

Besluit

Accreditatiebesluit met een positief eindoordeel voor de opleiding Master of Laws (LLM) (master na master) van de Katholieke Universiteit Leuven

Samenvattende bevindingen en overwegingen

- datum** 21 oktober 2016 De NVAO steunt haar inhoudelijke besluitvorming op de onderstaande elementen uit het visitatierapport.
- onderwerp** *Generieke kwaliteitswaarborg 1 – Beoogd eindniveau*
- Accreditatiebesluit** (004941) De visitatiecommissie (commissie) beoordeelt het beoogd eindniveau als goed.
- bijlagen**
- 4 According to the SER, 'the programme aims at ensuring an advanced expertise in the chosen focus area of European and international law, enabling its graduates to acquire an advanced profile of expertise in an international environment and to join the legal profession at the level of European (and international) institutions, a law firm or business in positions requiring a high level of expertise of European (and international) law.'

The former assessment panel (2006) stipulated that the implicit aims and objectives of the programme should be described clearly. This has been fully addressed. The general profile has been translated into five programme-specific intended learning outcomes. These objectives are known to all stakeholders involved. When the Kondor survey¹ included a question regarding the visibility of the learning outcomes ('The intended learning outcomes of the programme are clearly stated'), the mean score was 5/6.

The programme learning outcomes stipulate, among other things, that graduates have to be able to compare legal systems and work 'in a creative manner' with international and national legal sources and techniques. Three of the five learning outcomes underline the ability to conduct individual/independent research. These facts, as well as the references to 'in-depth knowledge' and the solving of 'complex legal problems' show that the programme is striving for an advanced level. The programme learning outcomes comply with the Flemish qualification framework.

While the previous assessment panel in 2006 observed that the profile was mainly based on in-house resources, the focus areas have developed since then in light of the profile sought by international students and developments in the international dimension of law. The focus is on finance and economics, but institutional and human rights are also emerging. Overall, the panel finds that the programme-specific learning outcomes coincide well with the domain-specific learning outcomes - the latter being much more basic than the former. The

¹ A centralised student survey organised in 2011-2012, regarding various aspects of the programme.

Pagina 2 van 12 panel appreciates the fact that the programme specific learning outcomes have been 'translated' in an actively formulated way, requiring students to show that they can do certain things.

The 2006 assessment panel stated that the alignment of aims and objectives with the needs of the intended professional field was 'not entirely clear'. The programme was 'strongly urged' to make better use of its connections with the professional field. This issue has been addressed in the view of the current assessment panel. Contacts with the professional field are intense.

In conclusion, the panel finds that the programme learning outcomes comply with all formal requirements. The panel is satisfied that the programme is aiming at a high level while maintaining intense contacts with the professional field. The programme managers and the faculty management show much ambition with regard to this programme.

Generieke kwaliteitswaarborg 2 – Onderwijsproces

De commissie beoordeelt het onderwijsproces als goed.

The programme counts 60 ECTS and consists of one year. Students have to choose one option from among the following three: (1) European Union and Economic Law, (2) European Union and Financial Law and (3) International and European Public Law. Each option is composed of four mandatory courses (each counting 4-6 ECTS) and two series of Master Classes which are mandatory within the chosen option (4 ECTS each). The first two options share a *truncus communis* within a mandatory programme. Apart from this, all students follow a compulsory course 'LL.M. Global Law' (4 ECTS).

The chosen option determines approximately half the curriculum in terms of legal content. In order to create a personalised additional profile, students can choose courses for approximately one quarter of the total number of credits. Mandatory courses are organised during the first semester, optional courses in the second semester. Finally, students write a Master's thesis representing 15 ECTS.

The panel finds the programme coherent and appreciates the balance between the 'core' curriculum and the free options. While most students value the programme structure too, some of them (according to the 2011-2012 Kondor survey) find that there is not yet enough study choice.

The Master Classes (also called 'clinics') are mandatory in each option and organised partly in Brussels and partly in Leuven. They aim to give students a practice-based perspective at an advanced level through entering into debate with authoritative guest lecturers from the legal profession. According to the SER, students are obliged to prepare for the classes and are invited to 'actively participate in the debate'. While the clinics are well organised and generally appreciated by the students, the panel observed that according to students in some cases these classes remain too lecture-based. The teaching staff should pay attention to their interactive character.

According to the SER, the Master's thesis 'focuses entirely on research, and therefore on independent analysis of a topic by the student under the guidance of a professor'. The purpose of the thesis 'is not to give a mere description of certain legal issues, but rather to focus on a clear position and contain precise arguments about the topic discussed'. In the

Pagina 3 van 12 first meeting with students at the very beginning of the academic year, they are informed by the programme coordinators about the concept, the practical arrangements and the fixed timeframe for the thesis. This starts with identifying the legal area within which the student intends to write his/her thesis (this must be related to their chosen option); a suitable professor is also identified and asked whether he/she agrees to act as supervisor. This is formalised – within the first two months of the academic year – by the submission of a 2-page outline with a short description and a provisional overview of literature on legal sources. The student must then, according to a fixed schedule determined at the beginning of the academic year, submit a first draft of the thesis in March and the final version in May.

During the on-site visit it became clear that the thesis supervision is personalised and individual, which means that differences in guidance are inevitable. Students and alumni mentioned that thesis supervisors are nearly always available, but most 'contacts' are via e-mail. The 2011-2012 Kondor survey pointed out that 37.5% of the students '(somewhat) disagree' that the guidance of the Master's thesis is good. The SER itself stresses that, regarding active feedback during the writing process, 'there certainly seems to be some margin for improvement'. The panel appreciates that, as explained above, there is a sort of 'roadmap' for the Master's thesis. However this roadmap is mainly in support of students. The supervisors too should have a kind of roadmap indicating what (and when) the students may expect from their supervisors.

The panel observed an adequate diversity in learning activities. Some of the lectures are given ex cathedra. Parts of every course are taught in smaller groups and are in essence interactive, inviting and stimulating the students to actively participate. This is essentially the case with the LL.M. Master Classes and the Global Law course. In some courses (2-3 per LL.M. student, according to the SER) students are required to write papers.

Besides the curricular programme, the faculty organises each year – exclusively for the LL.M. students - trips to the European and international institutions in Luxembourg and Strasbourg. Four to five lunch seminars are organised during the academic year, mostly with foreign guest speakers, giving the students the opportunity to discuss legal issues (generally non-technical) in a more interactive way. The purpose of these activities is to provide students with the personal experience of approaching the institutions from a 'real life' angle. At the time of the on-site visit, a pilot project for internships was being initiated. If this is satisfactory, internships may become a permanent part of the programme, as an alternative to the Master's thesis. The panel welcomes this idea, at the same time stressing that supervision and assessment of the internship still need to be developed to reach a fully academic level.

All mandatory courses, as well as the Master Classes and the Global Law course, are exclusive for LL.M. students. Because of the optional courses in the curriculum, not all classes are exclusive and some classes can be rather crowded. Nevertheless, most students experience an appropriate balance between exclusive and non-exclusive teaching. The bigger classes are considered interesting too because of the possibility to connect with students from other programmes. However, when the student population attending a class is considered too heterogeneous, the programme management can decide to 'split' a course between two groups. This has already occurred. The assessment panel appreciates the balance that has been achieved regarding the size of the classes.

For a number of non-exclusive classes – at least four - specific tutorials are organised for LL.M. students alone. As with the Master Classes, tutorials provide the possibility to discuss

Pagina 4 van 12 in greater depth on an advanced level. During the on-site visit of the panel, some lecturers signalled that the tutorials need further fine-tuning, as – in their words – students ‘do not always have enough discipline’ to prepare for the tutorials. In the 2014 mid-term meeting (cf. *infra*) students advocated ‘a more general use of the tutorials as preparation for the clinics’. The assessment panel, appreciating the existing tutorials, recommends an increase in number and further developing of tutorials.

The basic requirement for admission to the programme is the possession of a law degree that entitles the holder to practise law in his/her country of origin. This means that the candidate must hold a Master’s degree or equivalent, except for England where a Bachelor’s degree in Law is sufficient. Decisions on the admission of applicants are taken by the programme coordinator, with advice from the international office with regard to the formal requirements, based on the evaluation of a complete application file and on the following elements: results obtained during the applicant’s university studies, the level of knowledge of the English language, a statement of purpose (with the student’s expectations of the programme) and three letters of recommendation.

The assessment panel has ascertained that the student’s level and motivation are carefully and deeply scrutinised before any decision is made, in order to guarantee both a properly functioning programme and student satisfaction. The SER mentions that fewer than 50% of the students applying for the programme are eligible. On average 95% of the students are international. The SER stresses that the final number of admitted students has never been an objective as such, that the number of students over the years has remained rather stable and that 20-30 proves to be an ‘adequate number’ of students in terms of group cohesion. Based on the procedures described here, as well as on the progression rate and the academic level of graduates (see GQS3), the assessment panel concludes that the admission policy is adequate.

