

**Wo-master of Advanced Studies in Public International Law
Universiteit Leiden**

Report of the panel for re-accreditation

March 2012

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Preface

From November 16th up to and including November 18th, 2011 a panel visited the Leiden University in the process of the limited programme assessment of the following four advanced master programmes offered by the Leiden Law Faculty:

- Advanced Studies in European and International Business Law (EIBL);
- Advanced Studies in Public International Law (PIL);
- Advanced Studies in International Tax Law (ITL);
- Advanced Studies in Air and Space Law (ASL).

For each of the programmes a separate report has been drafted. This report concerns the Public International Law programme.

This report has been drafted by the secretary, and has, after approval by the panel members, been submitted to the Leiden University for verification. This has led to some factual corrections in the report. Thereupon the final version of the report has been drafted by the secretary and chairman of the panel.



Prof. Friedl Weiss
Chairman



Drs. Carlo Hover
Secretary

0 Summary

Leiden University offers four advanced master programmes in International Law. These have been jointly visited by an assessment panel as part of the re-accreditation process. The findings with regard to the *Public International Law* programme are summarized below. This programme (60 ECTS) is offered in a full-time and part-time variant.

Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes

There is a relevant set of eight learning outcomes concerning knowledge, research abilities, presentation of knowledge, application of knowledge, working environment, ICT-skills and keeping up knowledge. The orientation is primarily professional, but students are also being prepared for academic research. Students obtain the capacity to thoroughly analyse and interpret legal sources, literature and complex cases; to carry out independent research and formulate an independent opinion on international legal questions, and to develop and formulate appropriate solutions to complex legal problems, based on the norms, practices and methods of the respective field.

The learning outcomes are academically robust and clearly aim at a master's level and above. Looked at from an international perspective, the programme has a specific and sufficiently distinctive position in terms of learning outcomes, level, content and method of delivery. Professional orientation is explicitly incorporated in the learning outcomes as well as in the academic skills and attitudes and research abilities. The needs of agencies, institutions and organisations in the field are met with.

The panel judges the programme with regard to standard 1 as excellent.

Standard 2. Teaching and learning environment

The programme combines in-depth coverage of general international law and its specialised fields with specialised knowledge in two areas of specialisation: International Criminal Law (ICL) and Peace, Justice and Development (PJD). The programme is divided in 7 foundation courses for all students and 4 specialisation courses for ICL and PJD respectively.

The programme familiarises students with the practices and working methods of the field, enabling them to work in a variety of contexts. It provides students not only with profound substantive knowledge and legal skills required to understand and apply the law, but with the ability to find creative solutions to problems, solve disputes or adjust to new environments. Parallel to the courses there are a number of assignments, including the moot court cases and a number of case law preparations. Research methodologies are offered from early on in the.

The programme makes use of an interactive classroom culture, Socratic teaching, and a problem-based approach to require students to reflect critically on the law studied, on the basis of problem scenarios from legal practice, regulatory dilemmas and choices, and review of the case law and jurisprudence of different courts and dispute settlement bodies, including their synergies, differences and interaction. A tutor system facilitates small group learning.

Engagement with the professional field is ensured by the working experience of the teaching staff and their large network, input from guest lecturers from the professional field and through various field trips.

The programme strives for international excellence and is highly selective. The main selection criterion is the academic record of applicants, most notably the reputation and content of prior academic education in combination with the grades achieved for the qualifying law degree. Additional criteria are the student's motivation and capacity to engage in advanced-level academic study.

The panel is impressed by the quality of the staff, the structure and coherence of the programme, the students' facilities and support structure and also by the commitment of the students. All this makes for a dynamic and highly productive teaching and learning environment; this is also the case for the blended learning variant.

The panel judges the teaching and learning environment as excellent.

Standard 3. Assessment and learning outcomes

The assessment method for each of the programme's courses is established in advance and indicated clearly in the course descriptions. Within courses, the weighting of the final grade is established according to the percentages indicated for each assessed component. Within the programme as a whole, the courses are weighted on the basis of their ECTS value. This is transparent for students

The directors of the four programmes, together with the Dean, form a 'Quality Assurance Standing Committee'. Through regular reviews of course evaluations, student exit reports, cross-examination of papers, jointly agreed assessment forms and cross-reviewing of theses, it is ensured that the quality and level across all four programmes remains at a consistent, and high level.

The thesis must treat a substantive issue of international law. It is supposed to investigate and present new and innovative findings, and should be of publishable quality. Each thesis is graded by the thesis supervisor and the thesis along with the written findings of the supervisor and the grade are submitted to the programme coordinator. Thesis grading is done on the basis of a common procedure and grading sheet for all four Advanced Studies programmes.

The panel is very impressed by the quality of the theses and can agree with the (generally high) grades that are awarded. Therefore the panel judges the programme with regard to standard 3 as excellent.

Conclusion and recommendations

The programme is, in terms of learning outcomes, curriculum, staff and theses produced by the students, certainly of an advanced nature in comparison to regular masters' programmes. The panel wants to stress that the quality (control) of the programmes is, to a substantial degree assured by the formal cooperation between the four advanced studies. For a single programme this would be difficult to achieve (and to maintain).

The panel feels that there is some room for further improvement of the already strong coherence in profile between the four programmes and formulates a number of recommendations in this respect.

1 Introduction

In this report, the panel for the re-accreditation of the *Advanced Studies in Public and International Law* (PIL) presents its findings, based on the study of documents, theses and a site visit in November 2011. The initial accreditation decision by the NVAO dates from May 2007. Two of the current panel members (F. Weiss and J. Tiley) were also members of the panel for the initial accreditation (site visit December 2006).

1.1 Site visit

From November 16th up to and including November 18th, 2011 a panel visited the Leiden University in the process of the limited programme assessment of the following four advanced master programmes offered by the Leiden Law Faculty:

- Advanced Studies in European and International Business Law (EIBL);
- Advanced Studies in Public International Law (PIL);
- Advanced Studies in International Tax Law (ITL);
- Advanced Studies in Air and Space Law (ASL).

A clustered visitation was possible given many similarities between the programmes in terms of generic learning outcomes, orientation, level, entry requirements, programme structure, assessment system, and support structure and student facilities.

The composition of the panel was as follows:

- Professor Friedl Weiss, chairman
- Professor Anna Masutti, member
- Professor John Tiley, member
- Asja Hegeman LL.M., member
- Drs. Carlo Hover, panel secretary

The panel composition is in compliance with the requirements stated in paragraph 3.3 of the NVAO Assessment frameworks for the higher education accreditation system (December 2010). All panel members have signed a declaration of independence and confidentiality. See appendix 7.1 for more information about the panel and appendix 7.3 for the schedule of the site visit.

1.2 Content and structure of the report

The report closely follows the requirements as formulated in paragraph 3.4.4 of the *NVAO Assessment frameworks for the higher education accreditation system* (December 2010). The report is structured on the basis of the three standards that constitute the basis of the assessment framework.

1.3 Process of the programme assessment

In preparation for the site visit, the panel members have studied the critical reflection and the appendixes of the four programmes in conformity with paragraphs 3.6.1 and 3.6.2 of the NVAO Assessment.

The panel members also assessed prior to the site visit a number of theses; see appendix 7.4 for the list.

On the evening before the site visit, the panel had a preparatory meeting. In this meeting the panel members exchanged their general impressions of the programmes, discussed the quality of the theses and their grading and made an inventory of questions and discussion points for the various meetings.

During the site visit, the panel has spoken with the programme directors, the programme managers, teachers, students, alumni and representatives of the respective professional fields. The schedule for the meetings was established in collaboration with the support staff of the programmes. The panel has set aside time for open consultations, which was, at the panel's request communicated to students and staff of the four programmes. Nobody has presented himself for discussion with the panel during the open consultation hour or otherwise. During the site visit the panel studied additional documents (theses, course material, exams, and quality assurance reports) in compliance with paragraph 3.6.3 of the NVAO Assessment frameworks.

In judging the various standards and in formulating the final conclusion the panel closely followed paragraph 8 and 9 of the NVAO Assessment frameworks as well as the *NVAO Guideline for the assessment of final projects* (July 2011).

The panel greatly appreciates the support provided by management and staff of the programmes. Additional information that was needed by the panel was promptly delivered. The discussion in the various meetings had a very open character.

1.4 Description of the programme

Country

The Netherlands

Institution

Universiteit Leiden

Title of the programme (as registered in CROHO)

Master Advanced Studies in Public International Law

Registration number in CROHO

75025

Orientation and level of the programme

Academic Master's programme ['post-initial' master]

Number of ECTS

60

Degree

Master of Laws (LL.M.) in Public International Law

Location

Leiden
Den Haag

Variations in which the programme is offered

Full-time (one academic year) and part-time (two academic years)

Working language

English

Funding

The institution is a public organisation funded by the Dutch government. However, the Master of Laws in Advanced Studies programmes are so-called ‘non-funded’ programmes. No government funding is received and therefore the tuition fees – set at the same level irrespective of nationality – cover the full programme costs. The tuition fee in the academic year 2010-2011 amounted to € 14.200.

1.5 Institutional profile

Leiden University is an international research university, offering 49 bachelor's programmes and 95 master's programmes to 18.000 students; there are about of 4.000 staff members. The University has seven faculties, of which the Leiden Law School is one. The Leiden Law School offers 4 bachelor's programmes, 4 ‘regular’ master's programmes (plus 9 specialisations) and 4 ‘advanced’ master’s programmes to about 4.250 thousand students.

Leiden University has opted to concentrate its research activities in 11 research profile areas that transcend the traditional boundaries between specialist fields and faculties. These research profile areas offer opportunities for top-level fundamental research, but also reflect key areas of debate in contemporary society. The aim in focusing on these themes is to increase the visibility of crucial research areas, as well as to enhance the cohesion of these areas.

Teaching at Leiden University is closely integrated with research. The University wants students to develop into responsible academics, fully aware of the ethical consequences of academic research and innovation, and of their conduct in society.

1.6 Programme profile

The Master of Laws programme in Advanced Studies in Public International Law is an advanced level postgraduate programme in the field of Public International Law that combines training in the theoretical aspects of Public International Law and its specialised fields with practical professional skills. It is designed for students who wish to pursue a career in international organisations, governmental institutions, internationally operating law firms, non-governmental organisations, or within an academic setting.

The programme addresses the growing diversification and impact of public international law

on regulation, adjudication and dispute settlement in a decentralised global legal order.

The programme combines in-depth coverage of general international law and its specialised fields (e.g., International Institutional Law, International Dispute Settlement, International Human Rights, International Humanitarian Law) with specialised knowledge in two areas of specialisation which have seen rapid growth and transformation in the past decades: International Criminal Law (ICL) and Peace, Justice and Development (PJD).

The ICL specialisation places particular emphasis on the law and procedure of international criminal courts and tribunals (e.g., International Criminal Court, ad hoc tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, hybrid courts) and legal skills required to practice in this field (e.g., advocacy and litigation). The PJD specialisation focuses on international peace and security, and its nexus to global justice, rule of law and sustainable development. Both specialisations are preceded by some common core courses and integrated by a final course on United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping which applies the knowledge acquired in the context of collective security and UN peace operations.

The market for positions in this field (e.g. as legal advisor, judicial clerk, policy officer or lecturer) is highly competitive. The programme is designed to provide an advanced and solid academic education (knowledge, transferable skills and critical approach), and to build bridges to legal practice. The programme aims to attract highly talented (international) students and to demonstrate excellence in terms of admission requirements, programme content, students' academic skills and learning outcomes, in order to facilitate a successful transition to the professional arena. It provides unique access to, and direct insights from legal practice, through its partial delivery in The Hague, the "City of Peace and Justice", and its proximity to the expertise, practice and infrastructure of relevant international institutions.

The programme takes one full academic year for full time students (two for part-time students), from September until the end of August, and the programme's core structure comprises nine (compulsory) courses and a final thesis.

Distinctive features of the programme are its highly focused curriculum, its level of specialisation, the level of expertise and teaching, and the added value of its location which allows students to benefit from the academic environment of Leiden University, and the professional setting of international institutions in The Hague.

1.7 Enrolment and graduation rates

Table 1 shows the number of applicants and graduates of the PIL programme from the academic year 2007/08 until 2010/11.

Table 1. Enrolment and graduation rates

Enrolment characteristics	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	Progression	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11
No. of Students *	22	18	33	42	Completed in allocated time	22	17	32	36
No. of Nationalities	12	13	19	24	Cum laude awards	4	5	3	5
Tuition Fee €	12.900	13.750	13.750	14.200	Average grade	7.56	7.75	7.62	7.52
Male	6	8	12	12	Extended Study Time	0	1	1	1
Female	16	10	21	30	Withdrawn	0	0	0	0
Full Time	22	17	32	38	Transferred	0	0	0	0
Part Time	0	1	1	3	Failed programme	0	0	0	0

** This figure includes part-time students, and students from Georgetown University. Part-time students are listed in each of the (two) academic years they are enrolled on the programme.*

1.8 Ambitions

In the critical reflections the four programmes mention their, partly collective, ambitions. During the site visit the panel discussed these also with the Law School Board. The Leiden Law School views the four advanced master's programmes as its flagship programmes: "they are our business card". The School wishes to expand the opportunities for students to take such courses at Leiden but has rejected the idea of doing so by admitting more students to each of the current programmes. Given the number of applicants, that would appear to be a feasible option but this would be to the detriment of the small-scale and interactive character of the programmes. Moreover it would be improbable to hire sufficient suitable staff. Expansion will therefore be sought by offering new advanced master's programmes for the international student market.

The current programmes will be limited to a maximum of 40 – 45 students and will keep their selective character.

In light of the competitive market, the Programme Board has decided to deepen the substantive focus of the programme, aiming to strengthen the PJD specialisation of the programme by incorporating a transitional justice component. The ICL specialisation track, will seek to intensify the international criminal law and human rights dimensions. Furthermore, the skills training elements of the programme will be enhanced. This enhanced focus on specialisations and on professional skills development will assist in providing even greater differentiation between the Regular and Advanced LL.M. programme offered in Leiden.

The programme seeks also to further expand scholarship options for top candidates to enter the programme. This would allow maintaining a diverse student composition and to admit

students originating from less developed countries to our programme. In particular the programme wishes to attract more top students from the African continent so as to ensure academic class discussions in which manifold perspectives on the law and its application are presented.

2 Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes

The intended learning outcomes of the programme have been concretised with regard to content, level and orientation; they meet international requirements.

As for level and orientation (bachelor's or master's; professional or academic), the intended learning outcomes fit into the Dutch qualifications framework. In addition, they tie in with the international perspective of the requirements currently set by the professional field and the discipline with regard to the contents of the programme.

2.1 Findings

Subject specific frame of reference

With reference to all academic law degrees in the Netherlands, a joint 'subject specific reference framework' was drawn up in 2009, by the Discipline Committee for Law, of the Association of Research Universities in the Netherlands. It concerns a joint framework of subject specific requirements for bachelor and master's degrees in Law. According to this framework, an academic law programme needs to provide insight into the key features of the law: its role in society; key concepts; the primary legal fields and their interconnectivity; the boundaries of the law, as well as its relativity from a multidisciplinary point of view. Law is considered as part of a European, international and comparative context.

The programme objectives have been set in line with this orientation.

The programme is designed to provide an advanced and solid academic education (knowledge, transferable skills and critical approach), and to build bridges to legal practice. The programme aims to attract highly talented (international) students and to demonstrate excellence in terms of admission requirements, programme content, students' academic skills and learning outcomes, in order to facilitate a successful transition to the professional arena.

Level and orientation

The intended learning outcomes of the programme have remained stable since the initial NVAO accreditation in 2007.

In all, there are eight learning outcomes. These concern knowledge (basic, overarching and specialist knowledge), research abilities, presentation of knowledge, application of knowledge, working environment, ICT-skills and keeping up knowledge.

For illustrative purposes the panel quotes learning outcome number 3, 'specialist knowledge':

“The graduate is capable of researching legal questions in general Public Law, its specialised fields and, as appropriate, ICL or PJD, by formulating coherent and concise problem statements, collecting and analysing data, judging its validity and relevance through thorough analysis and interpretation of legal sources, literature, and complex case. He/she is capable of posing critical questions, formulating an independent opinion on legal questions, and drawing well-founded conclusions. He/she is able to provide innovative solutions to challenges in general Public International Law, and to make recommendations and suggestions for further research.”

The orientation is primarily professional, but students are also being prepared for academic research. The programme aims at striking a balance between general knowledge and theory in Public International Law (including its sources, subjects and principles) and its application in specialised fields. Students obtain the capacity to thoroughly analyse and interpret legal sources, literature and complex cases; to carry out independent research and formulate an independent opinion on international legal questions, and to develop and formulate appropriate solutions to complex legal problems, based on the norms, practices and methods of the respective field. The academic knowledge and skills obtained, including the capacity to apply adequate legal scientific research methods and tools, and the ability to present results (individually or as a group), prepare students for further academic research and continued learning (i.e., self-learning, life-long learning) in the framework of advanced professional settings.

The programme is presented as an ‘an advanced level postgraduate programme’ in comparison with the ‘regular’ LL.M programmes. In the critical reflection this is made explicit in the following way.

“The LL.M. Advanced Studies programmes differ from regular LL.M. programmes both in their level of teaching and learning. The Advanced Studies programmes are specifically designed for excellent students with legal experience and for qualified lawyers who wish to enhance their career prospects. Regular LL.M. programmes are the final part of the standard Dutch law curriculum, and form a required programme for Dutch students wishing to gain the right to enter legal practice in the Netherlands. The regular programmes the Leiden Law School offers are also accessible for international students (and attract many), and are aimed at those participating directly after completing a bachelor’s programme in Law.

In terms of level of study, the Advanced Studies programmes are substantially more in-depth and demanding. In just one academic year they offer a thorough and focused education on a specific area of legal expertise. Advanced Studies students benefit from teaching based on the Socratic Method, as well as both a practical and theoretical approach to the subject area. The Advanced Studies programmes are not in the first place research programmes. Whilst they are an excellent vehicle for the further development of research skills and as such also offer entry into PhD research, the programmes are first and foremost professional in their orientation. They cater exclusively for a group of students who benefit from close contact with their professors and with expert practitioners from the relevant legal field. There are very few universities that offer LL.M. programmes at this level.”

