, especially in non-pandemic times, facilitate studying at two different universities – or even a third if students decide to also take part in the ERASMUS exchange programme for studying or doing an internship in another country.

### Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

## 8. Resources

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### Staff

The staff should be sufficient and adequate (qualifications, professional and international experience) to implement the study programme.

### Description

The programme draws on the overall staff of the Institute of Political Science at WWU and the Section on Public Administration at UT.

At WWU, twelve full professorships, two senior lecturers, four university teachers, and ten research associates are involved in teaching in the programme. They are supplemented by five long-term lecturers. Only elective classes that are not exclusive to the programme or elective parts within larger modules may be taught by non-permanent staff (research assistants).

At UT, twelve members of the Faculty's teaching staff are involved in the programme who at least hold a PhD. According to the SER, teaching staff by default have permanent contracts. This includes one full professor and 15 post-doctoral, full-time teaching staff.

In the Netherlands, university lecturers are obliged to complete a qualification for university didactic teaching. While this is voluntary in Germany, it is stated in the SER that it is strongly encouraged for all professors and lecturers to complete didactic training and teaching skills, and qualifications are to be taken into consideration in recruitment processes.

### Experts' evaluation

The teaching staff employed in the programme is suitably qualified in terms of subject matter and didactics for taking care of the teaching, learning, and assessment in this international Bachelor's programme.

The number of staff members involved in the programme in Münster and Twente is compatible and adequate. The qualifications of the teaching staff are suited to the content of the curriculum in such a way that the intended learning outcomes can be achieved.

In order to maintain both the expertise and didactical skills of staff members, the completion of didactical qualification is important. It is advisable that Münster copies the mandatory nature of these qualification as is already the case in Twente, as far as legally possible.

### Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

## Facilities

The facilities provided should be sufficient and adequate in view of the intended learning outcomes.

### Description

According to the SER, students have access to WWU's facilities such as the university's libraries including PC workstations, copy machines and group workspaces. With their university account, students can use the technical infrastructure of the WWU, including free WIFI in university buildings. Students can contact the Center for Information Processing (ZIV) for any technical questions and take courses on various programmes. Teaching at the institute takes mainly place in the four lecture halls and six seminar rooms in the institute building.

The situation at UT is described as comparable. Working rooms in the library can be booked by students as well as project rooms in the Ravelijn building of the faculty. Every student has access to the university library's sources. VPN for access from home is offered as well as eduroam as WIFI standard and wall outlets for laptops in student rooms and lecture halls; some student workstations are also provided on campus. The lecture halls are scheduled after teacher input by the UT's central Student Affairs and Logistics unit.

### Experts' evaluation

The programme is adequately equipped by providing the facilities necessary to achieve the intended learning outcomes. This applies to both Münster and Twente. There are sufficient premises in libraries, (digital) facilities and support as well as student working spaces. The access to up-to-date literature, databases, etc. is sufficiently ensured.

However, it would be advisable to examine which of the elements of, for example, digital learning can be further integrated in the curriculum the future. Here, for example, the offer of digital block courses should be mentioned, in order to facilitate the opportunity to do an internship in the winter semester until the end of January and still be able to complete the necessary course work at the same time (**finding 4**).

### Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

## 9. Transparency and Documentation

Relevant information about the programme like admission requirements and procedures, course catalogue, examination and assessment procedures, etc. should be well documented and published by taking into account specific needs of mobile students.

### Description

General information about the programme is publicly available on both universities' websites.

The website of the Institute of Political Science in Münster informs about the programme structure, admission requirements and procedures, relevant study fees, and the contact details of study coordinators and other relevant contact points. The examination regulations are publicly accessible and include the module descriptions. Each semester, the KVV (kommentiertes Vorlesungsverzeichnis/annotated course catalogue), a catalogue and schedule of courses during the semester, is published online. The study coordinator is responsible for the organisation of modules and for ensuring the coherence of the course offer. UT uses a Course Catalogue to give details about modules, which is updated before every module starts and is available online.

Documents for individual courses, such as information sheets, are to be made accessible by the respective lecturers. Throughout the programme, students have access to both the German and the Dutch digital learning environment (Learnweb or Canvas). Students are said to also receive assessment results through the digital learning platforms or on the websites.

### Experts' evaluation

The two universities have developed a high level of quality in the communication of the framework conditions for admission and examination regulations over the long period of cooperation. This contributes to the transparency and documentation of the programme in general. The criteria and process of admission are clearly defined in the Examination Regulations and operated accordingly.

Also, the module handbook provides relevant information on content and structure of the study programme. The information is freely available on the websites of both universities which makes access to relevant information easy for students and potentially interested applicants (apart from some communication gaps as mentioned in chapter 7 and as follows).

However, in the conversation with students it was mentioned that further improvement of communication and coordination seems necessary, at least in two aspects. Students wished for the mutual development of tools like a check list for students (what to do when and where to organize their studies well) by the two partner universities. Additionally, the students would wish to have an easily accessible list of contact persons at both universities responsible for certain questions (such as support in finding housing). This would further strengthen the information base and competence of students to organise their studies.

### Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

## 10. Quality Assurance

The cooperating institutions should apply joint internal quality assurance processes in accordance with part one of the ESG.

### Description

Two layers of quality assurance processes for the programme are described in the SER. First, both universities explain having quality assurance protocols in place, and the courses taught in the context of the programme are subject to these. Second, there are programme-specific measures.

On first level, the Institute of Political Science of WWU participates in the university-wide quality assurance system which was established to evaluate research and teaching at all faculties based on the general evaluation regulation (Evaluationsordnung der WWU). Students evaluate the courses anonymously in standardised questionnaires at the end of each semester. The results of these evaluations are to be published online and made accessible for lecturers and students.

At UT, every course is to be evaluated by students in several ways. First, during a panel meeting where a representative group of students, the programme coordinator and a member of the study association suggest improvements that are anonymised and shared with the responsible module coordinator. Secondly, a survey is sent out to all students in which they can give their opinion on all kinds of aspects of the module. This evaluation and core student figures, like the number of sufficient test grades, are incorporated in a module improvement plan. This module improvement plan is discussed with the programme committee which is a legal body supporting the educational quality enhancement and consists of 3–5 teaching staff members and an equal number of students. It discusses educational experiences and results, advises the programme director about improvements, and monitors their realisation. The programme committee must agree to changes in the Examination and Education Rules, as stated by Dutch law.

The Examination Board is the legal, internal body assigned with safeguarding the quality of examination in the programme. It consists of examiners who are supposed to take an independent stand while assessing the quality of examinations and the programme's final theses, which may result in directions for examiners and the programme director.

Apart from the formal procedures, direct contact between lecturers and students is described as essential for the quality assurance of the programme.

On second level, the programme directors and coordinators are in charge of the quality assurance of the study programme. Weekly meetings of the programme coordinators from both universities and regular joint meetings also involving the programme directors ought to support the continuous improvement.

Quality assurance is also said to benefit from student representation and consultation. Each student cohort is encouraged to elect student representatives, and these representatives are to be invited to the meetings of the programme coordinators.

### Experts' evaluation

As shown in the description above, there are several quality assurance mechanisms in place at both universities. In preparation of the re-accreditation, certain changes have been made of which effects can therefore not yet be assessed. However, the universities were able to justify the changes in a comprehensible and evidence-

based manner in the SER and during the on-site-visit. The main responsibility lies with the programme directors and coordinators, which is appropriate in a bi-national programme and to ensure the quality in teaching, learning, and assessment adequately.

However, data on the programme provided to the experts seemed to be only collected at the University of Münster, also covering results of evaluations which give the students the possibility of providing feedback on the support received at WWU – but not on support received from institutions at the University of Twente. Comparable data/evaluation results was/were not provided by UT and did not appear to exist, though the experts asked for it. Thus, the experts recommend that data on students and course and programme evaluations' results should be collected regularly and on a comparable level at both universities or, which would even be preferable, the joint quality assurance system should be further developed so that information can be collected more systematically and in a programme-specific way (student data, success rates, study programme evaluations, etc.). This should be done by keeping the special needs of the bi-national programme in mind so that information can be gathered that helps improving the programme as a whole (**finding 5**).

The programme's evaluation ("Studiengangsevaluation") at WWU includes questions on whether the results of course evaluations were discussed in class and whether students were informed about actions taken from them. Here the results demonstrated room for improvement. Furthermore, also the set of questions used in the evaluation seems worthy of improvement. Asking students "would you recommend making any changes to the study programme?" (of which 55.6% answered with yes) without offering a free-text field to provide further information on *what* students would like to change does not seem appropriate. At least, this information was not included in the documentation.

The implementation of nearly weekly meetings between the programme coordinators of both universities is a sign for good practice. As they (partly) also invite the student representatives it can be assured that students are informed over results of the quality assurance mechanisms and also make recommendations for "small-scale" changes in-between quality assurance cycles. This communication on equal terms is a useful complement to systematised surveys, especially in a programme with cohorts that are not too large.

### Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

### Recommendation of the panel of experts

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The panel of experts recommends accrediting the study programme “**Public Governance across Borders**” (B.Sc.) offered by University of Münster and University of Twente **without conditions**.

#### Findings:

1. To emphasize the mutuality and cohesion of the programme, an interuniversity coordinator should be appointed.
2. In the programme, the Public Administration angle should be focused on more.
3. Access to information on different issues that may arise at different points in the course of study either at WWU or UT should be facilitated. For this purpose, a central information point should be created and/or other supporting measures (like check lists) should be taken.
4. Teaching and learning methods should be regularly adapted to current developments, for example in the field of digital learning.
5. Data on students and course and programme evaluations' results should be collected regularly and on a comparable level at both universities or, which would even be preferable, the joint quality assurance system should be further developed so that information can be collected more systematically and in a programme-specific way.