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## IMPLEMENTATION OF BOLOGNA REQUIREMENTS IN THE BA/MA PROGRAMMES OF THE CORVINUS UNIVERSITY OF BUDAPEST

*The paper<sup>1</sup> provides an overview on the implementation of Bologna Declaration in the area of public administration at the Corvinus University. It analyses the new developments from three viewpoints. First, they are perceived as a step in the long historical process of the modernisation of the Hungarian state. Second, they fit into the general pattern of the implementation of the Bologna requirements in the whole system of Hungarian university education. Third, they are a continuation of previous efforts at the University to integrate, both in research and education the legal, political, economic and managerial aspects of public administration, with particular emphasis on non-legal approaches. In particular, it reviews the resources and constraints (both outside and within the University) that have influenced the development and introduction of the new programs.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Bologna process has ushered in new forms of university-level education (BA in Public Governance; MA in Public Policy and Management) in the field of public administration in Hungary. Building on its research and teaching experience in public policy and management, the Corvinus University of Budapest has taken a leading role in this process. The new developments can be analysed from different viewpoints. First, they can be perceived as a step in the long historical process of the modernisation of the Hungarian state. Second, they fit into the general pattern of the implementation of the Bologna requirements in the whole system of Hungarian university education. Third, they are a continuation of previous efforts at the University to integrate, both in research and education the legal, political, economic and managerial aspects of public administration, with particular emphasis on non-legal approaches. In what follows, we elaborate on each of these three interrelated perspectives in turn. In particular, we review the resources and constraints (both outside and within the University) that have influenced the development and introduction of the new programs. Finally, we discuss the experience of the first two years of the Bologna system, drawing on statistics about the attractiveness of the BA program in Public Governance.

### 2. SETTING THE STAGE: PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION EDUCATION IN HUNGARY SINCE WORLD WAR II

#### PA EDUCATION IN HUNGARY IN THE COMMUNIST ERA

The development of public administration education in Hungary is perhaps best understood as a series of responses to underlying political and social changes. In

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1949, a "state party" or "party state" system was established in Hungary. The Communist Party came to dominate economy and society. Its power had a totalitarian nature and was exercised by arbitrary actions. The totalitarian system had no special academic background. Political reliability was the only requirement for obtaining a position in the leadership of public administration. No special expertise was needed in public management, public economics or public policy. The leaders of public administration were educated at the Party-controlled "Council Academy".

Throughout the Communist era, the practice of administration mostly consisted of the execution of legal norms, regulations and non-legal Party regulations that were similar in character to legal rules. Norms and directives transmitted all state decisions and intentions towards the lower levels of a unitary hierarchy, including the dominant proportion of the productive sphere. It is important to note that this legalism of public administration differed from the legalism of traditional, Weberian bureaucracies of liberal democratic systems in a very important respect. Namely, while administrative apparatuses of liberal democratic political regimes historically played an important role in both preparing and executing laws, the role of administrative apparatuses was restricted only to execution; all important policy decisions were prepared by strictly separate Party organisations.

However, the totalitarian character of the system started to erode in the late 1960s. A shift began from a totalitarian system to an authoritarian political system. The main economic and societal functions were still accomplished by the Communist Party but the importance of legal norms increased in the day-to-day practice of public agencies. This shift resulted in changes in the academic background.

First, the knowledge of administrative law was now required besides political reliability. Second, a series of economic reforms was launched in 1968, which gave more emphasis to market incentives and mechanisms in the framework of a centrally planned economy. As a result, state enterprises acquired a new, albeit limited autonomy in decision-making. The extension of the economic reform was not continuous and contained many controversial elements and intentions. At the end of the 1980s, however, market incentives already had significant influence within the general framework of a planned economy. The consequence was a growing importance of economic sciences for state enterprises and, increasingly, a number of public agencies, especially in those sectoral ministries and central bodies that dealt with economic planning or administration. This knowledge was mostly provided by the Karl Marx University of Budapest, specialising in economic sciences.

Third, a new demand for managerial skills emerged. This was the consequence of the growing autonomy of public agencies. In order to meet these needs, a new educational institution called the College of Public Administration was established. The College provided degree programmes at bachelor's level. Its graduates found jobs mainly in regional and local public administration. Education at the College had a strong legal focus but also covered fields such as public management and social sciences [Hajnal-Jenei 2008].

## NEW CHALLENGES AND REQUIREMENTS IN THE PROCESS OF TRANSITION

The transition from command and control to a market economy and from a totalitarian state to a pluralistic, multiparty democracy is best perceived as a process of transformation, which requires essential reforms in the basic functions and institutions of the state [König 1992; Balázs 1993].

It is convenient to break up the process of administrative transformation into three phases. The first phase lasted from 1989 to 1992 [Verebélyi 1993]; the second phase from 1993 to 1997; while the third phase covers the period from 1998 to the present time.

*The first phase* was characterised by fundamental changes in the economic, political and legal environment of public administration. In economic terms, the basic thrust was to move away from central planning towards a market-oriented economic system. In political and legal terms, the principal development was the collapse of a totalitarian political system and the emergence of a pluralistic, multiparty regime based on a constitutional state and liberal democratic political institutions. These fundamental changes required basic shifts in the functions of the state and a comprehensive reform of public administration. The most important elements of the public sector reform included:

- creating the institutional and legal foundations of democratic political control over state apparatuses, with a special emphasis on the creation of a loyal and competent civil service;
- decentralization of decision-making to the regional and local level, providing genuine legal and financial autonomy for local institutions;
- deregulation reforms that make the long, complicated laws and regulations understandable to the public.

The new functions of the state required new knowledge and new skills of the civil servants. The former Karl Marx University, renamed the Budapest University of Economic Sciences in 1991, responded by developing new teaching programs preparing students for these completely novel functions. In 1992, the Department of Public Policy and Management at the Faculty of Economic Sciences launched a major in Public Policy and Management. The curriculum rested on four pillars:

- Public Economics and Finance,
- Public Policy and Management,
- Constitutional and Administrative Law,
- Public Management.

The Department's main aim was to provide insights into how democratic governments (should) function and provide students with analytic skills. The crucial question was the following: What knowledge, skills and type of personality is required of public sector employees? The Department defined the main components of the *knowledge requirements* as follows:

- knowledge of society, based on sociology, psychology,
- knowledge of politics, based on political sciences,
- knowledge of the legal system, based on Constitutional, and Administrative Law,
- knowledge of government policy, based on public policy process and analysis,

- knowledge of economic activities of public agencies, based on public economics and finance,
- knowledge of public sector organisations, based on public management,
- knowledge of ethics and justice, based on ethics and responsibility in the government,
- knowledge of methods and techniques, based on statistics, mathematics, informatics.

Furthermore, *skill components* were defined as follows:

- thinking strategically,
- decision making skills,
- managing resources and people,
- effective delegation of tasks and responsibilities,
- cross-cultural understanding,
- introduction of new technology,
- communication skills,
- speaking foreign languages.

Finally, the defined personality components included:

- productivity and efficiency,
- reliability,
- responsibility,
- loyalty (without being subservient),
- positive toward people and problems,
- neutral toward political parties,
- creativity and resourcefulness,
- constructively critical,
- flexibility,
- cooperativeness,
- showing human interest,
- taking initiative,
- taking risks,
- working under pressure.

*The second phase* of the transformation process was based on the recognition that the performance of the public sector was a crucial factor in ensuring the success of the politico-economic transition. It was increasingly accepted that public sector performance was one component of the overall performance of national economies not only because of its direct impact as a buyer and seller of goods and services but also because of its indirect effects on product and labour markets. Poor administration and inadequately conceived or unnecessary regulations could substantially burden the private sector as well as voluntary, not-for-profit organizations. The effectiveness with which governments fulfil their tasks in health care, education of the workforce, housing etc. influences international competitiveness of economies. It became obvious that under these circumstances there was only one solution: to enhance public sector productivity through general public management reforms. In this second phase, institutional capacity building was at the heart of reforms and the demand for a managerial approach increased significantly.

The Department of Public Policy and Management responded to these challenges by introducing a modified version of the major in Public Policy and Management that put more emphasis on managerial requirements such as management skills, substantial knowledge of the institutional settings of public agencies, mastery of human resources and information management. This program was accepted as a major by the Faculty of Business Studies. (The original version of the major, focussing on public policy, remained in place in an updated form at the Faculty of Economic Sciences.)

In 1999, the Hungarian Parliament made a decision on integrating the Budapest University of Economic Sciences and the College of Public Administration. This institutional change opened up opportunities for cooperation in curriculum development as well as teaching. The unique experience of the Department in teaching and researching public policy and management could now be utilised by the College. In return, the legal components of education at the Faculty of Economics could be strengthened. The College soon introduced a new University-level degree program in public administration with a strong legal emphasis.

*In the third phase* of the transformation process, the main objective has been to re-establish the institutionalised position of Hungary in the Euro-Atlantic World. The country entered OECD, NATO, and finally the European Union in 2004. As a new member state, Hungary has been obliged to implement the standards and values of the European Administration Space. This has brought great challenges for the Hungarian public administration. Although the relevant administrative principles are not formalised *acquis*, they are more than simply a code of ethics. They are considered to be common trends and features, rather than a particular organisational model of national civil service.

Furthermore, there are fundamental and ongoing changes in the economic, political and social environment of the Hungarian government and public administration. The economic and political environment has become increasingly complex and there are significant changes in the character of the Hungarian society, with greater diversity in the population, growing income disparity, changes in family structure and lifestyles, and increasing public safety concerns. People are losing confidence in the government and public institutions have been facing pressures and constraints on their resources and budgets at the same time. Some social groups have pushed for more direct and participative democracy, accompanying the decreasing respect for traditional instruments of representative democracy.

The nature of public organizations has been changing, too. Their organizational pattern has been transformed. In many cases, their services do not meet citizens' demands for quality and performance. The capacities of public agencies to lead, guide and manage have been increasing but they cannot meet the rapidly growing requirements of the citizens.

These changing framework requires substantial changes from the government and public institutions. An essential shift is needed from government to governance. That is,

- public institutions need to provide for citizens a full-range participation in public policy making;



- private enterprises should be involved in the service delivery by different means of privatization, contracting-out and public-private partnerships;
- public institutions should be transformed for being able to compete with private enterprises and civil society organizations;
- public institutions need to design new "networking structures" for governance;
- public organizations have to be able to change faster and have to become more responsive with a shift from a mechanic attitude to task execution to the development of problem solving capacities;
- more complexity in service delivery needs to strengthen regulation and monitoring;
- new ways of accountability need to be developed - public institutions should not be only implementers without any decision power anymore; they need autonomous responsibility based on their neutral expertise;
- public institutions should contribute to political stability and policy equilibrium (i.e. a balance between opposite political forces) and should resist the pressures of extreme political forces.

To better grasp the challenges Hungarian public administrators face, one must understand that since the early 1990s fundamental changes have been introduced in public administration in terms of private management methods and the commencement of an overall effort to reduce the scope of the state. The increasing economic, political and social pressure on public administration has forced bureaucrats to consider the requirements of legalism and managerialism at the same time. Even in the EU countries there are tensions between these principles. However in these countries the development of the "Rule of Law" and the introduction of "New Public Management" was a sequential process. There is a broadly discussed tension between the principles of professional integrity and professional loyalty. And a well-known consequence of customer orientation, quality improvement and application of management techniques is the growing tension between legalism and managerialism.

However, CEE countries have had to face a special dilemma. In the early 1990s, they established the legal and organizational framework of a "Rechtsstaat" and shortly afterwards had to introduce managerial systems and techniques in the public sector. Basically, the development of the "Rule of Law" and "New Public Management" have been parallel processes. This implies that the real danger in the region is not a tension between legalism and managerialism, but a fragmentation. Creating a legal-organizational framework for a "Rechtsstaat" does not mean that it is already a functioning legal state based on Weberian principles. But without a functioning Weberian democratic system, without regulative and monitoring power of the state the initial steps of "New Public Management" can strengthen corruption. On the other hand, without introducing the quality models the CEE countries cannot increase the competitiveness of the public sector which is an essential component of the economic, social and political modernisation processes of these countries [Hajnal-Jenei 2008].

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that there is a *demand for a new type of civil servant* who is not only well-versed in legal and managerial skills, but is also capable of active participation in the policy process and cooperation with a wide range of societal actors.

Hungarian higher education has attempted to satisfy this demand by introducing a new multi-cycle degree structure and extending PA education beyond the core institution of the Budapest University of Economics, renamed Corvinus University of Budapest in 2003.

