

Assessment report
Limited Programme Assessment

Master International Crimes and Criminology

VU University Amsterdam

Contents of the report

1. Executive summary	2
2. Assessment process	4
3. Overview of the programme.....	6
3.1 Basic information about the programme	6
3.2 Main facts about the institution	7
3.3 Intended learning outcomes.....	7
3.4 Outline of the curriculum	8
4. Overview of the assessments.....	9
5. Findings, considerations and assessments per standard	10
5.1 Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes	10
5.2 Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	12
5.3 Standard 3: Assessment and achieved learning outcomes.....	16
Annex 1: Schedule of site visit.....	19
Annex 2: Documents reviewed	20
Annex 3: Theses reviewed	21
Annex 4: Composition of the assessment panel	22

1. Executive summary

In this executive summary, the panel presents the main considerations which have led to the assessment of the quality of the master's programme International Crimes and Criminology of VU University Amsterdam, which was assessed according to the NVAO Assessment Framework (22 November 2011).

The programme management has taken up the recommendations made during the initial accreditation of the programme in 2009. To enable students to obtain positions outside of the academic world, the teaching of analytical and writing skills has been strengthened. Each year, programme management speaks to the lecturers in order to prevent overlap of courses or gaps between these. Not only has the programme management followed up on said recommendations but also on suggestions, made during the midterm review and by the advisory board. Programme management has considered extending the curriculum, has introduced additional reading for non-law-students in the International Criminal Courts and Tribunals course and has invited practitioners to teach in the Experts Course and in the Research Seminar.

The objectives of the programme are sound, stating clearly that the students should master relevant aspects of international crimes and of international criminal justice. The panel is very positive about the distinct interdisciplinary character of the programme, which makes it unique in the Netherlands. Moreover, the level of aspiration with regard to these interdisciplinary aspects is advanced and highly ambitious. The programme meets the requirements of the domain-specific framework of reference for Criminology. The intended learning outcomes of the programme reflect the objectives appropriately. The panel welcomes the emphasis the programme management has put on the knowledge of theories and methods in this field and on the research capabilities of the students, educating them to become independent, critical thinkers with in-depth knowledge of this domain. Meeting the learning outcomes, the graduates will be in a position to either pursue an academic career or to perform policy-related tasks in the professional field. Support for the programme's objectives and intended learning outcomes on the part of the programme management, lecturers and students is very strong. Comparing this programme to others in this domain, the programme management demonstrates the specific characteristics of the programme. The intended learning outcomes are an appropriate indication of its master's level.

The panel regards the entry requirements for the programme as quite appropriate and the admission procedure as carried out very conscientiously. The Faculty of Law and the programme management have made some well-thought-out decisions concerning the number of students to be admitted and the composition of the student group.

All of the learning outcomes have been covered in the courses. In the curriculum, the students learn research skills, like in the Research Methodology of International Crimes course and the Expert Course but also in other courses. The panel would appreciate more focus on qualitative research methods in the curriculum. The Corporations and International Crimes course is adequate for this programme, as corporations may play a role in and be held responsible for international crimes, even if they fall outside of the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. The panel holds the view that the victims of international crimes ought to feature more prominently as a subject in the core curriculum. For the panel, it is important that the programme management and lecturers can substantiate whether a specific topic is part of the domain of international crimes and international criminal justice. The compulsory and recommended literature in the courses is quite appropriate.

The capabilities of the lecturers in the programme are very much up to standard, regarding their expertise, their research capabilities and their teaching qualities. A substantial number of lecturers have a Basic Teaching Qualification. In addition, the lecturers incorporate their research into the courses and engage students in ongoing research projects.

The programme may be demanding but is doable, although it leaves little room for other activities. The assistance by the lecturers and the study guidance especially by the programme coordinator are more than appropriate. The panel accepts the programme management's view that extending the programme beyond one year would create more problems than it solves, but acknowledges there may be a difference between Dutch students including an internship and foreign students for whom this may not be feasible.

The quality assurance system of the programme is adequate. The positions and roles of the various boards and committees are well-defined.

The examination and assessment regulations of the programme are appropriate. The correspondence between the learning goals of the courses and the examinations is ensured and adequate assessment formats are being used, also for papers. The examination board performs their responsibilities well concerning the master's theses and should proceed to check written examinations and papers as well.

The panel studied a number of examinations and has found the contents to be very appropriate and the level quite demanding. The methods of examination are selected appropriately.

The procedure for writing the thesis is appropriate and the students are well-prepared for the thesis process. The theses the members of the panel have studied, were all at least satisfactory. The panel's evaluations of the theses did not differ substantially from the ones by the programme's supervisors. In six of the 15 theses, the students had done their own research, being other than the literature research. The panel would advise paying more attention to the quality of the English language in some of the theses. The panel has noted that a substantial percentage of the theses have led to an article in a peer-reviewed journal and/or have won prizes and regards this as additional evidence of the level a number of students have achieved. The graduates of the programme are well-equipped to pursue either an academic or a professional career.

The panel has noted the proposed introduction of more stringent rules regarding the supervision of theses and encourages the programme management to take even more steps to raise the number of students completing the programme in one year.

The panel assesses the programme as satisfactory and advises NVAO to grant re-accreditation to the master's programme International Crimes and Criminology of VU University Amsterdam.

Rotterdam, 21 November 2014

Chair of the assessment panel
prof. dr. C.H. Brants

Secretary
drs. W.J.J.C. Vercouteren RC

2. Assessment process

Certiked VBI received a request to conduct an assessment for the re-accreditation of the master's programme International Crimes and Criminology. This request was submitted by VU University Amsterdam.

Certiked requested the approval by NVAO of the proposed panel of experts to conduct this assessment. NVAO have given their approval. The panel consisted of (for more detailed information please refer to Annex 4: Composition of the assessment panel):

- prof. dr. C.H. Brants, chair, professor emeritus Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure, Utrecht University and professor of Comparative Criminal Justice, Northumbria University, United Kingdom
- prof. dr. J-A.M. Wemmers, panel member, full professor in Criminology, École de Criminologie, Université de Montréal, Canada
- dr. J.A.C. Bevers, panel member, general legal advisor to the Prosecutor at the International Criminal Court, The Hague, Netherlands
- A.M.A. Kangur BSc, student member, student in the master's programme Artificial Intelligence, University of Groningen.

On behalf of Certiked, drs. W. Vercouteren RC was responsible for the process co-ordination and for drafting the panel's report. All panel members and the secretary signed a statement of independence and confidentiality.

The panel conducted this assessment on the basis of the standards of the NVAO Assessment Framework (22 November 2011).

The following procedure was adopted. The members of the panel studied the documents presented beforehand by the programme management, including a number of theses (please refer to Annex 2 and 3: Documents reviewed and Theses reviewed).

Prior to the site visit, each panel member and the process co-ordinator/secretary discussed in person, by telephone or by e-mail their findings and preliminary considerations concerning the quality of the programme. The panel members presented a number of questions to be put to the programme representatives during the site visit. On the basis of this input, the secretary drew up a complete list of questions, which was used during the site visit.

On 4 November 2014, the panel conducted a site visit at the premises of the programme on the campus of VU University Amsterdam. The site visit was conducted in accordance with the schedule drawn up beforehand (please refer to Annex 1: Site visit schedule). The programme management communicated the open office hours to the students in the programme and the staff. No one presented himself.

Immediately after the site visit, the members of the panel shared their considerations for each of the standards of the NVAO Assessment Framework. These considerations were based on the findings during the site visit, building upon the evaluation of the documents submitted by the programme management. The chair of the panel presented a broad outline of the findings to the representatives of the Faculty of Law and of the programme.

A draft version of this report was finalised by the secretary having taken into account the information presented as well as the findings and considerations of the panel. The draft report was then sent to the members of the panel. The panel members corrected and amended the draft report. Finally, the secretary drew up the final report. This report was sent to the programme management to correct for errors. After having corrected the errors, the report was sent to the institution's Board to accompany their request for re-accreditation.

3. Overview of the programme

3.1 Basic information about the programme

Administrative information about the programme:

Name programme as in CROHO:	M International Crimes and Criminology
Orientation and level programme:	Academic Master
Grade:	MSc
Number of credits:	60 EC
Specializations:	Not applicable
Location:	Amsterdam
Mode of study:	full time
Registration in CROHO:	66724

Administrative information about the institution:

Name of institution:	VU University Amsterdam (Vrije Universiteit)
Status of institution:	private, government-funded university
Institution's quality assurance test:	positive (conditional)

Quantitative data about the programme

Percentage of students who have completed the programme in two years

Cohort	2009	2010	2011
Percentage of students	74 %	64 %	63 %

Percentage of lecturers with the following qualifications

Qualification	Master	PhD	BTQ
Percentage of lecturers	100 %	70 %	82 %

The students-to-teacher ratio is 14 to 1.

The number of contact hours amounts to 10 hours in the first semester and is 6 hours in the second semester.

3.2 Main facts about the institution

The degree programme Master in International Crimes and Criminology is a programme of the Faculty of Law of VU University Amsterdam.

VU University Amsterdam was founded in 1880. Nearly 25,000 students are enrolled in the programmes of the university. About 10,000 staff is employed by the University and by the affiliated VU Medical Centre.

VU University Amsterdam aspires to be an open organization, strongly linked to people and society. For the University what matters is not just the acquisition of a greater depth of knowledge, but also a wider scope.

The University expects students, researchers, PhD candidates, lecturers and other employees to look beyond their own interests and their own field.

Academic research and education at VU University Amsterdam are characterized by a high level of ambition, and encourage free and open communication and exchange of ideas.

VU University Amsterdam stands for universal university values such as academic freedom and independence, which is reflected in the name of the University ('VU' is the Dutch abbreviation for Free University). The basic philosophy of VU is expressed in three core values: responsibility, openness and personal engagement.

The Faculties of VU University Amsterdam are the Faculties of Earth and Life Sciences, Human Movement Sciences, Economics and Business Administration, Sciences, Medicine, Theology, Arts, Psychology and Education, Law, Social Sciences, Dentistry and Philosophy.

3.3 Intended learning outcomes

The students who have completed the master's programme International Crimes and Criminology, are to have mastered the following learning outcomes.

Has knowledge of and insight in:

- Recent approaches, theories, methods and insights from various disciplines in relation to international crimes;
- Quantitative and qualitative research methodology in relation to international crimes;
- Legal issues concerning international crimes.

Is capable of:

- Identifying and applying theoretical approaches from various disciplines;
- Applying research methods and interpreting results;
- Independently setting up, carrying out and reporting on the results of an interdisciplinary research project;
- Critical reflection on research results and reflection on the theoretical debates within the selected domain.

Shows evidence of:

- An independent, critical attitude with regard to existing theories and knowledge;
- An investigative, original and creative attitude with regard to existing issues and solutions in relation to international criminal justice and transitional justice;
- Critical, analytical and normative reflection on academic research and on research results.

3.4 Outline of the curriculum

In the table below, the courses in the programme are presented.

Compulsory courses:	Credits
International Crimes	9.0 EC
Research Methodology of International Crimes	6.0 EC
Expert Course	3.0 EC
International Criminal Courts and Tribunals	6.0 EC
Perpetrators and Bystanders	6.0 EC
Master Thesis	18.0 EC
Two or more optional courses totaling 12.0 EC from the list below:	
Public International Law	6.0 EC
International Law Clinic	6.0 EC
CICJ Research Lab	6.0 EC
International Humanitarian Law	6.0 EC
Research Seminar International Crimes	3.0 EC
Corporations and International Crimes	6.0 EC
The Politics of International Law	6.0 EC
The Politics of International Criminal Justice	6.0 EC
Seminar Human Rights	6.0 EC
Total credits of the programme	60.0 EC

4. Overview of the assessments

Standard	Assessment
Standard 1. Intended learning outcomes	Good
Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment	Satisfactory
Standard 3: Assessment and achieved learning outcomes	Satisfactory
Programme master in International Crimes and Criminology	Satisfactory

5. Findings, considerations and assessments per standard

5.1 Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

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

Findings

The objectives of the programme are to acquaint students with the various facets of international crimes and to teach them to address these in an academic way. So, the students are taught to define and conceptualize international crimes, to measure and map these, to investigate the causes thereof, to analyze ways to handle international crimes and to develop strategies to prevent these. The programme explicitly takes an interdisciplinary approach to these subjects, studying international crimes both from a social sciences or criminological perspective and from a legal or criminal law perspective. The programme management's objective is to train students to become independently thinking experts in the field of transitional and international criminal justice.

The programme management has adopted the domain-specific framework of reference for Criminology as the description of the domain the programme addresses. As has been stated for the master's programmes in this framework, the students in this domain are to acquire in-depth knowledge of the theories and methodologies of both criminal law and the social sciences and should be able to integrate their knowledge in order to address subjects regarding security and crimes as well as policy issues in this respect. In addition, these students are to be able to conduct interdisciplinary research in this domain in a largely self-directed manner.

The students are to be able to conduct academic research in this domain independently but should also have the skills to address crime and security issues in the professional field. So, the programme prepares the students for an academic career as well as for positions in the professional field. These positions may be found in the International Criminal Court or in one of the tribunals in The Hague but also in non-governmental organisations or national or international police organisations. In order to strengthen the relationships with the professional field, the programme management has installed an advisory board, representing a number of different organisations.

The programme management has drafted the intended learning outcomes, which have been listed in section 3.3 of this report. These learning outcomes refer to the knowledge and understanding the graduates ought to have of the approaches, theories, methods and insights regarding the subject of international crimes. The learning outcomes, also, stress the research skills of the students and their abilities to set up and carry out an interdisciplinary research project. To conclude, the students should be able to critically reflect on theories and on the results of academic research, thereby demonstrating an independent, creative and original attitude.

The programme management has compared the intended learning outcomes to the Dublin-descriptors in order to assess the master's level of these learning outcomes. From this comparison may be derived that all of the Dublin-descriptors are appropriately and evenly addressed by the learning outcomes.

Also, the programme management has conducted a review of similar programmes in criminology in the Netherlands and abroad. In the Netherlands, the programmes Forensic Criminology of Leiden University, Global Criminology of Utrecht University and Intervention Criminology of VU University are comparable. The focus of this programme, however, is on international crimes and international criminal justice. In this respect, the programme distinguishes itself from the other programmes. Another feature of this programme is its being directed towards the study of phenomena on a meso-level or micro-level. The programme differs from programmes like Holocaust and Genocide Studies of University of Amsterdam and Conflict Studies and Human Rights of Utrecht University which take a much more macro-level approach. In other countries like the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany and Poland, programmes are offered concerning the study of human rights and international crimes. Some of these programmes are quite similar to this programme.

Considerations

The panel considers the objectives of the programme to be sound. The objectives state very clearly the students are to master relevant aspects of international crimes and of international criminal justice. The panel is, especially, very positive about the distinct interdisciplinary character of the programme. In this respect, the programme is unique in the Netherlands. In the panel's view, the programme aspires to meet the specific interdisciplinary aspects at an advanced and definitely ambitious level.

The panel finds the programme meets the requirements of the domain-specific framework of reference for Criminology. The panel assesses this as positive, since having adopted this framework establishes the programme's objective firmly in this domain.

The intended learning outcomes of the programme reflect the objectives appropriately. The panel welcomes the emphasis the programme management has put on the knowledge of theories and methods in this field and on the research capabilities of the students. The panel is of the opinion that students who meet the intended learning outcomes will become independent, critical thinkers with in-depth knowledge of this domain, being able to pursue an academic career or to perform policy-related tasks in the professional field. The panel is positive about the advisory board, which enables the programme management to keep track of developments in the professional field.

The panel finds the programme management, the lecturers and the students to be a very strong and very coherent group, supporting the objective and the intended learning outcomes of the programme very strongly. For the panel, this implies the objectives and the learning outcomes being not only words on paper but being actively pursued by those involved in the programme.

The panel regards the comparison the programme management has made with other programmes to be sound. This comparison has been instructive in demonstrating the specific characteristics of the programme in relation to similar programmes in the Netherlands and abroad.

From the comparison of the intended learning outcomes to the Dublin-descriptors the panel has been able to deduce that all of the descriptors are represented in the learning outcomes. From this analysis and from their own inspection, the panel concludes these intended learning outcomes to reflect the master's level appropriately.

Assessment of this standard

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess the standard 1 *Intended learning outcomes* as good.

5.2 Standard 2: Teaching-learning environment

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

Findings

The number of students who enrolled in the programme was 31 (in 2009), 36 (in 2010), 24 (in 2011), 17 (2012) and 24 (2013). The number of students applying to enter the programme tends to be larger. In the last few years, between 40 and 65 students applied, of whom only 25 were admitted. The Faculty of Law and the programme management restrict the number of students in the programme to 25, 30 at most. This programme is a so-called selective master programme and the Faculty of Law intends to keep it small-scale. The programme management's target is to attract about 2/3 of the students from abroad and about 1/3 of the students from the Netherlands. Foreign students come from countries like the United Kingdom, Ireland and Canada, but also from post-conflict areas in Europe and Africa. To balance the composition of the student group, the programme management aims to admit 1/3 law students, 1/3 social science students and 1/3 political science students.

The programme management has set a number of admission prerequisites for prospective students. The student must have a bachelor's degree in Criminology, Law, Social Sciences, Political Science or Psychology. In addition, the students have to give proof of their proficiency in English by taking the VU University English test. If students do not meet the first requirement, they may apply, provided they have a solid academic background and an interest in and knowledge of international crimes. In the selection process, the student's grade point average (minimum of 7.3), the grade for his or her bachelor's thesis and the experience gained previously in this domain are taken into account. Furthermore, the students have to write a letter setting out their motivation and have to present letters of recommendation and proof of their academic writing skills.

For the students who may be interested in the programme, the programme management has organized a two-week Summer School International Criminal Justice in 2014. The intention is to offer this course in the coming years again. The course is open to law students and non-law students, the purpose being to attract students who may consider enrolling in the programme.

The programme management has drawn up a table in which the intended learning outcomes of the programme are related to the mandatory courses. From this table may be derived that these courses reflect all of the learning outcomes and that the learning outcomes are evenly distributed over the courses. For each of the courses, the programme management has drafted learning goals, which show the relationship between the intended learning outcomes and the course contents.

The curriculum of the programme is outlined in section 3.4 of this report. As is evident from section 3.4, the curriculum is composed of five mandatory courses, the master's thesis and a number of optional courses. The students have to choose their electives from this list of optional courses. Only in exceptional cases, are other courses permitted. The programme co-ordinator advises students on which optional course to take, depending on their plans and preferences. The programme management maintains a very restrictive policy when it comes to the granting of exemptions. In their interview with the panel, the examination board, responsible for granting exemptions, declared that no requests for exemptions have ever been approved.

The course International Crimes is an introductory course, addressing fundamental subjects with regard to both legal concepts and criminological theories on international crimes. At the end of the course, all of the students are to have mastered these concepts and theories, laying the ground for the rest of the curriculum. In this course, students have to write a paper and learn how to define concepts, operationalize research questions and write a well-structured paper. The Research Methodology of International Crimes course deals with quantitative and qualitative research methods and techniques. Students acquire and strengthen their research skills. This course is especially challenging for students with a background in law. The International Criminal Courts and Tribunals course, on the other hand, offers in-depth knowledge of and insights into the legal aspects of international criminal law. This course is demanding for students with a previous education in the social or political sciences. These students are advised to take the optional course Public International Law to prepare them for this course. The Expert Course addresses specific topics, complementing the more basic knowledge the students acquire in some of the other courses. Often, guest lecturers give classes about subjects in their field of expertise. Students are expected to voice and substantiate their opinions in class. In the course Perpetrators and Bystanders, the causes and reasons for international crimes as well as the response to these are analyzed and discussed, elaborating on social psychology theories. In the optional course Center for International Criminal Justice Research Lab, the students participate in current research projects of the staff of this research center. These students have to apply for this course and have to meet additional requirements. The optional course International Law Clinic is also research-focused.

For each of the courses, the lecturers have specified the academic books and journal articles to be studied by the students. For courses to be assessed by means of a paper, a minimum of compulsory literature and additional recommended books and articles have been listed. For courses to be assessed in the form of a written examination, a fixed list of compulsory literature applies.

The programme management intends to establish relationships with programmes abroad. Thus far, these relations have been rather limited. The programme management wants to intensify the efforts in this respect.

The lecturers in the programme are to a large extent full professors and associate professors, responsible for the lectures. In the tutorials, assistant professors or PhD-students assist. Most of the PhD-students nearly have finished their PhD-trajectory. All of the lecturers have at least a master's degree and 70 % of them have a PhD. The lecturers are renowned researchers in their field of expertise, regularly publishing articles in peer-reviewed academic journals. The number of lecturers having obtained a Basic Teaching Qualifications is very high, amounting to 82 %. For some of the courses like the Expert Course, guest lecturers are invited to lecture. The course co-ordinator assists the guest lecturer and supervises the course contents and quality.

The educational concept of the programme consists of small classes in which students are expected to participate and to make individual contributions to the learning processes. This concept is meant to promote participation by the students in class. In addition, students are encouraged to critically evaluate theories and to express and substantiate their own views. For most of the courses, the teaching methods are lectures for a group of about 25 students and tutorials for groups of about 12 students. In the lectures, the students are presented with the concepts and theories. In the tutorials, academic texts referring to the concepts and theories are studied and discussed. In the papers students have to demonstrate their abilities to write well-structured texts of academic quality.

In a number of courses offered in the programme, students from other programmes may attend classes as well. In the Expert Course this number is limited to five students. In the Corporations and International Crimes course up to 60 students attend classes. In the Perpetrators and Bystanders course the number of students in the tutorials is 20 students. In these courses, the student-to-staff ratio may not reach 14 : 1, as has been calculated for the programme as a whole (refer to section 3.1 of this report). In other courses however, such as research seminars, the student-staff ration may be 1 : 6.

The students and alumni with whom the panel has met, have indicated that they experience(d) this programme as very demanding. Notably, the courses Research Methodology of International Crimes and International Crimes and Tribunals are challenging courses for specific categories of students. Nevertheless, the success rates for these courses are 80 % and 70 % respectively, implying most of the students manage to complete even these courses. The lecturers meet once a year to discuss the courses and the relationships between the courses. The lecturers also meet to discuss the examinations and assignments schedule. They do so in order to balance the study load of the students. The students with whom the panel has spoken, have indicated that the lecturers are very approachable. The programme co-ordinator plays a very important role in the study guidance and study assistance of the students and does so with great enthusiasm and commitment.

The programme management has not included an internship in the curriculum, although an internship may be conducive for students to find a suitable job. The reason the programme management has abstained from including an internship is twofold. Firstly, the quality of internships cannot be guaranteed. Secondly, the programme management cannot guarantee access to suitable internships, since the internship programs of the most relevant international organisations recruit interns only through open procedures. The programme management, nevertheless, promotes taking extracurricular internships and informs students about internship opportunities, so they may apply for these. The panel has noted that internships, as they normally require extending the programme duration, are more feasible for Dutch students and are less so for foreign students. Financial reasons may prevent these students from taking an internship.

The programme management has considered extending the duration of the curriculum beyond one year. The reasons for this are that the curriculum is rather demanding, there is no place for an internship in the current set-up of the curriculum and some of the interesting topics could be addressed more extensively. The decision in favour of extending the curriculum has not been made, however, since this would increase the financial burden for foreign students considerably and would even prevent them from enrolling in the programme.

All courses are evaluated. The results of these evaluations are, generally, positive, with regard to the courses and with regard to the performance of the lecturers. An educational board is in place which advises the programme management on quality issues. The programme management is responsible for the programme quality.

Considerations

The panel feels the Faculty of Law and the programme management have made some well-thought-out decisions concerning the number of students to be admitted and the composition of the student group in the programme. The panel considers the entry requirements for the programme to be quite appropriate and the admission procedure to be carried out very conscientiously by the programme management.

The curriculum reflects the intended learning outcomes adequately, as all the learning outcomes have been covered in the courses. The panel is convinced the students will acquire the knowledge and skills which are required to achieve the learning outcomes. The courses are an appropriate representation of the intended learning outcomes. In the curriculum, the students are sufficiently acquainted with research, in the Research Methodology of International Crimes course and the Expert Course but in other courses as well. The panel would appreciate more attention for qualitative research methods in the curriculum. The panel feels the Corporations and International Crimes course is fitting for this programme, as corporations may play a role in international crimes, albeit that corporations fall outside of the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. Victims and victims' right are, however, a distinguishing feature of this court and the panel recommends paying more attention to the subject of victims of international crimes. Although some reference is made to this subject in some of the courses, the issue of the victim in international crimes ought to feature more prominently in the core curriculum of the mandatory courses and could be present in the titles of one or more of the courses. The panel feels the programme management should continue discussing the boundaries of the domain of the programme, as the management has done so far. For the panel, it is important that the programme management and lecturers can substantiate whether a specific topic is part of the domain of international crimes and international criminal justice.

The panel has studied the compulsory and recommended literature in the courses and considers that the literature reaches the required level and is quite appropriate for these courses.

The capabilities of the lecturers in the programme are very much up to standard, regarding their expertise, their research capabilities and their teaching qualities. The panel is very positive about the way in which the lecturers incorporate their research in the courses. The number of lecturers possessing a Basic Teaching Qualification is relatively high.

The programme may be demanding but is doable, although it leaves little room for other activities. The panel obtained this information from both students and alumni. The programme management and especially the programme co-ordinator guide and assist the students admirably. The lecturers are very approachable. The panel sees no reason to extend the duration of the programme beyond one year. There is, however, a downside to this. Whereas some Dutch students can, apparently, afford to extend their period of study to 18 months or even two years, for the foreign students this may be more challenging.

The panel considers the quality assurance system of the programme to be adequate. The positions and the roles of the various boards and committees are well-defined.

Assessment of this standard

These considerations have led the assessment panel to assess the standard 2 *Teaching-learning environment* to be satisfactory.

5.3 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.

Findings

VU University Amsterdam has laid down the examination and assessment procedures in the Manual of Educational Quality. The Faculty of Law has drafted a Test Policy Memorandum which follows the rules and regulations of the VU University Manual. The Faculty of Law has supplemented this document with the Quality Assurance of Faculty of Law Examinations, specifying the timetable for the examination board to inspect the examinations of the programmes in the Faculty. The main goal of the procedures is to arrive at valid, reliable and transparent examinations.

For the programme, a test and assessment plan has been drafted. This plan corresponds to the Faculty of Law regulations and the programme management intends to comply with these regulations. According to this plan, the examinations reflect the learning goals of the courses the examinations refer to. The lecturers of the courses are primarily responsible for the contents of the examinations and the assessment methods. A number of rules apply, however. One of the procedures in the test and assessment plan is for the lecturers to use an assessment matrix to verify whether the contents of the course are represented in the examinations. Another procedure is to request the lecturers to adopt assessment forms to assess papers. The educational board checks the distribution of the grades and may turn to the lecturers in case of abnormal distributions.

A number of test methods are applied in the programme. These methods are written examinations, papers, assignments, oral presentations, open book examinations and research proposals. The examination methods in the courses depend on the course contents to be assessed. Courses in which knowledge acquisition is the main component, are predominantly assessed by means of written examinations. Courses in which analytical skills are acquired, are mostly assessed in the form of papers. In some of the courses, multiple examination forms are applied. In a number of courses, the students do intermediate assignments which may or may not be part of the grade for the course. These assignments are helpful for the students to master the course contents.

The examination board is responsible for the quality of the examinations of the entire Faculty of Law, including this programme. A representative of this programme sits on the board, enabling the board to take into account the specific aspects of this programme. The members of the examination board check the master's theses randomly, mainly concentrating on those receiving low and high marks. The members of the board read the theses and study the thesis assessment forms. The board has not yet systematically checked the quality of the written examinations and assignments. This will be done two years from now.

The programme management has adopted a plagiarism policy and checks each of the essays, papers and theses for plagiarism by means of the computer programme SafeAssign.

The programme management has drafted a master thesis manual. In this manual the timetable, procedures and suggestions with regard to the master's thesis have been laid down. The subject of the thesis should refer to the contents of the programme, notably the subject of international crimes. The students are to choose the topic of the thesis themselves. When a number of rather strict conditions have been met, the theses may be written in conjunction with an internship. The programme management provides a database with topics to be chosen from and organizes a meeting in October to inform the students about the thesis writing process. The thesis manual contains suggestions about the structure of the thesis. The students must submit their thesis proposal in the first two weeks of January. Thereupon, the thesis co-ordinator assigns a supervisor and a second reader to the thesis project. Each student is entitled to six meetings with his or her supervisor. The programme management intends to apply this rule more strictly in future, to prevent the theses projects from taking too long. In July, the students have to submit their thesis. The supervisor and the second reader act as examiners and assess the thesis. They observe the criteria, which have been specified in the assessment form for the master's thesis, drafted by the programme management. This form includes ten different criteria and an overall assessment. The lecturers discuss the criteria and the standards for assessing the master's theses among themselves, aiming to raise the level of objectivity of the assessments.

The percentage of students completing the programme in one year or even two years is not very high. As has been indicated in section 3.1, the percentage graduates after two years was a little over 60 % for the cohorts 2010 and 2011. The reasons for this vary. Some students prolonged their studies on account of internships taken while still studying, for other students the programme proved to be too demanding and a third group of students have suffered from serious illnesses or experienced personal problems.

In the opinion of the examination board, the quality of the theses in the programme is generally high. The board has seen no reason to deviate from the grades the examiners have awarded. The students tend to excel in applying theoretical concepts and in addressing multidisciplinary issues and problems. Since the start of the programme in 2009, about 70 to 80 students have completed the programme. Some seven master's theses have led to the publication of an article in a peer-reviewed journal. Six of the students submitting their master's theses have won a prize, mostly winning the VU Criminology Thesis Award. The representatives of the professional field with whom the panel has met, feel the capabilities and the profile of the graduates meet the professional practice requirements.

The labour market for graduates of the programme is less favourable than before, in particular on account of tribunals in The Hague finishing their work. From a survey among 71 alumni 16 of them responded. Of these 14 alumni indicated that they had found a job. Students try to take an internship as a means to find a paid position. At least six alumni have begun their PhD-trajectory at Dutch universities. The programme management assists the students and alumni by informing them about interesting vacancies which come to the knowledge of the lecturers or the programme management. The alumni and the programme management remain in contact through LinkedIn and Facebook and through regular alumni meetings. The alumni with whom the panel has spoken, have indicated that they appreciate the efforts of the programme management to stay in contact with them.

Considerations

The panel considers the examination and assessment policy and regulations of the programme to be appropriate. Lecturers ensure the correspondence between the learning goals of the courses and the examinations. They also take care of adequate assessment formats, also for papers. The panel considers the examination board to perform their responsibilities well concerning the master's theses. On the other hand, the panel recommends the board to check a number of written examinations and papers as well.

The panel considers the methods of examination to be adequate and to reflect the contents and the learning objectives of the courses. The panel studied a number of examinations and has found the contents to be very appropriate and the level quite demanding.

The procedure for drafting the master's thesis is well-elaborated in the master thesis manual. The students are given information concerning the requirements and the timetable for the thesis and are well-prepared for the thesis process. The panel was pleased to see the master's theses evaluated by two examiners.

The percentage of students completing the programme in two years remains relatively low. The panel encourages the programme management to take steps to raise this number.

The theses the members of the panel have studied, were all at least satisfactory. The evaluations of the theses by the panel members did not differ substantially from the ones by the programme's supervisors. In six of the 15 theses studied by the panel members, the students had conducted their own research project, other than the literature research. In none of the theses quantitative research methods were applied. The panel would advise paying more attention to the quality of the English language in some of the theses. The panel has noted that a substantial percentage of the theses have led to an article in a peer-reviewed journal and/or have won prizes and regards this as an additional proof of the level some of the students have achieved.

From the meeting with the representatives of the professional field, the discussions with the alumni and the figures regarding the positions the alumni have found, the panel derives that the graduates of the programme are well-equipped to pursue either an academic or a professional career.

Assessment of this standard

The considerations have led the assessment panel to assess standard 3 *Assessment and achieved learning outcomes* to be satisfactory.

Annex 1: Site visit schedule

Amsterdam, 4 November 2014

08.30 h. – 09.30 h.	Arrival and deliberations panel (closed session)
09.30 h. – 10.00 h.	Dean, director and programme management prof. dr. mr. E. van Sliedregt (dean, Faculty of Law), prof. dr. mr. L. Coenraad (associate dean for education, Faculty of Law), dr. mr. J. van Wijk (programme director), drs. J. Stuijbergen MSc (programme co-ordinator)
10.00 h. – 11.20 h.	Programme management dr. mr. J. van Wijk (programme director), drs. J. Stuijbergen MSc (programme co-ordinator)
11.30 h. – 12.15 h.	Examination board prof. dr. mr. J. Struiksma (chair examination board), dr. A. Slotboom (member examination board), dr. B. Holá LLm (lecturer)
12.15 h. – 13.30 h.	Lunch, documents review (closed session), open office hours 12.15 h. – 12.45 h.
13.30 h. – 14.15 h.	Lecturers, including member of educational board prof. dr. mr. C. Bijleveld (professor, Research Methods in Criminology), M. Cupido LLm (lecturer, International Criminal Law, chair programme committee), dr. B. Holá LLm (assistant professor, Criminology), prof. dr. mr. W. Huisman (professor, Criminology)
14.15 h. – 15.00 h.	Students E. Asscheman (2013/2014, studying), G. Chlevickaite (2013/2014, studying), E. Dogovic (2014/2015), M. Torrisi (2014/2015, member programme committee)
15.15 h. – 16.00 h.	Representatives of the professional field and alumni T. van den Berg MSc (alumnus), J. Brouwer MSc (alumnus), R. Fraanje MSc (alumna), M. Bolhuis MSc (alumnus), mr. V. Cillessen (operational intelligence expert, International Crimes Team, National Police of the Netherlands), mr. V. Koppe (member advisory board, via skype)
16.00 h. – 16.15 h.	Programme management dr. mr. J. van Wijk, drs. J. Stuijbergen MSc
16.15 h. – 17.15 h.	Deliberations panel and documents review (closed session)
17.15 h. – 17.30 h.	Presentation of main findings by panel chair to dean and programme management prof. dr. mr. E. van Sliedregt (dean, Faculty of Law), prof. dr. mr. L. Coenraad (associate dean for education, Faculty of Law), dr. mr. J. van Wijk (programme director), drs. J. Stuijbergen MSc (programme co-ordinator)
17.30 h. – 17.45 h.	Presentation of main findings by panel chair to lecturers and students

Annex 2: Documents reviewed

The assessment panel studied the following documents, presented prior to the site visit:

- Critical self-reflection master's degree programme in International Crimes and Criminology
- Teaching and examination regulations, 2013/2014
- Teaching and examination regulations, 2014/2015
- Domain-specific framework Criminology
- Faculty regulations
- Overview of mandatory courses
- CV's of teaching staff
- Quality assurance plan
- Overview guest lecturers
- Tests, assessment and quality assurance thereof
- Thesis manual
- Assessment form master's thesis
- Study guide master's programme International Crimes and Criminology, 2014/2015

On the day of the site visit, the programme management presented the following documents:

- Literature prescribed for the courses
- Overview of courses
- Course manuals
- Annual reports of examination board
- Study guidance regulations (Faculty of Law)
- Selection of journal articles to be studied
- Examinations
- Model answers to assess examinations
- Examples of lecturer's feedback to student's papers
- Course and programme evaluations' reports
- Netherlands Student Evaluation's results (NSE)
- Alumni survey results

Annex 3: Theses reviewed

The theses of the following 15 students have been selected for review by the panel

- 1742043
- 1843567
- 1887785
- 1731580
- 1843931
- 1743279
- 1645757
- 2518213
- 1924621
- 2541047
- 2523917
- 1922432
- 2518980
- 2530574
- 2526627

Annex 4: Composition of the assessment panel

The assessment panel had the following composition:

- prof. dr. C.H. Brants, chair, professor emeritus Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure, Utrecht University and professor of Comparative Criminal Justice, Northumbria University, United Kingdom
- prof. dr. J-A.M. Wemmers, panel member, full professor in Criminology, École de Criminologie, Université de Montréal, Canada
- dr. J.A.C. Bevers, panel member, general legal advisor to the Prosecutor at the International Criminal Court, The Hague, Netherlands
- A.M.A. Kangur BSc, student member, student in the master's programme Artificial Intelligence, University of Groningen.

prof. dr. C.H. Brants, panel chair

Mrs Brants is professor emeritus Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure, Utrecht University, Netherlands and professor of Comparative Criminal Justice, Northumbria University, Newcastle, United Kingdom. Her research interests are, among others, the multidisciplinary and/or comparative study of international criminal procedures and human rights. She holds a number of external academic and non-academic positions in her field of expertise. Mrs Brants has published widely.

prof. dr. J-A. M. Wemmers, panel member

Mrs Wemmers, currently, is professor in Criminology at École de Criminologie, Université de Montréal and the head of the research group Victims, Law and Society of the International Centre for Comparative Criminology of Université de Montréal. She obtained her PhD from Leiden University. Presently, Mrs Wemmers holds positions in a number of professional organisations and serves on editorial boards of academic journals in her field of expertise. She has published many books and articles.

dr. J.A.C. Bevers, panel member

Mr Bevers, currently, is the general legal advisor to the Prosecutor at the International Criminal Court. He obtained his PhD from VU University Amsterdam with a dissertation on European police collaboration regarding criminal offences. Previously, he had a position as a legal advisor at the Dutch Ministry of Justice. In this capacity, he participated in the preparations to establish the International Criminal Court. Mr. Bevers has published a large number of articles and books in his field of expertise.

A.M.A. Kangur BSc, student member

Since 2012, Ms Kangur is a student in the master's programme Artificial Intelligence at University of Groningen, having completed the corresponding bachelor's programme at this university. She, also, is a student-assistant for the research group Sensory Cognition of the department of Artificial Intelligence of this university. Ms Kangur has been a student member in a number of committees and boards within University of Groningen.