

**DECISION 18 - 119**

Rapenburg 70  
Postbus 9500  
2300 RA Leiden  
T 071 527 81 18

of the Examination Appeals Board of Leiden University  
in the matter of  
the appeal by [name] from The Hague, appellant  
against  
the Board of Examiners of International Studies, respondent

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

In a decision of 4 June 2018, the respondent announced the results achieved by the appellant at La Sapienza University in Rome, Italy, after conversion to the assessment system used at Leiden University.

The appellant sent a letter on 24 June 2018, which was received by the Examination Appeals Board on 3 July 2018, to lodge an administrative appeal against this decision.

In short, the appellant argued that the respondent wrongly adjusted the grades she achieved at La Sapienza University downwards when converting them in the assessment system used at Leiden University.

The respondent attempted to reach an amicable settlement with the appellant on 7 September 2018. No amicable settlement was concluded.

The respondent submitted a letter of defence on 1 October 2018.

The appeal was considered on 17 October 2018 during a public hearing of a chamber of the Examination Appeals Board. The appellant appeared in person at the hearing [names], Chair of the Board of Examiners and Administrative Secretary respectively, appeared at the hearing on behalf of the respondent.

**Decision  
18-119**

Page 2/5

**2. Considerations with regard to admissibility**

The appellant lodged a timely appeal against the decision of 4 June 2018 by means of the letter that was received on 3 July 2018 by the Examination Appeals Board. Furthermore, the letter of appeal also meets the requirements as stipulated in the General Administrative Law Act ("Awb", *Algemene wet bestuursrecht*) and the Higher Education and Academic Research Act ("WHW", *Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek*). Consequently, the administrative appeal is admissible.

**3. Considerations with regard to the dispute**

In accordance with article 7.61, paragraph two, of the WHW, the Examination Appeals Board must consider whether the contested decision contravenes the law.

The contested decision announced the following results:

Communication and Politics 6.0

European Union Law and Human Rights 6.0

International Relations 7.0

Sociology of International Relations 7.5

La Sapienza University announced the following results:

Course	Institution grade	ECTS grade
Communication and Politics 6.0	24	E
European Union Law and Human Rights	24	E
International Relations	28	C
Sociology of International Relations	30	B-C

In the context of the amicable settlement, and at the hearing, the respondent clarified that the results achieved by the appellant at La Sapienza University were converted in line with the conversion tables that this foreign university sent to Leiden University. La Sapienza University applies an assessment system with grades up to "30 Lode". The conversion table that this university sent to the respondent lists the letters / "ECTS grades" to which the result as achieved by the appellant corresponds. Subsequently, the respondent converted these letters to

**Decision  
18-119**

Page 3/5

the assessment system used at Leiden University in accordance with the Nuffic assessment system.

The appellant takes the position that the respondent wrongly adjusted the grades she achieved at La Sapienza University downwards when converting them to the assessment system used at Leiden University. Furthermore, the respondent acted wrongly in failing to inform her that her grades would be converted.

The Examination Appeals Board holds that the respondent was at liberty to use the conversion table sent by La Sapienza University (in line with the decision of the Appeals Tribunal for Higher Education [*College van Beroep voor het Hoger Onderwijs*] of 5 July 2018, case number CBHO 2018/039). No evidence has been found to suggest that the conversion table used by the respondent was erroneous. The appellant's argument, that the respondent adjusted the achieved results downwards, is consequently incorrect. As an example, it is with good reason that the 30 points awarded to the appellant in respect of the Sociology of International Relations course unit was not converted into a 10 on a scale of 10 within the assessment system used at Leiden University. La Sapienza University informed the respondent that 30 points in this course unit corresponds with a B-C grade. A result of B-C level equals a 7.5 on a scale of 10 within the Leiden assessment system. The results achieved have been converted into the assessment system used at Leiden University in a consistent and verifiable manner.

At the hearing, the respondent explained that the internet page of Leiden University provides information on the conversion of results achieved abroad. At the hearing, the respondent indicated that she could have been more proactive with regard to providing information about the conversion of foreign study results. She explained that conversion has to take place as the grades are included in the calculation of the Grade Point Average (GPA). The GPA is a universal indicator for students' achievements. At the hearing, the respondent also expressed her preference for a fail/pass system in respect of results achieved abroad, when these are not part of the GPA. However, such a system does not apply yet.

The Examination Appeals Board holds that the information provided about the conversion is not below standard to such an extent that it could conflict with the law. In so far as the appellant stated that she was not aware that conversion would be carried out in this manner, the Examination Appeals Board pointed out that

**Decision  
18-119**  
Page 4/5

the internet page<sup>1</sup> of the respondent states that conversion would be effected. The page includes the following information

“Grade transfer

In the months following your exchange period, the partner/host university will send a transcript of your results to Leiden University. Leiden will transfer those credits that have been successfully obtained at the host university to your programme here. A number of resources and sources of expertise are employed to assist with determining Leiden equivalents to foreign grades. Grades are not transferred on a pass/fail basis. Students will receive a Leiden University grade equivalent to their grades at the host university.”

If there was any lack of clarity about the manner in which conversion would be effected, it would have been up to the appellant to request more detailed information regarding this. Finally, the Examination Appeals Board considers that the fact that the appellant was unaware of the manner in which conversion would be effected cannot lead to a different manner of conversion being effected than that effected by the respondent in the contested decision.

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.

---

<https://www.student.universiteitleiden.nl/en/study--studying/studying-abroad/exchange/to-arrange-upon-your-return/humanities/international-studies-ba?cd=international-studies-ba&cf=humanities#tab-2>

**Decision  
18-119**

Page 5/5

**4. 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 K.H. Sanders, LL.M., MA (Chair), Dr A.M. Rademaker, Dr K. Beerden, M. Heezen, and L.N. Kluinhaar LL.B. (Members), in the presence of the Secretary of the Examination Appeals Board, M.S.C.M. Stoop - van de Loo, LL.M.

K.H. Sanders, LL.M.,  
Chair

M.S.C.M. Stoop - van de Loo, LL.M.,  
Secretary

Certified true copy,

Sent on: