

MASTER'S PROGRAMME
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

LEIDEN UNIVERSITY

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This report was finalised on 23 March 2020

REPORT ON THE MASTER'S PROGRAMME INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF LEIDEN UNIVERSITY

This report takes the NVAO's Assessment Framework for the Higher Education Accreditation System of the Netherlands for limited programme assessments as a starting point (September 2018).

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE PROGRAMME

Master's programme International Relations

Name of the programme:	International Relations
CROHO number:	60734
Level of the programme:	Master's
Orientation of the programme:	Academic
Number of credits:	60 EC
Specializations or tracks:	- Culture and Politics - European Union Studies - Global Conflict in the Modern Era - Global Order in Historical Perspective - Global Political Economy
Location(s):	Leiden
Mode(s) of study:	Full-time
Language of instruction:	English
Submission deadline NVAO:	01/05/2020

The visit of the assessment panel History to the Faculty of Humanities of Leiden University took place on 17 and 18 October 2019.

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE INSTITUTION

Name of the institution:	Leiden University
Status of the institution:	Publicly funded institution
Result institutional quality assurance assessment:	Positive

COMPOSITION OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

The NVAO has approved the composition of the panel on 4 February 2019. The panel that assessed the Master's programme International Relations consisted of:

- Dr. J.W. (Jan Willem) Honig, senior lecturer in War Studies, Department of War Studies, King's College, London and professor of Military Strategy at the Swedish Defence University in Stockholm [chair];
- Prof. dr. I.B. (Inger) Leemans, professor Cultural History at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and Principal Investigator NL-Lab at KNAW Humanities Cluster;
- Prof. dr. P. (Peter) Bursens, full professor Political Sciences and former vice-dean at the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Antwerp;
- Prof. dr. W.P. (Wim) van Meurs, full professor European Political History and chairman of the department Political History at the Humanities Faculty of Radboud University;
- R. (Rikst) van der Schoor BA, student of the master's programme Intellectual History at the University of St. Andrews.

The panel was supported by V.L. (Victor) van Kleef MA, who acted as secretary.

WORKING METHOD OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

The site visit to the master's programme International Relations at Leiden University was part of the cluster assessment History. Between April 2019 and December 2019, the panel assessed 24 programmes at 8 universities. The following universities participated in this cluster assessment: Erasmus University Rotterdam, Maastricht University, Radboud University Nijmegen, University of Groningen, Leiden University, Utrecht University, University of Amsterdam and VU Amsterdam.

On behalf of the participating universities, quality assurance agency QANU was responsible for logistical support, panel guidance and the production of the reports. Dr. A.H.A.M. (Alexandra) Paffen was project coordinator for QANU. Dr. A.H.A.M. (Alexandra) Paffen, dr. F. (Floor) Meijer, drs. R. (Renate) Prenen, J. (Jaïra) Azaria MA and V.L. (Victor) van Kleef MA acted as secretaries in the cluster assessment.

During the site visit at Leiden University, the panel was supported by QANU project manager A.H.A.M. (Alexandra) Paffen and V.L. (Victor) van Kleef, a certified NVAO secretary.

Panel members

The members of the assessment panel were selected based on their expertise, availability and independence. The panel consisted of the following members:

- Dr. J.W. (Jan Willem) Honig, senior lecturer in War Studies, Department of War Studies, King's College London and visiting professor of Military Strategy at the Swedish Defence University in Stockholm [chair];
- Prof. dr. I.B. (Inger) Leemans, professor Cultural History at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and Principal Investigator NL-Lab at KNAW Humanities Cluster;
- Prof. dr. J.F.J. (Jeroen) Duindam, full professor of Early Modern History and programme director at Leiden University;
- Prof. dr. W.J.H. (Jan Hein) Furnée, full professor European Cultural History at Radboud University;
- Prof. dr. P. (Peter) Bursens, full professor Political Sciences and former vice-dean at the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Antwerp;
- Prof. dr. W.P. (Wim) van Meurs, full professor European Political History and chairman of the department Political History at the Humanities Faculty of Radboud University;
- Prof. dr. E. (Eric) Vanhaute, full professor Economic and Social History and World History, as well as head of UGent Research Group Communities, Comparisons, Connections at Ghent University;
- V. (Vicky) Marissen LLM, managing director at PACT European Affairs and partner at consultancy firm EPPA;
- Dr. N. (Nico) Randraad, associate professor at Maastricht University and interim director of the Social History Centre for Limburg History;
- Prof. dr. N. (Nanci) Adler, full professor Memory, History, and Transitional Justice at the University of Amsterdam and research director Holocaust and Genocide studies at the Nederlands Instituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie (NIOD);
- Prof. dr. K. (Koenraad) Verboven, professor of Ancient History and programme director for History at the University of Ghent;
- Prof. dr. V. (Violet) Soen, associate professor in Early Modern History and chair of the research group Early Modern History at the University of Leuven;
- Prof. dr. C.A. (Claire) Dunlop, full professor of Politics and Public Policy and head of research at the Department of Politics at Exeter University;
- Prof. dr. E.B.A. (Erik) van der Vleuten, professor of History of Technology and chair of the History Lab at the Eindhoven University of Technology;
- R. (Rikst) van der Schoor BA, student of the master's programme Intellectual History at the University of St. Andrews;

- M. (Mel) Schickel MA, completed the master's programme History of Society at the Erasmus University Rotterdam in 2018 and is working as research assistant at the Faculty of Behavioral and Social Sciences at the University of Amsterdam;
- R. (Rico) Tjepkema, third year bachelor's student International Relations & International Organization at the University of Groningen.

Preparation

On 11 March 2019, the panel chair was briefed by QANU on his role, the assessment framework, the working method, and the planning of site visits and reports. A preparatory panel meeting was organised on 14 April 2019. During this meeting, the panel members received instruction on the use of the assessment framework. The panel also discussed their working method and the planning of the site visits and reports. The project coordinator composed a schedule for the site visit in consultation with the Faculty. Prior to the site visit, the Faculty selected representative partners for the various interviews. See Appendix 3 for the final schedule.

Before the site visit to Leiden University, QANU received the self-evaluation reports of the programmes and sent these to the panel. A thesis selection was made by the panel's chair and the project coordinator. The selection consisted of 19 theses and their assessment forms for the programmes, based on a provided list of graduates in 2019. A variety of topics and tracks and a diversity of examiners were included in the selection. The project coordinator and panel chair assured that the distribution of grades in the selection matched the distribution of grades of all available theses.

After studying the self-evaluation report, theses and assessment forms, the panel members formulated their preliminary findings. The secretary collected all initial questions and remarks and distributed these amongst all panel members. At the start of the site visit, the panel discussed its initial findings on the self-evaluation report and the theses, as well as the division of tasks during the site visit.

Site visit

The site visit to Leiden University took place on 17 and 18 October 2019. Before and during the site visit, the panel studied the additional documents provided by the programmes. An overview of these materials can be found in Appendix 4. The panel conducted interviews with representatives of the programmes: students and staff members, the programme's management, alumni and representatives of the Board of Examiners. It also offered students and staff members an opportunity for confidential discussion during a consultation hour. No requests for a private consultation were received.

The panel used the final part of the site visit to discuss its findings in an internal meeting. Afterwards, the panel chair publicly presented the panel's preliminary findings and general observations.

Report

After the site visit, the secretary wrote a draft report based on the panel's findings and submitted it to the project coordinator for peer assessment. Subsequently, the secretary sent the report to the panel. After processing the panel members' feedback, the project coordinator sent the draft reports to the Faculty in order to have these checked for factual irregularities. The project coordinator discussed the ensuing comments with the panel's chair and changes were implemented accordingly. The report was then finalised and sent to the Faculty and University Board.

Definition of judgements standards

In accordance with the NVAO's Assessment framework for limited programme assessments, the panel used the following definitions for the assessment of the standards:



Generic quality

The quality that, from an international perspective, may reasonably be expected from a higher education Associate Degree, Bachelor's or Master's programme.

Meets the standard

The programme meets the generic quality standard.

Partially meets the standard

The programme meets the generic quality standard to a significant extent, but improvements are required in order to fully meet the standard.

Does not meet the standard

The programme does not meet the generic quality standard.

The panel used the following definitions for the assessment of the programme as a whole:

Positive

The programme meets all the standards.

Conditionally positive

The programme meets standard 1 and partially meets a maximum of two standards, with the imposition of conditions being recommended by the panel.

Negative

In the following situations:

- The programme fails to meet one or more standards;
- The programme partially meets standard 1;
- The programme partially meets one or two standards, without the imposition of conditions being recommended by the panel;
- The programme partially meets three or more standards.

SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

Standard 1

The panel appreciates the distinctive humanities-based profile of the master's programme International Relations (IR) vis-à-vis other IR degrees, though it finds that this well-developed and unique profile could be better assured in the general learning outcomes. Nonetheless, the panel is particularly impressed by the truly international programme which represents a multinational student body, high proportion of non-Dutch staff, and a substantive non-Western focus in many courses.

The panel believes that the intended learning outcomes (ILOs) are appropriate for an academic master's programme, as it is a strongly research-based programme. Hence the general learning outcomes set the standard for what is expected from the programme's graduates in terms of knowledge and skills. However, the panel advises that a more balanced integration of the University-wide transferable skills and the programme-tied ILOs should take place. The panel therefore strongly supports the Programme Board in revising the ILOs next academic year and stresses the need to consult all stakeholders in this process.

The choice of electives and specialisations is extensive, but the panel finds the ILOs per specification overly ambitious given the fact that it is a one-year programme and students with non-IR bachelor degrees can enrol. Furthermore, it encourages the Programme Board to slightly dilute the specialisation-specific outcomes about the transdisciplinary and non-Western perspective. The vision statement on a humanities-based IR is commendable and should be the starting point for reforms; it has strong potential to create ownership among the wider staff and to contribute to sell the programme on a growing IR student market.

Standard 2

The curriculum of MAIR enables its students to achieve the final qualifications. The panel finds the curriculum to be well developed, managed and implemented. There is a good alignment between the curriculum and the ILOs. The feasibility of the programme is in order as well, though the position of the *Thesis Seminar and Methods* course requires strengthening with a clearer eye on the preparation for the thesis project. After all, this is where all skills should 'materialise' from the ILOs. It therefore asks this course to be given a prominent place in the curriculum. This is especially important considering the predominantly academic orientation of the programme and the fact that students have not necessarily been fully trained in the discipline.

Dutch students often undertake internships which causes delay in graduation. Because of the academic nature of this master's degree and the proportion of international students, internships should not form a compulsory part of the programme. The panel praises the learning pathways that students can construct and it is impressed by the range of courses which is offered within the programme. The panel has seen motivated instructors and satisfied students, praising the content of the programme.

The panel considers it imperative that changes should be made in the supervision process of the thesis. It advises that supervisors must intervene at an earlier stage in the writing process to monitor the development of a solid research question, and safeguard the development of a proper methodological framework. Supervisors should then read the whole draft (not only the first two chapters). The panel is of the opinion that the quality of the theses will benefit from these changes, and it may help in bringing down the average graduation time. It is convinced that a more streamlined supervision process is key to deliver decent IR theses with a unique 'Humanities signature' in the future. The panel therefore strongly recommends the thesis supervisors to be stricter in assuring that the Humanities perspective is present throughout the research project. The Programme Board has already agreed on implementing the proposals of the panel.

The main challenge for MAIR has been the exponential growth of the programme and its student numbers in recent years. As of today, one third of the students has completed an academic



programme outside the Netherlands. This means that students have different academic backgrounds and experiences. This applies to staff members as well, making the MAIR programme truly diverse and international. Since the midterm review, measures have been taken to regulate the student intake, and to raise the requirements of admission. The panel understands these actions and values the international character of the programme.

Standard 3

Based on the written documentation and additional information provided during the site visit, the panel concludes that the assessment is grounded in a sound assessment plan and it fulfils the required quality criteria. The quality of assessment is therefore satisfactory.

The BoE is actively engaged in assuring the quality of assessment, despite the rapid expansion that the MAIR programme has seen in recent years. The challenge for the programme will be to respond to this new reality and secure a stable long-term development for the benefit of all its students. At the Faculty level, the panel stresses the need for adequate funding for BoEs, giving them the means to perform their important duties properly.

Diversity should not lead to randomness in the supervision and assessment process. Consequently, the panel recommends that the Programme Board organise regular calibration sessions where MAIR staff members share best practice, and where new staff members will be familiarised with the required examination standards.

Standard 4

The panel is of the opinion that the theses generally comply with MA level expectations. The grades are fair, and although generally on the high side, they do reflect the differences in quality between theses. More attention can be paid to guaranteeing the Humanities perspective in the theses. The alumni are satisfied with the programme as a preparation for their further career.

Overall the intended learning outcomes are achieved, though the panel finds that students could be trained better in choosing and applying specific methods in their MA theses. It urges the Programme Board to reorganise the TS&M course into six introduction lectures and six separate seminars. This will help convey the nature and importance of the proper use of methods, thus making it easier for students to write the research proposal and then their thesis.

The panel assesses the standards from the *Assessment framework for limited programme assessments* in the following way:

Master's programme International Relations

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes	Meets the standard
Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	Meets the standard
Standard 3: Student assessment	Meets the standard
Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes	Meets the standard

General conclusion Positive

The chair of the panel, dr. J.W. (Jan Willem) Honig, and the secretary, V.L. (Victor) van Kleef MA, hereby declare that all panel members have studied this report and that they agree with the judgements laid down in the report. They confirm that the assessment has been conducted in accordance with the demands relating to independence.

Date: 23 March 2020



DESCRIPTION OF THE STANDARDS FROM THE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK FOR LIMITED FRAMEWORK ASSESSMENTS

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes tie in with the level and orientation of the programme; they are geared to the expectations of the professional field, the discipline, and international requirements.

Findings

Profile and orientation

The Leiden University Masters of Arts in International Relations (hereafter: MAIR) is a 'Humanities-based' one-year degree programme belonging to the Faculty of Humanities. The MAIR approaches IR from a humanities-oriented, transdisciplinary and non-Western perspective. The ambition of this academic programme is to offer a combination of theoretical and practical knowledge. Other IR-related master's programmes at Leiden include the MSc programmes International Relations and Diplomacy (Political Science and Clingendael Institute), International Organisation (Political Science), International Politics (Political Science), and Crisis and Security Management (Governance and Global Affairs). Few IR-programmes specifically emphasise a humanities-based character, focussing on history and area studies in such strong way. The MAIR is therefore a rather idiosyncratic programme from both a domestic and an international perspective, which the panel acknowledges.

The MAIR perspective is grounded in the following four leading principles: (1) human understanding, (2) transdisciplinarity and scholarly diversity, (3) critical thinking and (4) engagement and accessibility. The four pillars of MAIR are embedded in the programme's five specialisations: Global Order in Historical Perspective (GOHP), Global Conflict in the Modern Era (GCME), Global Political Economy (GPE), Culture and Politics (C&P) and European Union Studies (EUS). These five specialisations and a broad range of electives offer students a choice in their degree, enabling them to tailor the programme to their interests. The MAIR aims to educate students in the analytical, reflective and communication skills needed to perform as a professional on the job market. The panel deduces from its observations that the ambitions of the programme are predominantly research-oriented.

During the site visit, the Programme Board explained that a Working Group on Programme Development has recently written a vision statement and summary report on what the MAIR stands for and what it means to lead, teach, and study IR within the Faculty of Humanities. The Programme Board informed the panel that describing the identity of MAIR is relevant, because until 2012 EUS was a stand-alone programme. In that year, the opportunity arose to establish a MA programme in International Relations by developing a new specialisation entitled International Studies to add to EUS. Most IR programmes outside the Netherlands are taught in Social Science departments, but the MAIR welcomes students with a bachelor's degree in Humanities and other disciplines—such as Social Sciences—resulting in a diverse student population. In recent years the MAIR has rapidly grown into the largest MA programme in the Faculty of Humanities. With over 37 percent foreign students, it is also one of the most international programmes in the Faculty. The panel praises the fact that the object of study has a clear international character and that a substantial proportion of both staff members and students have an international background.

Learning outcomes

The general goals of the master's programme have been translated into Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) that closely follow the Dublin descriptors. The ILOs are divided into overall ILOs and specialisation-specific outcomes—and are specified in the Course and Examination Regulations. The panel judges the ILOs to be well formulated and reflecting the requirements of the Dublin descriptors at master's level. The panel noted, however, that the ILOs should better reflect this unique humanities-based profile. This is exactly what the Programme Board has heard during the most recent midterm review. The programme management promised that after finalising the humanities-



based identity of the programme in the document *Towards a Humanities-based International Relations*, it will review the learning outcomes for the programme in the coming academic year. The panel applauds the proposal by the Programme Board for a revision and a more detailed description of the ILOs. An adjustment of the ILOs could also be a vehicle for making the claim of transdisciplinarity of the MAIR programme more explicit.

