

Examination Appeals Board

DECISION 17 - 348

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 3 October 2017 which was received on 9 October 2017, to lodge an appeal against the decision of the respondent of 26 September 2017 rejecting the appellant's application for admission to the Master's Programme in Psychology, with a specialisation in Clinical Neuropsychology.

In short, the appellant argued that she completed a four-year liberal arts programme at Bethel College in Kansas, from which she has acquired wide expertise. The appellant holds that the course units she has taken in that programme correspond sufficiently to course units in the Psychology bachelor's programme in Leiden. The appellant expressed her motivation 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 However, this did not result in the appeal being withdrawn.

A letter of defence was submitted on 10 November 2017. It stated that the appellant's previous education seriously deviates with regard to substance and level from the requirements for admission to the master's programme. The respondent indicated that the previous education does not have to be identical to the bachelor's programme in Leiden, but that it has to correspond in terms of substance and level.

The respondent pointed out that the appellant's previous education can be compared to two years of study at a university.

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The appeal was considered on 6 December 2017 during a public hearing of a chamber of the Examination Appeals Board. The appellant did not appear. [name] appeared on behalf of the respondent.

2. Considerations with regard to admissibility

The appellant lodged a timely appeal against the decision of 26 September 2017 by means of the letter dated 3 October 2017 that was received by the Examination Appeals Board on 9 October 2017. 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.

5.2.2 The Board of Admissions may, on request, grant admission to the programmes to persons 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 an equal level of knowledge, understanding and skills as holders of a degree specified in 5.2.1, possibly under conditions to be further determined, without prejudice to the requirements in 5.2.4.

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

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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
- 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) at 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 the degree of Bachelor 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

The appeal is aimed at the decision of 26 September 2017 which rejected the appellant's application for admission to the Master's programme in Psychology with a specialisation in Clinical Neuropsychology.

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

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It has been established that the appellant was awarded a Bachelor of Arts/Sciences in Psychology at Bethel 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, she 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 the appellant does not meet the requirements set out in article 5.2.4. of the OER based on her diploma. 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 for admittance to the master's programme. The appellant did not complete enough course units in the field of psychology, methodology and statistics and in the field of her chosen specialisation. The Examination Appeals Board agrees with this view.

Moreover, the comparison between course units at Bethel College and the bachelor's programme in Psychology that was submitted by the appellant does not warrant an alternative decision, as the Admissions Office established the level of the programme at Bethel College as equivalent to two years of study at a research university. The bachelor's programme at Leiden University is a three-year programme. Given these considerations, the respondent has rightfully refused admission of the appellant to the master's programme.

The appellant does not qualify for a pre-master's, since this programme is only available in Dutch and the appellant does not have command of this language.

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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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: O. van Loon, LL.M., (Chair), C. de Groot, LL.M., Dr K. Beerden, D.E. Mulder, LL.M., and M. Heezen (Members), in the presence of the Secretary of the Examination Appeals Board, W.J. de Wit, LL.M.

O. van Loon, LL.M.
Chair

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

Certified true copy,

Sent on: