



CBE, PO box 80125, 3508 TC Utrecht

Examination Appeals Board

ex article 7.60 of the Higher Education Act

Visiting address

Heidelberglaan 8, Utrecht

DECISION

Our reference	CBE/K21 05 021
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Website	www.uu.nl
Date	2 August 2021
subject	appeal [appellant]

The Examination Appeals Board at Utrecht University (hereinafter referred to as: the Board) has made the following decision on the appeal by:

[appellant], appellant,

versus

[the Admissions Committee of] the Graduate School of Economics, defendant.

I. Origin and course of the proceedings

The appellant lodged an appeal on 18 May 2021 against the defendant's decision of 17 May 2021 not to admit the appellant to the Master's programme Business and Social Impact. The appeal was sent to the defendant on 31 May 2021. On 6 July 2021 the Board received a statement of defence from the defendant. On 8 July 2021 the appellant has sent the Board a bachelor degree university certificate in English.

On 13 July 2021 a hearing was held. Due to covid-19 measures, this hearing was held online via MS-Teams. [appellant] attended. The admissions committee was represented by [].

II. Grounds

The defendant decided that the appellant was not admitted to the Master's programme Business and Social Impact because of a lack of sufficient background in Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Corporate Finance and Econometrics and because her previous education does not make her eligible.

The positions of both parties



The appellant stated the following in her appeal and during the hearing.

She explained that her graduation was in commerce and she did have Microeconomics and Macroeconomics in her subject during a course. She stated that she would like to prove her knowledge during an online test. Apart from this she has experience of around 18 years in the corporate world where she has worked in manager positions like Haworth, Tarkett and TechniGroup of which she enclosed experience letters. She is sure that her wide and practical experience in corporate world will definitely help in pursuing her master programme.

She stated that she is a quick learner and could be able to exceed the expectation.

At the hearing the appellant explained how her work experience was relevant. She also stated that her previous education should not be assessed to be equivalent to a University of Applied Sciences, because it is one of the best universities in India.

The defendant stated the following.

The application of the appellant for the Master's Programme Business and Social Impact has been assessed conform the Education and Examination Regulations for Master's Programmes in Economics, 2020-2021. The defendant has carefully re-assessed her application but still came to the same conclusion. She has not been admitted because the documents submitted in the application show insufficient background in Microeconomics, Macroeconomics and Econometrics. Her work experience unfortunately does not compensate for the lack of background in these fields. The diplomas have been assessed to be equivalent to a bachelor and master diploma from a University of Applied Sciences (Dutch HBO), as opposed to a bachelor or master diploma from a research university (Dutch WO). Applicants with a previous education equivalent to a University of Applied Sciences are in principle not eligible for a Master's Programme at the Utrecht School of Economics.

The diploma recognition is based on the information provided by Nuffic, the Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation in Higher Education and on the years of experience of seeing and assessing thousands of application files by our colleagues that handle admissions. The defendant has asked the Admissions colleagues to re-assess the diplomas and they confirmed once more their equivalence to a University of Applied Sciences. For comparison, Dutch students with a similar previous education from a University of Applied Sciences (HBO) are not eligible for the Master's Programme in Business and Social Impact and would first have to do a Pre-Master's Programme, provided that their HBO results are high enough.

As a final attempt to see if the decision should be reconsidered, the application was presented to the Program Coordinator of Business and Social Impact, but he judged that no settlement could be achieved.

Based on the documents submitted in these proceedings and what was said during the hearing, the Board considers the following.

The programme specific part of the Education and Examination Regulations (EER) Faculty of Law, Economics and Governance 2020-2021 states the following:

*"art. 2.1 – requirements for admission to the U.S.E. academic degree programmes
All programmes*

1. Students will be selected on the basis of objective standards concerning:

- a. previous academic performance in a relevant subject area or areas;*
- b. relevant skills;*
- c. command of the language(s) used in the programme.*



This information is used to consider whether the student concerned is in a position of being able to complete successfully the Master's Programme within the nominal time period.

2. The admission requirements have been formulated clearly and transparently so that candidates are aware beforehand of the requirements they must meet to be admitted to the programme."

On the UU website was stated the following about the entry requirements:

"Entry requirements:

*A BSc of a research university in Economics or Economics and Business Economics.
A good command of English. Check the specific English proficiency requirements below.
If you have another type of Bachelor's degree (e.g. Business Administration, Management, Social Sciences, Engineering, Political Sciences) you must have knowledge in the following fields:*

Microeconomics

Macroeconomics

Corporate Finance

Econometrics or Advanced Statistics

The Admissions Committee accesses your application and decides whether it believes you have demonstrated enough skills and knowledge to successfully complete the Master's programme within the nominal duration of 1 year.

The committee takes into account:

- The level of the required knowledge and academic skills;*
- Mastery of research methods and techniques;*
- Your motivation and talent;*
- Your command of the English language.*

The Admissions Committee bases its assessment and decision on the documents you submit. In some cases we might ask you for extra information such as course description, or invite you to an (Skype) interview."

The Board's considerations

It should be stated first and foremost that the duties and powers of the Board do not extend to assessing or reassessing an application for a master's programme. The Board assesses whether the assessment of the defendant has been made with due care and has been sufficiently substantiated. Furthermore, the assessment is one of the discretionary powers of the Admissions Committee. This means that, in addition to the assessment given above, it will only be possible to consider if there has been a conflict with any rule of written or unwritten law.

On the grounds of the documents submitted in these proceedings and on the grounds of the defendant's justification of the assessment, the Board takes the view, judging the matter within the limits set out above, that the assessment by the defendant of the application for the master's programme can be upheld. The defendant explained the procedure and the assessment of the appellant's application following the criteria as stated in the EER and the website. It can therefore be concluded that the assessment was made with due care. The arguments put forward by the appellant in her appeal has not been sufficient to persuade the Board to take a different view.

This leads to the conclusion that the appeal should be considered unfounded.



The Board decides as follows.

III . Decision

The Board

- I. Finds the appellant's appeal unfounded;
- II. Requires that copies of this decision be sent to the parties, to the Board of Utrecht University, and the management of the faculty Law, Economics and Governance and made available to interested parties.

Thus decided in Utrecht and made know to the parties involved on 2 August 2021 by
by Prof A.M. Hol, chair, Dr. B.M. Verdel, Dr. F.W. Lantink, Prof J.J.S. Dubas, A.J.H. Zuijderwijk
BSc, members, in presence of X.L. Westenburg LLB, secretary.

X.L. Westenburg LLB, secretary

Prof A.M. Hol, chair

Any party whose interests are directly affected by this decision may submit an appeal to the Appeals Tribunal for Higher Education, P.O. Box 16137, 2500 BC Den Haag (www.cbho.nl) for a period of six weeks after the day on which this decision was announced. The appeal should be written in Dutch. There is a registry fee involved.