Link with the professional field

According to the self-evaluation report, the master's programme aims to offer a combination of theoretical and practical knowledge grounded in an academic approach, preparing students for a wide range of employment opportunities. The specialisations have societal relevance, and through the programme students are enabled to develop knowledge and understanding of actual and historical aspects of their study. Throughout the programme, students are trained in a range of 'transferable skills' and they become acquainted with the professional field through an internship and/or by the emphasis on actual practices and policies in the courses.

The panel still regards the MAIR profile and ILOs to be predominantly focussing on developing academic skills. The introduction of above-mentioned transferable skills has been adapted from the University-wide educational vision *Learning@LeidenUniversity*. It pays attention to intercultural communication, collaboration, inquiry-based learning, problem-solving skills, analytical and critical thinking and self-reflection. The transferable skills are largely covered in the existing ILOs, although according to the Programme and Faculty Board they can be made more explicit and systematic. The panel fully recognises this possibility as well and encourages the stakeholders to better align the ILOs with the transferable skills.

The students and alumni value the international profile of the MAIR programme. Since the programme falls under the auspices of the Faculty of Humanities, it allows a broad spectrum of candidates to apply and enroll—also those with an interest in IR, but without an academic background in it. In order to prepare students for the (international) job market and to attract international students, the programme is delivered in the English language. This trains students to learn concepts and theoretical views from international debates and actively apply these.

Considerations

The panel appreciates the distinctive humanities-based profile vis-à-vis other IR degrees, though it finds that this well-developed and unique profile could be better assured in the general learning outcomes. Nonetheless, the panel is particularly impressed by the truly international programme which represents a multinational student body, high proportion of non-Dutch staff, and a substantive non-Western focus in many courses.

The panel believes that the ILOs are appropriate for an academic master's programme, as it is a strongly research-based programme. Hence the general learning outcomes set the standard for what is expected from the programme's graduates in terms of knowledge and skills. However, the panel advises that a more balanced integration of the University-wide transferable skills and the programme-tied ILOs should take place. The panel therefore strongly supports the Programme Board in revising the ILOs next academic year and stresses the need to consult all stakeholders in this process.

The choice of electives and specialisations is extensive, but the panel finds the ILOs per specification overly ambitious given the fact that it is a one-year programme and students with non-IR bachelor degrees can enrol. Furthermore, it encourages the Programme Board to slightly dilute the specialisation-specific outcomes about the transdisciplinary and non-Western perspective. The vision statement on a humanities-based IR is commendable and should be the starting point for reforms; it has strong potential to create ownership among the wider staff and to contribute to sell the programme on a growing IR student market.

Conclusion

Master's programme International Relations: the panel assesses Standard 1 as 'Meets the standard'

Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

The curriculum, the teaching-learning environment and the quality of the teaching staff enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Findings

Vision on education and structure

With regards to its vision on didactics, the programme lays down four tenets: (1) diversity and internationalisation, (2) student-centred learning, (3) research-based learning, and (4) flexible pathways. The MAIR programme aims to offer a balance of IR theory and approaches in the Humanities. Throughout the curriculum, especially by working with so-called 'flexible pathways', the integration of International Relations and Humanities is being shaped as students can choose from a range of electives. The didactical approach in the programme is more focussed on learning and less on teaching. This approach is suitable according to the panel, since it is a programme in which self-study and discipline of the student play an important role—the number of contact hours is relatively low. Most courses/seminars offer lectures combined with private essays and group assignments in which students can practice transferable skills such as writing, communication and teamwork. The panel noticed that staff and students form a genuine academic community, which creates a positive learning atmosphere.

The main challenge for MAIR is the exponential growth of the programme. The intake increased from 17 students in 2012 to around 320 students in recent years. Despite the rapid growth, the MAIR programme offers small-scale classes which is very much appreciated by students and alumni. This creates room for extensive interaction between students and lecturers in line with the ambition of the Faculty. This is primarily manifested through seminar activities, such as debates and roleplays. The panel is of the opinion that this is a great achievement and well done by the programme. The students mentioned that the programme actively invests in and supports student participation, also by (co)organising guest lectures, excursions (i.e., to Brussels for EUS students), and workshops.

The structure and timetable of the programme are identical regardless whether a student enrolls in September or February. Each semester is split in two blocks, in which students follow courses and work on their thesis. It is important in the opinion of the panel that students are following courses while writing their thesis in order to keep in touch with the community and share experiences. The MAIR students write in the self-evaluation that with the current five specialisations, they are able to choose an academic topic and understand it in more depth through the core courses. For them the structure suits well their wishes to build personal study pathways. The panel praises the structure of the programme because it is simple and clear. It is easy to navigate for students and leads up to graduation in one of the specialisations (see Appendix 2).

Curriculum

There are five specialisations of which Global Order in Historical Perspective (GOHP), Global Conflict in the Modern Era (GCME), Global Political Economy (GPE), Culture and Politics (C&P) are categorised as globally-orientated specialisations; European Union Studies (EUS) is the regionally-orientated specialisation. In the four globally-oriented specialisations, three core courses of 5 EC each and the master's thesis (15 EC) are compulsory for all students. The general core courses which all students have to take are: *Ideas and World Politics (IWP)*, *Regionalism in World Politics (RWP)* and *Thesis Seminar and Methods (TS&M)*. One core course in the specialisation and two electives (each course is 10 EC) are bringing the total for this programme to 60 EC. The EUS specialisation consists of six compulsory courses (5 EC each) in the first semester: *History of European Integration*, *Institutions of the EU*, *EU Law*, *Economics of the EU*, the RWP course and TS&M course. In the second semester students can choose three electives (15 EC total) and they write their thesis (15 EC). The thesis takes up 25 percent of the programme credits, which is typical for MA programmes at Leiden



University. This means that students acquire their knowledge and skills through a structured learning pathway of (1) general and specialisation-specific core courses; (2) electives; (3) a preparatory course for the MA thesis, and (4) the thesis.

The core courses provide a so-called 'state of the field' exploration, both of the discipline of IR and a student's chosen specialisation. Students become acquainted with the dominant theories and debates in their discipline. The RWP course and specialisation electives further consolidate the knowledge and skills gained in the first-semester core courses. The TS&M course then lays the foundation for the thesis. 5 EC are dedicated to this core course, yet the panel has studied the set of master theses where methodology seems to be the weakest part (see Standard 4). The Programme Board announced that this important core course will be revised into six introduction lectures and six separate seminars. This helps according to the management to put more emphasis on the proper use of methods in the theses, and timewise it aligns better with the preparations for the thesis project. The panel fully supports these proposed changes, as they will likely have positive effects on the understanding and application of methodology.

The programme has adequately translated its intended learning outcomes into a coherent curriculum by offering general core courses as well as unique multidisciplinary tracks. The panel agrees with the programme management that each of the five specialisations provides a distinctive thematic focus, which is primarily taught through a specialisation core course. Students can build on the foundation provided by this course through their electives and thesis. Because all students admitted to the programme have some affinity with the field of IR—without necessarily having been fully trained in the discipline—the core courses taught in the first semester start with an introductory focus, and quickly advance to a higher level. The panel studied the course catalogue, curriculum, as well as the content of a number of courses, and it confirms the courses/seminars comply with an advanced master's level—and align with international curricula. A small remark of the panel is that the profiling of the different master tracks is in some cases based on only 10 EC of distinctive and part-time introductory courses. The panel advises the programme management to keep an eye on future developments which may require adjustments in the set-up of the specialisations. Some could perhaps be merged, depending on future enrolment figures.

Students can choose from over 60 courses as electives and pursue the topics of their interest. To name a few examples: *A History of the United Nations*, *Corruption in Russia and Eurasia*, *'Talking to the Levant': Europeans' Cultural and Linguistic Policies in the Middle East (1900-1970)*, *Ethics in Global Politics*, and *Narratives that Matter: Literature, Film and Television Drama in Turkey*. Both the MAIR students and the panel praise the wide range of courses that are offered in the programme. The panel has studied the curriculum of the programme, as well as the content of a number of courses. It concludes that in general the ILOs meet the expectations of the academic and professional field. The interdisciplinary core of the programme connects students to both IR and History or Area Studies, thereby fitting the goals of the programme. Students have the opportunity to specialise regarding their own preferences, allowing them to pre-sort for a career in government, journalism, research, etcetera.

Feasibility

The one-year master's programme consists of 60 EC. Students usually take longer than the allotted year to complete the programme. For the MAIR the mean duration to finish the programme is 1.6 years, following a general trend in the University (1.7 years University-wide, 1.7 years Faculty-wide). According to the staff this is in most cases the result of a deliberate choice by students, who want to take extra courses, do a second MA or internship, or who require extra time to complete their thesis. This was confirmed to the panel by the students and alumni who have enrolled in second master's programmes before finishing the initial master's programme for financial reasons.

An internship is not compulsory, but most Dutch students regard taking one as indispensable. Especially in the growing field of IR, students can distinguish themselves (or better: their résumés) by gaining work experience. The panel thus understands that internships are made possible, but not

actively offered as part of the curriculum; the annual programme does not really have room for an internship without study delay. This is what students and alumni have mentioned at the site visit as well. Consequently, it becomes clear that following an internship causes delay in the student's graduation and this causes the relative long average duration. On the other hand, international students usually complete the programme in one year as for them the mere completion of a master's degree abroad in one year enhances their résumés and avoids additional costs. That in itself confirms the feasibility of the programme not to be a problem. The panel therefore judges the programme to be well-balanced. Yet it suggests that the Programme Board should monitor whether structural obstacles which create difficulties for students to graduate in one year occur. It notes that following an internship instead of an elective is unfortunately not really possible within the schedule.

Students and alumni acknowledge the fact that many of them take an extra semester in order to complete the MAIR programme (i.e., thesis). During the site visit and in the student chapter they propose that a third semester should be recognised as a normal part of the curriculum. In addition, they urge "the implementation of a voluntary summer 'pre-master programme' wherein students may opt to gain a foothold in the various specifics of studying, research and interacting with International Relations, its theories and concepts." Extension of the programme (outside the 60 EC) is not seen as a desirable or realistic option by the programme management and the panel. The Programme Board nevertheless agrees that the preparation of admitted students can be improved. At this moment all applicants must demonstrate an affinity with IR in their applications; the fact remains that there is significant variation in terms of knowledge amongst new students. This undeniably has an impact on the level of the MAIR programme regarding the relatively high intake of students from various academic backgrounds.

The programme is currently debating ways of providing more support to successful applicants to help them prepare for their MA degree. This includes preliminary reading lists per specialisation and potentially even an optional Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) to help students prepare for the MAIR. The MOOC is intended for the four globally-orientated specialisations; EUS has a pre-master's programme for students without an EUS background. The panel understands this rationale and believes this is a logical step in safeguarding the MA level—especially with regards to the EUS specialisation, as this sub-discipline demands advanced knowledge of the workings of the EU and its institutions. Admission to this specialisation has become more exclusive as requirements have been raised since the midterm review. Additional measures have been the strengthening of entry requirements in the Course and Examination Regulations, for example by asking for higher TOEFL and IELTS scores. Candidates may be asked to supply more documents, such as a sample of their written work on IR subjects. The MAIR programme does provide detailed information about the contents of its programme—both online and in Master's Open Day events—to make sure applicants know what to expect. The panel believes these measures contribute to a better student body.

Thesis supervision

A widely acknowledged concern of both students and staff is the late allocation of the thesis supervisor to the student. Currently this happens around mid-December (or even in January) for the students that have started in September. During the site visit everyone involved in the MAIR programme agreed that this should be done earlier, preferably in week 9 or 10 of the first semester. The intention is that students hand in an abstract of their thesis (proposal) before the 10th of November to connect the student to a supervisor. Related to this is the idea that the BoE should confirm second readers rather than propose them. The panel strongly encourages the Programme Board to settle these issues for next academic year. As the MAIR programme takes only one year, this may help bringing down the average time students take to complete their degree as well.

Another ambition is to look for a better fit between supervisor and student and prevent some staff members from 'cropping up' theses. Popular supervisors take up 12 to 18 theses per specialisation. This varies depending on specialisation as well: the number of students that focus on area studies is larger than history for example. The hours for supervision are allocated by the Faculty of Humanities and set at 15 hours per thesis—the EUS specialisation uses external supervisors who are paid



separately. According to the teaching staff there is enough time for supervision, and since there are two intakes per year (September and January/February) the workload balances out well. Furthermore, the staff hinted that there are differences between the students and the way they work, so on average it is evenly spread over the year.

Yet during the site visit it became clear that the supervisors only read the first two chapters of the draft (thesis). This is the result of the increasing workload and rapid growth of the student population. The panel believes this is not a desirable policy and it affects the quality of the theses. It understands that better, more autonomous students need less supervision—and that weaker students are given more support. That being said, it strongly advises that thesis supervisors must intervene at an earlier stage in the writing process to monitor the development of a solid research question and a proper methodological framework. Supervisors should then read the whole draft and not only the first two chapters. These proposed improvements of the supervision process will help to bring down the average study time and strengthen the quality of the theses (see Standard 4). The Programme Board wholeheartedly endorses these proposals and will make changes next academic year. The panel also put forward the idea to fit in the research topics and approaches within the core courses, enabling also an apposite focus on the Humanities perspective. This suggestion was also well received by the MAIR staff members.

Teaching staff and coordination

The MAIR programme involves a large number of instructors: 43 in 2019. The teaching staff is relatively stable, although sometimes replacements are required due to research grants, sabbaticals, or special leave. All instructors teach courses that reflect their specific expertise. Of the 43 instructors, four are full professors, one is a senior university lecturer, thirty are university lecturers, and eight are lecturers. There are currently no PhD students and post-docs teaching in the programme. All instructors are either actively involved in research or are involved in the professional field they are teaching about—in the case of external lecturers for the EUS specialisation. Members from the teaching staff in the MAIR programme are mostly affiliated to the Leiden Institute for Area Studies (LIAS), or the Leiden University Institute for History (LUIH). The panel has seen a dedicated and international team (Dutch, EU, non-EU), and applauds the way in which staff members take seriously their didactic responsibilities—when it comes to feedback on grading for example. In addition, students praise the approachability of the staff and supervisors and the feedback they provide on their questions. It was mentioned that the MAIR personnel are peers (age wise), so in theory they compete for the same grants and positions. In practice, however, this matter does not cause problems on the work floor.

Having a diverse international team has drawbacks as well: staff members likely have slightly different ideas and experiences on ethics in research, supervising students and assessing theses. The Programme Board is well aware of the need for sufficient training of new staff members on these issues, in order for the team to be on the same page. The panel affirms the observations of the MAIR management and encourages the implementation of regular calibration sessions where best practices amongst (new) staff members are shared. In 2015 a Faculty educational adviser was appointed to advise and guide lecturers and study programme organisers. From 2018, the adviser organises informative introduction meetings for new lecturers. The University Teaching Qualification (BKO) is obligatory for all (senior) lecturers and professors with a contract of more than 0.5 FTE with the duration of a year or more. They are obliged to obtain a BKO within two years, must attend at least two didactic courses, and put together a portfolio that needs to be assessed by an internal Faculty BKO Committee. All instructors requiring a BKO have obtained this certificate (or an international variant). Two staff members have obtained a Senior Teaching Qualification (SKO). Lecturers who teach in English are obliged to demonstrate that they have sufficient command of the English language and must obtain their Basic Examination Qualification (BKE). All MAIR instructors have a BKE and the English language proficiency level is good. The students acknowledged this during the visit.

Both students and staff applaud the visible and helpful role that the coordinator of studies plays in the programme. This has been a major improvement in comparison to the early days of the programme. The coordinator of studies has two functions: she is responsible for a number of coordinating tasks in collaboration with the programme director, and she is a study advisor—responsible for guiding and advising students during their studies and for providing study information to prospective students. All students and alumni spoke highly of the amount of support they receive in this degree programme. Whereas the coordinator of studies is easy to approach, the panel detected that the Programme Committee (OLC) is not very visible. The committee fulfils its internal tasks, but students generally do not have much affinity with this body. Since the MAIR is a one-year programme with a distinctive profile this is not so remarkable, according to the panel. The International Studies Student Association (ISSA), on the other hand, connects (new) students by frequently organising excursions and events—sometimes in collaboration with the Programme Board.

Language

The panel thinks the content of the programme is truly international—as is visible in both the specialisations and the courses—and in that sense it is perfectly aligned with the MAIR profile. In view of its current dominance in International Relations, English is understandably the main teaching language in the programme, enabling students to share and communicate in an international classroom setting. Besides, the high percentage of international students (intake of 37 percent in 2019) by itself justifies the choice for the English language. Although the programme wholeheartedly and rightly embraces the international classroom, it nonetheless seems to struggle with the great diversity in academic, cultural and national backgrounds of its incoming students. The panel urges the programme to keep a close eye on this.

Considerations

The curriculum of MAIR enables its students to achieve the final qualifications. The panel finds the curriculum to be well developed, managed and implemented. There is a good alignment between the curriculum and the ILOs. The feasibility of the programme is in order as well, though the position of the *Thesis Seminar and Methods* course requires strengthening with a clearer eye on the preparation for the thesis project. After all, this is where all skills should 'materialise' from the ILOs. It therefore asks this course to be given a prominent place in the curriculum. This is especially important considering the predominantly academic orientation of the programme and the fact that students have not necessarily been fully trained in the discipline.

Dutch students often undertake internships which causes delay in graduation. Because of the academic nature of this master's degree and the proportion of international students, internships should not form a compulsory part of the programme. The panel praises the learning pathways that students can construct and it is impressed by the range of courses which is offered within the programme. The panel has seen motivated instructors and satisfied students who praise the content of the programme.

The panel considers it imperative that changes should be made in the supervision process of the thesis. It advises that supervisors must intervene at an earlier stage in the writing process to monitor the development of a solid research question and safeguard the development of a proper methodological framework. Supervisors should then read the whole draft (not only the first two chapters). The panel is of the opinion that the quality of the theses will benefit from these changes, and it may help in bringing down the average graduation time. It is convinced that a more streamlined supervision process is key to deliver decent IR theses with a unique 'Humanities signature' in the future. The panel therefore strongly recommends the thesis supervisors to be stricter in assuring that the Humanities perspective is present throughout the research project. The Programme Board has already agreed on implementing the proposals of the panel.

The main challenge for MAIR has been the exponential growth of the programme and its student numbers in recent years. As of today, one third of the students has completed an academic programme outside the Netherlands. This means that students have different academic backgrounds



and experiences. This applies to staff members as well, making the MAIR programme truly diverse and international. Since the midterm review, measures have been taken to regulate the student intake, and to raise the requirements of admission. The panel understands these actions and values the international character of the programme.

Conclusion

Master's programme International Relations: the panel assesses Standard 2 as 'Meets the standard'

Standard 3: Student assessment

The programme has an adequate system of student assessment in place.

Findings

Assessment plan and system

It goes without saying that the recent growth of the programme and its student population poses a serious challenge for MAIR, especially regarding the organisation of thesis supervision and management of assessment. The programme's assessment policy is based on the assessment policy of the Faculty of Humanities. The assessment plan gives an insightful breakdown of the course-specific learning outcomes and assessment types in each individual course, as well as a detailed overview of how each individual course contributes to the achievement of the ILOs. The assessment plan is fit for purpose and it complies with the standards in the academic domain. Assessment of most core courses and specialisation core courses in the MAIR programme involves writing an essay or a report, combined with an oral presentation. In most courses, the final grade is the weighted result of two or more grades, in conformity with the policy of the Faculty to offer students more than one opportunity to pass a course. The panel agrees this is an appropriate assessment method for an academic master's programme. It hints that writing a report in the form of a policy plan, for instance, may be a helpful and original way to prepare students for the professional field.

For each core course, teachers constructively align their assessments to meet the learning outcomes for the programme by using a matrix structure. This ensures adequate testing of the learning outcomes, so that all MAIR graduates will attain these qualifications—as specified in the Course and Examination Regulations. The contribution of the three core courses to the ILOs is detailed in the assessment plan. The type of assessment is fully specified in the e-Prospectus, which is available to students before the start of the course. The weighting of several key components is also included. This is done in an insightful manner and it improves transparency, according to the panel. Written exams are archived with correct-answer models and the four-eyes principle is followed to ensure that each test is appropriate. Presentations and essays are commented on by instructors filling out special assessment forms. These forms are available in paper or via Blackboard. Written work is always submitted via Turnitin to check for plagiarism. The panel agrees that the four-eyes principle and the use of rubrics is commendable and sufficiently ensures both transparency and objectivity.

In preparation for the site visit, the panel checked assessment forms and finds the feedback almost always of a nature to fully understand the evaluation and realisation of the grade. It judges that students are provided with sufficient feedback, which was confirmed by students and alumni during the visitation. Instructors are described by the students as "reachable, communicative and they provide intermediate feedback if necessary". The panel has great appreciation for the teachers who fully take up their didactic role in this respect, though it believes that the grades given for the core courses seem relatively high. The Board of Examiners (BoE) stated in this regard that not all new staff members have the same standards of examination yet, which causes the variation in quality and quantification. A shared belief of all stakeholders during the site visit was that new personnel should be better introduced to the examination process and standardisation of the MAIR programme. The panel suggests organising a yearly calibration session amongst staff members to support this endeavour. It concludes that criteria for assessment quality have been formulated well enough, but that they are not yet sufficiently internalised and implemented by all staff members.

Thesis assessment

The thesis assessment follows the procedure as laid down by the Faculty. In consultation with the study programmes, the Faculty has decided to make the assessment of final projects and theses more transparent and independent by: (1) introducing standard assessment forms, and (2) harmonising and digitally supporting the assessment process for graduation projects or theses by two independent assessors. The assessment form used by the supervisor and the second reader of the thesis, who since 2016 is appointed by the BoE, is used Faculty-wide. Before it was the first reader who chose the second reader—often a close colleague with the same research interests. Now the selection of the second reader is no longer in the hands of the supervisor but assigned randomly within the specialisation. The panel is pleased with this change, because it contributes to an independent and more valid judgement.

The supervisor and the second reader independently assess the thesis, both fill in an (online) assessment form and propose a grade. The assessments are combined in a third form, which both readers and the student receive. The final grade is often determined by taking the mean of the two proposed grades. However, the two readers might also agree on a grade that is different from the mean. In the case of the two grades being too far apart, or if the readers disagree, a third reader is assigned by the BoE. The panel judges the transparency and set-up of the thesis assessment procedure to be sound and solid.

While scrutinising the thesis assessment forms the panel saw feedback—especially from second readers—that suggested a likely fail, only to see the award of a pass. The panel was informed during the visitation that a negotiation takes place in case of any discrepancy in the judgement of the supervisor and the second reader. The subsequent discussion is not reflected in the forms and the supervisor can edit the final third form. That means that the comments are not changed, but only the grades are. If this leads to questions, the students can ask for a clarification. The registration system that has been implemented by the Faculty uses software which will identify the difference between a pass and a fail. The panel understands the workings of this mechanism, but suggests that the programme consider appointing a third reader when the final grade is a 6. There is discussion amongst the Programme Board whether this idea is viable from an organisational point of view.

Board of Examiners

The examination committee is responsible for assuring the quality of assessments and exams and, therefore, for the standard of the degree awarded upon graduation. The MAIR Board of Examiners is composed of three staff members from the MAIR programme plus an external member and is supported by a secretary. The work of the BoE is based on applicable laws and regulations, particularly the Course and Examination Regulations and its appendices. The BoE usually convenes once per month during the academic semester and its members keep in touch via e-mail. The panel highly appreciates the knowledge, determination and energy that the BoE showed at the site visit. Notwithstanding the significant growth of the programme in the last few years, it conscientiously works on performing its tasks and improving the status quo. The panel concludes that the BoE fulfils its legal tasks systematically and actively.

The BoE advises the Programme Board on the text of the Course and Examination Regulations, informs the Programme Board of its decisions, and reviews the assessment plan. Its members informed the panel that the contact between the boards could be intensified. Also, it became clear that the BoE does not yet share 'best practices' with other examination boards. Given the fact that the Faculty of Humanities has 22 BoEs for its 52 programmes, the panel sees room for intensified cooperation and integration of examination committees. It supports the idea of the BoE to share its views and experiences with counterparts, thereby assuring the quality of the exams and tests used by the other programmes in the Faculty of Humanities. The idea for more frequent internal calibration sessions was launched, as it became clear that not all new staff members follow the same standards in examination. The panel applauds the introduction of these calibration sessions and urges a yearly in-depth dialogue between the entire BoE and the Programme Board.



Workload Board of Examiners

As the popularity of the MA programme grows, more staff is brought in to cope with the number of students and the BoE is therefore expanded with more members. The increase in students has led to: (1) a higher number of submitted approvals for internships and non-standard courses, (2) the assignment of more thesis supervisors and second readers, (3) the checking a higher percentage of theses, and (4) the handling of slightly more cases of fraud and plagiarism. In 2018, a total number of 281 theses was submitted of which the BoE strives to monitor 15 percent by reading the entire thesis and grading forms—they performed 45 checks last year. The panel compliments the BoE on the active role it plays. Unsurprisingly, the workload of the BoE is increasing and more time needs to be allocated to its members to adequately perform their legal duties. It should be noted, however, that the BoE looks at internship reports as well, which does not fall within the scope of its responsibilities, according to the panel. With effect from 2020 the BoE will relinquish reviewing internship reports, allowing itself to focus more time on its core tasks.

The panel, Programme Board and Faculty Board agree that a higher compensation for BoE duties (in time or funding) is desirable. According to the Faculty Board, members of the BoE receive a compensation on top of exemptions, but unfortunately structural funding to secure a reduction in the workload is not foreseen. At the Faculty level, various initiatives are being designed to make the workload more manageable. For example, the Faculty has developed a guideline for the time requirements for chairs and members of Programme Boards, Boards of Examiners and Programme Committees, which the institutes have translated into a time allocation for the chairmanship and membership of the aforementioned bodies.

A special Working Group has issued a recommendation to the Faculty Board pertaining to the development of further guidelines for the structure of educational programmes. Finally, the Faculty is working on organising administrative obligations more efficiently and relieving pressures on academic staff. The panel approves of these developments at the Faculty level, and it underscores the necessity of unremitting support given the legal status and legal responsibilities that the BoE(s) bears.

Considerations

Based on the written documentation and additional information provided during the site visit, the panel concludes that assessment is grounded in a sound assessment plan and that it fulfils the required quality criteria. The quality of assessment is therefore satisfactory.

The BoE is actively engaged in monitoring and assuring the quality of assessment, despite the rapid expansion that the MAIR programme has seen in recent years. The challenge for the programme will be to respond to this new reality and secure a stable long-term development for the benefit of all its students.

Diversity should not lead to randomness in the supervision and assessment process. Consequently, the panel recommends that the Programme Board organises regular calibration sessions where MAIR staff members share best practice, and where new staff members will be familiarised with the required examination standards.

At the Faculty level, the panel stresses the need for adequate funding for BoEs to give them the means to perform their important duties properly.

Conclusion

Master's programme International Relations: the panel assesses Standard 3 as 'Meets the standard'

Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

Findings*Theses*

The achievement of the intended learning outcomes is particularly demonstrated by the assessment of the final project: the master thesis. The 15 EC MA-thesis has to comply with a set of criteria that apply Faculty-wide and that are in line with the Dublin descriptors. These guarantee that the theses comply with the research-centred standards of the programme. A thesis is written in a journal article style, covers a topic within the student's chosen specialisation, and has a maximum word-count of 15,000 words. The panel initially read a sample of fifteen theses and their assessment forms. It requested four additional theses to expand the selection, because it considered two of the theses a marginal pass at most.

According to the panel the quality of the master theses and knowledge of the English language varied widely. In general, students seem to be very well able to find, synthesise and use appropriate primary and secondary sources. The panel saw some excellent theses that are of a publishable quality, though it also found two final projects that only very narrowly meet the learning objectives. Although 5 EC are dedicated to methods in IR in the core course *Thesis and Methods in International Relations Research*, the methodological element is nonetheless often weak and sometimes almost completely absent. When present, there is often little justification of and reflection on the choice made and the method applied is repeatedly insufficiently developed in the analysis. The panel considers this to be disconcerting and urges improvement by focussing more on methodology in the supervising process. The Programme Board announced that the TS&M course will be reorganised into six introduction lectures and six separate seminars. This helps according to the Programme Board to put more emphasis on the proper use of methods in the theses. The panel fully supports the change.

Another notable finding is that the 'humanities-based' profile of the programme is not always reflected in the theses. Students try to use a combination of historical and contemporary sources and take a mixed methods approach—not in the least because they are being stimulated to do so. The wide variety of students, most of them with different educational backgrounds, offers a significant challenge in this respect. It was brought to the attention of the panel that the way some international students cope with (direct) feedback differs. Also, prior experience in writing papers in English differs tremendously. Likewise, the above-mentioned factors apply to the staff members as well: they are from a very diverse background and they too have different ideas and expectations regarding the theses. The Programme Board is well aware of the need for training new staff to be on the same page when it comes to supervising and assessing theses. The panel agrees with the observations of the Programme Board and sees room for sharing best practices amongst (new) staff members.

Alumni and professional field

The panel held interviews with a number of MAIR alumni during the site visit to learn in what professional fields they end up, and to determine if the ILOs are achieved. The graduates are all very pleased with the diversity of the programme (i.e., the many elective courses and specialisations), small class sizes and the international profile of the programme. They find that the teaching staff and coordinator of studies are easy to approach and always willing to help. Career-oriented workshops and events are frequently organised by the Faculty, MAIR staff and the study association ISSA.

According to the self-evaluation report, graduates find employment in a variety of professions such as education, ICT, research, consulting, non-profit and (semi-)government. A recent investigation into the destinations of MA alumni in the Faculty of Humanities of Leiden University found that 70 percent of the MAIR alumni obtained a job at the vocational or academic level. Of these, 65 percent found this job within two months, 85 percent within six months. These figures are slightly lower than for other programmes in the Faculty. According to the programme management, the high number of



IR programmes in the Netherlands and abroad results in greater competition between graduates. The panel notes that it is therefore imperative to further embed the distinctive humanities-based profile in its teaching and communicate this to the students so that they can then demonstrate the added value of their degree to employers and differentiate themselves from other IR graduates. The panel notes that the testimonies of the MAIR alumni exuded optimism regarding their opportunities on the labour market.

Considerations

The panel is of the opinion that the theses generally comply with MA level expectations. The grades are fair, and although generally on the high side, they do reflect the differences in quality between theses. More attention can be paid to guaranteeing the Humanities perspective in the theses.

Overall the intended learning outcomes are achieved, though the panel finds that students could be trained better in choosing and applying specific methods in their MA theses. It urges the Programme Board to reorganise the TS&M course into six introduction lectures and six separate seminars. This will help to convey better the nature and importance of the proper use of methods, thus making it easier for students to write the research proposal and then the thesis.

The alumni are satisfied with the programme as a preparation for their further career.

Conclusion

Master's programme International Relations: the panel assesses Standard 4 as 'Meets the standard'

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The panel assesses Standard 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the master's programme International Relations as 'Meets the standard'. According to the decision rules of NVAO's Framework for limited programme assessments 2018, the panel assesses the master's programme International Relations as 'Positive'.

Conclusion

The panel assesses the *Master's programme International Relations* as 'Positive'

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Graduates of the programme have attained the following learning outcomes, listed according to the Dublin descriptors:

1. Knowledge and understanding

- a. Comprehensive knowledge and understanding of:
 - the contemporary and historical dimension, the evolution and interdependency of bilateral and multilateral relations among states and non-state actors,
 - the importance of government institutions and frameworks for the development of these relations,
- b. And the main areas and issues of current global and regional politics and international relations, knowledge of the main academic terminology, theories and paradigms pertaining to the past, present and future of current global issues and politics, with a special focus on ideas and approaches related to the humanities.

2. Applying knowledge and understanding

- a. The ability to locate, analyse and critically assess primary documents emanating from relevant sources and secondary (academic) sources, relating to areas and issues relevant to International Relations, including the process of European integration;
- b. The ability to conduct independent multi-disciplinary research and to formulate and conduct substantial pieces of academic research (including a master's thesis) in the field of humanities-based International Relations, thereby showing the ability to comprehend and apply relevant theoretical insights and methodological approaches;
- c. With regard to major regional and global areas and issues, the ability to successfully transfer and apply research to non-academic settings and environments;
- d. The ability to initiate and conduct research into the relevant areas and issues of regional and global politics, economics and culture;
- e. The ability to follow and understand the evolution of academic and non-academic discussions on the complex interdependency of national, regional and global politics;
- f. The ability to apply and evaluate qualitative and, if applicable, quantitative methods to the relevant contexts.

3. Judgement

- a. The ability to independently and critically evaluate evidence and sources relating to the variety and interdependency of areas and issues of regional and global economics, politics and culture;
- b. The ability to evaluate the historical, political, economic and cultural factors that shape the interests and behaviour of major state and non-state actors in the contemporary world, including the European Union;
- c. The ability to recognise, reflect upon and judge between different academic opinions and arguments on the complexity and interrelationship of contemporary politics, cultures and economics.

4. Communication

- a. The ability to clearly and convincingly present academically-supported arguments and analyses with respect to the evolution of relations among states, international organisations and non-state actors before peer-group and professional audiences both orally and in writing;
- b. The ability to present research in the relevant areas and issues.

5. Learning skills

- a. The learning abilities required to be able to follow post-master's professional training or a PhD training of a largely self-determined or autonomous nature.

