

**MASTER'S PROGRAMME  
LAW AND POLITICS OF  
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY**

FACULTY OF LAW

**VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT AMSTERDAM**

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This report was finalized on 17/05/2018.





# REPORT ON THE MASTER'S PROGRAMME LAW AND POLITICS OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY OF THE VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT AMSTERDAM

This report takes the NVAO's Assessment Framework for Limited Programme Assessments as a starting point (19 December 2014).

## ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE PROGRAMME

### Master's programme Law and Politics of International Security

Name of the programme:	Law and Politics of International Security
CROHO number:	60685
Level of the programme:	master's
Orientation of the programme:	academic
Number of credits:	60 EC
Specializations or tracks:	-
Location(s):	Amsterdam
Mode(s) of study:	full time
Language of instruction:	English
Expiration of accreditation:	03/05/2019

The visit of the assessment panel Law to the Faculty of Law of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam took place on 08/11/2017 - 10/11/2017.

## ADMINISTRATIVE DATA REGARDING THE INSTITUTION

Name of the institution:	Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
Status of the institution:	publicly funded institution
Result institutional quality assurance assessment:	positive

## COMPOSITION OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

The NVAO has approved the composition of the panel on 7 August 2017. The panel that assessed the master's programme Law and Politics of International Security consisted of:

- Em. prof. mr. I.F. (Ige) Dekker, professor emeritus in International Institutional Law at the University of Utrecht [chair];
- Prof. dr. mr. P.P.T. (Paul) Bovend'Eert, professor of Constitutional Law at the Radboud University Nijmegen [vice-chair];
- Em. prof. dr. mr. T.A. (Theo) de Roos, professor emeritus in Criminal Law at Tilburg University;
- Prof. dr. P.H.J. (Peter) Essers, professor in Tax Law at Tilburg University and former member of the Senate (Eerste Kamer) of the Dutch Parliament;
- Prof. dr. mr. A.L.B. (Aurelia) Colombi Ciacchi, professor in Law and Governance at the Law Faculty of the University of Groningen;
- Dr. mr. W.H.F.M. (Wouter) Cortenraad, senior judge at the Civil and Commercial Division of the Amsterdam Court of Appeals;
- Prof. dr. mr. G.E. (Gerrit) van Maanen, professor emeritus in Private Law, European Tort Law and Property Law at Maastricht University;
- R.P.M.G. (Robert) van den Boorn, master student of Dutch Law, specialisation Commercial and Company Law, at Maastricht University [student member];



- Prof. dr. mr. L.J. (Larissa) van den Herik, vice-dean and professor of Public International Law at the University of Leiden [referee on International Security].

The panel was supported by drs. José van Zwieten, who acted as secretary.

Appendix 1 contains the curricula vitae of the panel members.

## WORKING METHOD OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

### *The Law Assessment*

The master's programme Law and Politics of International Security at the Faculty of Law of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam were assessed as part of the Law cluster assessment. Between October of 2017 and March 2018, three panels assessed a total of 92 programmes at eleven universities. Upon consultation with the NVAO, it was decided that for the assessment within the umbrella group Domain of Law, three subclusters (henceforth: clusters) of institutions would be created:

Cluster I	University of Amsterdam, VU University Amsterdam, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Nyenrode Business Universiteit;
Cluster II	Leiden University, Tilburg University, Utrecht University;
Cluster III	Maastricht University, Open University, Radboud University Nijmegen, University of Groningen.

Each cluster was assessed by a separate panel. The panels consisted of the following members:

#### Cluster I

- Em. prof. mr. I.F. (Ige) Dekker (voorzitter)
- Prof. dr. mr. P.P.T. (Paul) Bovend'eert (vice-voorzitter)
- Em. prof. dr. mr. T.A. (Theo) de Roos
- Prof. dr. P.H.J. (Peter) Essers
- Prof. dr. mr. A.L.B. (Aurelia) Colombi Ciacchi
- Dr. mr. W.H.F.M. (Wouter) Cortenraad LLM
- Prof. dr. mr. G.E. (Gerrit) van Maanen
- V.A. (Veerle) van Waarde LLB
- R.P.M.G. (Robert) van den Boorn LLB
- D.H. (Danielle) Arnold LLB
- Prof. mr. dr. P. (Peggy) Valcke
- Prof. dr. L.J. (Larissa) van den Herik

#### Cluster II

- Em. prof. dr. mr. R. (Roel) Fernhout (voorzitter)
- Prof. mr. J. (Jan) Struiksma (vice-voorzitter)
- Em. prof. mr. G.P.M.F. (Gerard) Mols
- Prof. dr. B.E. (Barbara) Reinhartz
- Prof. dr. M.G. (Michael) Faure
- Prof. mr. R.G. (Rainer) Prokisch
- Prof. dr. mr. A.A.H. (Aukje) van Hoek
- Prof. mr. M.B.M. (Marco) Loos
- Prof. mr. J.B. (Hanneke) Spath
- V.A. (Veerle) van Waarde LLB
- R.P.M.G. (Robert) van den Boorn LLB
- D.H. (Danielle) Arnold LLB
- Prof. mr. A.A. (Antoon) Quaedvlieg

#### Cluster III

- Em. prof. mr. A.F.M. (Adriaan) Dorresteyn (voorzitter)



- Prof. mr. E. (Elies) van Sliedregt (vice-voorzitter)
- Prof. dr. R.A. (Ramses) Wessel
- Prof. dr. mr. A.J.C. (Adrienne) de Moor-van Vugt
- Em. prof. mr. L.C. (Laurens) Winkel
- Em. prof. mr. drs. H.P.A.M. (Henk) van Arendonk
- Dr. D. (Dominique) Sluijsmans
- V.A. (Veerle) van Waarde LLB
- R.P.M.G. (Robert) van den Boorn LLB
- D.H. (Danielle) Arnold LLB
- Prof. M. (Manuel) Desantes Real
- Prof. mr. A.A. (Antoon) Quaadvlieg
- Prof. dr. Y. (Yves) Jorens
- Dr. mr. S.A. (Sonja) Kruisinga
- Prof. mr. H.N. (Harriët) Schelhaas

A subpanel was composed for every site visit in a cluster, based on expertise, availability and independence of the panel members. The panel assessing the Faculty of Law of the Vrije Universiteit consisted of the following members:

- Em. prof. mr. I.F. (Ige) Dekker (chair)
- Prof. dr. mr. P.P.T. (Paul) Bovend'eert (vice chair)
- Em. prof. dr. mr. T.A. (Theo) de Roos
- Prof. dr. P.H.J. (Peter) Essers
- Prof. dr. mr. A.L.B. (Aurelia) Colombi Ciacchi
- Dr. mr. W.H.F.M. (Wouter) Cortenraad
- Prof. dr. mr. G.E. (Gerrit) van Maanen
- R.P.M.G. (Robert) van den Boorn
- Prof. dr. L.J. (Larissa) van den Herik

#### *Coordination and secretaries*

Dr. Fiona Schouten acted as executive coordinator of the Law assessment, drs. Linda te Marvelde as supervisor and Marcella van Schie MA as project assistant. Drs. José van Zwieten (University of Amsterdam, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam) and dr. Marianne van der Weiden (Erasmus University Rotterdam, Nyenrode Business Universiteit) acted as secretaries in cluster I; Adrienne Wieldraaijer-Huijzer MA (Leiden University) and dr. Floor Meijer (Tilburg University, Utrecht University) in cluster II; and drs. Renate Prenen (Maastricht University, Open University, Radboud University Nijmegen, University of Groningen) in cluster III. Due to parallel sessions in the site visit schedules, Fiona Schouten acted as additional secretary during the visits to Erasmus University Rotterdam, the University of Amsterdam, Maastricht University and Radboud University Nijmegen. She also acted as additional secretary during the visit to the University of Groningen due to planned name changes of various programmes.

#### *Consistency and calibration*

In order to assure the assessments took place consistently within and between clusters, various measures were taken:

1. The QANU coordinator was present at the start of all site visits as well as at the panel discussion leading to the preliminary findings at every site visit;
2. The coordinator was present at the first site visit of every cluster;
3. Calibration meetings took place on 8 December 2017 and 6 April 2018. During these meetings, the panel chairs, vice chairs, student members and QANU coordinator discussed the working method and the assessments;
4. The chairs attended at least one site visit outside their own cluster as a spectator;
5. The student members of the panels rotated: they took part in at least one site visit per cluster;
6. Prior to the site visits, on 29 August 2017, coordinator and secretaries held a meeting to discuss their working method.



