

DECISION 24 – 071

Rapenburg 70
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of the Examination Appeals Board of Leiden University
in the matter of the administrative appeal of

██████████, appellant,

against

the Board of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, respondent.

The course of the proceedings

The Appellant requested to be admitted to the Master's Programme in Psychology, with a specialisation in Clinical Psychology (hereafter 'the Master's Programme').

The respondent rejected the appellant's request in its decision of 7 February 2024 (hereafter 'the contested decision').

The appellant sent a letter on 26 February 2024 by email to lodge an administrative appeal against this decision.

The respondent investigated whether an amicable settlement could be reached. A conversation took place between the appellant and respondent to this end. No amicable settlement was reached.

The respondent submitted a letter of defence on 18 March 2024.

The appeal was considered on 18 April 2024 during a public hearing of a chamber of the Examination Appeals Board. The appellant did not appear at the hearing, without giving notice. ██████████ master's and pre-master's programme in Psychology appeared on behalf of the respondent.

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Considerations

In accordance with Article 7.61, paragraph two, of the Higher Education and Academic Research Act ('WHW', *Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek*), the Examination Appeals Board must consider whether the contested decision contravenes the law.

The relevant regulations are included in the Annex to this decision.

The appellant has completed a Bachelor's Programme in Psychology at The American College of Greece (DEREE College).

The respondent did not admit the appellant to the Master's Programme because her previous education was insufficient with regard to substance and level in view of the admission requirements to the Master's Programme. More specifically, the respondent holds that the appellant does not meet the requirements that:

- at least 80% of the curriculum of the prior education must consist of course units in the field of psychology;
- at least 30 ECTS must have been obtained in course units of sufficient level ('advanced courses') related to the chosen specialisation of Clinical Psychology;
- at least 20 ECTS must have been achieved in course units in the fields of methodology and statistics.

The appellant's reasoned position is that she does meet these requirements.

The respondent explained in detail at the hearing, as stated in the letter of defence, why the appellant does not meet the admission requirements. In doing so, it first explained why the US diploma was used as the starting point and not the Open University transcript from the UK. Although the appellant did not submit this transcript with her application, the respondent nonetheless reviewed it following the appellant's appeal. However, the respondent concluded that the Open University transcript was incomplete. It does not reflect the entire programme of The American College of Greece. This is also apparent when the number of credits of the UK version is compared with the US version, according to the calculation prescribed by The American College of Greece on its own website. Since the appellant failed to appear at the hearing and failed to provide an alternative explanation, the Examination Appeals Board seconds the respondent's approach of taking the original programme at The American College of Greece as the starting point.

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In that regard, the respondent explained in the letter of defence, as elaborated at the hearing and with reference to Article 5.2 of the Course and Examination Regulations (*Onderwijs- en Examenregeling*) of the Psychology Master's Programme 2023-2024, the reasons why the appellant had followed too few relevant course units in psychology, and course units of inadequate level in the field of the desired specialisation in Clinical Psychology and had not followed sufficient courses in the compulsory fields of methodology and statistics. In doing so, the respondent calculated the credits as they apply in the US programme. And because that programme requires 121 credits for a diploma, the respondent used that number to assess the required 80% psychology course units (and not the 139 credits that the appellant obtained). The conversion of the other Dutch-based requirements to the US programme was also based on 121 credits.

Next, the respondent held that only 72 of the 121 credits were in the field of psychology and not the required 97 credits (80%). Moreover, the appellant only attended 6 and not the required 20 out of 97 credits in in-depth course units in the field of the desired specialisation of Clinical Psychology. The respondent clarified in this respect that it considers only level 400 course units to be of sufficient level, where only two of four '400 subjects' on the appellant's grade list are really relevant. Finally, the appellant did not obtain 14 but 12 out of 121 credits in the field of methodology and statistics, and did not follow in-depth courses in statistics.

Although this was not decisive, as - on the basis of the above - the appellant already failed to meet the admission requirements for the Master's Programme, the respondent lastly pointed out that the Admissions Office's recommendation classified the appellant's previous education as comparable to a Dutch HBO programme (university of applied sciences).

The appellant did not refute the above in any way, including by failing to appear at the hearing. That is her own responsibility.

In view of the above, the respondent decided justly not to admit the appellant to the Master's Programme. The administrative appeal is unfounded.

Superfluously, the Examination Appeals Board remarks the following.

The contested decision is provided with a rather summary substantiation. The Examination Appeals Board understands that there are so many requests for admission that the respondent is unable to provide more detailed explanations. Furthermore, the respondent argued, without challenge, that the contested

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decision was explained in the conversation about the possible amicable settlement. At the same time, judging from the grounds of her administrative appeal, the appellant's main concern appears to have been how the respondent assessed her US credits in the light of the requirements stated in Dutch terms. Clarity on this at an earlier stage might have avoided an appeal. In view of this, the Examination Appeals Board recommends that the respondent should continue to provide rejection decisions such as the contested decision with a brief explanation on this point.

The decision

The Examination Appeals Board of Leiden University

holds the administrative appeal unfounded

in view of Article 7.61 of the Higher Education and Academic Research Act.

Established by a chamber of the Examination Appeals Board, comprised of F.M.J. den Houdijker, LL.M., (Chair), Dr J.J. Hylkema, Dr G.L. Dusseldorp, B.R.W. van Velthoven, M.A. and P.C. Kemeling, LL.B. (members), in the presence of the Secretary of the Examination Appeals Board, R.R. van der Vegt, LL.M.

F.M.J. den Houdijker, LL.M.
Chair

R.R. van der Vegt, LL.M.
Secretary

Sent on:

Certified true copy,

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ANNEX

Relevant legislation

The Course and Examination Regulations of the Master's Programme in History (hereafter: the OER) stipulate the following:

Article 5.2 Admission to the programme

5.2.1 Holders of one of the following degrees may be admitted to the programme (Article 7.30b (1) of the Act):

- a) a Bachelor's degree from the BSc programme in Psychology of Leiden University with the appropriate specialisation course for the chosen specialisation.
- b) Persons with a bachelor's degree or an equivalent degree from a university who possess the skills, understanding and knowledge that are required for earning the bachelor's degree referred to in Article 5.2.1a. Alongside the requirements specified in 5.2.1a and 5.2.2, the following admission requirements apply for the programme pursuant to Article 7.30b (2) of the Act, more specifically the knowledge at university level of the following topics:
 - introduction to psychology
 - social and organisational psychology
 - personality psychology
 - cognitive psychology
 - neuropsychology and/or psychophysiology and/or biopsychology
 - clinical and abnormal psychology
 - developmental and educational psychology
 - theory or training in interpersonal skills, such as interview, counselling, discussion techniques.
 - theory or training in psycho diagnostics
 - advanced courses (at least 30 ECs) at a third year bachelor's level on topics pertaining to the preferred master's specialisation within the MSc in Psychology.
 - have sufficient knowledge of Methodology and Statistics (at least 20 EC): introductory and more advanced courses in methodology and statistics of psychological research (including psychometrics, multivariate data-analysis) and the use of SPSS.
- c) c. a bachelor's degree and additionally having passed the prescribed pre-master's programme pursuant to article 5.4.1