In addition to the above programme-wide achievement levels, graduates will have obtained the following achievement levels per specialisation:



Specialisation in European Union Studies

1. Knowledge and understanding

- a. Comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the main policy areas (including external policies), institutions and decision-making procedures of the European Union);
- b. Knowledge of the main academic paradigms and theories pertaining to the past, present and future evolution of the process of European integration;
- c. Knowledge and understanding of the problem areas of the European Union, including issues such as foreign and security policy, relations with neighbouring countries, economic and monetary union, institutional reform, agricultural and rural policy, cultural policy.

2. Applying knowledge and understanding

- a. The ability to critically analyse primary documents emanating from the European Union and other relevant sources that relate to the European Union and its member states;
- b. The ability to follow the evolution of academic and non-academic discussions on European Union policy issues.

3. Judgement

- a. The ability to evaluate evidence and sources relating to the European Union and its member states;
- b. The ability to assess different academic opinions and arguments about European issues;
- c. The ability to evaluate policies of the European Union and its member states.

Specialisation in Culture and Politics

1. Knowledge and understanding

- a. Comprehensive knowledge and understanding of theories and methods in the humanities whereby culture is analysed;
- b. Knowledge of the paradigms through which mainstream IR scholarship has traditionally approached the study of culture, with a special focus on studies of "identity";
- c. Knowledge of areas where governments attempt to make practical use of culture.

2. Applying knowledge and understanding

- a. The ability to analyse cultural works and practices (e.g. movies, literature, music, comics and cartoons, games, ceremonies) to show how meaning about cross-border phenomena is produced, circulated, and maintained through culture;
- b. The ability to expound, problematize, and/or critique mainstream IR's reliance on "thin" concepts of culture in the study of concepts such as "identity";
- c. The ability to provide informed commentary and critique on government policy that claims to use "culture," particularly in spheres such as nation branding and public diplomacy.

3. Judgement

- a. The ability to recognise and select cultural texts that are broadly speaking—relevant to politics and international relations and to deploy methods of analysis that go beyond descriptive analysis;
- b. The ability to evaluate "identity" as a force shaping the interests and behaviour of major state and non-state actors in the contemporary world;
- c. The ability to recognise, reflect upon and judge between different academic opinions and arguments about government uses of "culture."

Specialisation in Global Conflict in the Modern Era

1. Knowledge and understanding

- a. Comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the main terminology, concepts and issues in the debate about conflict, peace and security since the nineteenth century;
- b. Knowledge of the main academic paradigms and theories pertaining to the past, present and future evolution of conflict, peace and security;
- c. Knowledge of the main methods used in the investigation of conflict, peace and security in the modern era.

2. Applying knowledge and understanding

- a. the ability to critically analyse primary and secondary documents related to conflict writ large;
- b. the ability to follow the evolution of academic and non-academic discussions issues related to conflict, peace and security;
- c. the ability to comprehend and apply relevant theoretical insights and methodological approaches in the field of conflict, peace and security.

3. Judgement

- a. the ability to evaluate evidence and sources relating to conflict, peace and security;
- b. the ability to assess different academic opinions and arguments about conflict, peace and security;
- c. the ability to evaluate policies conflict, peace and security.

Specialisation in Global Order in Historical Perspective

1. Knowledge and understanding

- a. Comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the processes behind the evolution of the global order, the pursuit of global justice and the variety of ethics, ideologies, institutions and norms that underpin the international political system;
- b. Knowledge and engagement with different trajectories of states, organizations and peoples, examining how they are manifested in power relations and interact at different points across time to order the world;
- c. Knowledge of how power relations are structured, from the great power politics of global governance, to diplomatic culture in regional and national perspectives through regional and transnational groupings.

2. Applying knowledge and understanding

- a. The ability to critically analyse primary sources relating to institutions, nation-states, transnational organisations and NGOs;
- b. The ability to apply a solid historical knowledge to current affairs and international politics.

3. Judgement

- a. The ability to critically evaluate evidence on issues relating to global order;
- b. The ability to dissect how institutions and systems of power are created modified and evolve over time;
- c. The ability to review and assess different opinions and discourses about the system of global governance.

Specialisation in Global Political Economy

1. Knowledge and understanding

- a. Knowledge and understanding of salient properties of the world economy and the social relations and institutional arrangements that have shaped its development;
- b. Knowledge of key concepts, leading theories, and major debates concerning the past, present and future development of world economy and their practical and normative implications;
- c. Knowledge and understanding of the determinants of variation in the world economy, particularly with respect to patterns of economic growth, inequality, and human wellbeing;
- d. Knowledge and understanding of actors and institutions that have shaped the organization and operation of the world economy and which have influenced and conditioned its regional, national, and local effects; including states, firms, international organizations, and civil society actors, among others;
- e. Knowledge and understanding of theoretical and research methods used for linking the analysis of the world economy to regional, national, and local contexts.



2. Applying knowledge and understanding

- a. The ability to locate, analyse and critically assess data and documents from official, academic, and other sources relevant to the analysis of the world economy;
- b. The ability to organize and order analyses from diverse disciplinary and theoretical perspectives in the exploration of a variety of global political economy themes;
- c. The ability to understand and engage debates on various aspects of global political economy, both within and outside academia, and across a variety of global settings.

3. Judgement

- a. The ability to explore rival hypotheses concerning the development of the world economy and its bearing on patterns of social change across and within countries;
- b. The ability to evaluate evidence relating to various aspects of global political economy across diverse geographical and historical contexts;
- c. The ability to evaluate the assumptions, interests, ideologies, and differential capacities of a diverse array of actors impinging on the development of the world economy and its regional, national, and local effects, including states, firms, international organizations, and civil society actors, among others.

APPENDIX 2: OVERVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM

Curriculum overview MA International Relations 2018-2019

<i>Core courses</i>	EC	Level	Culture and Politics	European Union Studies	Global Conflict in the Modern Era	Global Order in Historical Perspective	Global Political Economy
Thesis and Methods in International Relations Research	5	600	x (man)	x (man)	x (man)	x (man)	x (man)
Regionalism in World Politics	5	500	x (man)	x (man)	x (man)	x (man)	x (man)
MA Thesis	15	600	x (man)	x (man)	x (man)	x (man)	x (man)
Ideas in World Politics	5	500	x (man)		x (man)	x (man)	x (man)

<i>Two electives of the following, of which at least 10 EC in specialisation</i>	20		x (man)		x (man)	x (man)	x (man)
Core Course Culture and Politics	10	500	x (man)				
Brazil Visiting Chair			x (MAIR; spec)		x (MAIR; spec)	x (MAIR; spec)	x (MAIR; spec)
Decentering International Relations: Views from the Global South			x (MAIR; spec)		x (MAIR; spec)	x (MAIR; spec)	x (MAIR; spec)
Modern United States Foreign Policy			x (MAIR; spec)		x (MAIR; spec)	x (MAIR; spec)	x (MAIR; spec)
Modern United States Foreign Policy			x (MAIR; spec)		x (MAIR; spec)	x (MAIR; spec)	x (MAIR; spec)
Cultures of Crime: Identity, Protection and the Rule of Law in a Global World			x (MAIR; spec)		x (MAIR; spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)
A History of the United Nations			x (MAIR; spec)		x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)
Rethinking Secularism in International Relations			x (MAIR; spec)		x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)
Brazil in the Portuguese Speaking World: Political and Cultural Dynamics			x (MAIR; spec)		x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; spec)



Contemporary Brazil			x (MAIR; spec)		x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; spec)
Development Contested: Globalization and its Alternatives			x (MAIR; spec)		x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; spec)
'Talking to the Levant'. Europeans' Cultural and Linguistic Policies in the Middle East (1900-1970)			x (MAIR; spec)		x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)
Turkey and the Middle East in the 20 th Century			x (other; not spec)		x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)
China's International Political Economy			x (other; not spec)		x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)	x (other; spec)
Corruption in Russia and Eurasia			x (other; not spec)		x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)	x (other; spec)
Economic Development and Social Change in Southeast Asia			x (other; not spec)		x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)	x (other; spec)
International Relations of The Middle East and Asia			x (other; not spec)		x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)	x (other; spec)
Le français des affaires			x (other; not spec)		x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)	x (other; spec)
Histories of Southeast Asia			x (other; not spec)		x (other; not spec)	x (other; spec)	x (other; not spec)
International Relations in the Slavic Triangle Russia Ukraine and Belarus			x (other; not spec)		x (other; not spec)	x (other; spec)	x (other; not spec)
The Ottoman Empire and Turkey			x (other; not spec)		x (other; not spec)	x (other; spec)	x (other; not spec)
The State in Modern Chinese History			x (other; not spec)		x (other; not spec)	x (other; spec)	x (other; not spec)
Political Economy of Southeast Asia			x (other; not spec)		x (other; not spec)		x (other; spec)
International Relations in the Middle East: Regional Struggle and Great Power Rivalry after the Cold War			x (other; not spec)		x (other; spec)		
Internship MA International Relations			x (MAIR; not spec)		x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)
Neoliberalism and Illegality: Flows, Commodities, Locations			x (MAIR; not spec)		x (MAIR; spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; spec)
Deadly Borders: Theories, Actors, Cases			x (MAIR; not spec)		x (MAIR; spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)

Nation-building and Resistance			x (MAIR; not spec)		x (MAIR; spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)
Researching Authoritarianism: The Politics of Conflict, Violence, and Genocide			x (MAIR; not spec)		x (MAIR; spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)
Security Governance			x (MAIR; not spec)		x (MAIR; spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)
Strategy and Grand Strategy in Theory and Practice			x (MAIR; not spec)		x (MAIR; spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)
Strategy and Grand Strategy in Theory and Practice			x (MAIR; not spec)		x (MAIR; spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)
Violent Rebels in International Affairs			x (MAIR; not spec)		x (MAIR; spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)
War by Contract? The Drivers and Implications of Security Privatization			x (MAIR; not spec)		x (MAIR; spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)
Best Practice: Legislating and Regulating a Better Global Economy			x (MAIR; not spec)		x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; spec)	x (MAIR; spec)
BRIC: Emerging Powers and Changing Global Relations			x (MAIR; not spec)		x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; spec)	x (MAIR; spec)
Global Governance and Human Rights: History, Theory, and Practice			x (MAIR; not spec)		x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; spec)	x (MAIR; spec)
History, Race and Empire in the Study of International Relations			x (MAIR; not spec)		x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)
Internationalism, Empire and the Cold War: 20th Century International Relations			x (MAIR; not spec)		x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)
Issues in Latin American Foreign Policies			x (MAIR; not spec)		x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)
Diplomacy: History, theory and practice			x (MAIR; not spec)		x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)
Ethics in Global Politics			x (MAIR; not spec)		x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)
Industrialization, Revolution and Geopolitics: the making of the modern world order			x (MAIR; not spec)		x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)
Migration, Race and Identity: the making of 'Hispanics' in the United States			x (MAIR; not spec)		x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)	x (MAIR; not spec)

Global Governance and Human Rights: History, Theory, and Practice			x (MAIR; not spec)			x (MAIR; spec)	x (MAIR; spec)
Remapping the City in Modern Literature and Visual Cultures			x (other; spec)		x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)
Anthropology of Muslim Societies			x (other; spec)		x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)
Contemporary Indian Politics			x (other; spec)		x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)
Creativity and Culture in Contemporary China			x (other; spec)		x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)
Crime and Criminal Justice: East Asian Perspectives			x (other; spec)		x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)
Democratizing Histories			x (other; spec)		x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)
Developments in the Modern Middle East			x (other; spec)		x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)
Interculturality 1: Key Concepts			x (other; spec)		x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)
Interculturality 2: The Global Imagination			x (other; spec)		x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)
Literature and Politics in the Persian-speaking World			x (other; spec)		x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)
Material Culture, Memory and Commemoration along the Silk Roads in Central Asia			x (other; spec)		x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)
Modern Chinese Literature and Exile			x (other; spec)		x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)
Narratives that Matter: Literature, Film and Television Drama in Turkey			x (other; spec)		x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)
Cultures of Resistance in the Post-colonial World			x (other; spec)		x (other; not spec)		x (other; not spec)
War, Peace and Mass Media: The Arab-Israeli Conflict in the Public Sphere			x (other; spec)		x (other; spec)	x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)
Connecting Dreams: Europe in Africa, Africa in Europe			x (other; spec)		x (other; spec)	x (other; not spec)	x (other; spec)
Contemporary Japan's Economy in Global Economic Crises			x (other; spec)		x (other; spec)	x (other; not spec)	x (other; spec)

Politics of Southeast Asia			x (other; spec)				
Economics of the EU	5	400		x (man)			
EU Law	5	400		x (man)			
EU Seminar		400		x (man)			
History of European Integration	5	400		x (man)			
Institutions of the EU	5	400		x (man)			
Choose three of the following electives: Democracy and legitimacy in the European Union; EU Environmental Policy and Law; EU External Relations; EU Public Affairs & Lobbying; External Economic Relations; Social Europe; Economic and Monetary Union; EU and Energy Policy; Euroscepticism; Justice and Home Affairs; Migration Law and Policy in the EU; Parliaments in the European Union	3 x 5	500		x (man)			
Core Course Global Conflict in the Modern Era	10	500			x (man)		
Politics of Culture in Southeast Asia					x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)	x (other; not spec)
Themes in Arabic Literature: Bandits and Outlaws, Fact and Fiction					x (other; not spec)	x (other; spec)	x (other; not spec)
China and Global Cyberspace					x (other; spec)	x (other; not spec)	x (other; spec)
Core Course Global Order in Historical Perspective	10	500				x (man)	
Core Course Global Political Economy	10	500					x (man)

Abbreviations:

man = mandatory

MAIR = organised by MA International Relations

other = other

spec = specialisation related

not spec = not specialisation related



APPENDIX 3: PROGRAMME OF THE SITE VISIT

Location: Faculty Club, Leiden University

Day 1 – 17 October 2019

08.30 – 08.45 Welcome
08.45 – 10.00 Document study and ‘open spreekuur’
10.00 – 10.45 Board History
10.45 – 11.00 Break
11.00 – 11.45 Students History (BA+MA)
11.45 – 12.30 Staff History (BA+MA)
12.30 – 13.15 Lunch Break
13.15 – 14.00 Board International Relations
14.00 – 14.45 Students International Relations
14.45 – 15.00 Break
15.00 – 15.45 Staff members International Relations
15.45 – 17.30 Deliberations, documentation review
17.30 – 18.00 Alumni History and International Relations

Day 2 – 18 October 2019

08.30 – 10.00 Arrival and preparation
10.00 – 10.45 Board of Examiners History
10.45 – 11.00 Break
11.00 – 11.45 Board of Examiners International Relations
11.45 – 12.30 Deliberation
12.30 – 13.00 Lunch
13.00 – 14.00 Final discussion with programme and faculty management
14.00 – 14.15 Break
14.15 – 15.45 Deliberations
15.45 – 16.30 Development Dialogue (two parallel sessions)
16.00 – 17.00 Presentation Findings

APPENDIX 4: THESES AND DOCUMENTS STUDIED BY THE PANEL

Prior to the site visit, the panel studied 19 theses of the master's programme International Relations. Information on the selected theses is available from QANU upon request.

During the site visit, the panel studied, among other things, the following documents (partly as hard copies, partly via the institute's electronic learning environment):

- Programme metrics (*Opleidingskaart*)
- Course and Examination Regulations of Master's programme: International Relations (2018-2019)
- Assessment plans
- Assessment forms MA theses
- Thesis evaluations
- Rules and Regulations of the Board of Examiners
- *Vision on Teaching & Learning@LeidenUniversity*
- Regulations for internships as part of Master's and Research Master's programmes
- Towards a Humanities-based International Relations (HBIR)
- Visitation folder:
 - Course material and course descriptions
 - Annual reports MA International Relations 2015-2018
 - Annual reports Board of Examiners 2015-2018
 - Minutes Programme Committee 2015-2018
 - Factsheets Nationale Studenten Enquête 2018
 - ICLON course evaluations
 - ICLON programme evaluations 2019
- Manuals:
 - Guide to Teaching Quality Assurance
 - 'Tips for Tests'
 - Manual for Board of Examiners
 - Quality Assurance of Assessment
 - Manual for Programme Committees
- Brochures:
 - *Transferable skills at the Faculty of Humanities*
 - *Your Future – From university to a career*
 - *Humanities Master's Buddy Programme*
- Books:
 - Marc Trachtenberg, *The Craft of International History*
 - Wim van Meurs Et Al, *The Unfinished History of European Integration*
 - Chris Hart, *Doing a Literature Review*
 - Tim Dunne et al, *International Relations Theories*
- Online:
 - Blackboard
 - Website Study Association ISSA
 - Youtube promo Universiteit Leiden

The link to the e-Prospectus of the MA International Relations:

- [Culture and Politics](#)
- [European Union Studies](#)
- [Global Conflict in the Modern Era](#)
- [Global Order in Historical Perspective](#)
- [Global Political Economy](#)

