



Summary report on the accreditation of the Bachelor and Master programme “International Relations” at International University of Sarajevo (IUS), Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Upon the request for accreditation of the International University of Sarajevo from 27th January 2016, AQ Austria conducted the accreditation procedure of the Bachelor and Master programme “International Relations”. In accordance with the “Guideline for International Accreditation of Bachelor, Master and PhD Programmes” adopted by the Board of AQ Austria in July 2013, AQ Austria publishes the following summary report.

1 Accreditation decision

At its 36th meeting on 20th/21st September 2016 the Board of AQ Austria decided to grant accreditation to the Bachelor programme International Relations and the Master programme International Relations for a period of six years, subject to conditions.

The fulfilment of these conditions must be documented in writing within nine months (i.e. until 21st June 2017) and is subject to assessment by AQ Austria. In case of non-fulfilment, the accreditation will be withdrawn immediately.

2 Short information on the application for accreditation

Name of the programme	International Relations
Academic degree awarded	Bachelor of Arts (B.A)
Date of introduction	23 June, 2004/ Pursuant to the Article 14 of the Law on Higher Education (Official Gazettes of the Canton Sarajevo, issues 17/99, 14/00, 15/01, 13/02, 12/03 and 15/03)
Regular study period	8 semester/ 4 years
Number of ECTS credits	240
Full time/Part time	Fulltime
Tuition fees	As per Semester in EUR for academic year 2016/17: Foreign students: First cycle: EUR 2,750/semester Second Cycle: EUR 1,250/ semester Third cycle: EUR 3,000/ semester BiH citizen: First Cycle: EUR 1,925/semester Second Cycle: EUR 1,250/ semester Third cycle: EUR 3,000/ semester
Name of the programme	International Relations
Academic degree awarded	Master of Arts (M.A)
Date of introduction	23 June, 2004/ Pursuant to the Article 14 of the Law on Higher Education (Official Gazettes of the Canton Sarajevo, issues 17/99, 14/00, 15/01, 13/02, 12/03 and 15/03)
Regular study period	2 semester/ 1 year
Number of ECTS credits	60
Full time/Part time	Fulltime
Tuition fees	As per Semester in EUR for academic year 2016/17: Foreign students: First cycle: EUR 2,750/semester Second Cycle: EUR 1,250/ semester Third cycle: EUR 3,000/ semester BiH citizen: First Cycle: EUR 1,925/semester Second Cycle: EUR 1,250/ semester Third cycle: EUR 3,000/ semester

3 Short information on the accreditation procedure

International University of Sarajevo (IUS) submitted an application for accreditation of the study programmes in April 2016.

In a circular resolution on 15th April 2016, the Board of AQ Austria passed the proposal for experts for the review and assessment of the study programmes.

Members of the Expert panel

Name	Institution	Role
Dorota Pietrzyk-Reeves	Associate Professor at the Institute of Political Science and International Relations, School of International Studies, Jagiellonian University in Krakow	Head of the expert panel Expert from academia
Vedran Dzihic	Lecturer at the Institute for Political Sciences, University of Vienna	Expert from academia
Ingrid Gössinger	Monitoring Officer, OSCE Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine	Expert with professional practice
Katharina Hechl	Student at the University of Innsbruck.	Student Expert

A site visit at IUS took place in Sarajevo on 8th July 2016, which was attended by the expert panel and coordinators from AQ Austria.

The Board of AQ Austria took the accreditation decisions in its 36th meeting on 20th/21st September 2016. Both, the accreditation of the Bachelor programme and the Master programme are subject to conditions and are valid until 20th September 2022.

4 Subject matter of the application

The International University of Sarajevo (IUS) has been established in 2003. The founder of IUS is the Foundation for Education Development Sarajevo (SEDEF – Sarajevo Education Development Foundation). IUS offers, as of the academic year 2015/16, 53 study programmes in total in all cycles organized within five faculties:

- Faculty of Business and Administration
- Faculty of Engineering and Natural Sciences
- Faculty of Arts and Sciences,
- Faculty of Law
- Faculty of Education preparing our students to life and market realities.

All study programmes are offered in English. IUS is open to students from all over the world; however the majority of students are from the Republic of Turkey. As of the academic year 2015/16 1931 students are enrolled. 1201 are foreign students and 730 from BiH. Out of the

1201 1053 are from the Republic of Turkey. According to its own vision and mission IUS considers itself as one of the largest educational projects in the Balkan region and being a hub between east and west. IUS is an associate member of European University Association (EUA), and a full member of International Association of Universities (IAU) and European Consortium of Political Research (ECPR).

The Bachelor- and Master-study programme in International Relations (IR) offers a course of study for students with a primary interest in international and regional studies. The field of international relations includes the study of: the history, politics, economics, and cultures of regional systems around the world; the causes and consequences of conflict, its resolution and analysis, the conditions necessary for peace in the international system; the role of the great powers, and other states in world affairs; issues of minorities and their ability to integrate in society; contemporary issues pertaining the Balkan region and other topics that are of relevance to the field of international relations.

The aims of the **Bachelor programme** are:

2. To provide a strong background in International Relations discipline from various perspectives
3. To ensure the students understanding of the theories and approaches to International Relations and their critical evaluation
4. To develop skills necessary to analyse the key dimensions, events and processes of International Relations within their historic context
5. To demonstrate knowledge of the multi-disciplinary nature of International Relations by establishing connections with the disciplines such as history, sociology, economics, psychology, law, anthropology, etc.
6. To equip students with necessary skills and capabilities to analyse and to contribute towards solving the problems of the humanity at large
7. To provide knowledge and skills necessary for access job market in different areas and to continue in study at graduate level

The aims of the **Master programme** are:

8. To provide advanced understanding of the increasingly complex set of political, cultural, historical and economic factors in the contemporary world.
9. To develop analytical, research and critical-thinking capabilities of students.
10. To equip students with advanced knowledge and skills necessary for access to job market and to continue in study at Ph.D. level.

5 Summarizing results from the assessments of the expert panel

The overall assessments of the expert panel of all standards may be summarized as follows:

Standard 1: Study programme and programme management

(a) Statements

“The expert panel’s findings and analysis indicate that the **Bachelor programme’s** overall quality is sufficient and meets AQ Austria standard 1. The content, structure and other important components of the programme follow the requirements of the Bologna process and the programme is regarded as providing good quality education. There is still room for

improvement and our recommendations are met to help with implementing changes where needed" (review report, p. 18).

The panel states that the **Master programme** has several strong points as been a follow-up of the Bachelor programme providing more advanced knowledge. The panel has established, however, that the structure and content of the programme need changes in order to improve the overall quality of Master degree. It is beneficial to students that they are offered a number of elective courses, but these should be more closely related to the IR discipline (and not to economics). We recommend substantial changes in this respect. The major shortcoming of the programme is its elective MA thesis (review report, p. 18).

(b) Assessments

Bachelor Programme: The expert panel has assessed the standard as **"met"**.

Master Programme: The panel has assessed the standard as **"partially met"** and recommends the following **conditions**:

1. "The MA thesis must be made mandatory for all IUS students wishing to graduate with MA degree in International Relations. Writing and submitting a MA thesis is an essential part of second cycle programmes in social science and humanities no matter whether they last one year (eg. at UK universities) or two years (most European countries). MA thesis is supposed to demonstrate certain skills that are closely related with the programme objectives as stated in the self-documentation. The aim of the thesis is to show that at the end of their degree, students have the capacity to think and work independently, they can carry on their own research and solve problems independently. Replacing MA thesis with three additional courses does not allow for achieving such objectives and thus some of the key learning outcomes of the programme. With appropriate supervision the completion of MA thesis should be done at the end of the second semester (eg. in September) followed by formal defence. Students who for some important reasons cannot fulfil this requirement should be offered one more semester to complete the work (review report, p. 19).
2. "Revise the structure and contents of the programme to ensure that it provides good education at MA level that focuses on some major fields within IR disciplines and is not limited to international economics. Alternatively, allow for a specific focus in terms of teaching, eg. Conflict resolution and peace building, the Balkan region, international security etc." (review report, p. 19)

The IUS should also consider fulfilling the following recommendations of the expert panel.

Bachelor and Master Programme:

- "Course syllabi should specify the way of demonstrating the achievement of learning outcomes, in what way they will be verified: eg. Learning Outcome 1: final exam, LO2: essay, LO3: final exam, presentation, etc. (review report, p.11)"
- "Rules of admission and criteria that candidates need to meet for both BA and MA level should be stated more clearly and unambiguously. It was difficult for the panel to establish what exactly is expected from candidates to the IR programmes, eg. what additional criteria (if any) graduates of a three-year BA programmes should meet to be admitted for the MA programme in IR" (review report, p. 17)

Bachelor Programme:

- “Instead of a university-wide Freshman English IR students should be offered a more specialized Academic English course consisting of at least 45 teaching hours and taught in small groups (15-20 students). This course would include instruction on academic writing as well speaking, presentation and research and would be offered in the first or second semester as mandatory” (review report, p.13).
- “The number of ECTS credits awarded upon completion of a BA thesis should be higher than 6 ECTS credits (at least 10-12 ECTS credits) if it is supposed to be a serious piece of writing demonstrating skills acquired during the whole cycle of studies. The requirements for those who prefer not to write a BA thesis should also be higher – eg. a formal final exam” (review report, p.13).
- “Close attention should be paid not only to the language skills of the students but also of the lecturers to assure the quality of teaching and the achievement of the programme objectives” (review report, p.13).
- Provide a list of learning outcomes associated with 6 ECTS credits that IR students will acquire upon completion of an internship” (review report, p.18).

Master Programme:

- “As stated above, the programme needs revision to provide good quality MA degree in International Relations that focuses on the current developments of the IR field” (review report, p.15).

Standard 2: Staff

(a) Statements

The experts argue that “the composition of the teaching staff for the **Bachelor programme** is not adequate although meets BIH requirements. They insist that in **both programmes** “a sufficient number of IR lecturers is needed to ensure the quality of the programme as well as research development with some support from the IUS. Further, they mention that “the lecturers, especially at **Master level**, receive some support from the IUS but not the necessary time flexibility for their research” (review report, p.21).

(b) Assessments

Bachelor and Master Programme: The panel has assessed the standard as “**partially met**” and suggests the following **condition**:

1. “The University needs to employ more PhD holders competent in both teaching and research in the discipline of International Relations and increase the number of full time teaching staff by at least two PhD holders to share and consequently reduce the teaching obligations amongst a larger team of course holders” (review report, p. 21).

The IUS should also consider fulfilling the following recommendation of the expert panel.

Bachelor and Master Programme:

- “The IUS should cater to introducing more favourable teaching arrangements (limited number of teaching hours) for those lecturers who are in the stage of completing their PhD theses, finalising research publications or wishing to focus on research” (review report, p.21).

Standard 3: Quality assurance

(a) Statements

The experts concluded that “the duties, rights and responsibilities of QA and QA agents have been clearly defined by IUS and is convinced that the university’s quality assurance system functions adequately, providing all the necessary support for enhancing and assuring the study programme’s quality. The QA system presents the necessary requirements and involves internal as well as external stakeholders in the QA process. Students’ say in QA is credibly assured and institutionalised” (review report, p.23). This assessment is valid for the **bachelor and master programme**.

(b) Assessments

Bachelor and Master Programme: The panel has assessed the standard as “**met**”.

Standard 4: Funding and infrastructure

(a) Statements

Concerning the funding and infrastructure of the **bachelor and master programme** the expert panel states that “the IUS infrastructure and facilities available to IR students are sufficient and of good quality. Students can also apply for rooms in dormitories. The IUS library [...] is one of the best in Bosnia and Herzegovina in terms of the number of books published in English that are available in the library. This however, does not fully correspond with the needs of IR students and lecturers. Therefore we strongly recommend that a significant number of IR books is purchased for the library” (review report, p.25).

(b) Assessments

Bachelor and Master Programme: The panel has assessed the standard as “**met**”.

The IUS should consider fulfilling the following recommendation of the expert panel.

Bachelor and Master Programme:

- “Students’ and lectures’ access to IR books published in English must be extended through the acquisition of a significant number of the most recent publications in most areas taught as part of the IR curriculum. This will vastly facilitate good quality of teaching and learning as well as research. We strongly recommend purchasing of at least a hundred volumes” (review report, p.25).

Standard 5: Research and development and appreciation of the arts

(a) Statements

Concerning research and development taking place in the **Bachelor and Master programme** the panel is reported that “the strategic orientation of the IUS for 2016-2020 includes strengthening research potential of the institution. Specific plans have been developed. Still, there are a number of obstacles that need to be overcome to develop further

from a teaching towards (also) a research university." It is teaching rather than research that is priority at the moment" (review report, p. 28f).

With regard to the **Bachelor program** the experts point out that "it is more individual effort of staff member to undertake research than a systematically implement University strategy. There is potential to change this with an increased number of teaching/research staff" (review report, p. 28f).

(b) Assessments

Bachelor and Master Programme: The expert panel has assessed the standard as "**met**", but the condition formulated for standard 2 is also relevant here.

The IUS should consider fulfilling the following recommendations of the expert panel.

Bachelor and Master programme:

- "Ensure the implementation of the new University plan 2016-2020 (strategy) in the field of research and develop a) an active strategy for the implementation, and b) a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to accompany the implementation of the plan" (review report, p.26).
- Develop an internal research strategy for the Programme of International Relations and identify main areas of research" (review report, p.26).
- "Increase the visibility of correlation between research and teaching" (review report, p.26).
- "Make a specific and transparent allocation of budget for the research dedicated to the Programme of International Relations" (review report, p.27).
- "With the increase in number of PhD holders in the Programme a new teaching schedule should be elaborated and introduced allowing staff members to allocate more time for research" (review report, p.27).

Standard 6: National and international co-operations

(a) Statements

Concerning the **Bachelor and Master Programme** the panel states that "International cooperation is one of the key strategic directions for IUS in 2016-2020. IUS has a broad network for national and international cooperation although primarily on the rather formal level of Memoranda of Understanding. Staff and student mobility is limited but it is beginning to improve" (review report, p. 29).

(b) Assessments

Bachelor and Master programme: The expert panel has assessed the standard as "**met**".

The IUS should consider fulfilling the following recommendation of the expert panel.

Bachelor and Master Programme:

- "Teaching staff in the Programme is aiming at memberships in important international networks in the field of political science and international relations. After joining ECPR (European Consortium for Political Research) in 2016 it is recommended to intensify

these efforts and to join in the next step IPSA (International Political Science Association) (review report, p. 29).

- "Make better use of existing memoranda of understanding and make them functional" (review report, p. 29).

6 Decision of the AQ Austria Board

The Board of AQ Austria based its decision on the self-documentation and supporting documents submitted by IUS, the review report of the expert panel, and the formal statement by IUS.

The Board of AQ Austria decided to grant accreditation to the study programme International Relations (Bachelor of Arts) for a period of six years, subject to one condition:

1. The University needs to employ more PhD holders competent in both teaching and research in the discipline of International Relations and increase the number of full time teaching staff by at least two PhD holders to share and consequently reduce the teaching obligations amongst a larger team of course holders.

The Board of AQ Austria decided to grant accreditation to the study programme International Relations (Master of Arts) for a period of six years, subject to three conditions:

1. The University needs to employ more PhD holders competent in both teaching and research in the discipline of International Relations and increase the number of full time teaching staff by at least two PhD holders to share and consequently reduce the teaching obligations amongst a larger team of course holders.
2. The Master thesis must be made mandatory for all IUS students wishing to graduate with MA degree in International Relations.
3. Revise the structure and contents of the programme to ensure that it provides good education at Master level that focuses on some major fields within IR disciplines and is not limited to international economics. Alternatively, allow for a specific focus in terms of teaching, eg. conflict resolution and peace building, the Balkan region, international security etc.

The fulfilment of these conditions must be documented in writing within nine months (i.e. until 21st June 2017) and is subject to assessment by AQ Austria. In case of non-fulfilment, the accreditations will be withdrawn immediately.

7 Annex

- Review report of the expert panel
- Formal statement by IUS