### 3. BA AND MA PROGRAMS IN THE BOLOGNA FRAMEWORK

At the Corvinus University of Budapest, a three-year, full-time *BA program in Public Governance* was introduced in the academic year 2006-2007. A two-year *MA program in Public Policy and Management* shall be launched in the academic year 2008/2009 for full time and part time students. The University thus offers a complete five-year programme in the field of public administration. Graduates at the Master's level shall also have the opportunity to participate in different PhD programs. Public Policy Analysis is a specialization in the PhD program in Economics; Public Management is a specialization in the PhD program in Business Studies; and the Department of Public Policy and Management is also involved in the PhD program in Political Sciences.

Five other universities and colleges have also introduced BA programs providing the same official degree of 'Bachelor of Arts in Public Governance'. Two of them (the University of West Hungary in Sopron and the University of Szeged) are also launching *MA programs in Public Policy and Management*. These programs mainly cater to regional needs.

The BA and MA programs cover all the major areas of Public Administration with a focus on public service. The MA program has two main focuses: policy analysis and public management. The BA program contains the basics while the MA program contains the advanced knowledge of the major areas of Public Administration Studies: Constitutional and Administrative Law, Public Finance, Public Sector Economics, Public Management and Public Policy Analysis. Both programs strongly emphasise affiliated fields such as Political Sciences, Sociology, Mathematics, Statistics and Computer Science.

At Corvinus University, an important concern has been to ensure high quality education by including the main findings of standard and up-to-date professional literature in the curricula. This implies that each basic theoretical approach should be taught and alternatives and schools with different focuses and priorities should be presented. Moreover, curricula have been based on the assumption that public administration is always problem-oriented with a set of interrelated decisions and actions in a world of conflicting values. The University has sought a balanced position among the underlying philosophies of the American (job orientation), the British (developing personal skills) and the German Humboldtian (science orientation) traditions.

#### THE DEVELOPMENT OF BA AND MA PROGRAMS AT CORVINUS UNIVERSITY: THE ROLE OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

By far the most important factors influencing the development of the new BA/MA program structure at Corvinus University are related to the implementation of

Bologna requirements in Hungary. First, the Bologna process has implied a complete reorganisation of degree programs in the larger field of economic and management studies, which provided an opportunity for introducing the new degree programs. Second, Parliament, government and the Ministry of Education have exercised close control over the implementation of the Bologna process and adopted strict rules for establishing and launching degree programs. Therefore, the way the University has been able to respond to the above-mentioned demand for educated civil servants is to a large extent determined by the higher education policy of the Hungarian government.

The legal basis of the Bologna-type multi-cycle system includes the following acts and decrees:

- The Act on Higher Education (29 November 2005, No. CXXXIX) regulates the training structure;
- A government decree (28 December 2004, No. 381/2004) defines the new structure of training programmes in the multicycle system, the designation of the programmes, credit ranges attached to the programmes as well as the procedure of launching a new programme;
- A ministerial decree specifies the qualification requirements of the distinct training programmes, the competences, skills, fields of study and their scope of credit related to graduation levels and qualifications.

Based on the above system, institutions are free to develop their new curricula, i.e. they decide for themselves what courses they use and what educational and assessment methods they apply to transfer the knowledge, competences and skills to students as defined in the programme framework.

#### THE GENERAL STRUCTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The structure of Hungarian higher education conforms to general European practice. The first cycle within the newly introduced system comprises 6 to 8 semesters (180-240 credits). At the end of this cycle, students get a bachelor's degree, which entitles them to continue their studies in the master's cycle (after a successful entrance exam, if required). Master programs last for 2 to 4 semesters (60-120 credits), except for teacher training, where they last 5 semesters (150 credits). The admission requirements of the master programs (e.g. from which bachelor programs and with what conditions students are to be admitted) are specified by the institutions of higher education. The total period of the bachelor and the master training cannot be less than 10 semesters and must not exceed 12 semesters. PhD programs consist of 6 semesters (180 credits). Students may be admitted to PhD programs only after having accomplished a master's program. It must be noted that the structural reform has brought about general changes in course contents as well. Responding to the challenges of educating a growing number of students, higher education policy prefers (at least in principle) bachelor programs that are less specialised and more broadly founded. The key policy goal is that training should better adapt to the changing needs of the labour market and better meet the purposes of lifelong learning.



#### ESTABLISHING AND LAUNCHING NEW PROGRAMMES WITHIN THE NEW SYSTEM

The system of the bachelor's and the planned master's programmes of the new structure has been developed by professional organisations, consisting of representatives of universities and colleges, and laid down in a government decree. A new bachelor programme may be *established* upon recommendation of the professional committee set up by the Hungarian Rector's Conference, subsequent to a supervision regarding the complete programme structure, and the previous request for opinion of professional organisations, employers as well as the sectoral ministries concerned. A new master's programme may be established upon the initiative of the institution or institutions of higher education. The qualification requirements of bachelor and master programmes are published in a decree by the minister of education.

Bachelor's and master's programmes may be *launched* in institutions of higher education only on the basis of a previous supporting opinion of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee of Higher Education (HAC). The very essence of the process is that a program is generally accredited in the establishment phase, then the accreditation of launching the program is based on the individual application of the consortium member higher education institution. During the procedure the HAC examines whether the programme submitted by the institution of higher education is in accordance with the qualification requirements of the bachelor or master programme and whether the institution meets the staff and material criteria for launching a bachelor or a master programme.<sup>2</sup>

The Hungarian Accreditation Committee has 29 full members, delegated by higher education institutions, research institutes and professional organisations. They receive their letters of appointment from the Prime Minister. Two non-voting student members, representing the National Union of Students and the National Union of Doctoral Students, sit in on the plenary meetings. Additional non-voting members are appointed in order to cover all the main disciplines.

#### ESTABLISHING AND LAUNCHING THE NEW BA/MA PROGRAMS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

As mentioned above, the BA programs in public governance were first launched in the academic year 2006/2007. In accordance with the general rules, the introduction of these programs proceeded as follows:

- The first task was the *establishment* of the programme. A consortium - consisting of the representatives of 10 universities and colleges - applied for the estab-

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<sup>2</sup> Besides this type of programme accreditation, the HAC also assesses the standard of education and research in each higher education institution approximately every eight years (institutional accreditation) based on a detailed self-assessment of the institution and the report of a visiting committee. In 1999/2000 the Hungarian Accreditation Committee was evaluated by an international review team under the auspices of the European Rectors Conference (CRE, now European University Association), whose report and the Committee's response is downloadable from <http://www.mab.hu/english/doc/extevalhac.pdf> (20 March, 2008).

lishment to the Ministry of Education. The approval of the application by the Hungarian Accreditation Committee was a necessary precondition for the favourable decision of the Minister.

- The second task was to *launch* the programme based on the permission of establishment. Each consortium member university or college had to apply individually for the accreditation.

The Department of Public Policy and Management had an outstanding role in the accreditation process. Members of the Department were the Chairman and the Secretary of both consortia preparing the proposals of accreditation in the phase of establishment.

The forming of consortia was strongly encouraged by the Ministry of Education and had far-reaching consequences. First, it ensured that the general structure and contents of the new degree programs reflected the academic and teaching experience of the outstanding members within each consortium. Thus, the above-mentioned BA and MA programs in public administration were heavily influenced by Corvinus University. At the same time, compromises had to be made to obtain the support of all institutions that wished to launch such programs. These compromises reflected capacity constraints and the large differences in the learning capabilities of different groups of students (with regard to methodological subjects). The participating universities agreed, however, that they retained sufficient autonomy in working out the details of their own programs.

#### 4. RESOURCES AND CONSTRAINTS WITHIN CORVINUS UNIVERSITY AFFECTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BA AND MA PROGRAMS

The most important resource that has facilitated the introduction of the new multi-cycle course structure at Corvinus University is the *experience* it has accumulated *in teaching and researching public policy and management* since the early 1990s. The antecedents of the new degree programs were described in the historical overview above.

Another key factor is the experience of Corvinus University and its predecessors in providing economists and social scientists with *thorough methodological and theoretical knowledge*. As mentioned above, the University was once named after Karl Marx, which symbolized that the school was under the direct control of the Communist Party. In the late 1960s, however, parallel with the introduction of market-oriented economic reforms, modern economic science started to play an increasing role at the University, and other modern social sciences appeared as well. The University came to play an ever more important role in the dissemination of modern economic knowledge, research into the real state of the Hungarian economy and Hungarian society, the working out of proposals for market-oriented reforms and initiating the process of democratization. In the 1980's, the University played a vital part in providing the scientific underpinning for the transition from a centrally planned economy based on state ownership to a market economy based on private ownership. It must also be emphasised that the University has for a long time paid attention to supplement economics and busi-

ness studies with teaching and research in other social sciences such as sociology, political science and economic and social history.

Another important resource is the tradition of *international cooperation* at the Department of Public Policy and Management. Since the early 1990s, the Department has participated in a great number of multilateral and bilateral co-operations with West European and North American universities and scholars. The cooperation has taken many forms:

- Making the western public policy literature, from research methods to highly theoretical to highly applied, available and accessible to eastern partners.
- Creating curricula and teaching materials to provide the content of the programs based on European and American models.
- Fostering collaborative research programs, including joint conference papers, articles, edited volumes, and research grants.
- Developing educational resources and technologies, particularly in libraries and computers.
- Assistance in developing in-service training programs, seminars, and courses for public sector employees.
- Faculty development activities including language skills, research methods, course development, and research activities.
- Faculty and student exchanges between eastern and western partners.

Since 1996, Corvinus University has been a member of the *EMPA* (European Master in Public Administration) program. EMPA is focused on the comparative analysis of questions of public administration, public policy and public management in different (EU and non-EU) European countries in the context of processes of internationalization, Europeanization and European integration. Close cooperation with foreign universities participating in EMPA has been highly useful when it came to developing a full-blown Master's program.

One of the guarantees of high quality teaching is the *participation of faculty members in international academic life*. Corvinus University was the first East Central European institution to host the annual conference of the European Group of Public Administration in 1996. The hosting of the International Research Symposium of Public Management in 2004 and the European Conference on Health Economics in 2006 are further symbolic signs of the involvement of the Department of Public Policy and Management in the international academic world of studies closely related to public administration.

Having reviewed the resources, we must also consider the internal constraints at Corvinus University that have affected the introduction of the BA and MA programs. The *support of the leadership* of the University and the Faculty of Economics has been vital in establishing the new programs. However, they have also been responsible for deciding the number of students that could be admitted to each program. Basically, the various programs compete for allotments of student places. In 2006, the University chose to create a BA program in Public Governance with one group of students (i.e. 30 to 50 places). The experience so far suggests that this actually gives the program an advantage over other programs with higher student numbers since it allows for a more personalised form of education. The MA program in Public

Policy and Management will be launched with a similar allotment of student places in the academic year 2008/2009.

Another difficulty arose from the need to ensure the *cooperation of several departments* within the University. In the pre-Bologna system, all students at the Faculties of Business and Economics received the same basic education. Now, departments teaching basic methodological and theoretical subjects had to be convinced to revise their curricula in order to adapt them to the specific needs of the new programs. The most important experience so far is that this process takes time: after two years of launching the BA program adaptation is still not finished.

Within the Department of Public Policy and Management, one important constraint has been the *lack of previous experience of teaching several subjects at Bachelor's level* (e.g. Public Policy Analysis) or, in some case, the first two years rather than the third year (e.g. Public Economics). This implies that course instructors have to put a lot more effort into their teaching activities than usual. First, they must develop new didactical and pedagogical methods. Second, practical applications have to be included in the curricula already at the undergraduate level, without compromising theoretical rigour.

## 5. THE EXPERIENCE OF THE BA PROGRAM SO FAR: SOME FACTS AND FIGURES

It would be rash to conclude much from two years of experience with BA programs in Public Governance. However, some hard data on entry statistics do provide some information about the position of these programs within the whole of Hungarian education and among the undergraduate programs offered by the Faculty of Economics at Corvinus University.

In 2006, six universities<sup>3</sup> and colleges launched full-time BA programs in Public Governance. In 2007, only four of them<sup>4</sup> had a sufficient number of applicants. This suggests that there were initially too many participants on the market. Table 1 shows the entry requirements for state-financed places in full-time BA programs in Public Governance. To put them into context, Table 2 shows the overall distribution of bachelor programs based on their entry requirements (as expressed in minimum

**Table 1. Entry requirements for full-time BA programs in Public Governance (state-financed places, maximum score: 144)**

	2006	2007
Corvinus University	122	134
Average of other institutions of higher education	108	122
National average	110	125

Source: www.felvi.hu (16 March, 2008)

<sup>3</sup> Budapest Business School, Corvinus University, Debrecen University, General School of Enterprise, Károly Róbert College and University of West Hungary.

<sup>4</sup> Budapest Business School, Corvinus University, Debrecen University and General School of Enterprise.