During the week preceding the beginning of the academic year, the programme organises an optional ‘Introductory week on EU Law’, explaining the basics of EU Law to the students (or, for more experienced students, rehearsing the basic concepts). This introduction is much valued by all students who participate. Generally speaking, students are satisfied with the guidance they receive when arriving in Leuven. Even before their arrival they have received useful information. Recently a buddy system for newcomers has been introduced. The role of the staff member in charge of administrative and operational support (responsible for communicating information to students) is highlighted. The overall organisation of the programme is described – by students and alumni alike – as good. The panel observed no significant flaws in this respect.

Almost half of the students spread their degree over two years. A large majority of part-time students on the LL.M. programme have full-time jobs. The panel takes note that in the 2011-2012 Kondor survey most students perceived the study load as corresponding to the course credits which are assigned.

The educational facilities are adequate. All classes are organised in College De Valk in Leuven. The auditoria and tutorial rooms are well equipped and up-to-date. LL.M. students benefit from having their own ‘LL.M. Common Room’ within the Law Faculty building. Students describe the room as ‘very convenient’. The law library has a virtually complete range of all existing printed and online sources of Belgian, European and international law. For several years, the library has not only operated as a place for consulting sources, but

Pagina 5 van 12 has also become a learning area where students perform group assignments or study. It is important that students also have access to the electronic collection.

According to the SER, the selection of the teaching and assisting staff is 'handled with the greatest care' by the faculty. All mandatory and elective courses are taught by appointed professors. All guest lecturers at the Master Classes are authoritative persons selected by the option coordinators. The Global Law course is taught by several specially invited foreign professors. The assessment panel confirms that there is a high quality teaching staff, both in terms of content and didactic approach. Lecturers are authorities in their subject domain. Students describe the teachers as 'outstanding'. They are involved and their approach is personal. Finally, given the mix between exclusive and non-exclusive classes, the panel finds the current staff numbers adequate.

The LL.M. programme does not have a programme-specific educational committee, but is embedded in the POC Rechten, a Standing Educational Committee (POC) encompassing all Law courses. This POC has monthly meetings and advises the Faculty Board on educational matters. All professors with teaching responsibilities within the LL.M. programme are part of the POC Rechten, together with delegations of assistants and students. According to the SER, the Law Faculty 'systematically further reflects on the LL.M.'s needs and potential, to avoid it becoming a static element in its curriculum, to make sure that it has a real reason to be offered.' A separate evaluation of all LL.M.-related issues for the POC Rechten has been announced, to take place every year. The panel stresses that the presence of LLM students in this evaluation must be ensured. The assessment panel has also learned that various tools are used to evaluate and monitor the quality of the programme. At university level, all courses are subject to an online student evaluation held every two years. In 2011-2012 a Kondor student survey was organised, focusing not on separate courses but on the LL.M. programme as a whole. As well as this, each year a questionnaire-based survey is conducted among students and a mid-year review is annually organised during a hearing with a students' delegation. Prior to the 2014 on-site visit, the programme organised a special survey among its alumni. The self-evaluation report (SER) that was written for the current assessment is an informative and analytical document, making use of the results from the various surveys mentioned here.

On the basis of the student and alumni surveys, as well as the informal contacts among staff and students, a learning organisation has been created in the view of the assessment panel. Several improvement measures recommended by the 2006 assessment panel have been followed up. The programme is able to quickly drop elements that do not work well and further develop what seems appealing. As a result, the composition of the programme has substantially (and in a positive manner) developed since the 2006 assessment.

One improvement measure suggested by the assessment panel in 2006 that has not been followed up is the creation of an active alumni association. The current assessment panel stresses the importance of such an association and asks the programme to take necessary steps.

In conclusion, the assessment panel is convinced that the teaching process makes it possible for students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. Overall, the panel finds that the programme is stimulating students to actively participate, discuss and reflect. The writing of papers, the excursions and the Master's thesis contribute to the involvement of students in the practice of law and in independent research. There is a good balance

Pagina 6 van 12 between exclusive and non-exclusive teaching, the latter involving specific tutorials. The panel also highlights the high quality of the teaching staff.

Generieke kwaliteitswaarborg 3 – Gerealiseerd eindniveau

De commissie beoordeelt het gerealiseerde eindniveau als voldoende.

The assessment panel is satisfied with the validity, reliability and transparency of the evaluation of students. The LL.M. programme has two examination periods (at the end of the first and the second semester), as well as a second examination attempt after the summer break. From the very start of the academic year, students know their examination schedule for the first and second semester.

A large majority of the exams for LL.M. courses are written exams. Oral exams are the second most common examination method. A third evaluation form is the continuous assessment, based on a written assignment and active participation in class. This is the case for the Master Classes. A small number of courses (2-3 per LL.M. student, including the Global Law Course) are assessed on the basis of a written paper solely. The students' oral skills are assessed in the continuous evaluation during the Master Classes and the oral defence of the Master's thesis (cf. infra). The choice between written or oral evaluation is left to the professor's discretion. However, in 2012-2013 the faculty introduced the obligation to organise oral exams for optional courses with a small number of students, in order to enhance the students' oral skills.

Any changes in the evaluation methods are discussed by the Standing Educational Committee (POC) Rechten. Whether at the professor's own initiative (in order to better comply with the predefined learning outcomes for his or her course) or at the students' initiative (based on the feedback forms), it is the POC that debates and decides on the proposed change. Prior to the on-site visit, the panel viewed a selection of exam questions and finds their quality satisfactory. The panel values the role that the POC is currently playing in setting up an evaluation policy, but this should be made more formal yet and not only retroactive.

Based on its interviews with students and alumni, the assessment panel concludes that they are generally satisfied with the organisation and transparency of the evaluation process. According to the SER, only two students in the past five years have launched appeals against an exam result.

The Master's thesis represents 25% of the total number of credits to be obtained. The oral defence of the thesis normally takes 40 minutes. The examination committee consists of three people: a thesis supervisor, a co-reader and the president of the LL.M. defence. The supervisor and the co-reader address questions after the student has presented the work. The final score is the average of the two professors' individual scores, based on both the written exam and the oral presentation. In order to guarantee uniformity of the evaluation criteria, the LL.M. programme coordinator acts as co-reader for practically all LL.M. Master's theses. The panel learned that a standardised evaluation form is used by some promoters, but only on an optional basis, as a helping tool. It is recommended that this evaluation form be used on a permanent basis, and students informed about the different evaluation criteria. Prior to the on-site visit, the assessment panel read a relevant sample of Master's theses. Overall, the quality is satisfactory and corresponds to the grades that were given.

Pagina 7 van 12 Nevertheless, the panel feels that in several cases the quality might have been even better, if students had received more guidance.

Most full-time LL.M. students (83-92% in the period from 2010 to 2013) complete the programme within one academic year. For the small percentage who do not graduate, the main reasons are their decision to put off the defence of their Master's thesis to the following academic year or the failure of one course, forcing them to re-enrol the following academic year. Approximately one student every three years leaves the programme without having graduated, mostly due to a full-time job offer or health reasons. In the view of the panel, this satisfactory study yield is closely connected to the adequate selection policy described in GQS 2.

When interviewed by the assessment panel, LL.M. alumni expressed their general satisfaction with the programme. The SER stresses that the employment rate of LL.M. students is high: graduates find jobs shortly before having graduated or else within 2-4 months after graduation. Most graduates work for private companies on international markets and for international companies, especially law firms, or for national (i.e. governmental) and international institutions. Only a few of the graduates opt for further research studies.

In conclusion, based on the evaluation methods, the quality of the Master's theses, the employability and the on-site interviews with graduates, the panel finds that the intended learning outcomes are achieved. According to the 2011-2012 Kondor survey, a large majority of the students agreed too that they acquire the intended learning outcomes by the end of the programme. A kind of evaluation policy has been initiated – mainly through the POC – but this should be further developed and made more explicit.

Eindoordeel commissie

De commissie heeft vastgesteld dat de opleiding Master of Laws (LLM) (master na master) voldoet aan alle generieke kwaliteitswaarborgen. Ze beoordeelt de kwaliteit van de opleiding als voldoende.

De NVAO onderschrijft de aanbeveling van de commissie ten aanzien van de ontwikkeling van een toetsbeleid.

Bevindingen NVAO

- Het visitatierapport is opgesteld en onderbouwd overeenkomstig het toepasselijke Kader voor de opleidingsaccreditatie 2de ronde (8 februari 2013);
- De commissie heeft voor de externe beoordeling het visitatieprotocol gevolgd zoals vastgesteld door de Vlaamse Universiteiten en Hogescholen Raad (augustus 2013);
- Het visitatierapport geeft inzicht in de samenstelling van de commissie;
- Het visitatierapport bevat een onderzoek ten gronde naar de aanwezigheid van voldoende generieke kwaliteitswaarborgen.

Besluit²

betreffende de accreditatie van de Master of Laws (LLM) (master na master) van de Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.

De NVAO,
Na beraadslaging,
Besluit:

Met toepassing van de Codex Hoger Onderwijs, in het bijzonder de artikelen II.133-II.149, besluit de NVAO accreditatie te verlenen aan de opleiding Master of Laws (LLM) (master na master) georganiseerd door de Katholieke Universiteit Leuven. De opleiding wordt aangeboden te Leuven zonder afstudeerrichtingen. De kwaliteit van de opleiding is voldoende.

De accreditatie geldt overeenkomstig artikel II.147§2 van de Codex Hoger Onderwijs vanaf 1 oktober 2016 tot en met 30 september 2024.

Den Haag, 21 oktober 2016

De NVAO
Voor deze:



Ann Verreth
(vicevoorzitter)

² Het ontwerp van accreditatiebesluit werd aan de instelling bezorgd voor eventuele opmerkingen en bezwaren. Bij brief van 4 oktober 2016 heeft de instelling van de gelegenheid gebruik gemaakt om te reageren. Dit heeft geleid tot enkele tekstuele aanpassingen.

De onderstaande tabel geeft per generieke kwaliteitswaarborg het globaal oordeel van de NVAO weer, alsook het eindoordeel.

Generieke kwaliteitswaarborg

Oordeel	
1. Beoogd eindniveau	Goed
2. Onderwijsproces	Goed
3. Gerealiseerd eindniveau	Voldoende
Eindoordeel opleiding	Voldoende

Naam instelling	Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
Adres instelling	Naamsestraat 22 - bus 5000 B-3000 LEUVEN
Aard instelling	ambtshalve geregistreerd
Naam associatie	KU Leuven, opleiding aangeboden te Leuven, Associatie KU Leuven
Naam opleiding (Graad, kwalificatie, specificatie)	Master of Laws (LLM)
Niveau en oriëntatie	master na master
Bijkomende titel	geen
Opleidingsvarianten: – Afstudeerrichtingen – Studietraject voor werkstudenten	– geen – geen
Onderwijstaal	Engels
Vestiging(en) opleiding	Leuven
Studieomvang (in studiepunten)	60
Vervaldatum accreditatie, tijdelijke erkenning of erkenning nieuwe opleiding	30 september 2016
Academiejaar(en) ³ waarin opleiding wordt aangeboden	2015 -2016
(Delen van) studiegebied(en)	Rechten, notariaat en criminologische wetenschappen
ISCED benaming van het studiegebied	04 Business, administration and law / 042 Law

³ Betreft het lopende academiejaar, op het ogenblik van de accreditatieaanvraag

Onderstaande leerresultaten bouwen voort op deze van de Master of Laws in de Rechten.

1. Een brede en diepgaande kennis hebben van en inzicht hebben in de rechtsdomeinen van het internationaal en/of Europees recht, de totstandkoming en de dynamische ontwikkeling van de regelgeving.
2. Zelfstandig een binnen het domein van het internationaal en/of Europees recht relevante onderzoeksvraag formuleren, kaderen in de bestaande regelgeving, uitwerken en de onderzoeksresultaten kritisch evalueren met het oog op het leveren van een eigen bijdrage aan het vakgebied.
3. Een complex feitelijk en/of juridisch, internationaal en/of Europees, probleem vatten in een juridische vraagstelling en op basis hiervan een doordachte oplossing uitwerken.
4. Een kritische analyse en synthese van eigen onderzoeksresultaten helder en gevat rapporteren en presenteren.
5. In staat zijn nieuwe kennis op basis van zelfstudie te verwerven en deze op wetenschappelijk verantwoorde wijze aan te wenden in het domein van het internationaal en/of Europees recht.

Voorzitter en onderwijsdeskundig lid:

- Prof. dr. Gijs Vonk, gewoon hoogleraar Europees en internationaal Recht, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen;

Leden:

- Prof. dr. em. Jenneke Bosch-Boesjes, hoogleraar burgerlijk procesrecht en gewezen directeur onderwijs juridische faculteit, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen;
- Prof. dr. Ellen Hey, hoogleraar internationaal publiekrecht, Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam en coördinator van het LLM programma in internationaal en Europees publiek recht, universiteit Rotterdam;
- Bram Devolder, student master in de rechten, Universiteit Gent.

De commissie werd ondersteund door Peter Daerden, stafmedewerker kwaliteitszorg verbonden aan de Cel Kwaliteitszorg van de Vlaamse Universiteiten en Hogescholen Raad, projectbegeleider en secretaris.