

DECISION 17 - 363

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of the Examination Appeals Board of Leiden University

in the matter of

the appeal of [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 6 November 2017, which was received on 9 November 2017, to lodge an appeal against the decision of the respondent of 31 October 2017, rejecting the appellant's application for admission to the Master's Programme in Psychology, with a specialisation in Clinical Psychology.

In short, the appellant argued that he only lacks the course units Neuropsychology, Developmental Psychology, and Abnormal Psychology that are required for admission to the master's programme. The appellant stated that he is motivated to start the master's programme.

The respondent investigated whether an amicable settlement could be reached. However, this did not result in the appeal being withdrawn. In an email of 23 November 2017, the respondent informed the appellant that the contested decision will not be amended and that he can only be admitted to the master's programme after attending the International Bachelor's Programme in Psychology, since the pre-master's is only available in Dutch.

A letter of defence was submitted on 27 November 2017. It stated that the appellant's previous education deviates essentially with regard to substance and level from the requirements for admission to the master's programme.

The appeal was considered on 20 December 2017 during a public hearing of a chamber of the Examination Appeals Board. The appellant did not appear at the hearing, having given prior notice. [name], appeared on behalf of the respondent.

2. Considerations with regard to admissibility

The appellant lodged a timely appeal against the decision of 31 October 2017 by means of the letter dated 6 November 2017 that was received by the Examination Appeals Board on 9 November 2017. 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. 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 specialisation 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

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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) 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 relates to the decision of 31 October 2017 which rejected the appellant's application for admission to the Master's programme in Psychology, with a specialisation in 'Clinical Psychology'.

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

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It has been established that the appellant was awarded a Bachelor of Arts/Sciences in Psychology and English at Vassar College in the United States.

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 hold 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 the appellant does not meet the requirements set out in article 5.2.4. of the OER of the Master's Programme in Psychology based on his diploma, and why this is the case. 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 terms of the bachelor's programme taught at Leiden University, and he must also possess sufficient expertise in the field of his preferred specialisation. At the hearing, the respondent explained that the curriculum of the appellant comprises 60% of course units that are not focused on the field of psychology. Besides, the appellant has completed too few course units in the field of his preferred specialisation. The Examination Appeals Board endorses this finding.

The fact that the appellant has a different view of the relevance of the course units he has completed successfully, namely Neuropsychology, Developmental Psychology, and Abnormal Psychology, does not alter the above. The respondent has rightfully refused the appellant admission to the master's programme.

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.

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5. 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: O. van Loon, LLM, (Chair), Dr J.J.G.B. de Frankrijker, Dr H.W. Sneller, M. Heezen and G. Kluinhaar, LLM, (members), in the presence of the Secretary of the Examination Appeals Board, M.S.C.M. Stoop - van de Loo, LLM

O. van Loon, LLM,
Chair

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

Certified true copy,

Sent on: