

DECISION 23 - 230

Rapenburg 70
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of the Examination Appeals Board of Leiden University

in the matter of the appeal of

██████████, appellant

against

the Board of the Faculty of Humanities, respondent.

The course of the proceedings

The appellant requested the respondent to be admitted to the Master's Programme in Linguistics, research (hereinafter to be referred to as “the programme”) by 1 September 2023.

The respondent rejected the appellant’s request in its decision of 15 March 2023.

The appellant sent a letter on 26 April 2023 to lodge an administrative appeal against this decision.

The respondent informed the Examination Appeals Board that it investigated whether an amicable settlement could be reached on 10 May 2023. An amicable settlement was not reached.

The respondent submitted a letter of defence on 27 May 2023.

The appeal was considered on 31 May 2023 during a hearing of a chamber of the Examination Appeals Board. The appellant did appear in person at the hearing. ██████████, ██████████ at the Education Advice & Quality Assurance at the Faculty of Humanities, 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 (*Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek*, hereinafter referred to as “WHW”), the Examination Appeals Board must consider whether the contested decision is contrary to the law.

The appellant does not agree with the rejection of the request for admittance. He received a bachelor's degree in Translation and Interpreting Studies from Yeditepe University in Turkey in 2021. While studying Translation and Interpreting Studies, he sat Language Theory and Semantics and other Linguistics-related course units. His GPA is 3.36/4.0, which is high (> 3.25 is an honour). Yeditepe University is a private university and is ranked. The bachelor programme takes four years and he has achieved high grades. He has a 100 per cent scholarship.

The respondent rejected the application for admission because the appellant's previous education was not equivalent to a Dutch academic bachelor's degree. As such, the appellant does not meet the requirements were set to admission to the Programme. The appellant lacks background in Linguistics and research experience.

Following Article 5.2.4.1 of the Course and Examination Regulations of the Master Programme in Psychology (*Onderwijs- en Examenregeling*, “OER”) the following admission requirements apply to the Programme: Linguistics (research), hereinafter “OER”.

Under Article 5.2.1, paragraph b, of the OER, candidates can be admitted to the Programme based on:

- a bachelor's degree from a research university, equivalent to the level of a Dutch academic bachelor's degree, including the General Academic Skills as listed in Appendix B of the OER.
- a bachelor's degree in Linguistics, a language and culture degree or a similar degree with relevant specialisation, with at least 30 ECTS of academic study in Linguistics subjects, including 20 ECTS in basic

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subjects such as phonology, phonetics, syntax, morphology, semantics, language typology).

- Candidates must have knowledge, understanding and skills in:
 - the ability to understand basic linguistic analysis and read linguistic literature (in English) at textbook level, and
 - the ability to collect linguistic data and detect patterns in it.
- as demonstrated in previous studies, previous research activities, and in the "Research Proposal".

Additional qualitative admission requirements have been stipulated in Article 5.2.4.1 of the OER. These require good grades with an average final grade of at least 7.5 in component A, and a grade of 8 or higher for the bachelor's thesis in component B. Component C tests against a Research Proposal, which demonstrates affinity and aptitude in the specific field of the Programme. Component D requires submission of an application letter.

The respondent based its decision on the advice provided by the Admissions Office. The Admissions Office holds that the bachelor's diploma of the appellant is not equivalent to a Dutch academic bachelor's degree. The Admissions Office assessed the degree at about 2 years of a bachelors' programme at a research university. Given the nature of the prior education, the respondent holds that the prior education is more consistent with a Dutch bachelor's degree at a university of applied sciences (HBO). It is rather applied linguistics.

It was not demonstrated that the appellant had otherwise obtained sufficient knowledge, insight, and skills equivalent to the required prior education. It was not demonstrated that he has at least 30 ECTS in the field of Linguistics. The Board of Admissions is not convinced that the appellant be able to collect linguistic data and detect patterns in it. According to the respondent, there are too many deficiencies to start the Programme. A background and experience in research activities is lacking. Although the minor the appellant attended at the University of Amsterdam is of sufficient level, it lacks a clear link to Linguistics.

Nor does the Research Proposal submitted by the appellant meet the requirements set to it in the OER. The Board of Admissions holds that the

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submitted document does not demonstrate that the appellant has the knowledge, insight, and skills to be admitted to the Programme.

Finally, the motivation letter does not meet the requirements on it either (there are too few arguments, the structure is inadequate and language errors are present).

According to the respondent, the admission procedure was complied with properly and there is no reason to review the contested decision.

During the amicable settlement discussion, it was explained to the appellant that there is an alternative route. In principle, he could be admitted to the one-year Master's Programme in Linguistics, after completing a premaster to make up for the shortfall of 60 ECTS in knowledge, understanding and skills. Because he still needs a visa, he will not be able to start the premaster's programme in September 2023. It might be possible to start the premaster's programme by 1 February 2024.

The Examination Appeals Board considers that at the hearing, the respondent provided sufficient reasons as to the grounds on which it reached the contested decision. The Examination Appeals Board agrees with the respondent that the admission procedure was complied with properly and that the Board of Admissions applied the correct provisions. The respondent relied correctly on the advice of the *Admissions Office* which rated the appellant's prior education and advised that his prior education did not correspond to the level required by Article 5.2.1 of the OER. The fact that the appellant obtained high marks during his prior education does not detract from this. On the basis of the documents sent by the appellant, the respondent correctly assessed that the appellant did not have knowledge, understanding and skills at the required level to start the Programme.

This means that the administrative appeal is unfounded.

At the hearing, the respondent explained once more what alternative route there would be for the appellant so that he may be admitted to the Programme at a later date. The Examination Appeals Board reminds the appellant to communicate well with the respondent if he considers to proceed on this route.

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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: O. van Loon, LL.M, (Chair), J.H.M. Huijts, LL.M., and R.A. Brouwer LLB (members), assisted by Mr I.L. Schretlen, LL.M., Secretary.

O. van Loon, LL.M.,
Chair

I.L. Schretlen, LL.M.
Secretary

The decision was notified to the appellant by email on 31 May 2023 and the decision was dispatched on:

Certified true copy,