### *Preparation*

On 23 March 2017, the panel chairs were briefed by QANU on the working method, assessment frameworks and planning of the Law assessment. They also discussed mutual coordination and communication. This led to a shared directive on the selection of theses and to a description of the nature and number of courses to be selected as study material during each site visit.

A preparatory meeting was organised on 19 June 2017 for the members of the three panels. During this meeting, the panel members received instruction on the assessment frameworks and the planning of the site visits. They reflected upon the content and use of the domain-specific framework of reference (see appendix 2).

In preparing the site visit to the Vrije Universiteit, the coordinator and the panel chair made a selection of theses of the programmes under assessment. These were chosen from a list of graduates between 01/09/2015 and 31/08/2017. The selection followed the NVAO guideline for the assessment of theses and took the range of thesis subjects, tracks, supervisors and grades into account. The panel studied the selected theses and the assessment forms.

In consultation with the contact persons from the Faculty of Law, the coordinator drafted a programme for the site visit (see appendix 5). The Faculty of Law selected representative discussion partners for the interviews. The panel and coordinator agreed with this selection.

Upon receiving the critical reflections, the coordinator checked their quality and content before sending them to the panel. The panel members studied the documents and formulated questions and preliminary findings. These were collected by the secretary, who arranged them according to subject matter.

### *Site visit*

The site visit to the Vrije Universiteit took place on 08/11/2017 - 10/11/2017. During the visit, the panel studied documents provided by the contact person of the Vrije Universiteit (cf. appendix 6). The panel interviewed programme management, students, staff members, alumni and representatives of the programme committee and the board of examiners. The panel also offered staff members and students the opportunity to speak to the panel confidentially upon prior request. No requests were received for this consultation hour.

At the end of the site visit, the panel held an internal meeting to formulate its preliminary findings. The panel chair concluded the site visit with a public presentation of the panel's findings.

### *Report*

After the site visit, the secretary produced a draft version of the report based on the panel's findings. The coordinator sent this to the panel members. After their commentary was processed, the coordinator sent the report to the Vrije Universiteit to check for factual errors. The response of the university was discussed with the panel chair; changes to the report were made based on his request. The report was then finalised and sent to the Faculty of Law and the Vrije Universiteit.

### *Decision rules*

In accordance with the NVAO's Assessment framework for limited programme assessments, the panel used the following definitions for the assessment of both the standards and the programme as a whole.

### **Generic quality**

The quality that can reasonably be expected in an international perspective from a higher education bachelor's or master's programme.



**Unsatisfactory**

The programme does not meet the current generic quality standards and shows serious shortcomings in several areas.

**Satisfactory**

The programme meets the current generic quality standards and shows an acceptable level across its entire spectrum.

**Good**

The programme systematically surpasses the current generic quality standard.

**Excellent**

The programme systematically well surpasses the current generic quality standard and is regarded as an international example.





# SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

## ***Master's programme Law and Politics of International Security***

### *Intended learning outcomes*

The panel considers the profile of the LPIS programme to be exceptional. Combining an interdisciplinary approach that integrates international law and international relations with a clear focus on international security is highly distinctive, both nationally and internationally. The panel appreciates the effort LPIS has made to capture this unique profile in the intended learning outcomes. The intended learning outcomes demonstrate an ambitious level: they demand a clear grasp of the core concepts, theories and methodologies of the fields of international law and political science. According to the panel, the focus on the sector of international security makes this ambition realistic. The panel is pleased with the level and orientation of the intended learning outcomes.

### *Teaching-learning environment*

The panel finds the curriculum of Law and Politics of International Security to be very well designed. It offers a well-balanced mix of legal and political aspects of international security and convincingly realises the intended integration of these two perspectives. The course content is very topical and research-led. The curriculum clearly has an academic approach. Students practise their writing and presentation skills frequently. The teaching methods within the programme are very innovative and enable and promote the active participation of the students. Students are taught by excellent teaching staff with a solid background in interdisciplinary research. They experience the programme as challenging, but receive good support and feedback from teachers and benefit from the stimulating environment of a truly international and interdisciplinary classroom. The thesis trajectory provides LPIS students with the support and structure they need to complete the programme successfully.

### *Assessment*

According to the panel, assessment within Law and Politics of International Security is of high quality. Assessment practices and policies are in line with faculty policy ('Nota Toetsbeleid', 2013). Examiners are appointed based on clear criteria. LPIS assessment is varied and consists of written and oral examinations as well as several papers. The panel is impressed with the variety of assessment formats and the amount of feedback students receive. The Examination Board has a clear view of its tasks and responsibilities. It carries out its tasks in a proactive manner and is in control of safeguarding assessment quality.

### *Achieved learning outcomes*

The panel is impressed with the high level of the master's theses it studied. The theses demonstrate that LPIS graduates have developed an interdisciplinary perspective on the domain of international security. The level of English is good to very good. Students have greatly differing backgrounds when entering the programme, but LPIS clearly manages to bring out the best in them. Despite limited data on graduate success, the panel is convinced that LPIS graduates have acquired a skill set and level which render them attractive to the professional field.

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

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes	excellent
Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	excellent
Standard 3: Assessment	good
Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes	good
General conclusion	good



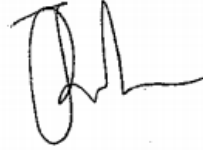
The chair and the secretary of the panel hereby declare that all panel members have studied this report and that they agree with the judgements laid down in the report. They confirm that the assessment has been conducted in accordance with the demands relating to independence.

Date: 15/08/2018



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Em. prof. mr. I.F. (Ige) Dekker



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Drs. J. (José) van Zwieten

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

The master's programme Law and Politics of International Security (LPIS) is organised as a joint venture between the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU). It is one of eleven programmes that are organised by the Faculty of Law. Seven have been assessed in the Law cluster assessment (2017-2018). All programmes have a director, who is responsible for the curriculum, quality assurance and organisation of the programme. LPIS also has a vice-Director. The directors of the eleven programmes are members of the Educational Advisory Board (OWB), which is chaired by the faculty's Associate Dean of Education. This Board advises the Faculty Board on matters that go beyond the interests of one programme. Education in the faculty is organised by six departments. LPIS staff are members of the Department of Transnational Legal Studies, except for the lecturers from the Faculty of Social Sciences. There is a faculty-wide Examination Board. LPIS has its own programme committee.

### **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.

#### **Explanation:**

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. Insofar as is applicable, the intended learning outcomes are in accordance with relevant legislation and regulations.

### **Findings**

The master's programme Law and Politics of International Security (LPIS) of the Vrije Universiteit (VU) aims to train students to take an interdisciplinary approach to matters of international security at a high academic and intellectual level. According to the critical reflection, students graduating from LPIS must have a thorough understanding of the core concepts of international law and international relations, which are considered crucial to studying problems of international security. They need to understand the political and social context in which international law operates. As a consequence, the programme's profile and design are fully in line with the educational vision of the Faculty of Law: students study 'Law in action'. The Faculty has adopted 'Law in action' as an important aspect of its educational vision. Education needs to be linked to current societal themes, and law needs to be understood from the societal context in which it operates.

The panel considers the profile of the programme and its general aim to be exceptional. According to the panel, combining an interdisciplinary approach with a clear focus on international security is truly unique. The programme creates this interdisciplinary approach by addressing theories and methods from the domains of international law and international relations as well as the interplay between them in the field of international security. It performed an international benchmark and describes in the critical reflection how it distinguishes itself from other master's programmes in and outside the Netherlands. The panel is pleased with this benchmark and agrees that the programme is highly distinctive, both nationally and internationally.

The programme translated its aims into seventeen intended learning outcomes, which describe the knowledge and skills students need to acquire (cf. appendix 3). These intended learning outcomes are summarised in eight final objectives of the programme. The panel appreciates the effort LPIS has made to capture its unique profile and particular interdisciplinary approach in the intended learning outcomes. The intended learning outcomes demonstrate an ambitious level: they demand a clear grasp of the core concepts, theories and methodologies of the fields of international law and political science. According to the panel, the focus on the sector of international security makes this



ambition realistic. The panel observed that the intended learning outcomes reflect the key characteristics of academic law programmes as listed in the subject-specific reference framework (cf. appendix 2). LPIS's intended learning outcomes (cf. appendix 3) also reflect the Dublin descriptors for master's programmes. This is demonstrated clearly by a table in the critical reflection, which matches the outcomes to the descriptors. The panel is pleased with the level and orientation of the intended learning outcomes.

### **Considerations**

The panel considers the profile of the LPIS programme to be exceptional. Combining an interdisciplinary approach that integrates international law and international relations with a clear focus on international security is highly distinctive, both nationally and internationally. The panel appreciates the effort LPIS has made to capture this unique profile in the intended learning outcomes. The intended learning outcomes demonstrate an ambitious level: they demand a clear grasp of the core concepts, theories and methodologies of the fields of international law and political science. According to the panel, the focus on the sector of international security makes this ambition realistic. The panel is pleased with the level and orientation of the intended learning outcomes.

### **Conclusion**

*Master's programme Law and Politics of International Security*: the panel assesses Standard 1 as '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.

#### **Explanation:**

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.

### **Findings**

Law and Politics of International Security is a one-track, one-year master's programme. It has an average annual intake of approximately 35 students. The majority of these students have an international background: in 2015-2016, 15 of 37 students were Dutch. The curriculum of LPIS is divided up into two semesters composed of three blocks each. The blocks follow the university-wide academic calendar, in accordance with university policy. The first two blocks are 8 weeks in length, the last one 4 weeks. A schematic overview of the curriculum can be found in appendix 4 of this report.

#### *Curriculum contents and design*

According to the panel, the programme has a clear structure. It consists of four core courses (30 EC), two electives (6 EC each) and a master's thesis (18 EC). The critical reflection contains a matrix that relates the mandatory courses and electives to the intended learning outcomes of the programme. It shows that all final terms are addressed in the core courses of the programme.

The panel studied the curriculum given in the critical reflection and the online study guide. It looked at the materials and handbooks of three core courses (cf. appendix 6). It also discussed the curriculum with the programme management, teaching staff, students and alumni. Based on this input, the panel gathered that while the curriculum contains disciplinary elements of both international law and international relations, the focus is on combining and integrating them into an interdisciplinary perspective on international security. As such, the curriculum is in line with the programme's profile. According to the panel, the four core courses provide a comprehensive overview

of the subject of international security. The course materials are very topical and represent the state of the art in international security studies.

Since students have a background in either international law or political sciences, they are advised to take an elective in the first block in the other discipline in order to obtain a solid basis in both disciplines at the beginning of the programme. In parallel, all students start their programme with the mandatory course Theories and Approaches to War and Collective Security (12 EC). In this course, students gain knowledge and understanding of international conflict and security law, of the nature and development of contemporary armed conflicts, and of the overlaps and differences between the legal and political science approaches to international security. The interdisciplinary approach in this course is operationalised by co-teaching: one lecturer is an international academic lawyer, the other is a political scientist. Co-teaching does not guarantee that integration of both perspectives is realised, but the panel established that this integration does take place. Both lecturers have strong expertise in the interdisciplinary approach and use this expertise to encourage students to reflect on the interplay between law and politics. Students perceive this course as a good starting point of the programme as they are guided intensively in combining a legal and a political perspective.

The programme places a lot of emphasis on the development of academic skills. Students are trained to prepare legal and political arguments independently and present their findings persuasively in both oral and written formats. They write several papers and practise oral presentations. Students pointed out that this intensive training in writing papers and the large amount of feedback they receive help them to prepare for their master's thesis. The panel appreciates the fact that the programme puts a lot of effort into training students with varying backgrounds in academic writing and critical reflection.

LPIS courses are research-led: scientific research is incorporated into the lectures, and the research of the LPIS teaching staff is discussed. Staff members of the programme are part of the Centre for the Politics of Transnational Law, which was founded on the basis of a COST Action Network of academics who work together on the interplay between international law and international politics. The panel established that excellent researchers are involved in the programme. Students and alumni confirmed this strong relationship between research and education, but they also pointed out that the strong academic approach of the programme can make it seem abstract and less practice-oriented. In order to gain more practical experience, some choose to extend their programme with an extracurricular internship.

#### *Teaching methods*

The panel is impressed with the activating and stimulating setting of the LPIS programme. LPIS courses use a variety of teaching methods: lectures, tutorials, simulations, seminars, poster sessions, excursions and guest lectures. Students were very positive about their classes. They praised the manner in which LPIS lecturers engaged them in discussion in class. In the tutorials, ample time is reserved for students to debate and discuss the themes and questions raised by the lecturers, both among themselves and with the lecturers. The panel found confirmation of the variety of activating elements in the course materials it studied and in the examples provided by LPIS staff during the site visit. A simulation and role play as part of the foundational course Theories and Approaches to War and Collective Security, a guided analysis of the 2016 Chilcot report in the Politics of International Law course, debate sessions with guest lecturers, and thesis seminars are examples that led the panel to conclude that the teaching methods in LPIS are excellent.

Students and lecturers also pointed out that the tutorials were enhanced by the fact that the student population of LPIS is very international and diverse in their academic backgrounds. Students discuss legal and political practices from their own backgrounds with their peers and professors. In doing so, they gain a sense of the cultural and political dimension of legal norms and differences between national systems. The panel agrees: the combination of student activation and a diverse student body is a contributing factor to the programme's profile. It received the impression that the selective



nature of the programme and the high level of all participants induced students to perform to the best of their ability.

Every year, approximately five LPIS students are selected to participate in the VU International Law Clinic (12 EC). In this clinic, students work together with staff members of the Dutch office of the renowned Public International Law and Policy Group, which deals with requests from governments and non-state actors' leaderships in conflict or post-conflict situations. Students provide legal and policy research assistance and participate in professional development sessions which help them prepare for a successful entry into the professional field. Examples of assignments from this clinic included providing advice on the conflict in Sudan and doing research on legal aspects of the MH17 crash. The panel is impressed with this top-notch facility and the opportunity the clinic offers to students. It is pleased that the Board of the VU has secured the funding of this clinic.

#### *Teaching staff*

The panel looked at the list of teaching staff provided in the critical reflection and interviewed a selection of LPIS faculty members. It concluded that the quality of the LPIS staff is very high. All lecturers have a PhD degree, which stimulates research-based teaching. Their research profile is very strong. Many LPIS staff members are researchers at the Centre for the Politics of Transnational Law, and a number of them are considered outstanding researchers in the interdisciplinary field of international security.

All staff members who are involved in LPIS teaching hold a basic teaching qualification (BKO) or are working to obtain it. One staff member holds a senior qualification (SKO). The programme director is working to complete this trajectory. The Faculty also organises education-themed lunches and an annual education day, during which teaching staff are informed about and discuss topics such as assessment quality, ICT in education and diversity. The panel established that LPIS staff possess the necessary didactic skills.

During the site visit, the panel met with a selection of lecturers of the programme. It was impressed with the commitment and dedication they demonstrated concerning their teaching responsibilities. The praise of students and alumni regarding the accessibility and involvement of their teachers is particularly high. They confirmed the panel's impression that the commitment of staff members to their students is an important asset of the programme. The student-staff ratio for the programmes is approximately 21 to 1, depending on the annual intake. The panel concludes that staff quantity is clearly sufficient to run the programme successfully.

#### *Feasibility*

The LPIS programme is selective. The admission criteria are based on grade average, English proficiency, CV and a motivation letter. The programme strives to select a diverse population, in terms of nationality and disciplinary background. The number of students enrolling per year fluctuates between 22 and 37. As a result, LPIS courses involve a select number of good and excellent students.

The LPIS master's programme aims for students to acquire insight into the setup and mechanics of a complex field of law, and to understand the political dimension of this field. It combines two scientific traditions. Therefore, the academic requirements are high. Students and alumni stated that they experienced the programme as challenging. Some mentioned that they struggled with the course load, particularly in the first block. The feasibility of the programme seems affected by LPIS's ambitious aims and design. It is further challenged by the differences between the students entering the programme. LPIS is accessible to any student holding a national or international bachelor's degree in law or international relations. To obtain a sufficient level in both disciplines, most students combine the mandatory foundational course of 12 EC with a 6 EC elective on international law or international relations in the first block. The panel feels that this may be expected of an ambitious and selective programme.



The panel found that the programme has taken adequate measures to limit the impact of these challenges to feasibility. To begin with, various measures are in place to support LPIS students. They can turn to the programme coordinator for study-related concerns, and to the international office of the university with practical questions. Students with personal or study problems can talk to the faculty's study counsellors. During the site visit, the panel learned that information on the programme and facilities is clear and easy to find. Students and staff are very satisfied with how information is made available through VUNet and the Canvas sites of the programme. The panel studied course information on Canvas and was pleased to see that for each course, the learning goals, teaching methods, content, the relationship with the intended learning outcomes of the programme, and assessment methods are explained. It appreciates the organisation of student support.

Students, alumni and staff members pointed out to the panel that the feasibility of LPIS is enhanced by additional factors. The first is the programme's 'international classroom', which brings together students from various nationalities and backgrounds and increases the quality of education by drawing on their experiences and perspectives in class. Students work closely together in international cohorts. This collaboration strengthens the group identity of LPIS students and works as a motivator. The second factor contributing to feasibility and study success according to students and alumni is the assistance and supervision provided by the teaching staff. LPIS staff members are very accessible and always ready to answer questions and provide extensive feedback. Students writing their thesis reported that their supervisors made time for them whenever the process required it. The panel praises the programme for creating such a supportive and stimulating study climate.

The LPIS thesis trajectory also contributes to the programme's feasibility. In order to create a sense of community during the writing of the master's thesis and to streamline the thesis supervision, the programme designed a thesis trajectory that includes several seminar sessions. The introductory seminar in October is organised to introduce students to possible topics and the timeline of the thesis. At the seminar in January, students present their research proposal in a poster format to fellow students and supervisors. From then on, there are monthly group sessions, along with individual meetings with thesis supervisors. Students are also invited to present their research at the annual LPIS alumni day, another opportunity to get feedback on their work. LPIS students and teaching staff were very positive about the thesis trajectory during the site visit interviews. Plans have been made to further intensify the trajectory by offering additional 'thesis writing bootcamp sessions'. These sessions were organised last year and were highly appreciated by the participants. The programme sees this as an additional instrument that stimulates peer group learning during the thesis writing.

The programme has a high success rate: dropout is almost non-existent, and the majority of students manage to finish their programme within one year (cohort 2014: 61%). Approximately 85% obtain their degree within 2 years after entering the programme. An explanation for these delayed trajectories was given by students and the programme management: in most cases, students choose to do an extracurricular internship before entering the job market, in order to gain practical experience and improve their CV. All in all, the panel considers the thesis trajectory to provide LPIS students with the support and structure they need to complete the core programme successfully.

### **Considerations**

The panel considers the curriculum of Law and Politics of International Security to be very well designed. It offers a well-balanced mix of legal and political aspects of international security and convincingly realises the intended integration of these two perspectives. The course content is very topical and research-led. The curriculum clearly has an academic approach. Students practise their writing and presentation skills frequently. The teaching methods within the programme are very innovative and enable and promote the active participation of the students. Students are taught by excellent teaching staff with a solid background in interdisciplinary research. They experience the programme as challenging, but receive good support and feedback from teachers and benefit from the stimulating environment of a truly international and interdisciplinary classroom. The thesis trajectory provides LPIS students with the support and structure they need to complete the programme successfully.



## Conclusion

*Master's programme Law and Politics of International Security*: the panel assesses Standard 2 as 'excellent'.

### Standard 3: Assessment

The programme has an adequate assessment system in place.

#### Explanation:

The tests and assessments are valid, reliable and transparent to the students. The programme's examining board safeguards the quality of the interim and final tests administered.

## Findings

Assessment within Law and Politics of International Security follows the policy of VU as documented in the 'Handboek Onderwijskwaliteit'. The faculty operationalised this in the 'Nota Toetsbeleid' (2013) after consulting the Examination Board. According to this document, assessment must meet quality requirements regarding reliability, validity, transparency and learning effect. The Examination Board produced a 'Nota Kwaliteitsbewaking tentamens Faculteit der Rechtsgeleerdheid' (updated in 2017) which describes, among other things, the manner and frequency of assessment of the quality of exams by the Examination Board.

The faculty's assessment system includes an assessment plan for each programme. This plan is prepared by the programme director. It describes when and how the final qualifications are assessed in the various courses of the programme. Exams are prepared by at least two staff members, under the responsibility of the course coordinator. He or she is obliged to use some kind of assessment justification, preferably an assessment matrix. The programme director establishes the alignment of the assessment formats with the assessment plan. This is part of the assessment dossier of the course, which also includes the assignments/exams, an overview of the grades, and the students' evaluation of the course. Theses are assessed by the supervisor and a second assessor. They perform their assessment independently using the marking form that indicates the different assessment criteria. Finally, the Examination Board established criteria for three separate qualification levels of examiners: course coordinator, bachelor's thesis supervisor and master's thesis supervisor.

The faculty invests in the enhancement of assessment expertise. Workshops and training sessions are organised for staff members to raise awareness of and expertise in this topic. Assessment is also part of the training programmes for the BKO and SKO qualification.

The panel is impressed with the assessment system of the faculty and the adequate measures that are in place to stimulate and safeguard the quality of assessment. The assessment plans are well-structured and give a clear overview of the modes and frequency of assessment. The assessment dossiers that the panel studied weren't complete in all cases, but the format is good, and the Examination Board is encouraging course coordinators to complete them. However, the panel observed that one of the theses it studied was not accompanied by a marking form. From its conversations with the management, staff and students of the programme, the panel concluded that these stakeholders are satisfied with the assessment system. It was pleased to learn that LPIS organises oral presentation sessions at several points in the thesis trajectory. Such sessions constitute a good learning opportunity, and the panel assumes that they provide students with ample feedback.

Students are positive about the transparency of assessments. They are aware of the expectations and deadlines in the courses, including the thesis trajectory. The panel suggests formulating performance standards for theses with a team of thesis supervisors: what do they expect from students in order to receive a 6, 7 or 8? This could further improve the calibration of grading while stimulating and challenging students at the same time, since they will have a clearer perspective on what is expected in a good thesis.



LPIS assessment takes the form of papers and other forms of written assignments, oral presentations, roleplay and written exams. Most courses are assessed by a combination of assignments. Papers are written in three of the four mandatory courses. Students pointed out to the panel that this forms a good preparation for the writing of their thesis. Oral examination is a part of the core courses Security Studies and International Humanitarian Law. The tutorials contain formative assessments, such as oral presentations and simulations. Students also receive formative feedback on their research plan and their thesis. The panel is impressed with this variety of assessment formats and the amount of feedback students receive.

#### *Examination Board*

The quality of assessment within LPIS is safeguarded by an Examination Board appointed for all programmes within the Faculty of Law. The Examination Board has six members. Five of them are members of the Faculty's teaching staff. The sixth is an external member and an expert in assessment. The Board is assisted by two secretaries. Members of the Examination Board have received training in their tasks and responsibilities.

The panel interviewed members of the Examination Board. It concluded that they have a clear view of their tasks and responsibilities and that they work hard to guarantee a faculty-wide quality of assessment. The Board has developed its own analysis tool, which enables it to establish the reliability of test items immediately after the exam takes place. When this analysis gives rise to doubts concerning the reliability of an item, the grading can be altered before the test results are published. The Examination Board uses this instrument when it looks at a sample of tests, upon request, or whenever evaluations or results indicate that the quality of the exam is not up to standard. It discusses its findings with the lecturers of the course. In the experience of the Board, this instrument has enhanced the quality of assessment within the faculty, raising awareness and providing insight into the factors that influence the quality of exam items. The Examination Board also evaluates the assessment dossiers of courses biannually, as well as a sample of master's theses.

The panel concludes that the Examination Board has a clear view of its role and responsibilities. Its members work hard to safeguard assessment quality within the faculty. The panel appreciates the ambition of the Examination Board to supervise assessment quality in a proactive and thorough manner, while at the same time exercising the necessary restraint in placing demands upon staff members in order to avoid taking time away from education.

#### **Considerations**

According to the panel, assessment within Law and Politics of International Security is of high quality. Assessment practices and policies are in line with faculty policy ('Nota Toetsbeleid', 2013). Examiners are appointed based on clear criteria. LPIS assessment is varied and consists of written and oral examinations as well as several papers. The panel is impressed with the variety of assessment formats and the amount of feedback students receive. The Examination Board has a clear view of its tasks and responsibilities. It carries out its tasks in a proactive manner and is in control of safeguarding assessment quality.

#### **Conclusion**

*Master's programme Law and Politics of International Security*: the panel assesses Standard 3 as 'good'.



**Standard 4: Achieved learning outcomes**

The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

**Explanation:**

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.

**Findings**

Prior to the site visit, the panel studied a selection of 10 LPIS theses and the accompanying assessment forms. The theses demonstrated that LPIS graduates had acquired the ability to formulate a research question, select relevant academic literature and other legal documents, reflect on these sources and draw conclusions. A significant number of theses contained an in-depth and well-executed analysis of their theme. Almost all of the theses demonstrated the student's ability to perform a thorough interdisciplinary analysis of the topic that was studied. In all cases, the level of English and writing was good to very good. The panel did not observe systematic over- or under-grading. Some theses may even be called outstanding. This is reflected in the fact that a significant number of theses have served as the basis for an academic journal publication. All in all, the panel is impressed with the high level of the master's theses, especially since the programme attracts a wide range of students from various backgrounds. It concludes that LPIS clearly manages to bring out the best in them.

The critical reflection states that there are limited data on graduate performance, but various graduates have embarked on PhD trajectories or moved on to positions as lawyers or counsel in national and international organisations. The panel had a conversation with a sample of LPIS alumni, who were convinced that the programme prepared them well for the labour market. Despite limited data on graduate success, the high quality of the theses leads the panel to believe that LPIS graduates have acquired a skill set and level which render them attractive to the professional field.

**Considerations**

The panel is impressed with the high level of the master's theses it studied. The theses demonstrate that LPIS graduates have developed an interdisciplinary perspective on the domain of international security. The level of English is good to very good. Students have greatly differing backgrounds when entering the programme, but LPIS clearly manages to bring out the best in them. Despite limited data on graduate success, the panel is convinced that LPIS graduates have acquired a skill set and level which render them attractive to the professional field.

**Conclusion**

*Master's programme Law and Politics of International Security*: the panel assesses Standard 4 as 'good'.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

The master's programme Law and Politics of International Security distinguishes itself through its unique profile. It combines an interdisciplinary approach with a clear focus on international security. This approach is clearly visible in the curriculum, which strikes a good balance between an international law perspective, a political perspective and the relatedness of these perspectives. The programme is challenging and ambitious but remains feasible thanks to a selection of highly motivated and (very) good students, to activating and innovative learning methods, a stimulating international classroom, and good and dedicated staff with a very strong academic profile. Students receive plenty of support and benefit from the thesis trajectory. Assessment is varied and surpasses the standard. The Examination Board is clearly in control of assessment quality. The high quality of the LPIS theses demonstrates that the programme manages to bring out the best in its students.

**Conclusion**

The panel assesses the *master's programme Law and Politics of International Security* as 'good'.



# APPENDICES





## APPENDIX 1: CURRICULA VITAE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE ASSESSMENT PANEL

**Em. prof. mr. I.F. (Ige) Dekker (chair)** is professor emeritus of International Institutional Law at Utrecht University. Upon finishing his studies in 1974, he held various positions at the University of Groningen, VU University in Amsterdam, the University of Twente and Utrecht University. He was academic director at the universities of Twente and Utrecht, and was chair of the Department of Law at Utrecht University for six years. Since his retirement in 2015, he has been active in an administrative and advisory role for Utrecht University and the Open University in Heerlen. He specialises in international and European law, with a focus on institutional and economic law, international organisations, the law of war and institutional legal theory. Among his publications are books and articles on the legal meaning of violence and aggression, the European Union as a legal entity, the jurisdiction and liability of international organisations and international investment law.

**Prof. dr. mr. P.P.T. (Paul) Bovend'Eert (vice-chair)** studied Dutch Law at the Catholic University in Nijmegen, where he obtained his PhD in 1988. In 1999, he was appointed professor of Constitutional Law at that same institution, by then renamed as Radboud University. He is a lecturer in the master's programme Politics and Parliament in the Faculty of Arts, and teaches at the Academy for Legislation in The Hague. Between 1995 and 2001 and between 2008 and 2010, he was vice-dean of education and from 2010 until 2014 he was dean at the Faculty of Law in Nijmegen. His research focuses on institutional and constitutional law issues concerning the government, parliament, the judicial system and the constitutional position of the King. He was a part of several research projects on the legislative process in the Dutch parliament and the US Congress. In 2017, he joined an advisory committee dealing with developments concerning the King's income. He has published many articles and has (co-)written several books, including a handbook on constitutional law.

**R.P.M.G. (Robert) van den Boorn LLB (student member)** is a master student in Dutch Law, specialisation Commercial and Company Law, at Maastricht University. He obtained his bachelor's degree in Dutch Law at the same university in 2017. Robert van den Boorn acts as student member of the Programme Committee Dutch Law, as member of the Student Council of the Maastricht Faculty of Law, and as a student-tutor. He is also working as a court clerk to the Limburg court, both locations, sector Private Law.

**Prof. dr. mr. A.L.B. (Aurelia) Colombi Ciacchi** studied law at the universities of Trieste (Italy) and Kiel (Germany). She received her PhD from the Universities of Trieste and Bergamo (1998) and Bucerius Law School (Germany) in 2004. She has held research positions at the University of Kiel (Germany), the University of Oxford (United Kingdom) and at the Centre of European Law and Politics (ZERP) of the University of Bremen. Since 2010, she has been full professor at the Law Faculty of the University of Groningen, Endowed Chair 'Law and Governance', and academic director of the Groningen Centre for Law and Governance. Professor Colombi Ciacchi specialises in EU law, comparative law, the horizontal effect of fundamental rights and European law of obligations, and has (co-)written many books as well as articles which have been published in international journals. She is editor-in-chief of the *European Journal of Comparative Law and Governance*.

**Dr. mr. W.H.F.M. (Wouter) Cortenraad, LL.M.**, studied law at the University of Toronto (Canada) and Maastricht University, where he also obtained his PhD in 1999. He worked as legal counsel for Royal Dutch Shell (1991-1995) and was attorney at law for the law firm Allen & Overy in Amsterdam (1995-2000). In 2000 he was appointed judge for the District Court of Utrecht. In 2005 he became judge for the Amsterdam Court of Appeals (Civil Division), where he was promoted to senior judge in 2009. As a judge he oversees various types of cases, from labour and consumer law to private and financial law. Cortenraad also works as an arbitrator for the Netherlands Arbitration Institute in Rotterdam.



**Prof. dr. P.H.J. (Peter) Essers** became an adjunct tax inspector at the Ministry of Finance in The Hague upon graduating in fiscal economics at Katholieke Universiteit Brabant in Tilburg (currently named Tilburg University). In 1984, he became a lecturer in tax law at that same institution, obtaining his PhD in 1989. In 1991, he was appointed professor and chair of the department of tax law and between 1998 and 2002, he was dean of the Faculty of Law. From 2003 until 2015 he was a member of the Dutch Senate on behalf of the CDA, acting as chair of the Financial Committee. He is currently chair of the Academic Committee of European Association of Tax Law Professors and a member of the Executive Committee of this organisation. As of May 2017, he is chair of the Association for Tax Sciences (Vereniging voor Belastingwetenschap).

**Prof. dr. L.J. (Larissa) van den Herik** studied law at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, where she obtained her PhD in 2005. Since then, she has held various positions at the Faculty of Law of Leiden University. She is currently vice-dean and professor of Public International Law at the Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies. Her areas of research and expertise include international peace and security law with a focus on UN sanctions and terrorism, international criminal law and particularly the law on genocide and crimes against humanity, the role of domestic courts and questions of corporate responsibility and natural resources. She is chair of the ILA Study Group on UN Sanctions and International Law. She also holds the position of vice-chair of the Advisory Committee on Public International Law Issues to the Netherlands Government, and has advised the government in that capacity, inter alia, on drones, cyber warfare, humanitarian assistance, and autonomous weapon systems. She is editor for the *Cambridge Studies in International and Comparative Law*.

**Em. prof. dr. mr. G.E. (Gerrit) van Maanen** is emeritus and honorary professor in Private Law at Maastricht University. He studied law and philosophy at the University of Groningen, where he also obtained his PhD in 1986. In 1989, he was appointed professor in Private Law at Maastricht University. He has been involved in the development and evaluation of education at the Faculty of Law, first as chair of the programme committee in Dutch Law and later as academic director. Gerrit van Maanen specialises in private law and focuses on property law, tort law and governmental liability law. From 2002 to 2011 he was editor-in-chief of *Het Nederlands Tijdschrift voor Burgerlijk Recht*. Currently, he works as an honorary judge in the Court of Appeal in Den Bosch and as an independent advisor to various organisations.

**Em. prof. dr. mr. T.A. (Theo) de Roos** is professor emeritus of Criminal Law at Tilburg University. He studied at VU University in Amsterdam worked as lecturer at Sociale Academie De Horst in Driebergen upon graduating in 1972. He obtained his PhD at Utrecht University in 1987. Between 1977 and 2010, he worked as a lawyer at De Roos & Pen in Amsterdam. He was also professor in Criminal Law at Maastricht University (1990-1997), Leiden University (1995-2005) and Tilburg University (2005-2013). From 2013 onwards, he has been working as an honorary judge at the Court of Appeal in Den Bosch. He currently teaches law at the Netherlands Bar, the Academie voor de Rechtspraak, the Training and Study Centre for the Judiciary and OSR Judicial Education. He is also active as a member of several committees in the field of law.



## APPENDIX 2: DOMAIN-SPECIFIC FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE

### Introduction

This document outlines the Subject-specific Reference Framework for Law. The framework sets out the basic principles that degree programmes must use when setting their curricula. It indicates what may be expected in terms of the content and the level of the programmes, what they aim to achieve and what wider society can thus expect from a law graduate at Bachelor's and Master's level. The framework has been written explicitly for university Bachelor's and Master's programmes which are part of the Quality Inspections Group for Law (*Visitatiegroep Rechtsgeleerdheid*) by virtue of the final attainment levels they themselves have chosen, or which wish to join it in the context of the initial accreditation process for new programmes (*Toets nieuwe opleiding*).

The framework does not provide an exhaustive list of areas of law or legally relevant areas of focus to which the programmes must restrict themselves. Equally, it does not seek to offer rankings, answers to discussions of methodology or instructions on how programmes should meet professional requirements. It is up to each individual programme to provide an indication of where it considers itself to be on the global map of law. In formal terms, a programme achieves this by means of its academic and examination regulations and in materials included in the documents submitted to independent quality inspection committees when applying to be assessed for the purposes of accreditation.

What this framework does attempt to offer is a blueprint of what the academic world and wider society can expect from a graduate, academically-qualified lawyer – and therefore also from a programme in Law – in terms of knowledge, attitudes and skills. The fact that the framework has been revised in no way implicates that programmes offered in accordance with the old framework are outdated. On the contrary, since even the previous framework urged programmes to be open to new developments such as the globalization and digitization of society. However, the new framework places greater emphasis on describing the knowledge, attitudes and skills that relate to contemporary developments and challenges programmes to demonstrate these in their objectives and final attainment levels.

By publishing this Subject-specific Reference Framework, the Consultation Body for Law (*Disciplineoverleg Rechtsgeleerdheid*) hopes on the one hand to have provided independent quality inspection committees that will need to conduct programme assessments within the Quality Inspection Group in the years ahead with an effective basis for doing so. On the other hand, the framework offers the essential room for manoeuvre for the separate programmes offered within the Quality Inspection Group for Law to adopt their own distinctive approach.

Utrecht, December 2015

On behalf of the Council of Law Deans

Professor dr. A.M. Hol,  
Chairperson



## Realization

On 18 December 2015, the consultative body of the Council of Law Deans (abbreviated in Dutch to RDR) agreed to this Subject-specific Reference Framework for programme assessments within the Quality Inspection Group for academic programmes in Law. It offers a joint framework of subject-specific requirements for all Bachelor's and Master's programmes offered by the Law faculties at Dutch universities. This Subject-specific Reference Framework supersedes its predecessor, agreed by the then Council of Law Deans, in December 2009.

In the rest of this document, the term 'programme' is exclusively intended to mean a degree programme that is included in the Netherlands Central Register of Higher Education Study Programmes (*Centraal Register Opleidingen Hoger Onderwijs*, CROHO). Any references to the term 'lawyer' refer to academically-qualified lawyers, unless otherwise specified.

### 1. Law programmes and professions in the wider social context

Bachelor's and Master's programmes in Law aim to educate and train lawyers who are competent in the discipline and engaged in wider society, have a critical, academic mind, and are capable of analysing problem scenarios independently in order to formulate a solution. To achieve this, they not only need to apply analysis and critical evaluation to their thinking: they also need to be capable of synthetic, abstract thought. It is essential that the academic level and relevance to society of the programme is guaranteed. Communication, information and research skills all play an essential role in the programmes and there must be sufficient emphasis on current developments in terms of their social background. As such, the academic programme leading to the qualification of lawyer must be seen in context, so to speak.

The relationship between the law and wider society is in a continuous state of flux. Society is pluralistic and globally-oriented, as a result of which it is becoming increasingly complex. This trend also applies to the law. The days when law in the Netherlands encompassed Dutch legislation and case law alone are long gone and it is now equally affected by international and European legislation and case law, in the form of policy regulations, recommendations, covenants, self-regulation, European harmonization, the influence of comparative law, etc. Citizens have become empowered, the number of legal regulations continues to increase and society is strongly influenced by a trend towards juridification. As a result of European integration and globalization, European law and international law are becoming increasingly important. The 21st-century information society and its legal problems, as well as the expectations placed on the law by society, are decreasingly affected by national borders at the same time as the traditional boundaries in the legal and social sense are regaining ground. In whatever context he or she enters employment, a graduate lawyer needs to be increasingly aware of and responsive to other countries' legal systems and cultures.

Within the Quality Inspections Group for Law, programmes are offered that meet the demand for lawyers with a broad academic training – generalists – especially for the purposes of first-line consultancy and policy preparation and in numerous other positions across the labour market. There are also specialized Master's programmes which produce graduates capable of developing into academically-trained specialists who compare favourably in their field with their academic professional counterparts anywhere in the world. Finally, there are programmes that are actually more focused on broadening the area of law covered by the programme.

Lawyers work in a wide range of positions and roles. Indeed, there are greater numbers of lawyers working outside the traditional legal professions rather than within. The Law programmes prepare graduates for these traditional professions, but increasingly also for a variety of other activities that call for an academic attitude, critical analysis, skills in writing and speaking, and where legal expertise is desirable. They, therefore, no longer focus solely on the professional requirements for the Bar, judiciary, taxation and notarial profession which are generally seen as the traditional legal professions, although these form the core of certain programmes. All programmes aim to achieve effective coordination with the labour market by maintaining strong links with the wider professional field they serve. In addition to internships and career orientation, this encompasses contacts with

professional organizations and employers, advisory councils, alumni and guest lecturers. In addition, a graduate Bachelor of Laws must be adequately equipped with the research and other skills required to gain admission to a Master's programme in Law and subsequently to a PhD programme, despite the fact that only a small portion of graduates opt for a career in research.

In the more than ten years that the Bachelor/Master system has been in place in the Netherlands, no specific career prospects for an academically-qualified Bachelor in Law have emerged and there is no clearly identifiable labour market for graduates equipped only with an academic Bachelor's degree in Law (LL.B). Many LL.B graduates work in an environment where knowledge of law is relevant, but so far no specific requirements for professional skills from a Bachelor's programme have emerged as a result of this. The labour market for academically-qualified lawyers still shows a preference for lawyers who have qualified to Master's level. As a result, a large majority of students studying Law at university opt to complete a Master's programme after the Bachelor. This is not only because of the greater prospects this offers in the labour market, but also because it is a statutory requirement for access to the traditional legal professions.

Nevertheless, Bachelor's programmes still also aim to prepare students for their future life as lawyers. This can be achieved by including aspects of that professional practice in the content and composition of the curriculum, but also by means of extracurricular activities and career preparation.

With the advent of higher professional education (HBO) programmes in areas of the law, a lawyer is no longer necessarily someone with a university certificate that qualifies them for the traditional legal professions (prosecuting lawyers and the judiciary; the Bar; the notarial profession, tax consultants); a Master of Laws (*meester in de rechten, mr.*). Although lawyers qualified to HBO level are entitled to use the title of Bachelor of Laws (LL.B), there is a distinct difference between the HBO programmes and the academic programmes in Law. What distinguishes them is that the academic programmes lay the foundations for mastering the legal research method, as expressed in the final attainment levels of the programmes. This is mainly reflected in the content of the programme, its depth and its approach to the law. Academic Bachelor's and Master's programmes focus on educating lawyers who have learned how to think independently and critically, who not only learn to find answers to questions, but also continue to question the answers they find. Access to the traditional legal professions is regulated by statute and requires both an academic Bachelor's degree (LL.B) and the Master of Laws degree (LL.M).<sup>1</sup>

In the Netherlands, lawyers with the LL.M qualification will generally use the equivalent Dutch title *meester in de rechten (mr.)*, especially when working in the traditional legal professions.

## **2. Possibilities for national and international comparison**

Globally and within Europe, programmes in Law are characterized by their highly varied context and structure, together with significant differences in terms of admission and the duration of study. In addition, all countries have separate regulations governing graduate lawyers' access to the Bar, the judiciary, tax law and the notarial profession, which have an influence on both the orientation and the intended final level. Of course, it is possible to compare the curricula of different programmes, but a serious international benchmark for objectives, level and orientation for programmes in Law currently remains impossible.

The German CHE benchmark organization is not open to programmes in Law in other countries, despite the fact that this is possible for other disciplines.<sup>2</sup> The EU project Tuning Sectoral Framework for Social Sciences also failed to reach a harmonized set of final attainment levels for programmes

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<sup>1</sup> The professional requirements for the Bar, the judiciary and the notarial profession were changed by Royal Decree on 18 September 2008 (Netherlands Bulletin of Acts and Decrees 2008, 383) when, in the context of admission to regulated legal professions, the HBO degree of Bachelor obtained at a university of applied sciences (*hogeschool*) was equated with a Bachelor's degree in Law obtained at an academic university, if the HBO programme in Law was completed by means of a bridging programme. The bridging programme contains course components in Law offered by a university or the Open University, with a total study load of at least 60 credits.

<sup>2</sup> Gemeinnütziges Centrum für Hochschulentwicklung: [www.che.de](http://www.che.de).



in Law.<sup>3</sup> In other countries, several national benchmarks for programmes in Law do exist, including the Benchmarks for Law in the United Kingdom, which stipulates the knowledge, skills and attitude required by Bachelor's and Master's graduates for quality assessment and accreditation of programmes there.<sup>4</sup> In any case, these are only of limited use for programmes in continental Europe because of the major differences between the common law and civil law legal systems.

There is no doubt that the Bologna and Lisbon Agreements had a harmonizing impact on the content of legal education in the EU. As part of the accession process to the EU, new EU member states have frequently based their programmes on the Bachelor/Master structure in advance, and the old member states are still in the process of reforming and harmonizing their education systems. In this, they sometimes opt for solutions that actually hamper comparability between different countries, as in the example of Germany, which is moving towards a more varied assortment of programmes.<sup>5</sup>

All of this would suggest that a serious international comparison of the objectives, level and orientation of programmes in Law remains impossible or at least of little use.

With regard to the comparison of programmes in the Netherlands itself, it is possible to say that there is a lot of sharing of information and coordination between the faculties of Law in the Netherlands, including on such areas as educational renewal, research, the interpretation of accreditations and the configuration of professional requirements. There is regular national consultation between the Deans in the RDR, as an offshoot of which those responsible for education and the directors of operations meet when necessary to discuss education-related, organizational and financial subjects and share experiences and information. Finally, there are regular national consultations and coordination at administrative level in the National Policy-workers Consultation Body (*Landelijk Overleg Beleidsmedewerkers*). In addition, the RDR and separate faculties also take advantage of good practice examples identified by the panels conducting independent quality inspections and included in their assessment reports to the NVAO (Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders). The RDR also engages in discussion with representatives from the varied professional field it serves. For example, it consults with the Council for the Judiciary (*Raad voor de Rechtspraak*) and the Netherlands Bar Association (*Nederlandse Orde van Advocaten*) in order to determine a standard to define the applicable statutory provisions for the so-called civil effect of programmes in Law. This takes the form of a covenant.

As such, it is possible to argue that some kind of national benchmarking does take place, generally of an informal nature, except in the case of national independent quality inspections and the restrictions relating to the aforementioned covenant. In that context, the Discipline Consultation Body also undertakes formal duties.

### 3. Professional requirements

Access to the judiciary, the Bar and the notarial profession is regulated by and in accordance with statute. In practical terms, this means that requirements are set for the organization of Bachelor's and Master's programmes intended to enable admission to higher programmes that prepare for positions in the judiciary, the Bar, the notarial profession and tax law.

The programmes that opt to prepare for these higher programmes stipulate this in their academic and examination regulations by emphatically including within them the statutory professional requirements and the further definition of these in the covenant described above. The examination

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<sup>3</sup> Excerpt from the 2012 final report: 'Consequently, even the proto list of the competences required by students and future practitioners of law are still at this stage no more than embryonic.' Tuning Sectoral Framework for Social Sciences – Final Report, 2008, p. 45. See also the country lists in Annex 4 of the report (<http://tuningacademy.org/sqf-social-sciences/?lang=en>).

<sup>4</sup> A draft of a revised version has been published: Subject Benchmark Statement: Law (Draft for Consultation, March 2015) (<http://www.gaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/SBS-consultation-Law-15.pdf>).

<sup>5</sup> Neue Wege in der Juristenausbildung, Essen, 2010, [http://www.stifterverband.info/wissenschaft\\_und\\_hochschule/lehre/juristenausbildung/](http://www.stifterverband.info/wissenschaft_und_hochschule/lehre/juristenausbildung/).

boards for these programmes will issue specific statements to this effect, on the basis of which the higher programmes can determine whether a programme fulfils the intended requirements.

#### **4. Final attainment levels for Bachelor's and Master's programmes**

Every Law programme makes choices when setting its final attainment levels based on national and relevant international comparisons of final attainment levels and in an attempt to achieve the best possible match with what is a very diverse professional field. These final attainment levels are included in the academic and examination regulations of each separate programme. They include at least three categories.

##### *A. Knowledge and understanding*

The graduate lawyer is proficient in the key tenets of the area or areas of law on which the programme focuses. This applies equally to their material and formal and the historical and theoretical aspects.

However, one-dimensional knowledge alone is not sufficient. Programmes therefore aim to develop a 'genuine understanding of the law' in their students, in an academic environment in which 'why' questions are allowed to flourish. This means that, alongside the subject-specific knowledge referred to above, methods are also taught which enable students to keep abreast of the latest relevant developments and changes. The education can also encompass an understanding of the differences between major legal families (such as those between common law and civil law), of the historical and philosophical evolution of the law and, insofar as the nature of the programme requires or permits it, also of comparative law methodology. This means that the graduate lawyer must always be capable of updating his or her legal knowledge on a permanent basis and possibly also specialize in new areas.

##### *B. Academic and legal skills*

The above assumes an increasing focus on acquiring academic and legal skills: lifelong learning and the acquisition of an international attitude. It also assumes that the graduate lawyer is capable of reflecting on the law and translating issues in society into the language that the law uses to solve such issues. During the programme, students are encouraged to search for questions and problems as well as answers and solutions; they are given an opportunity to develop capacities of analysis and learn to think, write and present in a critical way.

The ability to formulate and solve a legal case is also essential. To achieve this, the graduate lawyer must be able to effectively collect, process and evaluate the relevant facts and evidence, and apply the rules of law to them. The lawyer is expected to be capable of legally interpreting a problem in society and outlining potential solutions.

In addition, a lawyer must be capable of conveying his or her legal knowledge and legal judgment both orally and in writing to other lawyers and in other professional environments. This means that language is the lawyer's main working tool. Effective and clear verbal and written proficiency in the Dutch language (or in English if that is the language of instruction for the programme or part of it) is essential. For this, students must have an opportunity during their programme, if relevant for the specific programme, to acquire knowledge of English legal terminology in the current social context.

##### *c. Academic citizenship/attitude*

During the programme, the prospective lawyer should become fully acquainted with the legal culture or cultures. He or she should be enabled to develop an ethical professional attitude and be aware of the social context in which the law operates and, related to that, his or her responsibility within society. The teaching and educational environment assists the student in this. It is important for education to be structured in such a way that it sparks an interest in wider society and evokes a natural curiosity for legal issues and legal thinking, as well as for the role that law plays in society.



## 5. Final level

Programmes need to be transparent regarding how students are able to reach the final level and how they can demonstrate that they have reached it. Test results, assignments and presentations form the primary basis for this.

For Bachelor's programmes in Law, the final level achieved is also reflected in the thesis, dissertation or final project. Responding to a legal question with the help of recognized legal methods and reporting on the underlying research conducted form the main basis for this.

The Bachelor's thesis or its equivalent does not aim to demonstrate that the final attainment levels of the Bachelor's programme have been reached. Some important skills, such as communication, are not tested and neither is the student's understanding of all areas of the law that are of relevance to the Bachelor's programme. Moreover, most Bachelors' programmes in Law award only relatively few credits for this final assignment. In Bachelor's programmes in Law, the acquisition of research skills, in the form of methodology and technique courses, does not generally play a central role. Acquiring research skills is part of the general academic education of lawyers and primarily occurs through the handling of the separate areas of the law. Programmes are at liberty to emphasize certain areas in order to reflect the distinctive appeal of a particular programme, which in turn will be expressed in the final assignment.

The same applies for the Master's thesis, although it differs in generally placing greater emphasis on the development of research skills, if only in view of the fact that achieving any Master's degree in Law in principle enables access to a PhD programme. Alongside the regular Master's programmes, specialist research Master's programmes also exist, which place specific emphasis on the acquisition of research skills. The further in-depth study required for other areas of academic professional practice is in any case only really achieved in the Master's phase. This is expressed in the position played in the curriculum by the Master's thesis, the greater number of credits generally set aside for the final assignment in the Master's programme and the requirements set with regard to its contents.

## 6. General characteristics and objectives of Bachelor's and Master's programmes

It has already been pointed out above that the range of programmes is varied, in terms of their number, the chosen specializations and their emphasis. This does not detract from the fact that programmes in Law have, and must have, characteristics in common. These characteristics need not necessarily be present to the same extent in each programme, but they must at least be reflected at the core of each programme. The specific approach adopted by programmes in this regard is stipulated in the academic and examination regulations for the programme .

In Bachelor's programmes in Law, the following characteristics play a central role:

- a. the social function of the law;
- b. the core concepts in the most important areas of law: private law, constitutional law, administrative law, criminal law, European law, international law and, for tax-related and notarial programmes, tax law;
- c. the law as a coherent system;
- d. the theoretical basic principles and historical development of the law and, for tax-related and notarial programmes, the economic aspects of the law.

Master's programmes in Law involve further in-depth study of knowledge relating to one or several areas of the law or specific subjects within them. Key characteristics include:

- e. the social function of the area covered by the programme, its boundaries and related areas;
- f. more intensive or extensive study of core concepts in one or several areas of the law (private law, constitutional law, administrative law, criminal law, European law and international law);
- g. the position of the area of the law covered within the system of the law as a whole;
- h. the theoretical basic principles and historical development of the law and, for tax-related and notarial programmes, the economic aspects of the law.

Academic programmes in Law also aim to achieve the following:

- i. the acquisition of knowledge and understanding of the law, in which law is considered also in its European, international and comparative law context;
- j. reflecting on the boundaries of the law as well as its related areas;
- k. acquiring academic and legal skills. In this context, this is understood to mean:
  - 1. the capacity to think about the law as an academic;
  - 2. the ability to communicate with fellow lawyers and non-lawyers based on the knowledge and understanding acquired, making use of an analytical attitude and outstanding speaking and writing skills;
  - 3. the ability to apply a relevant set of academic tools;
  - 4. the ability to participate in an academic debate;
  - 5. the ability to gather, evaluate, process and apply knowledge;
  - 6. the ability to apply specific knowledge of an area of the law in a wider academic, historical, philosophical, ethical and socio-cultural context;
  - 7. the ability to deal critically with the rules of law and case law, and seek out and find new solutions;
  - 8. the ability to keep abreast of and explore new developments and new areas of the law;
  - 9. the ability to deal with the increasing globalization, Europeanization and internationalization of the law;
- l. the development of academic citizenship that includes an understanding of a professional ethical attitude and awareness of the social context in which the law operates, as well as the social responsibility that this implies for the academically-qualified lawyer.



## APPENDIX 3: INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

***The student graduating with a Master's degree will have the following knowledge and understanding of:***

1. International conflict and security law, including *jus ad bellum*, *jus in bello* and *jus post bellum*;
2. Contemporary theories of international security, as developed in political science (especially IR theory);
3. The nature and development of contemporary armed conflicts;
4. The overlaps and differences between the legal and political science approaches to international security;
5. The interrelationship between international law and international politics in the area of international security;
6. The difficulties involved in the application of 'traditional' legal and political science concepts to contemporary armed conflicts.

***The student graduating with a Master's degree will be capable of:***

7. Identify and apply theoretical approaches from international law and political science;
8. Identify the differences and overlaps between the various methodologies used in law and political science;
9. Independently set up legal and political arguments in the area of international conflict and security law;
10. Independently apply research methods and interpret results;
11. Independently set up, carry out and report the result of research projects;
12. Critically reflect on research results and relating those results to theoretical debates within the selected domains.

***The student graduating with a Master's degree will have a critical, creative and innovative attitude with regard to:***

13. The way in which problems in the area of international conflict and security are framed in academic, legal and policy debates;
14. The existing legal framework in the field of international conflict and security;
15. Existing policy solutions in the field of international conflict and security;
16. Existing scientific theories in the area of international security;
17. Academic research as well as research results.





# APPENDIX 4: OVERVIEW OF THE CURRICULUM

## Law and Politics of International Security 2016/2017

Period 1				Period 2				Period 3				Period 4				Period 5				Period 6																						
5 sep 2016/ 28 oct 2016				31 oct 2016/ 23 dec 2016				9 jan 2017/ 3 feb 2017				6 feb 2017/ 31 march 2017				3 april 2017/ 2 june 2017				30 june 2017																						
36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Theories and Approaches to War and Collective Security (12 ec)				International Humanitarian Law (6 ec)				IHL (continued)				The Politics of International Law (6 ec)				Philosophy of International Law (6 ec)																										
Public International Law (6 ec)				Security Studies (6 ec)								Perpetrators and Bystanders (6 ec)																														
Theories and Approaches in International Relations (6 ec)				International Criminal Courts and Tribunals (6 ec)								Corporations and International Crimes (6 ec)																														
				Selected Issues in: International Security (6 ec)				Res. Sem Int. Crimes (3 ec)								Research Seminar Int. Crimes (3 ec)																										
International Law Clinic (12 ec)				International Law Clinic (continued)				ILC (continued)				International Law Clinic (continued)				International Law Clinic (continued)																										
Capita Selecta Law and Politics of International Security (3 or 6 ec)																																										
Master Thesis (18 ec)																																										

Compulsory Course

Optional Course  
(2 courses)

Extra Curricular  
Courses

3 june 2016



## APPENDIX 5: PROGRAMME OF THE SITE VISIT

<b>Wednesday 8 November 2017</b>		
9.30	10.00	Arrival and welcome
10.00	12.00	Preparatory meeting and review of available information
12.00	12.30	Interview with faculty management
12.30	13.00	Lunch
13.00	14.00	Interview with management of all programmes
14.00	14.45	Interview with students B Rechtsgeleerdheid
14.45	15.15	Panel discussion/break
15.15	16.00	Interview with students B and M Notarieel recht
16.00	16.45	Interview with teaching staff B Rechtsgeleerdheid, B and M Notarieel recht
16.45	17.00	Break
17.00	17.45	Interview with members programme committee Notarieel recht
17.45	18.30	Interview with alumni Notarieel recht
<b>Thursday 9 November 2017</b>		
9.00	10.30	Preparatory meeting and review of available information; office hour (10.00-10.30)
10.30	11.30	Interview with students M Rechtsgeleerdheid, M Fiscaal recht
11.30	12.00	Interview with students M International Business Law
12.30	13.00	Interview with students M Law and Politics of International Security
12.30	13.00	Lunch
13.00	14.00	Interview with teaching staff M Rechtsgeleerdheid, M Fiscaal recht
14.00	14.30	Interview with teaching staff M International Business Law
14.30	15.00	Interview with teaching staff M Law and Politics of International Security
15.00	15.30	Break
15.30	16.15	Interview with members programme committees B and M Rechtsgeleerdheid
16.15	17.00	Interview with members examination board
17.00	17.15	Break
17.15	17.45	Interview with M Rechtsgeleerdheid and M Fiscaal recht
17.45	18.15	Interview with M International Business Law and M Law and Politics of International Security
<b>Friday 10 November 2017</b>		
9.00	10.00	Final interview with faculty management
10.00	10.30	Tour
10.30	12.30	Formulation preliminary findings
12.30	13.00	Break and lunch
13.00	16.00	Formulation preliminary findings
16.00	16.30	Preparation of presentation preliminary findings
16.30	17.00	Presentation of preliminary findings

## APPENDIX 6: THESES AND DOCUMENTS STUDIED BY THE PANEL

Prior to the site visit, the panel studied a selection of 10 LPIS theses. The student numbers of these theses are available upon request.

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

- Course materials, sample exams and answer models of the following LPIS courses:
  1. Theories and Approaches to War and Collective Security
  2. Security Studies
  3. International Humanitarian Law
- Annual reports and annual strategy of the faculty (2014-2020)
- Annual reports examination board and programme committee (2014-2017)
- Annual reports programmes and study adviser (2014-2016)
- Minutes examination board
- Assessment policy of the faculty
- Assessment dossier contents 10 March 2017
- Report on appointment of examiners
- Strategic plan quality assurance exams
- Examination board Thesis check 2017 sample
- Examination rules
- assessment plans, matrices, internship and thesis guidelines of all programmes
- Facultaire Nota toetsbeleid 2013 en 2017
- RCH quality assurance framework 2016 en 2017
- NSE 2017
- Report teaching methods RCH and Not.
- Position Paper Law in Action
- Regulations Faculty of Law
- Advisory committee Cornelisse skills master's programmes RCH
- Report ICT in Education 2016-2017
- Report Talent Education 2016
- Academic juridical education December 2012 versie 2.0 RCH and Not
- 2016 and 2017 Educational Vision Faculty of Law
- Report Career Office 2.0 and annual reports 2016-2017
- information and report Diversity
- Analysis and results course evaluations 2016-2017
- Minor evaluations
- Programme Onderwijsdag (2014-2017)
- Graduates per master's track (2015-2017)
- Midterm review Fiscaal Recht, February 2015

