

**DECISION 17 - 056 and 057**

of the Examination Appeals Board of Leiden University

in the matter of

the appeal by [name], appellant

against

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

**1. Origin and course of the proceedings**

The appellant sent a letter on 13 March 2017 which was received on 16 March 2017, to lodge an appeal against the decision of the respondent of 30 February 2017, rejecting the appellant's application for admission to the Master's Programme in Clinical Psychology, and Clinical Neuropsychology, respectively.

In short, the appellant argued that the admission procedure for the two specialisations took a long time. She also pointed out that admission to the specialisation in Clinical Neuropsychology was rejected on two grounds, namely the circumstance that his previous education diverged too much from the requirements, and that the level of her university could not be compared to the level of a research university in the Netherlands. With regard to the Clinical Psychology specialisation, the rejection was based entirely on the consideration that her previous education diverged too much.

The respondent investigated whether it was possible to reach an amicable settlement. An email message was sent to the student on 23 March, to inform him that no amicable settlement was possible, stating the reasons why.

A letter of defence was submitted on 4 April 2017. The letter stated that the appellant had already been informed why the procedure took a long time and that apologies were offered in that respect. Furthermore, the respondent pointed out that the appellant requested to be admitted to two specialisations within the same master's programme. Since these are distinct specialisations, it may occur that the decisions are different. The respondent clarified that the assessment is based on the specific course units that the student has completed in the field of the relevant specialisation.

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Furthermore, it was explained that the Admissions Office of the University assessed the level of the appellant's previous education, at a private university, to be equal to two study years spent at a research university in the Netherlands. Besides, the relevant university does not have a very good reputation within the country (Serbia), it is not a research university, and the programme that the appellant attended has not been accredited.

Moreover, since the appellant indicated that a student from the same university had been admitted, the file of this student has since been scrutinized. It appeared that this student completed more course units and had a higher average grade.

The appeal was considered on 10 May 2017 during a public hearing of a chamber of the Examination Appeals Board, at which the appellant did not appear in person– although she had been properly summoned. Nor was she represented. [name] appeared on behalf of the respondent.

## **2. Considerations with regard to admissibility**

The appellant lodged a timely appeal against the decision of 30 February 2017 by means of the letter dated 13 March 2017 that was received on 16 March 2017 by the Examination Appeals Board. Furthermore, the letter of appeal also meets the requirements as stipulated in the General Administrative Law Act (*Algemene wet bestuursrecht*, “Awb”) and the Higher Education and Academic Research Act (*Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek*, “WHW”). Consequently, the administrative appeal is admissible.

## **3. Relevant legislation**

As far as relevant, the Course and Examination Regulations (“OER”) of the Master's Programme in Psychology state the following:

5.2.1 Pursuant to Article 7.30b, first paragraph, of the Act, holders of one of the following degrees may be admitted to the programme and one of its specialisations: a bachelor's degree from the BSc programme in Psychology at Leiden University.

5.2.4 Persons with a bachelor's degree from a university programme or an equivalent degree who possess the skills, understanding and knowledge that are required for earning the bachelor's degree referred to in Article 5.2.1; 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

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- 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) on a third year bachelor's level on topics pertaining to the preferred master's specialisation within the MSc Psychology.
  - and
- o 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.
- o have earned a bachelor's degree at a university.
- have proof of thorough proficiency in written and spoken English, e.g. by means of an IELTS score of 7 or a TOEFL score of 100/250/600 or equivalent (for non-native speakers of English) ) with at least an IELTS score of 6,5 on partial scales of this test and at least a TOEFL score of 22 (reading), 22 (listening), 22 (speaking) and 25 (writing) on partial scales of this test.

#### **4. Considerations with regard to the dispute**

In accordance with article 7.61, paragraph two, of the WHW (Higher Education and Academic Research Act), the Examination Appeals Board must consider whether the contested decision contravenes the law.

First and foremost, the Examination Appeals Board remarks that the requests for admission to the two specialisations have been rejected by means of two separate decisions. In view of the coherence of these two decisions, the appeals will be considered jointly.

It was established that the appellant was awarded a 'Diplomirani' in *Psychology* (bachelor's diploma) at Singidunum University, *Faculty of Media and Communications*, in Serbia. The appellant wants to be admitted - on the basis of this diploma - to the Master of Science programme in Psychology, in the Clinical Psychology specialisation, or in the Clinical Neuropsychology specialisation, , at the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences.

Article 5.2.1. of the OER states that automatic admission to this master's programme is only possible with a Bachelor's diploma in Psychology from Leiden University. Since the appellant does not have this diploma, he does not qualify for direct admission. The request to be admitted must therefore be assessed on the basis of the requirements stipulated by the OER.

The respondent explained in its letter of defence and at the hearing that and why this diploma does not meet the requirements set out in article 5.2.4. of the OER.

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The appellant did not complete a sufficient number of course units at an academic level in the field of the specialisation of the Master's Programme.

The Admissions Office of the University assessed the level of the previous education, attended at a private university, and concluded that the previous education of the appellant is comparable to two years of education at a research university in the Netherlands. Furthermore, the university in question does not have a very good reputation within the country (Serbia), it is not a research university, and the programme that the appellant attended has not been accredited.

In view of the above, the Examination Appeals Board holds that the respondent has made it sufficiently clear and has properly substantiated that the appellant lacks similar capacities with regard to knowledge, understanding and skills compared to those that must have been acquired upon completion of a bachelor's programme as referred to in Article 5.3 of the OER. The respondent correctly adopted the position that the appellant cannot be admitted due to the nature of the deficiencies found.

Furthermore, the respondent explained that it had scrutinized the previous admission of a student who studied at the same university and was indeed admitted to Leiden University. It appeared that the other student did complete more and other course units, and was awarded more study credits and higher grades. The above entailed that said student was allowed to sit an admission examination, which she completed successfully. However, the appellant's deficiencies are too comprehensive to offer a similar admission exam to him.

Considering this, the respondent has rightfully refused the appellant admission to the relevant specialisations of the Master's Programme in Psychology.

Since the decision of the respondent does not qualify to be quashed on any other grounds, the appeal must be held unfounded.

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**4. The decision**

in view of article 7.61 of the Higher Education and Academic Research Act,  
the Examination Appeals Board of Leiden University,  
holds the appeal **UNFOUNDED**.

Established by a chamber of the Examination Appeals Board, comprised of M.M. Bosma (Chair), Dr H.W. Sneller, Dr J. Nijland, LL.M., Dr A.M. Rademaker, and M. Heezen (members), in the presence of the Secretary of the Examination Appeals Board, W.J. de Wit, LL.M.

M.M. Bosma, LL.M.,  
Chair

W.J. de Wit, LL.M.,  
Secretary

Certified true copy,

Sent on: