FAQ: Ethics, Economics and Policy (EEP)

Ethics, Economics, and Policy (EEP) is for students who want to understand the ethical questions behind economic and public policy. In this programme we ask not only what policies can achieve, but what they should *aim* to achieve.

You can follow EEP in two ways: as a stand-alone two-year Master's in Philosophy, or alongside another Master's, such as Economics, Political Science or Public Administration, at VU Amsterdam or elsewhere in the Netherlands. Below you'll find answers to general questions about EEP, followed by a section for each route.

GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT EEP

What is the difference between stand-alone EEP and combining EEP with another Master's?

The **stand-alone EEP programme** is a complete two-year, 120-ECTS Master's in Philosophy. You follow the core EEP and philosophy courses and use your elective space to build an interdisciplinary programme that reflects your interests in areas such as economics, politics, governance, or public policy.

In the **combined route**, you follow EEP alongside another Master's programme, such as Economics or Political Science. 30 ECTS from your second Master's can count toward the EEP programme, allowing you to combine advanced philosophical training with deeper disciplinary expertise and graduate with **two Master's degrees, but this is not required**.

Do I need a Bachelor's degree in Philosophy?

No. EEP is specifically designed to bring together students from different disciplinary backgrounds. You can apply with an academic Bachelor's degree in fields such as PPE, Economics, Political Science, Business, Finance, or another relevant discipline. A previous degree in Philosophy is therefore not required, although all applicants must meet the programme's admission requirements.

Am I drectly admissible with a Bachelor's degree in Philosophy?

No. Many of the courses that would be used to fill the elective space in the stand alone EEP programme have prerequisites that students with a bachelor's degree in Philosophy may not have (e.g.: a bachelor's degree course in micoreconomics or business adminstration).

Students with a Bachelor's degree would not be admissible for other's master's programmes in the combined route.

Is EEP taught in English?

Yes, all EEP courses are taught in English.

Can I follow EEP part-time?

Yes

Can I specialise in a particular policy area?

Yes. EEP gives you several opportunities to develop your own substantive focus. *Current EEP Topics* examines pressing contemporary issues, with topics varying from year to year, while your elective courses allow you to explore areas that match your interests and background. Your Master's thesis provides the greatest opportunity to specialise by developing an independent research project on an ethical or philosophical question connected to a particular policy area.

Depending on your interests and the courses available, you might develop a focus on areas such as climate and sustainability, AI and digital policy, migration, public health, economic policy, or inequality and social justice.

Who can I contact with questions about EEP?

You can contact **EEP coordinator dr. Lisa Bastian** (l.bastian@vu.nl).

STAND-ALONE EEP

What is the stand-alone EEP programme?

The stand-alone EEP programme is a two-year Master's specialisation in Philosophy for students who want to study ethical and philosophical questions at the intersection of economics and public policy. Unlike the combined route, you do not need to enrol in a second Master's programme. You follow a coherent programme of foundational philosophy, specialised EEP courses, EEP-related electives, and an EEP Master's thesis.

How is the stand-alone programme structured?

The programme builds from philosophical foundations towards increasingly specialised work in ethics, economics, and policy. In the first year, you follow courses including *Policy Ethics*, *Normative Ethics*, *Political and Social Philosophy*, *History of Philosophy*, and *Ethics and Economics*, alongside EEP-related electives.

In the second year, the emphasis shifts towards specialised EEP courses such as *Cooperation and Rationality*, *Freedom, Equality, and Justice*, *Philosophy of Responsibility*, and *Ethics of Public Health*, as well as the EEP thesis.

What can I take as electives?

The stand-alone programme includes elective space that allows you to tailor EEP to your interests and academic background. One option is to follow a package of courses identified by EEP programme coordinators, providing a ready-made and coherent route through the elective component.

You can also use some or all of this space for other **EEP-related Master's courses**. These are not completely free electives: they should have a substantive connection to EEP—for example in economics, political science, public administration, governance, or public policy. The EEP coordinators maintain a pool of suitable Master's courses offered by other programmes that can be taken as elective courses.

Can I take *Philosophical Texts* or *Current EEP Topics* more than once?

Yes. The content of *Philosophical Texts* and *Current EEP Topics* changes from year to year. This means that you can take either course twice during the programme, provided you follow different editions with different content.

These courses can also be used to fill elective space in Year 1, depending on the year in which a particular edition is offered. This gives you additional flexibility in planning your individual programme.

How does the *Ethics Research Seminar* fit into the programme?

The *Ethics Research Seminar* is a year-long course running throughout the first academic year rather than within a single teaching period. If you choose the seminar, it fills the elective space shown in Period 6 of the example schedule.

Do I have to follow the courses in exactly the order shown in the schedule?

No. The schedule shows an **indicative study plan**, not the only possible trajectory. Your precise programme can vary depending on your choice of electives and the availability of courses. The EEP coordinators can help you construct a coherent individual study plan.

Do I need to enrol in an Economics or Political Science Master's programme alongside EEP?

No. That is the key difference between the stand-alone and combined routes. As a stand-alone EEP student, you are enrolled only in the Master's in Philosophy. You can nevertheless use your elective space to take relevant Master's-level courses in economics, political science, public administration, or related disciplines.

Will I receive a full Master's degree if I follow EEP stand-alone?

Yes. EEP is a specialisation within the two-year Master's in Philosophy. Students completing the stand-alone route receive a full Master's degree in Philosophy without needing to complete a second Master's programme.

COMBINING EEP WITH ANOTHER MASTER'S

Why might I want to combine EEP with another Master's programme?

While EEP can also be followed as a stand-alone programme, the combined route allows you to bring its philosophical training together with advanced disciplinary expertise in a field such as economics, political science, or public policy. Combining EEP with another Master's allows you to strengthen both your analytical and professional profile and offers distinctive preparation for careers in research, policy analysis, consultancy, or public service.

How do I know when the courses are planned?

You can find the full EEP curriculum on the VU website, including a suggested distribution of courses across the first and second year.

It is possible to take EEP courses in a different order to fit your schedule. The teaching periods themselves do not change, but you may take a second-year course (such as *Ethics and Economics*) in your first year, or a first-year course (such as *History of Philosophy*) in your second year.

Course schedules are published about four weeks before the start of each period via rooster.vu.nl or Canvas.

Courses officially planned for the first year are often scheduled in the evenings (after 17:00), making it easier to combine them with your other Master's or internship. Second-year courses

are often taught on Tuesdays and Thursdays, allowing you to follow most lectures on one or two days per week.

How much time will it take to complete both programmes?

This depends on your background and study load. For many students, completing both within two years may be possible with careful planning. The first-year EEP curriculum comprises *Policy Ethics*, *History of Philosophy*, *Normative Ethics*, and *Political and Social Philosophy*. These core courses can be followed alongside coursework in another Master's. It is also possible to spread out the requirements over more than two years.

When you combine EEP with another Master's (e.g. Economics or Political Science) of 60 ECTS, your total workload will be **150 ECTS**.

Here's how it works:

- EEP is a 120-ECTS programme, but 30 ECTS can be filled by courses from your other Master's.
- You therefore complete 90 ECTS specifically for EEP + 60 ECTS for your other Master's.

The combined route is more intensive than a single full-time programme and requires careful planning. It is designed to make completion within two years possible, although students may also spread the programmes over a longer period.

When should I start EEP if I am already enrolled in another Master's?

You can start EEP either concurrently with your other Master's or after completing it. The best option depends on your workload and course scheduling.

Can I follow EEP without paying double tuition fees?

It depends on your nationality. Students from the EU/EEA, Switzerland or Suriname who start EEP while enrolled in their other Master's pay one fee for both programmes.

Other students pay two fees for as long as they are enrolled in both. See 'Second study programme' on the VU tuition fee page for details.

Is there a separate admission procedure?

Yes. You must apply separately for admission to the Master's in Philosophy (Ethics, Economics and Policy specialisation). The Admissions Board determines whether you meet the EEP admission requirements based on your academic background and complete application.

If you want to follow the combined route, you must also apply for and be admitted to the other Master's programme. The Admissions Board of the other Master's programme determines whether you can be admitted to this particular programme. You must send proof of this admission to the second Master's programme to the Admissions board of EEP.

Can I use the same Master's thesis for both programmes?

No, but you may write two theses on related topics. In such cases, it is possible to design complementary projects—for example, a policy analysis for your Economics degree and a normative evaluation of that policy for your EEP thesis. Please discuss such plans with one of the EEP coordinators in advance.

Is attendance mandatory for EEP lectures?

Attendance requirements vary per course. You can find this information in the course manual on Canvas, in the Study Guide, or by contacting the lecturer. The VU course schedule provides an overview of contact hours and the division between lectures and tutorials.

If your other programme's classes overlap, contact the course lecturer before the start of the period to discuss possible solutions.

Who can I contact for advice about combining EEP with another Master's?

You can contact **EEP coordinator dr. Lisa Bastian** (l.bastian@vu.nl).

Once you have enrolled in the programme you can contact the Philosophy department's academic advisor for individual advice on combining study programmes, planning your schedule, and managing your workload.