

Faculty of Economic, Social and Political Sciences



IDAP2221 Analysis of public sector policies

[30h] 4 credits

Teacher(s): David Aubin
Language: French
Level: Second cycle

Aims

By the end of the course, students will be able to:
 situate an evaluation of public sector policies in relation to other tools used to direct action in the public sector;
 distinguish between the main theoretical approaches and methods of scientific evaluation;
 link the stages of a typical evaluation procedure;
 critically analyse the content of an evaluation report;
 identify the issues of power associated with the institutionalisation of evaluation.

Content and teaching methods

Evaluation aims to understand the effects (beneficial or harmful, expected or unexpected, direct or secondary) of an action in the public sector, and to inform political decision makers, civil servants and citizens. It clearly represents an instrument of control, but it is also an aid to decision making, a management tool and a catalyst for the birth of a collective learning process in the public sector.

Why and how may a public policy be scientifically evaluated? Who are the results of an evaluation for, and by means of what strategy is it possible to politically assess them most effectively? Is it necessary to institutionalise the evaluation in the Belgian politico administrative system? What foreign experiences is it already possible to draw on? What information can we draw from initial evaluations of public policies at federal, regional and community level?

The course provides answers to these varied questions by illustrating the theoretical aims through numerous case studies carried out in Belgium and abroad. It is structured in four main parts: (1) the notion of evaluation, (2) evaluative approaches and methods, (3) examples of evaluation and (4) the institutional context of evaluation.

Other information (prerequisite, evaluation (assessment methods), course materials recommended readings, ...)

The 'Public management' course, which includes a 15 hour introduction to an analysis of public policies.

All students will be invited to comment, using an analytical grid presented in class, on the report of an evaluation recently carried out in Belgium. This critical analysis will be summarised in a 10-page text, which will itself be the subject of an oral presentation and class discussion.

Syllabus, reading portfolio and a book: Christian de Visscher and Frédéric Varone (eds) (2001), 'Évaluer les politiques publiques. Regards croisés sur la Belgique', Bruylant Academia.

The Course Leader, Steve Jacobs, a researcher at AURAP, will also run some of the sessions and will see students himself.

The course will also be open to economists, lawyers, and others interested in the evaluation of public policies (to be discussed with the course leader).

Other credits in programs

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| POL22/AP | Deuxième licence en sciences politiques (Affaires publiques) | | Mandatory |
| POLS2M1/AP | Master en sciences politiques, orientation générale (option affaires publiques) | (3 credits) | Mandatory |