

VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT AMSTERDAM



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Decision in Dutch**

EXAMINATION APPEALS
BOARD

No. 2024/26/1168

THE EXAMINATION APPEALS BOARD

Ruling on the appeal by [appellant], [student number], against the decision of the Admissions Committee of the Business Analytics Master's programme of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, respondent, not to admit the appellant to the Business Analytics Master's programme.

I. Course of the proceedings

On 26 March 2024, the appellant lodged an appeal with the Examination Appeals Board against the respondent's decision of 18 March 2024 on the appellant's application for admission to the master's programme in Business Analytics with effect from 1 September 2024.

On 28 March 2024, the Board asked the respondent to explore, in consultation with the appellant, the possibility of an amicable settlement of the dispute. The respondent met with the appellant through video calls. No settlement was reached. The defendant filed a statement of defence on 14 May 2024. The appeal was heard at the hearing of the Board on 10 June 2024. The appellant and the respondent did not appear without notice.

II. Facts

Based on the documents, the Board assumes the following facts.

The appellant obtained a Bachelor of Science in Engineering and Management Science from Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco, and on that basis applied for admission to the master's programme in Business Analytics. The defendant rejected the appellant's application on the grounds that the appellant did not meet the admission requirements. She did not obtain enough mathematics subjects, and her prior education is not at university level, according to the defendant.

III. Views of the parties

The appellant does not agree with the respondent's decision.

The appellant points out that she followed a specialisation in mathematical subjects at secondary school. Her undergraduate degree includes 48 EC of mathematics and statistics subjects, namely Calculus (6 EC), Multivariable Calculus (6 EC), Linear Algebra (6 EC), Differential Equations (6 EC), Probability and Statistics (6 EC), Operations Research and Optimization (6 EC), Engineering Statistics (6 EC) and Data Analysis (6 EC). The appellant argues that her previous education adequately prepared her for the master's programme in Business Analytics.

The respondent maintains its position that the appellant is not admissible to the Business Analytics master's programme because she does not meet the admission requirements.

The Teaching and Examination Regulations 2023-2024 (the TER) include the following about the admission requirements to the master's programme.

Article 7.2 Admission requirements

Admission to the Master's programme is possible for an applicant who has obtained a Bachelor's degree obtained at an institution of academic higher education, which demonstrates the following knowledge, understanding and skills corresponding to the exit qualifications of the Bachelor's programme Business Analytics. This is demonstrated in the following prior education requirements.

- a. *Registration for the Master's programme in Business Analytics is open to anyone who is in the possession of a Bachelor's degree in Business Analytics.*
- b. *An applicant with a university Bachelor's degree other than that specified in paragraph 1.a may be admitted to the programme by the Examination [Admission] Board if the following conditions have been met:*
 - *the applicant's prior education, including any additional coursework, includes at least 90 credits in mathematics, computer science and/or econometrics;*
 - *the applicant's prior education, including any additional coursework, includes at least 45 credits in mathematics, including at the very least Probability and Statistics;*
 - *the applicant's prior education, including any additional coursework, includes at least 6 credits of programming in Java, Python, C++, or another formal programming language that covers the OOP paradigm;*
 - *the applicant's prior education meets the qualifications of a university Bachelor's degree programme as defined in the Dublin descriptors.*

In addition, the website of the master's programme states that candidates must have completed at least one subject in Probability and Statistics, each of 6 EC.

The defendant points out that the appellant did not meet the requirement of having obtained at least 45 EC of pure mathematics subjects. Judging from the course descriptions submitted by the appellant, the respondent does not consider the subject Data Analysis to be sufficiently mathematical. The subject Engineering Statistics is of an applied nature and therefore does not count as a pure mathematics subject. In addition, the appellant did not obtain a 6 EC course in Probability.

Finally, the prior education followed by the appellant is not equivalent to a university education. The International Office qualifies the level of the prior education depending on the subjects taken between higher vocational education and university level. The subjects taken were mainly of an applied nature, which is why the prior education is not considered to be of university level.

IV. Considerations of the Board

The appellant's appeal was timely filed and also otherwise meets the legal requirements.

This case concerns an appellant's request for admission to the Business Analytics master's programme. How to deal with such a request is regulated in article 7.2 of the Teaching and Examination Regulations 2023-2024 of the master programme (the OER). Article 7.2 of the OER lays down the admission criteria.

Article 7.4 of the OER states that candidates who do not meet the admission requirements set out in Article 7.2 may request to be admitted to a premaster programme in order to meet the admission requirements by that route.

The Board notes that the defendant assessed the request for admission to the master's programme on the basis of the admission criteria listed in the OER and the additional criteria published on the website.

The defendant could reasonably come to the decision that the appellant did not yet meet the admission requirements because the appellant had not obtained 45 EC of pure mathematics subjects.

Although the admission criteria of the Business Analytics master's programme are sufficiently known to candidates, the Board considers that there is room for improvement in the way these admission requirements have been published. The starting point should be that the admission requirements of a programme or programme are laid down in the OER. Further information can then be provided on the university's website - insofar as necessary.

The aforementioned considerations lead to the following ruling.

V. Ruling

The Board declares the appeal unfounded.

Done in Amsterdam, on 18 June 2024, by Prof. Dr. P.J. Huisman, chairman, S.A. Bekkenutte and J.R. Hulst, in the presence of A.M. van Donk, secretary.

Prof. Dr. P.J. Huisman
chairman

drs. A.M. van Donk,
secretary

An appeal against a decision of the Examinations Appeals Board may be lodged by the person concerned with the Administrative Jurisdiction Division of the Council of State, PO Box 20019, 2500 EA The Hague, the Netherlands. The period for submitting a notice of appeal is six weeks. A Safe Mail web form can be used. A court fee is payable. See www.raadvanstate.nl/studentzaken.