The learning outcomes for the full-time and the part-time programme are identical.

International perspective

In the absence of internationally accepted standards with regard to the required qualifications, aims and objectives of degree courses at a postgraduate level in the domain of Public International Law, ICL or PJD, the learning outcomes have been set based on the academic and professional judgement of the programme staff on the basis of on-going assessments of programmes in the academic field and input from professional field (e.g. prospective employers).

The critical reflection contains a comparative analysis of existing LL.M. programmes in the area of European and/or international business law, both within The Netherlands as within other countries.

Requirements set by professionals and discipline

The programme, although academically rigorous, is professional in its orientation. A key element in the programme's learning outcomes is the application of acquired knowledge, research and practical skills, at an advanced level, in the professional arena.

2.2 Considerations

Subject specific frame of reference

The panel has no doubt that the programme complies with, if not exceeds national or international standards, if any, for an LL.M programme.

Level and orientation

On the basis of the documents studied and the discussions in the various meetings, it has become clear that the programme has a very strong professional orientation, while maintaining academic standards. The learning outcomes clearly reflect this and the profile is recognized and appreciated by the students, as became evident in the meeting with students and alumni. The panel can confirm that relevant international institutions and research institutions have a need for graduates with this kind of orientation and with these qualifications. This was also confirmed in the meeting with representatives from the professional field.

The learning outcomes convincingly comply with the Dublin descriptors (master level). These refer to Knowledge and understanding, Application of knowledge and understanding, Judgement formulation, Communication and Learning skills. These are all evident from the learning outcomes.

The panel has no doubt about the master level of the learning outcomes of the programme. The panel has however given much attention to the 'advanced' nature of programme. This arises not only with Standard 1 (learning outcomes), but also with Standard 2 (content, curriculum, entry requirements) and with Standard 3 (thesis requirements). Because of the relatedness of these aspects and the importance of clarity about the level of the programme, the panel treats this issue here at some length and also with regard to the other two standards (to avoid repetition).

Despite the evident quality, also in terms of level of the programme on the basis of the various documents, at the start of the site visit the exact nature of the 'advanced level' was not entirely clear to the panel. In the meetings with director and coordinator of the programme, teaching staff and students and alumni, this has been given a lot of attention. Interestingly, it was students and alumni that shed most light on the matter.

The panel understands that the 'advanced' character of the programme consists of three elements.

Firstly the end qualifications build upon the completion of a full law degree that offers entry to legal practice in the country in which it was obtained. Depending on the regulations in the country of origin, this can imply that candidates already have obtained a master's degree. Furthermore the learning outcomes (and their operationalization in terms of level and content) clearly set high demands for both application of knowledge and understanding at a high professional level and for research capabilities necessary for further academic study. Even though the orientation is primarily professional, the specialist knowledge that is being applied and the quality of the research that students learn to use are of high academic standard. According to the panel, the programme distinguishes itself in this respect from most existing, comparable programmes.

Secondly (and the panel will further illustrate this while discussing Standard 2) the programme content (e.g. the number of level 600 courses; see footnote 1), structure and delivery modes meet standards that surpass those of 'regular' (i.e. government funded) master programmes in The Netherlands. The quality of the teaching staff is outstanding; the intensity of the education is very high as are the demands in terms of learning outcomes of the various courses and of the thesis.

Thirdly, the set of entry requirements, and the admittance procedure contribute to creating a highly qualified, highly motivated and – in terms of relevant background and credentials – mixed learning group in which, as one of the students stated 'people rise to the occasion'. The panel will elaborate on this in Standard 2.

Solely on the basis of the textual formulation of the learning outcomes it is perhaps not possible to firmly establish the 'advanced' character of the level of the programme, which is also caused by the fact that internationally accepted descriptions are lacking.

Students and alumni who participated in the meeting with the panel all stressed that the programme offers more depth and high-level interaction, for instance compared with other master's programmes they have followed. They related this to study load, the depth reached in interactive discussions in class and with the staff, and to the way they learned to read cases and to practice case law in for instance the moot courts. One of the alumni compared the programme in terms of level and quality with an honours programme and this seems to be not far off the mark.

As the NVAO assessment frameworks stresses the importance of weighted and integrated judgements, the panel can confidently state the level of the programme is indeed of an advanced level in comparison with 'regular' LL.M programmes.

The programme in national and international perspective

The documents provided compare the programme with related programmes in The Netherlands, Europe and the rest of the world. The comparison makes it clear that the programme has a specific position in terms of learning outcomes, level, content and method of delivery.

The programme has, given title and content alone, definitively an international orientation. The learning outcomes also explicitly specify this.

The documents provided further contain a positioning of the programme vis-a-vis international programmes in and outside Europe. The panel considers the international positioning of the programme as relevant. Compared to related programmes offered within the international academic community, the PIL programme definitively has something to add both for the professional and the academic domains. The profile is also sufficiently distinctive.

An important asset is the close integration with international institutions in The Hague and its link to practice. Jointly, the Leiden Law School and the Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies, host one of the largest communities of scholars and practitioners with expertise in public international law, even on a European or international scale. A large number of the lecturers who teach on the programme are practitioners in international institutions and are qualified both as academics and as practitioners of Public International Law. This nexus to experts and institutions enables students to gain first-hand experience and to 'experience' how the law operates in context.

Requirements set by professionals and discipline

The Leiden Law School is situated in the proximity of various relevant international organisations. The relevance of the programme is evident. The representatives from the professional field have attested to this.

2.3 Judgement

That the programme meets the requirements of an academic master level, conform the standards of the NVAO assessment frameworks, is evident to the panel. There are however no established standards to assess an advanced master level. Given the formulation of the learning outcomes, the explanation of the notion of 'advanced' master's programme in the documentation and the statements of students and alumni, the panel is satisfied that the programme aims for learning outcomes above the regular master's level.

Therefore the panel judges the programme with regard to standard 1 as excellent.

3 Standard 2. Teaching-learning environment

The curriculum, staff and programme-specific services and facilities enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

The contents and structure of the curriculum enable the students admitted to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The quality of the staff and of the programme-specific services and facilities is essential to that end. Curriculum, staff, services and facilities constitute a coherent teaching-learning environment for the students.

3.1 Findings

The programme of the part-time variant is identical to that of the full-time variant. The only difference between the two programmes is the duration: one versus two academic years. Part-time students participate in the classes of the full-time students. There is no separate grouping of full-time and part-time students; they follow the same (daytime) courses, but spread over a longer period. Also the facilities offered to the students are exactly the same.

The number of part-time students is small; 3 of a total of 42 students (2010-2011).

In all, there are 260 contact hours and the student staff ratio is 9.13.

Curriculum

The programme is designed to familiarise students with the practices and working methods of the field, and to enable them to work in a variety of contexts. The programme provides students not only with profound substantive knowledge and legal skills required to understand and apply the law, but with the ability to find creative solutions to problems, solve disputes or adjust to new environments. Skills, such as independent learning, peer-learning and the ability to work in a team which are essential in professional legal practice, form an important part of activities. This is reflected in the learning environment.

The total programme takes one full academic year from September, and comprises courses and seminars, and a final thesis. All courses, except the first course (Capita Selecta: Public International Law) have a level of 600 (the first course has a level of 500).¹

The programme is structured in a way that allows students to acquire foundational knowledge, in connection with related specialised fields in the first semester. This general knowledge-base and skills-set allows students to develop their research and legal skills in the second semester, and to make an informed choice on the selection of their respective specialisation. At the end of the second semester, the respective specialisations are integrated

¹ The Leiden register of courses provides the following definitions. Level-500 implies that courses have an academic orientation and cover advanced literature. Tests and or independent research, in which students evaluate the studied materials critically and in an independent way. The 600-level courses are highly specialized. They are based on the analysis of recent academic articles, recent advances in academic thinking on a topic and require an independent contribution by students to a problem that is not yet resolved, as well as an oral presentation.

by the final *privatissimum*² on UN Peacekeeping which brings together the entire class, and rounded up by the final thesis. UN peacekeeping serves as an integrating theme, in which knowledge, skills and competencies of both specialisations are taken into account.

During the first semester, the programme puts a clear focus on integrated coverage of general public international law, and related specialised fields. At the beginning of the second semester, students choose their area of specialisation, i.e. either ICL or PJD. Courses in the second semester enable students to deepen their specialist knowledge in particular areas (International Human Rights, International Humanitarian Law), including their area of specialisation, and to develop an integrated understanding of the interaction between peace, justice and international law, and to further refine their research and professional skills.

The programme is divided in 7 foundation courses (Capita Selecta; International Institutional law; International Dispute Settlement; International Criminal law; International Humanitarian Law; International Protection of Human Rights; United Nations: Peacekeeping) and 4 specialisation courses (PJD: International relations and Internationals Economic Law and Sustainable Development; ICL: Advanced International Criminal Law and International Criminal Litigation). All foundation courses are compulsory as are the courses in the chosen field of specialisation.

Thesis writing takes place in July and August, although the research process begins earlier; students are encouraged to give thought to their thesis topics and begin research for them as early as around the middle of the first semester.

Parallel to the courses there are a number of assignments, including the moot court cases (first semester) and a number of case law preparations (first and second semester). Participation in Moot Court competitions is encouraged. Research methodologies are offered early on in the curriculum and developed further in each course through a number of assignments, culminating in the supervised writing of the thesis.

Approach to teaching and learning

The learning and teaching methods are specifically targeted towards long-term, problem-based and peer-learning.

Students are prepared from the start to understand that learning within the programme is not only geared towards short-term goals (i.e. success in a specific course or exam), but part of a process of self-learning and ‘life-long’ learning. Through the use of an interactive classroom culture, Socratic teaching, and problem-oriented reading, students are trained to ‘ask the right questions’ and to acquire the capacity to teach themselves.

Both the teaching curriculum and learning are problem-based. From the start, students are asked to reflect critically on the law studied, on the basis of problem scenarios from legal practice, regulatory dilemmas and choices, and review of the case law and jurisprudence of different courts and dispute settlement bodies, including their synergies, differences and

² A *Privatissimum* is a more academically oriented practical where one (not too limited) subject is studied in a group from all sides, including in a context of Comparative Law. Its focus is on writing papers and presenting research results, followed by a discussion. Assessment is based on the oral and written contributions.

interaction. In courses, students are trained not just to learn facts, concepts and theories about international law, but also to apply them in real cases and practical settings, and to identify the most appropriate method to solve the problem at hand. This problem-based approach is practiced in class assignments, discussions and smaller papers or exercises (e.g. student presentations in class, blog entries). In assignments, students are encouraged to develop their skills in writing, analysis and cooperation in teams.

Structured self-study is an integral and essential part of all courses. Through the course syllabus as well as in class, detailed requirements and instructions for every seminar are provided, and students are expected to attend classes thoroughly prepared, allowing for interactive and high-level academic teaching. Unusual for the Dutch academic system, class attendance is mandatory.

With rising student numbers, the programme has instituted a tutor system in 2010 to facilitate small group learning. Each student is assigned to a tutor (i.e. an academic staff member) who provides individual advice and counselling, in consultation with the student. In case of high student numbers, individual courses are exceptionally divided into smaller groups, in order to maintain an interactive learning environment

Work in the international legal profession requires managerial skills, the ability to work in a team and the ability to learn from 'peers'. The programme prepares students for this in different ways:

- Moot courts are an important element of the extracurricular activities and are also included in specific courses. Students have to organise themselves in groups, divide and coordinate roles and responsibilities, and manage submissions and oral pleadings. This experience trains students how to work effectively as a team and deal with diverse skills, backgrounds and cultures.
- Group presentations are part of the curriculum and assignments. They are held as part of teaching in specific classes (e.g. *Privatissimum*) or as part of the assessment (e.g., *International Criminal Litigation*).
- Peer-learning forms part of the teaching methodology. Students learn from each other in class through use of the Socratic method and group exercises. Peer-learning is furthermore part of thesis research meetings. The programme encourages additional 'student-initiated' discussion forums after class, by providing use of facilities.

Before the start of the programme, applicants are provided with recommended reading materials to catch up on deficiencies, if necessary. Throughout the year, progress of students is monitored on an individual basis.

As of the first semester, the teaching methods and forms of assessment are aimed at developing student's skills in writing, analysis and communication. Early on in the first semester, therefore, the coursework includes written and oral assignments next to traditional written exams. These include preparing legal advice, motions and briefs, and presentations - individually as well as in group work. In the context of the general course on ICL, students prepare briefs and argue a Moot Court case in small groups before a mock bench, composed of fellow students, instructors and professionals, involving sometimes 'real' international judges.

In the framework of the specialisations, the intensity and interactivity of teaching is enhanced by the small size of the groups (i.e. typically seminar-size). The scope and level of research and skills training is increased incrementally, building on the knowledge and skills acquired in the first semester.

In May, the programme organises a collective, one week trip to Geneva (non compulsory), which involves visits of the UN Headquarters, expert or treaty bodies and other institutions. Institutional visits to other institutions are organised in the context of specific courses (e.g., ICC, the Netherlands Defence Academy or Brussels institutions). Students are further actively encouraged to take part in academic activities outside the formal curriculum, such as Moot Court competitions, conferences and workshops, internships and the Leiden Journal of International Law and the Criminal Law Forum.

In the context of the ICL specialisation, students are specifically trained in criminal procedure as well as advocacy and cross-examination. Classes involve real life assignments from practice. Students are asked to write, argue and defend motions individually or in a team before practicing lawyers or litigation specialists. This training is designed to prepare participants for practice in the field, and was developed in line with requests by students.

In the PJD specialisation, students are exposed to the political and socio-economic context in which international law operates. Intensive class debates on core dilemmas of international law and global justice are complemented by site visits.

Through focused research assignments, students are trained to accommodate contextual arguments, policy dimensions and perspectives from multiple disciplines successfully in advice and academic writing.

Engagement with the professional field

The programme incorporates and encourages active engagement with the professional field in a number of ways in order to facilitate a successful transition to the professional world. The programme encompasses an ‘experiential’ dimension. Students are encouraged to integrate the practice and environment of The Hague into their studies. Contacts with professionals, exposure to real life problems and extracurricular activities are an important part of this process. Students are, for instance, actively encouraged to complement research (e.g. thesis or papers) by interviews with professionals or experts. Students are further encouraged to follow an internship (i.e. part-time or at the end of the programme).

A great number of the professorial and lecturing staff on the programme either were or still are actively involved in international legal practice, i.e. UN bodies, international courts and tribunals or international organisations. Experts from legal practice are invited to provide specific guest lectures in several courses.

Students themselves bring in a professional component as well. Students joining the programme have typically some or considerable work experience, which has an impact on the level and depth of discussions in class. A further element of professional experience is participation in international Moot Courts, such as the Jessup Competition, the ICC Trial Competition, or the Telders and the Kalshoven Moot Court which involve written submissions and/or oral pleadings to prepare students for international practice.

Internships are not mandatory, but are recommended. Possibilities for internships (and also job postings) arise through international organisations, courts and tribunals, NGOs and legal practitioners who have regular contact with the programme contacts, or through alumni. For example, specific units of the ICTY or the ICC, NGOs and defence counsel request the programme to recommend students for an internship on a regular basis. The job/internship possibilities are usually emailed to the students and placed on the careers section of the Leiden Law School website.

Emphasis on research

Leiden University is a research-intensive university with a strong commitment to high quality research as the main inspiration for teaching. A strong interaction between research and teaching is reflected in several ways.

The selection and appointment of staff, as well as their professional development track incorporates qualified and quantified research and teaching requirements.

The Leiden Law School has a longstanding tradition of research in Public International Law. Particularly through its Department of Public International Law (now: Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies). The Centre has specialised chairs in Public International Law, the Law of International Organisations, International Criminal Law, International Humanitarian Law, Rights of Women and Children and Peace, Law and Security. It also publishes three leading academic journal in the field, namely the Leiden Journal of International Law (LJIL), the Criminal Law Forum (CLF) and the International Organizations Law Review (IOLR).

Staff

Most of the core members of staff teaching on the programme are Professors.

A great number of the professorial and lecturing staff on the programme either were or still are actively involved in international legal practice, i.e. UN bodies, international courts and tribunals or international organisations. Staff members or lecturers currently teaching the courses *Capita Selecta*, International Institutional Law, International Criminal Law, International Humanitarian Law, International Relations, International Economic Law, International Criminal Litigation and UN Peacekeeping have affiliations with legal practice (UN, EU, NATO, ICC) or are practitioners (Foreign Affairs, Civil service, Defence counsel). They integrate this specialised expertise in the course content, choice of readings and delivery.

Experts from legal practice are invited to provide specific guest lectures in several courses.

Programme-specific services and facilities

Part of the courses are taught at the Grotius Centre The Hague, because of the proximity of the various international legal organisations situated in The Hague.

The PIL programme, along with the other Advanced Studies LL.M. programmes at the Leiden Law School, has a dedicated support structure. Recruitment, selection, student and programme support are arranged through the Office for International Education, in close consultation with each of the programmes. A streamlined procedure for admissions,

programme management and quality assurance has been set up and is implemented by programme - and academic coordinators within each of the programmes. The staff involved in this structure has international educational backgrounds and experience, and have a good understanding of international students' needs and requirements.

Furthermore there is a dedicated management and organisational structure supporting all four Advanced Studies LL.M. programmes. The directors of the four programmes, together with the Dean, form the so-called 'Quality Assurance Standing Committee'. In this committee a range of issues surrounding the programmes are being discussed and decided upon, dealing with admissions, programme structure, assessment and evaluation, appeals procedures and any other quality related issues or problems that may arise. The board continually reviews the prevailing rules and regulations, and has recently put in place a structure for cross-reviewing exams and theses, in order to monitor and compare performance and assessment levels across the four programmes.

The Standing Committee is supported by two staff members of the Office for International Education: a dedicated Quality Assurance Manager, who coordinates the organisational and monitoring structure for all four programmes, and the head of the office, who carries responsibility for the Law School's internationalisation policy and activities, including the process of student recruitment and admissions.

Student progress is in the first instance monitored by the course lecturers. Lecturers discuss any concerns regarding student progress and performance with the Programme Coordinator, the Academic Coordinator, or in the second instance, the Programme Director - dependent on the type of issue or problem. More often than not, potential problems are identified before any assessment is undertaken, as in addition to taking attendance, lecturers monitor individual students' input and participation in class. Additional support (e.g. a one-to-one session, additional reading, and pastoral care) may be offered to students who appear to be struggling with specific course components.

During the year, students have access to several libraries, including the Peace Palace Library and the Royal Library in The Hague. Visits of institutions in The Hague, Geneva and Brussels facilitate critical inquiry and streamlining of research questions. Several students are given an opportunity to gain practical insight into academic research and publication. At the beginning of the academic year, students can apply to serve as Assistant Editors on LJIL or CLF. Selected candidates participate actively in the running of the journal, i.e. editorial board meetings, editing, and discussion of submissions, throughout the year. Students are also given an opportunity to be involved in research conferences and events of the Grotius Centre, or the Hague Academic Coalition (e.g. Supranational Criminal Law Lecture Series). Student input ranges from participation and discussion to managerial responsibilities, such as logistical assistance or finalisation of research output (i.e. reports, academic papers).

Possibilities for internships (or job postings, for that matter) arise through international organisations, courts and tribunals, NGOs and legal practitioners who have regular contact with the programme contacts, or through alumni. A useful network of contacts has been built up. For example, specific units of the ICTY or the ICC, NGOs and defence counsel request the program board to recommend the best students for an internship on a regular basis. The

job/internship possibilities are usually emailed to the students and placed on the careers section of the Leiden Law School website.

Incoming students

The programme is particularly geared towards students who have completed their legal studies in their home country, usually at master's level, with sufficient knowledge of Public International Law, or an equivalent degree, or have sufficient professional experience in the field. All applicants are requested to provide documented evidence of relevant experience related to the subject, as part of their application.

The content and orientation of the programme is well-suited to accommodate the needs of different categories of candidates: (i) students with a classical legal background who wish to specialise in public international law; (ii) candidates from a non-classical legal background who seek to facilitate the transition to legal career; and (iii) practitioners who wish to pursue further specialisation and continuing academic education.

The programme strives for international excellence. Entry standards for the programme are high. Admission is increasingly competitive, as more applications are received each year. The main selection criterion is the academic record of applicants, most notably the reputation and content of prior academic education in combination with the grades achieved for the qualifying law degree, as well as any additional practical experience in public international law. Two required letters of recommendation provide the selection committee with helpful additional information. Another essential factor in the advanced level entry for the programme is the entry standard for the level of English, which is set at IELTS 7.0 or equivalent.

Students come from a wide range of countries and educational backgrounds; often from renowned universities, across Europe, North and South America, Asia and Africa. About a quarter of the students have obtained (prestigious) scholarships, based on academic merit; some receive funding from their employers.

The programme has attracted well-qualified applicants with a track record in international law. Over the past years, their student body has regularly included employees of international organisations (e.g., UN, European Space Agency), international courts and tribunals (e.g., ICC, ICTR or Special Tribunal for Lebanon), diplomats, members of domestic ministries or judiciaries (e.g. Foreign Affairs, Justice) or employees of NGOs. Practitioners and experts active in The Hague can combine work with academic development by enrolling as part-time students. The fact that many students bring prior professional or academic experience to the programme shows that the programme is considered to meet the needs and professional requirements of the field. It also allows for a significantly enhanced level of teaching and discussion, including peer learning among students

The intention is to accept no more than 45 students enrolling in the programme each year. During 2010/11 the PIL programme had 42 students, which is the highest number to date.

Admissions are discussed in the Standing Committee, also because students can (and in practice do) apply for more than one of the four advanced master's programmes. It also happens that a student may be advised to apply for a different programme ('regular' or

advanced') than that of his first choice. A 'downgrading' to a regular master's programme is sometimes needed in case of Chinese students when their command of English and their ability to think independently is not of the required level.

3.2 Considerations

Curriculum

On the basis of a table in the documents that provides a description for each course, providing a cross-reference to the learning outcomes and listing also the method(s) of assessment, the panel concludes that the curriculum adequately covers the learning outcomes as treated under Standard 1.

The panel commends the structure and content of the curriculum. The fact that all courses (partly within specializations) are compulsory adds to its coherence and ensures that all students reach a comparable level of insight and understanding of the broad field of Public International.

A programme offering more optional courses could not as easily accomplish that. This may not appeal equally to all students, but is clearly communicated to them in the application process.

The students attested to this in their meeting with the panel. All students are offered the option to attend one course in any of the three other advanced master programmes of the Law Faculty (without charge) to further broaden their horizon and or deepen specific knowledge. The panel considers this as an excellent bonus.

An asset of the programme is the diversity of the student body in terms of countries of origin. This forces the programme to structure the curriculum in such a way that a common ground is build to bring all students at the same level. Courses in the first semester (especially the Capita Selecta course) bring this about.

In comparison to the programme's content and structure at the time of the original accreditation, one course (Principles and Practices of Legal Scholarship) has been abandoned in response to student comments about the usefulness of the courses. The course has been replaced with enhanced support in thesis writing, and detailed guidance on avoiding plagiarism, offered in the form of workshops.

Four courses have been re-named in order to streamline the specializations and take into account developments in the field of international criminal justice. This was also done in response to student comments and following a recommendation from the initial accreditation process.

Two courses were made compulsory for all students because of the inter-relatedness of their respective fields. Integrating these two courses into the general part of the programme would provide a better foundation and knowledge base for the two specialisations.

At the same time, it was decided to focus the content within each specialisation on two mandatory courses, which form the core of the specialisation. This was done in order to streamline the content of the specialisations (e.g. additional skills training), to enhance the

clarity and stability of the curriculum, and to maintain the integrity of the programme in years of reduced student enrolment (e.g. where the size of optional courses might drop below six students). The element of choice within the programme was preserved, by offering students of each specialisation the opportunity to take courses of the other specialisation as additional courses on a voluntary basis.

At the initial accreditation, the then panel has made recommendations with regard to the degree of coherence of the PJD specialisation, the content and function of the 'Capita Selecta' course and the absence of courses that integrate knowledge, skills and competencies. The first recommendation, that was specifically aimed at one course, has been followed by a reorientation of the said course. The Capita Selecta course has been redesigned to focus more on a number of core themes of Public International Law. It is now designed to bring students (given different backgrounds) up to the same level on PIL.

The last recommendation has been met by altering one of the courses.

In the meeting with the students there was a negative comment about the Capita Selecta course but this was made by an alumnus; current students were much less critical, probably reflecting that the programme has in the meantime been changed. The panel therefore concludes that all of the recommendations have been accepted and followed up.

The panel has established that the curriculum is, in terms of content up to date. The changes with regard to content and structure of the programme are well grounded. The panel has browsed course material during the site visit and concludes that relevant and up to date books and other sources are being used.

Approach to teaching and learning

It is a very intense programme, requiring hard work and active participation in an interactive setting. As became evident in the meeting with students and alumni, they appreciate this and praise the problem-based learning, the assignments, the Moot Court and above all the direct interaction and the approachability of the professors.

The panel has raised questions about the amount of oral presentations, as that is an important and relevant professional skill. In the meeting with the students it turned out that alumni mentioned a lack of oral presentations, while students mentioned that this was now part of the didactics of the programme. In the meeting with the staff, it was said that oral presentations and role playing are getting more attention. At the moment this type of activity is not separately graded, but the Programme Board has already decided that that will be the case. The panel wishes to stress the importance of these competencies and the necessity to include them in the overall assessment.

The programme is now paying more attention to the importance of oral presentations. From the discussion with students it became evident that this already has been improved. Besides oral presentations, some courses use role-playing. Plans exist to make oral presentations more an integral part of the grading. The panel supports that intention.

Given that the number of students that withdraw, or are transferred to another programme, or need extended study time or fail the programme is very small (or even zero), the panel concludes that the approach to teaching and learning is an effective one.

Staff

The majority of the staff members are (assistant) professor. Guest lecturers are chosen for the expertise in relevant professional fields and less on the basis of formal academic merit.

On the basis of their CV's, and based on the impressions gained in the meeting with the staff, the panel concludes that they are well up to their task. The panel regards the teaching staff as leading scholars and/or professionals in the field. The very positive remarks of students about the quality and dedication of the teaching staff is also relevant in this respect.

Programme-specific services and facilities

The panel has spoken with staff members of the Office for International Education, visited the library and some lecture rooms/halls. The Office for International Education turns out to offer a great deal of support (well before the actual start of the programmes) to the students in order to facilitate administrative issues (visa etc.) and their settling down in Leiden. The office also offers guidance with regard to applications for scholarships. A substantial number of students do have a scholarship. With this the programme board has followed a suggestion from the panel during the initial accreditation.

The panel regards all this as more than adequate.

There is a dedicated management and organizational structure supporting the four Advanced Studies LL.M. programmes. This has already been described under 'Findings'.

The panel has spoken with the programme directors and the Dean who form this *Quality Assurance Standing Committee*, as well as with the support staff. The panel also studied minutes from the meetings and annual review reports on the programme reflecting on programme improvements and changes, and reporting on student performance at course and programme level. These reports also include an evaluation written by student representatives from the programme.

The panel considers this overarching structure (that also facilitates with regards to standards concerning assessment; see Standard 3) as a valuable facility that adds a robustness that each relatively small programme could not very well establish on its own.

Incoming students

The programme has a selective profile. It took the panel some time however to get a full insight into the entry requirements. There seemed to be a discrepancy between the entry requirements as written down in the documents and the information on the programme website. The confusion arose because of an incorrect link between pages; the panel was pleased that the faulty link was corrected during the site visit.

Main entry requirement is possession of a full law degree, i.e. one entitling the holder to enter legal professions. However these requirements vary between countries (in some cases a master's degree is required, in other cases a bachelor degree may suffice). This can lead to variations in terms of entry level. Besides that there are also differences in terms of content that has been studied. Chinese students (whatever their degree) will have had much less

introduction to EU law than students from EU-countries. The panel understands that it is neither feasible nor appropriate to apply rigid formal entry requirements, given the differences between countries with regard to entry into legal professions and content of Law curricula.

The selection procedure does not only look at academic credentials, but also takes the professional experience into account (for instance work experience in an international organisation, practice in a domestic setting or work in a relevant NGO). Furthermore, the admission procedure not only weighs individual credentials but also aims at an adequate mix in the group, a mix of academic, professional and regional backgrounds in such a way that an inspiring and complementary learning environment is created.

Any differences that remain in terms of level and content are 'equalized' during the first semester (Capita Selecta course). Furthermore, some students are admitted only with the proviso that they finish additional reading requirements before the start of the programme or follow a course to improve their English (only in the case the score on the test is just below the requirements).

If during the programme students express the need for extra information or coaching (or as staff deems that necessary) additional workshops or coaching are offered. This has for instance happened with regard to the topic of plagiarism.

In the meeting with the students and alumni from all the four programmes, one alumnus mentioned that in his group one of the students had been a dentist. But upon inspection of the files it appeared to have been a student with a double degree.

The panel has furthermore studied short biographies of all the current students, which confirmed that the admission procedure indeed results in a diverse and dynamic group of students. This substantiates the claim made by the programme that the admission procedure takes a lot of factors jointly into consideration. It has also become clear that the programme management is very much aware of the potential risks of combining a great diversity of nationalities within the student group, resulting in an elaborate admission procedure.

3.3 Judgement

The panel is impressed by the content and coherence of the curriculum, the intensive and interactive mode of delivery, the selectivity of the admission procedure and the quality of the support structure.

The panel has also established that recommendations from the initial accreditation panel have all been adequately followed up.

Therefore the panel judges the programme with regard to standard 2 as excellent.

4 Standard 3. Assessment and learning outcomes

The programme has an adequate assessment system in place and demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

The level achieved is demonstrated by interim and final tests, final projects and the performance of graduates in actual practice or in post-graduate programmes. The tests and assessments are valid, reliable and transparent to the students.

4.1 Findings

Assessment system

The assessment method for each of the programme's courses is established in advance and indicated clearly in the course descriptions. Within courses, the weighting of the final grade is established according to the percentages indicated for each assessed component. Within the programme as a whole, the courses are weighted on the basis of their ECTS value.

Lecturers are free in general to decide on their own assessment methods and the weighting thereof. They must however inform the students, in advance through the course descriptions in the E-prospectus, and again at the start of the course, about the applicable assessment methods and their weighting for the final course grade.

The exam and the grading are discussed at the beginning of each course. Former exam questions are usually included in the course reader, or provided through Blackboard. Assessment results are given to the students on an individual basis, usually by email. A joint review session is then held for each exam, taking place within a course. Students are also able to discuss their performance with the lecturer individually, upon appointment.

Students may appeal the grades they are awarded. There are four (consecutive) levels of appeal (the relevant lecturer, the Programme Board, the Board of Appeals for the Advanced Studies programmes and Leiden University's Board of Appeals for Examinations).

The directors of the four programmes, together with the Dean, form the so-called 'Quality Assurance Standing Committee'. The Standing Committee currently acts as an overarching Exams Committee. Whereas the Academic Board of each individual programme (in the PIL programme consisting of the Programme Director and the Academic Coordinator) is responsible for the correct and consistent grading of academic work within the programme, the Standing Committee, through its regular reviews of course evaluations, the student exit reports, the cross-examination of papers, the jointly agreed assessment forms and the cross-reviewing of theses, ensures that the quality and level across all four programmes remains at a consistent, and high level.

Taking into account the new rules being introduced in Dutch Higher Education legislation, in the context of debate in the Dutch Higher Education sector on the 'independence' of exam committees, Leiden University has decided as a general policy to establish for each of its academic programmes an exam board structure that is - as much as possible - separate from

the possibly conflicting pressures of programme completion requirements and is independent from the Dean and/or any programme board.

In light of this new policy, the Board of the Law School, in close consultation with the Quality Assurance Standing Committee, has decided to put in place a new Exam Board for the four programmes, as from the academic year 2012/13. In the new set-up the exam board will consist of four members of teaching staff, one from each of the Advanced Studies programmes. These members of staff will not be members of the programme boards, so as to maintain a certain level of independence from the roles and views of programme management.

The Quality Assurance Standing Committee will maintain its current role(s), with the exception of the monitoring and appeals procedure regarding examinations, which will be taken over by the new Exam Board. The rules and regulations of the programmes will be amended accordingly prior to the start of the 2012/13 academic year.

Thesis

The culminating point in the students' research work is the preparation of the final thesis (10 ECTS).

All students write a master's thesis on a topic of their choice, agreed with the supervisor and the programme board. The thesis must treat a substantive issue of international law. It is supposed to investigate and present new and innovative findings, and should be of publishable quality. The programme pursues a structured approach towards thesis writing and completion. Preparation for the thesis starts with smaller research assignments in the first semester. A first meeting with the students on choice of topics, and writing instructions usually takes place in January. In February, students consult with individual supervisors to submit an abstract, draft outline and bibliography by February, which is approved by the Programme Director.

Usually, thesis writing takes place throughout the second semester. Students are encouraged to make contact with authorities and institutions in the field of study, or to support their research through interviews.

Students can apply for coaching or supervision during the process. Depending on the topic, there may be a second supervisor, in which case the second supervisor also grades the thesis. The thesis writing process is complemented by consultations with the supervisor. In fact, one third of all teaching hours of the staff are spent on thesis supervision.

Some supervisors hold specific research meetings in order to train students in research presentation and assessment. In these meetings, students are asked to present the main arguments of their own research and to provide feedback on presentations by others in a constructive dialogue.

The evaluation and grading of the theses is subject to review by a second reader and coordinated by the Programme Director in order to guarantee the application of the same grading standards. In addition, three theses (one outstanding, one good and one with passing

grade) are subject to an audit by an international legal expert who was not involved in the thesis supervision, as part of the quality assurance system.

Thesis grading is done on the basis of a common procedure and grading sheet for all four Advanced Studies programmes, along the same lines as indicated above for exam assessments. The grade consists of the following components, each given a particular weighting:

- Structure: balanced organization of paper and clarity of discussion;
- Drafting (language): spelling; grammar, comprehensibility of the English text;
- Quality of the analysis of the thesis: description and analysis of existing writings and knowledge, developing new ideas, clear formulation and sound underpinning of ideas;
- Quality: ease of reading and understanding: executive summary and overview of main findings;
- Qualitative statement: indication as to amount of supervision or help was required with regard to idea formation, execution of research and writing.

Performance in actual practice

Many of the students, when starting the programme, already have some or even considerable working experience. According to annual alumni surveys, the majority of the graduates enter or continue their careers in public service, international law firms, international organisations, courts and tribunals or NGOs.

Although the programme prepares graduates for relevant professional careers, access to full employment in the professional field of choice (e.g., international organisations) is not always instant or easy. In some cases, it is necessary for graduates to gain further professional experience domestically (i.e. in litigation) or internationally, before making the transition to an international career. In other cases, graduates may have to adopt an alternative intermediate strategy (i.e. law firm or private sector practice) before gaining access to international civil service or the public sector. This is caused by the fact that positions with government and international organisations are limited, governed by specific access requirements (e.g. specific contingents) or tied to a minimum number of years of practical working experience, either at entry-level or at higher level. Especially in times of financial cuts and economic crisis, the LL.M. degree is therefore a bridge, but not an automatic gateway towards full-time employment in public international law.

The programme organizes sessions on job opportunities; also the various study visits during the programme aim at orientation for job positions. Furthermore the program promotes internships that can also be a route to a career. A substantial number of students have obtained internships with international institutions, with the assistance of the programme. These positions are typically recruited by way of a competitive procedure, in which applicants compete with other graduates worldwide.

An interesting example is that the International Criminal Court asks the programme board to preselect a number of students to work for ICC for a period of 6 months after their study; also other international tribunals, Defence Councils and NGOs regularly ask for students to assist.

The Office of International Education makes use of alumni to support the programme with job possibilities, opportunities for internships and to serve as a point of contact for future students.

With regard to academic research, after completion of the programme the students have all the necessary skills to proceed further as a PhD student. Some alumni of the programme have in fact obtained PhD degrees.

4.2 Considerations

Assessment system

According to the panel, the Standing Committee has performed well as an overarching Exams Committee. The structure warrants that the quality and level across all four programmes remains at a consistent and high level. Each programme by itself could not achieve this. The panel has seen the system at work in grading sheets that were received together with the theses that the panel members have studied. During the meeting the panel has also studied exams.

The panel especially appreciates the role of the ‘Standing Committee’ to enhance correct and consistent grading of academic work within the programme, including the cross-reviewing of theses. Still, the panel supports the plan to warrant a division of responsibilities by creating a separate, independent Exam Board.

The joint review sessions that are held for each exam add to the transparency of the assessment system and besides provide valuable feedback to the students.

The panel received no indication of conflict of interest between ‘financial’ and ‘academic’ objectives. This also follows from the fact that the programme is highly selective and the number of applicants is larger than the number of students admitted.

Thesis

The panel has studied a number of theses; see appendix 7.4.

The panel is impressed by the quality of the theses and considers the grades as correct.

An important factor is guidance and supervision offered to the students; one-third of the total teaching time of the staff is spent on thesis supervision.

One of the theses that the panel has read had the grade adjusted by the programme director, as part of the procedure (described under the paragraph ‘Findings’) to check the consistency of the grading. The average grade for the theses in the academic year 2009-2010 was 7.5. There is quite a number of high grades (grades 9 – 9,5) but according to the panel, these grades are fully justified.

The panel has also seen a list (and examples) of theses that have been published or have led to a Ph.D.

Performance in actual practice

The panel has no doubt, given the professional orientation of the programme and the character of the various assignments, and also on the basis of the meetings with students,

alumni, and representatives of the professional field, that the programme prepares students adequately for the demands of legal practice in Public International Law. The preparation for the specific field is obvious, but students also acquire a lot of transferable skills, that can equally be put to good use in other fields.

One representative of the professional field said during the meeting that his organisation is already spotting talented students during the programme.

The documents provided contain lists of organisations that employ alumni; these are all relevant given the character and orientation of the programme.

Of course, a degree can never be a guarantee and the competition in the application for interesting jobs is fierce.

The quality of the theses convinces the panel that students are also well prepared to continue an academic career leading to a PhD degree.

4.3 Judgement

The programme has an adequate assessment system in place and convincingly demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved. The panel is impressed by the professional orientation and academic level of the theses. These surpass the level that one may expect from 'regular' master's programmes and thus attest to the 'advanced' character of the programme.

Therefore the panel judges the programme with regard to standard 3 as excellent.

5 General conclusions

A score table of the judgements of the panel is provided in appendix 7.2.

Overall, the panel is positively impressed. During the site visit it has become clear that the programme is, in terms of learning outcomes, curriculum, staff and theses produced by the students, certainly of an advanced nature in comparison to regular masters' programmes. The panel wants to stress that the quality (control) of the programmes is, to a substantial degree assured by the formal cooperation between the four advanced studies. For a single programme this would be difficult to achieve (and to maintain).

There is however no formal assessment framework for this type of advanced studies. Therefore the general conclusion of the panel is that the programme, with regard to 'regular' Dutch LL.M programmes, can be considered as excellent.

In the NVAO assessment frameworks, 'excellence' is defined as follows:

"The programme systematically well surpasses the current generic quality standards across its entire spectrum and is regarded as an (inter)national example.

This judgement could be operationalized as follows:

- The level and/or orientation of the learning outcomes fit within the (inter)national qualification frameworks and have been concretised into subject- or programme- specific performance levels. These are given a specific interpretation based on the programme's explicit and unique views. The programme serves as an example both nationally and internationally.
- The aggregate of curriculum, staff, services and facilities constitutes an innovative, original learning environment.
- The learning outcomes achieved are of excellent quality and translate into awards and (inter)national publications."

Given the 'advanced' nature of the programme and considering the learning outcomes and orientation of the programme, it can be considered as exemplary in comparison with other programmes internationally on offer. All three 'operationalizations' apply to the programme.

The panel therefore advises the Board of the NVAO to extend the accreditation of the programme.

6 Recommendations

Two of the panel members took also part in the initial accreditation of the PIL programme in 2006 together with three other advanced LL.M programmes.

Given the many similarities between the four programmes, in terms of academic level and orientation, curriculum structure, didactics, assessment, quality control etc., the panel's recommendations for the four programmes overlap considerably.

During the, soon expiring, first accreditation term the programme has matured, partly in response to student evaluations and also by incorporating recent developments in the relevant professional and academic domains of PIL.

The panel is pleased to find that one of the strengths of the original concept of the four advanced masters' programmes, the overarching 'Standing Committee' and the common support structure, has been further elaborated. The panel especially appreciates the quality control that has been developed with respect to assessment and grading. The panel endorses the decision to create a separate, independent Exam Board.

The panel feels that there is perhaps some room for further improvement.

In terms of learning outcomes there is a strong convergence between the four programmes. In this respect it is somewhat surprising that there is a slight differentiation in terms of the generic titles of the learning outcome 'knowledge'. For this learning outcome the titles differ between 'basic, overarching and specialist', 'overarching and specialist' and 'basic and overarching'. Also there are some differences between the concrete texts of the learning outcomes. The differences are small, and do not seem evidently related to 'real' differences in terms of orientation, content and level. Therefore the panel suggest that the standing committee look into the matter.

Furthermore, one of the programmes has a separate learning outcome 'contribution to academic and professional debate'. The panel considers this a relevant learning outcome, but has no indication that the other three programmes do not in fact realize this outcome. Such a learning outcome could, according to the panel, very well be fitting for the programmes given their 'advanced' nature.

The current description of the 'advanced' nature of the programme was initially not entirely clear to the panel. If that is the case, it might be possible that it is likewise unclear for other audiences either. The panel has established that the programme does indeed distinguish itself from regular LL.M programmes, certainly in The Netherlands. Given the selective character of the programmes, it is right to communicate correctly with possible applicants about the level and orientation of the programme so as to motivate members of the intended target groups to submit an application. This might especially refer to the weighted nature of the admissions procedure where both individual credentials and the overall composition of the group are relevant.

The panel is convinced that students are well prepared for the demands of the job market. Even in times of economic crisis, globalization will continue and the importance of Public

International Law will certainly not diminish. This is to the advantage of the alumni. They are being prepared to fulfil top positions but the competition in that segment of the market is fierce. All four programmes have, in varying degrees some provision for career counselling. The International Tax Law programme offers an annual job fair and has a career counsellor; the Air and Space Law programme contains a compulsory internship that can also function as a venue to a career.

The panel feels that this element could be strengthened, not because that would be a formal prerequisite, but because an advanced support structure fits with the concept of an advanced study as the Leiden Law School markets it.

With this suggestion, the panel joins a similar recommendation made in the last internal mid-term review of the four programmes to develop a better system for career development.

The four programmes differ somewhat with regard to thesis requirements. Partly these are due to differences in the curricula (for instance in relation to the number of papers students write in the rest of the curriculum). Relevant differences should of course remain; there is no reason to harmonize only for the sake of harmonization. Still, the panel suggest looking into the existing differences, especially with regard to the required number of words. The panel stresses this with regard to requirement from the professional and academic fields: conciseness and analytic rigour, without sacrificing depth and breadth, is important. Adhering to the standard of requirement of a leading journal in the field (as is the case in the EIBL programme), is an interesting operationalization.

This would of course not have to exclude the possibility of exception, to the discretion of the Exams Committee. In fact the panel has seen an example of a thesis where the student was allowed to write more pages, given the nature of the topic. Another example was a case where two students worked consecutively (and independently) on the same research question. Such flexibility is rare and to be commended.

There is a large convergence between the four programmes as regards the approach to teaching and learning. Still, there are differences, e.g. the use of oral presentations, role-playing etc. The panel considers these as relevant ways for training important professional competencies. There is no need to rigidly harmonize the programmes, but they could benefit from cooperation in developing these didactical methods (also with regard to their grading).

Finally, the panel wishes to support the ambitions of the programme as stated in paragraph 1.8. These show that the programme is being continuously improved.

7 Appendices

7.1 Composition of the panel

The composition of the panel for the assessment of the

Professor Friedl Weiss, chair of the panel

Professor of European Law, European and International Economic Law, Institute of European, International and Comparative Law, University of Vienna, Austria

Professor, Vienna Diplomatic Academy

Visiting Professor, Bratislavská vysoká škola práva, Slovak Republic

Prof. Weiss acted as subject specific expert for the Public International Law Advanced Studies Programme and the European and International Business Law Advanced Studies Programme.

Professor Anna Masutti, member

Tenured Professor of Air Law at the University of Bologna (Aerospace Law and Commercial Law).

Member of the Board for the Master's Degree in Aviation Sciences and Flight Security and responsible for the School in Aviation Management organized by the University of Bologna and the Italian air navigation service provider (ENAV).

Professor for the master's course Competition and Regulation for Public Utilities, University of Rome.

Professor for the master's course Transport Economics – University of Bologna.

Prof. Masutti acted as subject specific expert for the Air and Space Law Advanced Studies Programme

Professor John Tiley, member

Professor of the Law of Taxation, University of Cambridge (1991); Emeritus since October 2008

Prof. Tiley acted as subject specific expert for the International Tax Law Advanced Studies Programme

Asja Hegeman LL.M., member

Student Master Public International Law University of Amsterdam

Asja Hegeman acted as student representative

Drs. Carlo Hover, panel secretary

Smets + Hover +

Advisors for Professional Organisations, NVAO certified secretary

7.2 Score table of panel judgements

Standard	Judgement EIBL	Judgement PIL	Judgement ITL	Judgement ASL
Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes The intended learning outcomes of the programme have been concretised with regard to content, level and orientation; they meet international requirements.	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Standard 2. Teaching-learning environment The curriculum, staff and programme-specific services and facilities enable the incoming students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Standard 3. Assessment and achieved learning outcomes The programme has an adequate assessment system in place and demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Programme overall	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

7.3 Schedule of the site visit

Programme on-site visit Leiden University, 17 & 18 November 2011

Visitation Panel

Professor dr F. (Friedl) Weiss (Chair)
Professor dr A. (Anna) Masutti;
Professor dr J. (John) Tiley;
Ms A. (Asja) Hegeman (Student Representative)
Mr C. (Carlo) Hover (NVAO accredited Secretary)

Wednesday, 16 November 2011

19:00 Evening dinner; Panel members introduction, preparation and discussion of key points and questions

Thursday, 17 November 2011

09.00 - 09.30 **Meeting with the Leiden Law School Board and Head, Office for International Education Leiden Law School**

- *Professor dr Rick Lawson, Dean*
- *Mr Dennis Hoitink, Financial Controller Leiden Law School*
- *Ms Els Lemaire, Head, Office for International Education*

09.30 - 11.00 **First meeting with the directors and coordinators of the four programmes**

Programme Directors:

- *Professor dr Christa Tobler, Programme Director European and International Business Law*
- *Professor dr Kees van Raad, Programme Director International Tax Law*
- *Professor dr Larissa van den Herik, Programme Director Public International Law*
- *Drs. Tanja Masson Zwaan, Deputy Programme Director Air and Space Law*

Academic and Programme Coordinators:

- *Mr Wouter Oude Alink, Programme Coordinator Air and Space Law*
- *Mr Agis Karpetas, Academic Coordinator European and International Business Law*
- *Ms Sheena Bruce, Programme Coordinator European and International Business Law*

- Mr Mike Tegos, Programme Coordinator International Tax Law
- Ms Mette Léons, Programme Coordinator Public International Law

11.15 - 12.45 Meeting with teaching staff of the four programmes

Air and Space Law:

- Drs Tanja Masson Zwaan, Deputy Director
- Mr. Patrick Honnebier LL.M. LL.M. (double LL.M.), Guest Lecturer

European and International Business Law:

- Professor dr Stefaan Van den Bogaert, Professor of European Law
- Professor dr Tom Ottervanger, Professor of European Law
- Dr Jorrit Rijpma, Associate Professor European Law

International Tax Law:

- Prof. dr. René van der Paardt part-time professor in indirect taxes at the Faculty of Economic Sciences at the Erasmus University Rotterdam and a member of the practice group VAT, Customs and International Trade of Loyens & Loeff N.V. (partner).
- Dr Stefano Simontacchi, Guest Lecturer, Partner at Bonelli Erede Pappalardo

Public International Law:

- Professor Jaap de Hoop Scheffer
- Dr Eric De Brabandere, Associate Professor

12.45 - 13.45 Lunch and closed meeting of panel

13.45 - 14.30 Open Consultation Meeting

14.30 - 15.20 Study time additional materials

15.20 – 15.30 Walk to the Leiden Law School

15.30 - 16.00 Facilities and library tour

Library staff

- Marjo Oldenhof, subject librarian,
- Emke Clifford Kock van Breugel, team leader front office,
- Kees Konings, Manager Information and Knowledge Services.

16.00 – 16.15 Tour of the Kamerlingh Onnes Building

- Ms. Els Lemaire
- Ms. Sheena Bruce

16.15 – 16.30 **Walk to the Faculty Club**

16.30 - 17.30 **Meeting with representatives from the professional field**

- *Air and Space Law*

Jorn Wegter: Corporate Legal Counsel at KLM Royal Dutch Airlines

- *European and International Business Law*

Mr. Christof Swaak, partner, **Stibbe Amsterdam**

Mr. Garth Schofield. Legal Counsel, **Permanent Court of Arbitration**

- *International Tax Law*

Mr Wim Wijnen, Counsel to the Academic Chairman of **IBFD, Amsterdam**, Professor of International Tax Law, **LUISS University Italy**. Part-time judge of the **Court of Appeal, 's-Hertogenbosch** (The Netherlands).

Prof. Jan de Goede, Senior Principal, Tax Knowledge Management at the **IBFD Tax Knowledge Centre**.

- *Public International Law*

Dr Marten Zwanenburg, *Legal Adviser*, **Ministry of Defence, NL**
Wayde Pittman (**ICTY**)

17.30 - 19.00 **Free time**

19.00 **Dinner and Closed Panel Meeting**

Friday, 18 November 2011

09.00 - 10.30 **Meeting with students and alumni of the four programmes**

Air and Space Law

- **Students**

Ana Dedijer and Jose Ignacio Garcia Arboleda

- **Alumni**

Stephanie Golinvaux - Associate, Brussels - Field Fisher Waterhouse

Public International Law

- **Students**

Esteban Jorge Guidici and Robynne Croft

- **Alumni**

Markus Eikel - Investigator, ICC,

William Worster, Lecturer, The Hague University of Applied Sciences,

Ekaterine Kikalishvili - ICC Prosecution

Jennifer DePiazza – International Bar Association Fellow in the Appeals Chamber, ICTY

Tax Law

- **Students**
Eleonora Calandri and Jose Francisco Sepulveda
- **Alumni**
Rafael Miraglia - Associate Baker & McKenzie Amsterdam

European Business Law

- **Students**
Anna Szegedi and Wika Febrina Putri
- **Alumni**
Yanying Li - PhD Student & Assistant Legal Counsel, Permanent Court of Arbitration
Araz Alasgarov - Former Legal Advisor, Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, currently LL.M. Advanced PIL Student

10.45 - 12.15 Second meeting with the directors and coordinators of the four programmes

Programme Directors

- Prof. dr Carsten Stahn, *Programme Director Public International Law*
- Prof. dr Larissa van den Herik, *Programme Director Public International Law*
- Prof. dr Kees van Raad, *Programme Director International Tax Law*
- Prof. dr Pablo Mendes de Leon, *Programme Director Air and Space Law*
- Prof. dr Christa Tobler, *Programme Director European & International Business Law*

Academic and Programme Coordinators

- Ms. Mette Leons, *Programme Coordinator Public International Law*
- Mr. Wouter Oude Alink, *Programme Coordinator Air and Space Law*
- Mr. Mike Tegos, *Programme Coordinator International Tax Law*
- Mr. Agis Karpetas, *Academic Coordinator European Business Law*
- Ms Sheena Bruce, *Programme Coordinator European Business Law*

Faculty Office for International Education

- Ms Els Lemaire (MA), Head

12.15 - 12.45 Tour of new ITC student residence halls (Gerecht 10, Leiden)

12.45 – 13.45 Lunch and closed meeting of panel at Faculty Club restaurant

13.45 - 16.30 Closed meeting of panel

16.30 – 17.00 Summary and Feedback session

Dean of Law School

- Prof. dr Rick Lawson

Programme Directors

- Prof. dr Carsten Stahn, *Programme Director Public International Law*
- Prof. dr Larissa van den Herik, *Programme Director Public International Law*
- Prof. dr Kees van Raad, *Programme Director International Tax Law*
- Prof. dr Pablo Mendes de Leon, *Programme Director Air and Space Law*
- Prof. dr Christa Tobler, *Programme Director European & International Business Law*

Academic and Programme Coordinators

- Ms. Mette Leons, *Programme Coordinator Public International Law*
- Mr. Wouter Oude Alink, *Programme Coordinator Air and Space Law*
- Mr. Mike Tegos, *Programme Coordinator International Tax Law*
- Mr. Agis Karpetas, *Academic Coordinator European Business Law*
- Ms Sheena Bruce, *Programme Coordinator European Business Law*

Faculty Office for International Education

- Ms Els Lemaire (MA), *Head, Office for Internationalisation*

Academic and Educational Affairs Leiden University

- Ms. Julia van Proosdij
- Ms. Marijke Visch

7.4 List of theses and grades

Programme	Student number	Grade
Air and space law	0875198	6.5
	0891452	8.0
	1062018	9.5
	1056573	9.5
International tax law	833401	9.0
	949558	6.0
	1056212	8.5
	1030736	7.5
European and international business law	027492	7.0
	0503983	9.0
	1062743	8.5
Public international law	1063626	9.0
	053027	9.5
	1077775	9.0

7.5 Declarations of independence and confidentiality

All members and the secretary have, prior to the assessment process signed a Declaration of independence and confidentiality that has been submitted to the NVAO.