**Table 2. Distribution of Bachelor programs based on their entry requirements (number of programs; percentage of programs)**

	2006		2007	
141-144	11	0,34%	20	0,65%
131-140	99	3,06%	138	4,51%
121-130	253	7,82%	323	10,54%
111-120	468	14,46%	452	14,76%
101-110	335	10,35%	280	9,14%
91-100	470	14,52%	294	9,60%
81-90	423	13,07%	293	9,57%
80-72	1177	36,37%	1262	41,21%

Source: www.felvi.hu (16 March, 2008)

scores based on a student's secondary school performance). The BA program at Corvinus University was in the top 11 percent in 2006 and in the top 5 percent in 2007. On average, BA programs in Public Governance were in the top 36 percent in 2006 and in the top 16 percent in 2007. The higher scores for Corvinus University undoubtedly reflect the high prestige of the institution within Hungary. The programs became markedly more popular in 2007. This might be explained by the fact that, unlike most other undergraduate programs, the BA in Public Governance was a novelty in 2006 and gained somewhat wider recognition by the next academic year.

Since the entry statistics for BA in Public Governance at Corvinus University are heavily influenced by the general attractiveness of the institution, it is worth comparing admission data within the Faculty of Economics. Presumably, the closest competitors of the BA program in Public Governance are the other programs offered by the Faculty of Economics. This presumption is based on the fact that curricular overlaps are greatest among these programs. Tables 3 and 4 indicate that from 2006 to 2007 the program in Public Governance almost caught up with the tra-

**Table 3. Admission statistics for Bachelor programs at the Faculty of Economics, Corvinus University in 2006**

Program	Source of financing	Number of applicants		Number of admitted students	Entry requirement (minimum score)
		Total	First place		
BA in Applied Economics	State	608	193	52	139
BA in Applied Economics	Private	128	14	37	120
BA in Human Resources	State	202	39	36	132
BA in Human Resources	Private	48	2	4	120
BSc in Economics	State	316	115	70	138
BSc in Economics	Private	41	4	73	130
BA in Public Governance	State	93	21	35	122
BA in Public Governance	Private	18	1	2	120

Source: www.felvi.hu (16 March, 2008)



ditional, very popular and prestigious programs in Applied Economics (BA) and Economics (BSc). Although the entry requirements remained somewhat lower, it attracted the greatest number of applicants *relative* to its allotment of student places. It remains to be seen whether this positive trend will continue and whether it will extend to the graduate level.

**Table 4. Admission statistics for Bachelor programs at the Faculty of Economics, Corvinus University in 2007**

Program	Source of financing	Number of applicants		Number of admitted students	Entry requirement (minimum score)
		Total	First place		
BA in Applied Economics	State	596	207	84	140
BA in Applied Economics	Private	229	15	65	120
BA in Human Resources	State	-	-	-	-
BA in Human Resources*	Private	-	-	-	-
BSc in Economics	State	250	78	48	139
BSc in Economics	Private	64	4	6	120
BA in Public Governance	State	459	86	36	134
BA in Public Governance	Private	64	2	7	120

\* Discontinued as a full-time program in 2007.  
Source: www.felvi.hu (16 March, 2008)

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The Bologna process provided a window of opportunity for the Corvinus University of Budapest and a number of other institutions of higher education in Hungary that wished to introduce BA and MA programs in the field of public policy and management. The launching of these programs is best perceived as a response to a growing demand for civil servants of a new type. Civil servants who dispose of legal, managerial and economic knowledge and are capable of cooperating with a wide range of societal actors in all stages of the policy process. Corvinus University could build on decades of teaching and research experience in the field. Besides this accumulated 'capital', the most important resources it could utilise were the long tradition at Corvinus University of providing thorough methodological and theoretical training in economics and other social sciences, the experience resulting from international cooperation in research and education and the participation of faculty members in international academic life. The most important external constraint was that compromises had to be made to obtain the support of all institutions that wished to launch the same programs. Within the University, the support of Faculty and University leadership proved crucial. The most important internal constraints included the difficulties posed by cooperation among departments and the lack of previous experience of teaching several subjects in the fields of public policy and management at undergraduate level. In terms of entry statistics, the BA program in

Public Governance was in the top 5 percent of Hungarian undergraduate programs in 2007. This gives some ground for optimism. However, we have merely taken the first few steps on the road from Bologna.

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