

Examination Appeals Board

DECISION 18-058

of the Examination Appeals Board of Leiden University

in the matter of

the appeal by [name] from Dublin, Ireland, 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 17 April 2018 which was received on 25 April 2018, to lodge an appeal against the decision of the respondent of 5 April 2018, rejecting the appellant's application for admission to the Master's Programme in Psychology, with a specialisation in Economic and Consumer Psychology.

The respondent investigated whether the dispute could be settled amicably, and contacted the appellant to this end. However, this did not result in the appeal being withdrawn.

A letter of defence was submitted on 23 May 2018.

The appeal was considered on 20 June 2018 during a public hearing of a chamber of the Examination Appeals Board. The appellant did not appear and was not represented at the hearing. [name], Secretary of the Board of Admissions, and [name], appeared on behalf of the respondent.

2. Considerations with regard to admissibility

The appellant lodged a timely appeal against the decision of 5 April 2018 by means of the letter dated 17 April 2018 that was received by the Examination Appeals Board on 25 April 2018. 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, (1), 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 programme BSc in Psychology of Leiden University with the appropriate specialization course for the chosen specialisation.

5.2.2 The Board of Admissions may, on request, admit persons to the programmes who do not meet the requirements specified in 5.2.1 but who can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Board of Admissions that they possess the same level of knowledge, understanding and skills as holders of a degree specified in 5.2.1, possibly under further conditions, without prejudice to the conditions specified in 5.2.4.

5.2.4 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 5.2.1. Alongside the requirements specified in 5.2.1 and 5.2.2, the following qualitative admission requirements apply for the programme pursuant to Article 7.30b (2) of the Act, more specifically the knowledge on 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) on a third year Bachelor level on topics pertaining to the preferred master specialisation within the MSc Psychology.
- have sufficient knowledge of Methods and Statistics (at least 20 EC): introductory and more advanced courses in methods and statistics of psychological research (including psychometrics, multivariate data analysis) and the use of SPSS.
- 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

The appeal is against the decision of 5 April 2018 which rejected the appellant's application for admission to the Master's programme in Psychology, with a specialisation in Economic and Consumer Psychology.

In short, the appellant argued that his previous education may have too little substance related to psychology, but he pointed out that he has a high average grade. This demonstrates that he is able to familiarise himself with various disciplines. The appellant indicated that he has registered for a 'Diploma of Psychology' at City Colleges Dublin in order to broaden his expertise in the field of psychology. The appellant still wishes to be admitted to the master's programme.

In essence, the opinion of the respondent is that the request for admission has been rejected since the applicant's previous education differs materially from the requirements for admission to the master's programme. The respondent pointed out that the appellant has not yet submitted the 'Diploma of Psychology' to which he referred. Moreover, the course units of that programme will only provide a 'broad, basic knowledge' of modern psychology. Even if the appellant has this diploma, he would still lack 30 ECs of course units at an advanced level, both in the field of psychology and in the field of methodology and statistics.

The Examination Appeals Board has to decide whether the contested decision must be upheld.

It was established that the appellant was awarded a Bachelor's degree in Business & Law at University College in Dublin, Ireland, and wants to be admitted to the master's programme in Psychology on that basis.

Article 5.2.1. of the OER states that direct 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 the 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 of the Master's Programme in Psychology. The respondent substantiated the contested decision with the considerations that the previous education of the appellant differs considerably in terms of substance from the requirements to be admitted to the master's programme. In order to be admitted to the master's programme, the appellant must satisfy the final learning objectives of the bachelor's programme taught at Leiden University, and he must also possess sufficient expertise in the field of his preferred specialisation.

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At the hearing, the respondent explained that the curriculum of the Bachelor's Programme in Business & Law does not correspond with the preferred master's programme and consists of rather generic course units. Furthermore, the appellant completed hardly any course units in the field of his preferred specialisation.

The Examination Appeals Board endorses the respondent's position. It is not altered by the fact that the appellant is currently engaged in obtaining a *Diploma of Psychology*, since this diploma has not been awarded yet, and additionally, even if awarded, it would not remedy the deficiencies indicated.

Since the Examination Appeals Board has not been informed of any other facts or circumstances that could lead to an alternative decision, the appeal must be held unfounded.

5. The decision

The Examination Appeals Board of Leiden University,

holds the 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 H.M. Braam, LL.M., M.A. (Chair), Dr K. Beerden, J.J. Hylkema, M.A., Y.D.R. Mandel, and M. Heezen (members), in the presence of the Secretary of the Examination Appeals Board, W.J. de Wit, LL.M.

H.M. Braam, LL.M., MA
Chair

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

Certified true copy,

Sent on: