

**Evaluation Report for the Accreditation of Study Programmes
offered by**
the School of International Relations, the School of Political Affairs, the
European Studies Institute and the Master's Programme Department of
MGIMO University, Moscow

Name of Programme	Degree Awarded	ECTS credit points	Programme duration	Type of programme	Annual admission capacity	Taught in
Comparative Politics	Bachelor of Political Affairs	240	4 years	Full-time	27	Russian
Politics and Business	Bachelor of Political Affairs	240	4 years	Full-time	24	Russian
World Politics	Bachelor of International Relations	240	4 years	Full-time	29	Russian
International Relations	Bachelor of International Relations	240	4 years	Full-time	(147)	Russian
Area Studies	Bachelor of Area Studies	240	4 years	Full-time	(147)	Russian
World Politics (MGIMO only)	Master of IR	120	2 years	Full-time	25	Russian
World Politics (w/ FU Berlin, HU Berlin, Univ. Potsdam, Germany)	Master of IR (Double Degree)	(120)	2 years	Full-time, joint program	4	German, Russian
World Politics (w/ University of Florence, Italy)	Master of IR (Double Degree)	(120)	2 years	Full-time, joint program	3	Italian, Russian
World Politics (w/Science Po Paris, France)	MA (Double Degree)	(120)	2 years	Full-time, double degree	20	French, Russian, English

Name of Programme	Degree Awarded	ECTS credit points	Programme duration	Type of programme	Annual admission capacity	Taught in
International Politics and Multinational Business	Master of IR	120	2 years	Full-time	20	Russian
Foreign Policy and Diplomacy of the Russian Federation	Master of IR	120	2 years	Full-time	25	Russian
Politics of the European Union	MA	120	2 years	Full-time	130	Russian
Politics and Economics in Eurasia	MA	120	2 years	Full-time	20	English
Governance and Global Affairs	Master of IR	120	2 years	Full-time	20	English
Policy Analysis and GR-Strategies	Master of Political Science	120	2 years	Full-time	20	Russian
World Regional Studies and International Relations	MA in Regional Studies	120	2 years	Full-time	52	Russian
International Relations and Foreign Policy	PhD		3-5 years	Full-time, part-time	5	Russian
Global Politics and Area Studies	PhD		3.5 years	Full-time, part-time	15	Russian

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Evaluation Report

1.1 Introduction: Purpose, Design and Context of the Accreditation Procedure

By contract dated June 1st, 2012 the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO University) has entrusted the Central Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (ZEvA) with the accreditation of its entire portfolio of study programmes. For this purpose, the programmes were grouped according to academic disciplines. All in all, five different clusters were formed, each of which was evaluated separately by a review panel consisting of experts from the respective scientific and/or professional background.

This is one of five evaluation reports following a series of on-site talks at MGIMO University between October and December 2012. As indicated in the survey table above, this report focuses on the study programmes in the field of International Relations and Political Science.

The evaluation of the study programmes is based on the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ESG, 2009), the Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area and the ECTS Users' Guide. Among other things, the ESG require "established processes, criteria and procedures that are used by [quality assurance] agencies which should be also pre-defined and publicly available" (ESG 2005, p. 25). Hence, ZEvA has largely applied its established procedures and evaluation criteria for the accreditation of study programmes, which are all fundamentally rooted in the European-wide standards and guidelines mentioned above. Among others, one central procedural rule is the representation of all institutional stakeholders in the expert panel. Thus, ZEvA decided to include representatives of the Russian labour market and a Russian student representative in each of the five review panels.

Russia signed the Bologna declaration in 2003 and since then has continuously implemented its basic objectives both at national and at institutional level. In the year 2004, MGIMO introduced the ECTS system with its central focus on the learners, the learning process and learning outcomes.

However, slight modifications of the accreditation framework were necessary, especially when it came to aspects that do not lie within the power of the institution alone: for example, the reviewers took a less narrow approach to issues of curricular structure and modularization, as the design and content of the curricula depend to a relatively large extent on nationwide standards defined at ministerial level, not at institutional level. In case of a positive accreditation decision, the study programmes will receive the ZEvA quality seal (instead of the seal of the German Accreditation Council). As a recognized actor in quality assurance at European level, ZEvA also awards the quality seals of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).

This evaluation report is based on the self-report and documentation submitted by the responsible schools and institutes of MGIMO University, additional documents provided on request during the on-site visit or shortly thereafter and the on-site talks with deans, teaching faculty, students and members of the rectorate on November 6th and November 7th, 2012. Both in the self-report and during the talks the English language was used as a medium of

communication, with the addition of simultaneous translation in some talks.

The procedural rules and the criteria for the accreditation of the study programmes were made transparent to MGIMO at the time of contracting. Also, a template including all central evaluation criteria was created to assist the university in generating the self-report.

The experts would like to thank the leadership board, faculty, staff and students of MGIMO University for the friendly and open atmosphere during the on-site talks and the careful organization and planning of the site visit.

1.2 Outline of the Institutional Profile, Organizational Structures and Management of MGIMO University

The Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO University) was founded in 1944 and quickly became Russia's leading diplomatic training institution. Still today, MGIMO is closely linked to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, although operating as an independent higher education institution. Until the present day, MGIMO has retained its humanistic, decidedly non-technical profile with a focus on International Relations and Diplomacy, Economics, Law and Social Sciences.

In the course of the large-scale social, political and economic changes that Russia saw in the 1990s, MGIMO also underwent a process of restructuring and modernization. In 1994, it officially gained the status of a university. In recent years, the institution's educational scope has been continuously widened through the foundation of several new schools and institutes. During the past decade, MGIMO has also gradually got in line with the European-wide educational standards developed in the course of the Bologna Process, for example by introducing two-tier study programmes (Bachelor/Master programmes) and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) at all educational levels. What has remained, however, is the strong emphasis on internationality which is reflected, for instance, in the special importance attached to foreign language acquisition and a significant percentage of graduates entering diplomatic service for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A relatively large number of international students and several joint programs offered in cooperation with other European universities are also evidence of MGIMO's overall strategy of internationalization.

At present, MGIMO University comprises eight different schools and five associated institutes which cooperate with the schools in matters of teaching and learning, but are independent of them in terms of organization. All schools and institutes consist of several departments (most of which equal what would be called a 'chair' in English-speaking countries or a 'Lehrstuhl' in German). Also, there are independent departments responsible for the general coordination of Master and PhD programmes and academic supervisors in charge of the individual Master programmes.

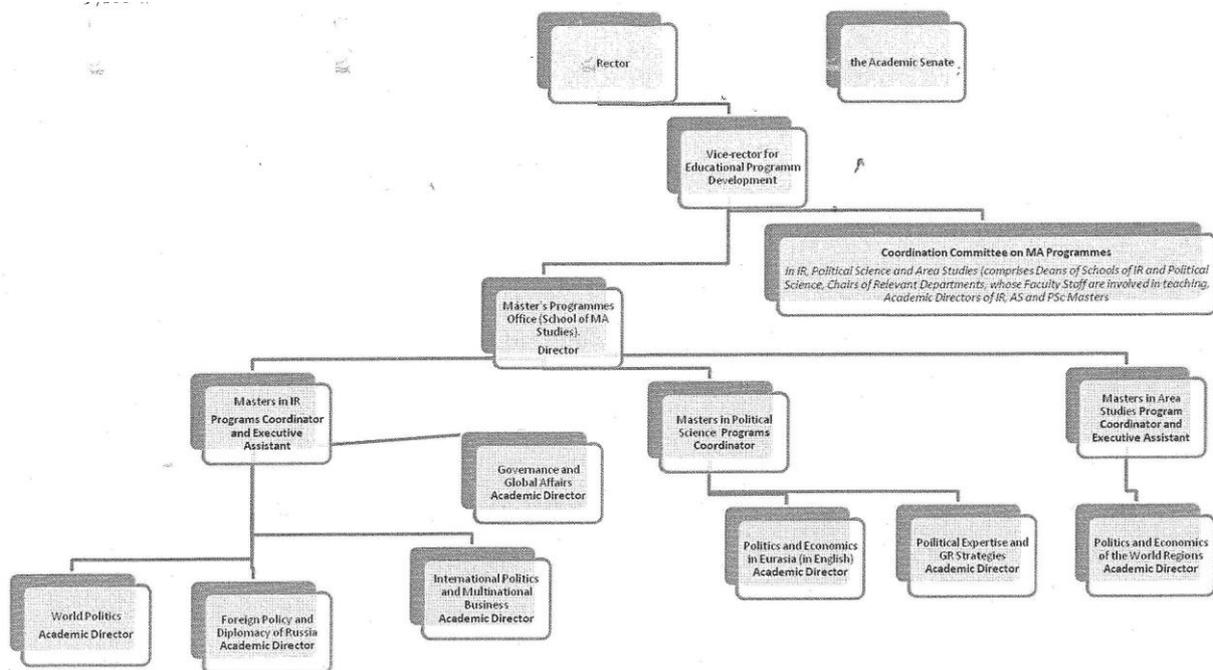
This cluster encompasses three Bachelor's programmes, two PhD-programmes and eleven Master's programmes, including several Joint Programmes with a Double Degree.

The Bachelor's programmes discussed in this report are offered and administered by two separate schools. The School of International Relations (in the following abbreviated as School of IR) has been one of the three traditional schools of MGIMO (International Relations, International Law and International Economic Relations) from the 1940s onwards. It

offers the BA-programmes “International Relations” and “Area Studies” with around 800 students altogether. The School of Political Affairs (also named School of Political Science and World Politics) has been established more recently as a separate branch of the School of International Relations in 1998. It is responsible for three Bachelor’s programmes: “Comparative Politics”, “Politics and Business”, and “World Politics” with all in all around 330 students. While both schools share an international perspective, they maintain markedly different approaches to their subject: The School of International Relations is traditionally oriented towards “factual aspects of international relations” (Prof. A. Malgim), i.e. such contents and approaches explicitly aimed at training future diplomats. This includes a strong emphasis on languages (up to 53 different languages are taught) and specialized regional and historical knowledge. The School of Political Affairs has a more comparativist-oriented and theory-driven approach and positions itself more towards academic training, but also includes language training.

While both schools mainly have their own separate staff and teaching faculty, they mutually contribute to a wide range of Master’s programmes. Those are generally administered by the Master’s Programmes Office of MGIMO, but are academically supervised each by an Academic Director (see Figure 1). While most Master’s programmes are thus attached to a specific Department (and thus implicitly also to a School), there are programmes like “Politics and Economics of World Regions” with shared responsibility between both Schools.

Figure 1: Organizational Structure of Master’s Programmes



In addition, MGIMO offers a Joint Programme with Double Master’s Degrees in cooperation with different European universities: “World Politics” is offered as a two-year Master solely at MGIMO (Russian track) and as Joint Programmes in cooperation with the University of Florence, Italy (Russian-Italian track), with three universities in the Berlin area, Germany (Free

University Berlin, Humboldt University at Berlin, University of Potsdam; Russian-German track), and with Sciences Po, Paris, France (Russian-French track). The Master's programme "Politics of the European Union" is in addition offered by the EU-supported European Studies Institute and integrates institute-specific courses with courses from other departments. "Politics and Economics in Eurasia" and "Governance and Global Affairs" are English-taught Masters offered primarily for international students.

The two PhD-programmes evaluated in this cluster are coordinated by the Department of Post-Graduate Studies.

For the members of the expert panel this organizational structure became partly transparent during the site-visit. But due to the large number of programmes and the not always sufficient nature of self-reports the panel opted for a more generalist evaluation of programmes for each cycle instead of assessing each programme individually. The two-tier structure on the Bachelor's level was a special point of discussion among the experts and with the representatives of both Schools. Generally, the panel concludes that both have quite distinct approaches to the broader field of international politics and aim for partly different types of qualifications which also has implication for curricula development and teaching styles. While this diversity might be a value in itself, the experts recommend increasing cooperation between the Schools to foster mutual synergies already on the Bachelor's level. Additionally, they would recommend making the specific profiles more visible and transparent on the Schools' level as well as on the programmes' level. This is especially important for a better orientation of current and future students.

1.3 Evaluation of the Study Programmes, the General Infrastructure and Related Managerial Aspects

1.3.1 Qualification Objectives of the Study Programmes

The overall qualification goals of all Bachelor's, Master's and PhD programmes offered by MGIMO are based on nation-wide governmental standards which are defined by the Ministry of Education for each academic discipline. As the Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area, these standards describe the level of knowledge and the analytical, generic and communicative skills and competences that graduates should have acquired at completing a programme.

This chapter provides a brief introductory outline of the general aims and purposes of the study programmes referred to in this report. More detailed information on goals and learning outcomes is provided in the chapters 1.3.2 and 1.3.3.

Bachelor Level

The qualification objectives of the Bachelor's programmes in International Relations and Politics have been made transparent in the self-reports and the course descriptions submitted by MGIMO. Some of them are also mentioned in the Diploma Supplements.

All five Bachelor's programmes include the acquirement of a broad basis of knowledge in History, Philosophy and Politics as well as in subject-related IT and Mathematics (e.g. course on databases in IR and Political Science or courses on statistics). In regard to their specific

core areas, the programmes and their qualification objectives differ markedly, especially between the two Schools:

- The Bachelor's programme "International Relations" (School of IR) is aimed toward competencies in practical analysis and forecasting in the domain of international relations. Special emphasis is on providing graduates with the proficiency in analysing information and applying it – with concurrent diplomatic skills and knowledge of etiquette – towards contemporary international politics. Special emphasis is put on a thorough knowledge of Russia's foreign policy doctrines and international conventions and acts – thus mostly educating towards a diplomatic career.
- The second Bachelor's programme of the School of IR, "Area Studies" shares with the former the aspired area of employment, but with a stronger focus on knowledge about geographic, historical, political, social, economic, etc. characteristics of specific regions and/or countries. This includes knowledge of languages of the specific region.
- The Bachelor's programmes "Comparative Politics" and "Politics and Business", both offered by the School of Political Affairs, share some basic qualification objectives as they are explicitly aimed at the ability to do research on political processes and acquiring the necessary skills for scientific investigation. While the former programme pursues this goal with a special emphasis on theories and methods of comparative politics and the latter with a focus on understanding and analysing economic issues, both call special attention towards Russian and international political perspectives. The vocational aims then differ decisively from the programmes of the School of IR, as they are less attuned towards the diplomatic service and more towards general political governance, including decision-making processes, citizens' participation or the interaction between government and business – of course supported by a high level of proficiency in at least two foreign languages.
- The Bachelor's programme on World Politics (School of Political Affairs) shares the substantial emphasis on competencies and skills for scientifically based analysis, but this time aimed towards the world political system in its historical, economic and legal perspectives and their respective key methods.

In line with MGIMO's international orientation, foreign language acquisition plays a central role especially at undergraduate level, i.e. the knowledge of foreign languages is an essential part of the graduates' special educational profile. Whereas courses in English are compulsory for everyone, students must also choose at least one out of up to 50 other European and non-European languages on offer. Hence, foreign language classes take up a large part of the curriculum, making for about one third of the total workload (around 90 out of 240 ECTS-points).

Furthermore, the Bachelor students are meant to develop general personal and social competences as e.g. the ability to cooperate with others within a team, the capability of self-development and self-improvement as well as analytical skills. Intercultural competence is also imparted in the context of the language classes.

Democratic citizenship is an explicitly formulated educational goal of the Bachelor programmes in IR and Politics, including the ability to analyse social processes, to respect and

preserve historical and cultural traditions, and to protect one's own and others' legal and human rights. In addition, extracurricular activities as e.g. involvement in the student union or other clubs and societies support this goal.

Master level

The educational goals of the Master's programmes vary depending on the specific subjects of each programme, the professional fields that the graduates are supposed to enter, and the distinctive concept of the programme.

- The three Master's programmes on International Relations with three tiers – “World Politics”, “International Politics and Multinational Business” and “Foreign Policy and Diplomacy of the Russian Federation” (for additional Joint Programmes see below) – share most of their qualifications objectives which are then adapted via curricular specifications. Graduates should be able to explore current political situations and international processes by using methods of applied political analysis. Students are prepared to design and perform independent analytical research and to interpret and present the results. According to the self-reports the differences in regard to content and educational goals of the three programmes are minimal. The panel members suggest to either accentuate the differences more clearly or to fuse the programmes into one Master's programme, possibly with some optional course specialisations.
- The Master's programme “World Regional Studies and International Relations” (abbreviated officially as MARS) is explicitly oriented towards “gaining profound knowledge about regional dimensions of international relations” (cf. self-report). Graduates should have a thorough understanding of theoretical discourses in Regional Studies and International Relations, accompanied by practical knowledge of regional, sub-regional and country-specific features. This includes the professional ability to analyse, understand and explain processes of integration/disintegration, the causes of security threats or regional conflicts.
- Graduates of the programme “Political Expertise and Governmental Relations Strategies”, just established in 2012 and predominantly taught by the faculty of the School of Political Affairs, are expected to have gained primarily the competencies, skills and knowledge to plan, carry out (and teach) scientific research in the realm of Political Science, with special emphasis on phenomena of the contemporary world political system, including major international organizations and security issues. This programme appears to be explicitly aimed at policy advice in different occupational contexts. The English-taught programme “Politics and Economics in Eurasia” has set nearly the same qualification objectives, but is more focused on the Eurasian region and offered mainly for international students. Basically, the same holds true for the English-taught programme “Governance and Global Affairs”, which is focused on knowledge and competencies in the field of International Relations, especially in regard to “major international organizations, associations, problems and trends in world politics, national and international security issues” (cf. self-report).
- The programme “Politics of the European Union”, offered by the European Studies Institute, sets its aims according to its expected clientele, mostly civil servants, businessmen and employees of companies and institutions. Its focus is on training on dif-

ferent aspects of the politics of European integration, including EU policies, multi-level governance or European regional and sub-regional processes. The programme includes language training and a Master's thesis.

- The three Joint Programmes with Double Degrees share a similar structure: MGIMO students spend their first year abroad and then join the Russian course in the third semester, either the programme "World Politics" (German-Russian track, Italian-Russian Track) or a combination of this programme and "International Politics and Multinational Business" (French-Russian track). Accordingly, the scientific qualification goals (as explained during the site-visit) have a more comparative focus, not only in regard to regional or language expertise, but also to different 'schools' and traditions of International Relations and Political Science.

The different programmes are thus to different degrees either more oriented towards training and future employment (especially in the Foreign Ministry, but also in other governmental institutions, economic or non-governmental organizations) or more towards analytical and scientific skills and competencies. Thus, most of the programmes in this cluster use practice-oriented forms and contents in teaching and learning, including forms of simulations and practice-related workshops or seminars with representatives from e.g. the Foreign Ministry, broadcasting companies or with guest lecturers from other (international) higher education institutions.

PhD Level

As distinguished from the Bachelor's and Master's programmes, the research abilities of the students lie in the centre of attention at PhD level. Holders of a PhD in History or Political Science, respectively, are expected to demonstrate the ability to conduct independent, original research and critical analyses, to communicate their research results to peers and the general public and to contribute actively to scientific advancement in the international context. In the two PhD-programmes evaluated in this cluster, those general objectives are oriented towards subjects in the area of world politics, foreign policy and their historical as well as theoretical, cultural etc. backgrounds.

The experts assess the programmes on Bachelor, Master and PhD level as being generally oriented towards scientific and employment-related qualification objectives in a plausible and positive way. Also considered are the goals of developing personal skills and competencies and of enhancing the involvement in civil society. Still, the experts would like to put forward three recommendations: Firstly, the qualification profiles of the different programmes on the Bachelor's and Master's level should become more pronounced. While this might be rather a problem of translation and compilation in the current self-reports, the final programme descriptions in English should be more explicit about the aims of the programmes. Secondly, a larger measure of individual choices in the curricula (already on the Bachelor's level) would promote the students' personal development. Thirdly, they propose to reconsider one particular aspect: Currently many of the programmes and/or courses put a lot of emphasis on Russian politics and Russia's foreign policy, including course content which aims at familiarizing students with what presumably are "Russian national interests". Among others this appears to be done via techniques which let students take the position of decision-makers in

Russian politics. The panel of experts feels strongly that this involves highly normative (and, therefore, subjective) aspects which should either be downgraded or balanced by teaching students the interests of other countries as well. Given that this might be too demanding for the (largely Russian) faculty, the panel of experts recommends looking for alternative solutions. The experts do realize and appreciate that the Russian Foreign Ministry as a prospective employer has a vital interest in professional diplomats representing a “Russian” position. The realization of such competences should, however, be taken care of within the Foreign Ministry after the formal completion of the degree programmes at MGIMO. Among others, such a professional separation of study programmes and political interests and priorities would strengthen the international appeal of the programmes – especially considering the broad (and, for Russia, almost unique) level of expertise among the staff on non-Russian topics and regions.

1.3.2 Compliance of the Study Programmes with the ECTS Users’ Guide

In 2004 MGIMO was the first Russian university to introduce the European Credit Transfer System based on the awarding of credit points for achieved learning outcomes. Courses are worth between 1 and 10 ECTS credit points.

Bachelor programmes at MGIMO comprise 240 ECTS credits to be acquired within a span of four years (60 credits per academic year). As a general rule, the courses are not grouped into larger educational components (modules) but are instead allocated to one of the three following “cycles” or pillars:

- Humanities, social and economic cycle (ca. 50 ECTS points)
- Mathematic cycle (ca. 15 ECTS points)
- Professional cycle (ca. 160 ECTS points)

The three cycles are not studied successively, but simultaneously, i.e. each semester students take courses from more than one cycle. Each cycle includes both compulsory courses (as prescribed by ministerial directive) and a range of varying elective courses that lie in the responsibility of the institution itself.

Additional ECTS points are awarded for preparation and taking the final state examinations (cf. Chapter 1.3.5) and the final paper. The content and didactic purpose of the individual cycles will be described in more detail in Chapter 1.3.3.

Graduates of the Bachelor’s programmes are awarded either the degree “Bachelor of Political Science” or “Bachelor of Arts”.

At Master level, a total of 120 ECTS points is awarded (60 credits per year). All Master programmes in IR and Politics consist of the following cycles/pillars:

- General scientific cycle: methods, current debates, language etc. (ca. 20-30 ECTS points; around one third compulsory, two-thirds electives)
- Professional cycle: subject-specific courses (ca. 30-45 ECTS points, around one third compulsory, two-thirds electives)
- Internship, Scientific Research and thesis (ca. 40-55 ECTS points)

- Examination, State Certification (ca. 12 ECTS points)

ECTS points are also awarded to PhD students, in total 179. For the PhD programme in International Relations and Politics, students have to take four compulsory courses with a total credit of 9 ECTS points. The rest of the workload is devoted to independent research (that is, the generation of the doctoral thesis) and preparation for examinations, both in the second and third year.

While the experts regard the curricular structure as reasonable in general, the programme-related awarding of credits to specific cycles, courses and other achievements (internship, thesis etc.) remains ambiguous in the presented reports (e.g., for “state certification” the Master’s programme “World Regional Studies and IR” states 30 ECTS points, including thesis, while “Policy Analysis and GR-Strategies” states 4 ECTS points). The panel members therefore strongly recommend including transparent crediting provisions in the programme handbooks (see below).

By ministerial directive, one ECTS credit point equals a total workload of ca. 36 hours at all levels of qualification (both contact hours and self-study time are included in this estimation). This amounts to a workload of about 2,160 hours per academic year, which clearly exceeds the average workload recommended in the ECTS Users’ Guide (25-30 hours per ECTS point, 1,500-1,800 hours per year). Consequently the average annual student workload is high by international comparison (in most Bologna countries it does not go beyond the limit of 1,800 hours). As the huge quantity of compulsory work (such as class attendance or the consumption and reproduction of large amounts of factual knowledge) risks to result in lesser academic quality and too little space for the individual scientific development of students, the experts recommend a closer monitoring of workload estimates at course and programme level. In order to achieve the ambitious academic aims of MGIMO programmes, it could be helpful to readjust the mode of calculation of workload (i.e. more free study time, less pre-defined obligations; also cf. Chapter 1.3.4).

Graduates of the Master’s programmes in IR and Politics are awarded different types of the degrees: “Master in International Relations”, “MA”, “Master in Political Science” or “MA in Regional Studies”.

In accordance with the ECTS Users’ Guide, ECTS points are awarded based on the assessment of these desired learning outcomes by means of different forms of examination.

A Diploma Supplement including an ECTS grading scheme has been submitted for the Bachelor’s programmes and most of the Master’s programmes. Examples of other ECTS key documents like Learning Agreements were not included in the documentation. However, during the on-site talks, MGIMO submitted a draft version of an ECTS handbook (in English), in which Learning Agreements and Transcripts of Records are mentioned as standard documents. The procedures in connection with the issuance of the documents are described in detail in the draft handbook.

The experts welcome the draft of the general part of an ECTS handbook by MGIMO. However, to allow for compliance of all reviewed study programmes in International Relations and Politics with the provisions of the ECTS User’s Guide the experts strongly recommend to compile specific ECTS-handbooks for each of the study programmes. Besides a general part

they must include the workload and awarded credits for each course as well as for each cycle/part of the programme, including internships, exams or thesis preparation. It should be made publicly available.

General remarks regarding the practical components of the curricula

As already indicated in Chapter 1.3.2, all of MGIMO's study programmes at Bachelor's and Master's level consist of both general education and subject-specific parts. The members of the panel welcome the practical training MGIMO students receive, including national and international internships organized in cooperation with e.g. the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The experts consider these practical elements as being overall professionally organized. Yet, it remains somewhat unclear to which extent and in what forms internships are (compulsorily) included in the specific Bachelor's and Master's programmes and how they are possibly related to the preparation of the thesis. This information should be included in the programme-specific ECTS handbook as well as further information on the educational goals/desired learning outcomes of internships and the existing forms of quality assurance (e.g. special Learning Agreements to be signed by the student, the training company and MGIMO). In addition, the possibility of international internships, which seem to be exclusively incorporated into the Joint Programmes by now, should be expanded.

General remarks on credit transfer, mobility and admission

Student exchange and mobility are part of MGIMO's overall strategy of internationalization and participation in the Bologna process. Each year, MGIMO takes in an increasing number of international students and in return sends a considerable, even though not impressively high, number of its own students to universities abroad. The members of the panel appreciate this exchange. However, given the nature and subject matter of the Study Programmes they also strongly recommend strengthening the efforts to further increase the bi-directional mobility. In addition, the rules and procedures applied by MGIMO for the recognition of credits earned abroad remained somewhat unclear in the documentation. As mentioned above, there were no examples of Learning and Training Agreements included in the documentation.

However, the draft ECTS handbook submitted during the on-site talks transparently describes a process of recognition based on comparable learning outcomes as recommended in the ECTS Users' Guide. Again, the experts strongly recommend the inclusion of these procedures and provisions in the respective ECTS handbooks, including a binding policy on the recognition of credits. The criteria and procedures for the recognition of credits should also be published online.

1.3.3 Structure, Teaching Contents and General Concept of the Study Programmes

Bachelor's programme in International Relations and Politics

Like all Bachelor's programmes offered by MGIMO, the Bachelor's program in International Relations, World Politics, Regional Studies and Comparative Politics (to name just the most significant disciplinary sub-fields) consists of several "cycles", each of which has its own didactic purpose and desired learning outcomes defined in nation-wide standards. By and

large, these standards are closely aligned with the desired learning outcomes described in the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area. Students are to learn to apply methods of analysing political processes, institutions and policies on different geographical and institutional scales with a special focus on the international and regional levels. Students also become able to integrate knowledge from neighbouring fields like history, economics, philosophy or culture to better understand, analyse and eventually help to resolve political, social and economic problems. Also, graduates should be able to communicate the results of their work in written and oral forms directed at different types of audiences.

During the four-year program, students receive a broad general education in the Arts and Humanities (Philosophy, History, and Sociology; often attuned towards the core subject of the programme) and take courses in the field of Mathematics and Information Science, like Statistics or “Natural Science Concepts”. At the same time they acquire specialized knowledge in the respective study field and receive in-depth training in at least two languages (cf. the qualification outcomes described in more detail above, 1.3.1). The Professional Cycle makes up the largest share of the curricula. It includes training in a second foreign language and then the core academic courses. All Bachelor’s programmes share introductory courses like “Introduction to International Relations and World Politics” or courses on the history of International Relations or the Foreign Policy of Russia. All programmes also include some theoretical and methodological components. In addition, each curriculum has its own core area. To mention just two examples:

- Students of the programme on “Comparative Politics” (School of Political Affairs) have to take four compulsory courses on Comparative Politics over several semesters, but can also choose between courses like “Political Discourse Analysis” and “Methods of Socio-Political Research”. The courses use Russian as well as English literature (e.g. R. Dahl, G. Sartori, J. Nye).
- Students of the programmes “International Relations” and “Area Studies”, which share large parts of their curricula, take courses like “Conflicts in the Post-Soviet Space”, “Traditional Diplomacy of Asian and African Countries” or “Contemporary Political Processes in the Western Countries”. This fits with the more diplomacy- and regionally-oriented aims of these programmes. However, to keep the programmes up to the desired international standard, the experts recommend using non-Russian and especially English literature in these programmes to a larger extent than it is now the case.

According to the representatives of the Schools, the Bachelor’s thesis is conceived as a constant process that already starts before the last semester. With a size between 40 to 70 pages the thesis is defended in the eighth semester. The experts regard this extent as rather high compared to their programmes at home (about 30-50 pages). In line with the remarks above regarding the rather high workload of students, the panels thus want to encourage MGIMO and the respective Schools to reassess the necessity of a rather large extensive BA thesis. In addition, the experts recommend making the requirements and procedural rules for the BA thesis more transparent.

Based on the self-reports and the on-site talks, the members of the expert panel evaluate the

programme concepts as being generally built up coherently and with a view towards the set qualification objectives. They principally welcome the wide and rich curricula structure which allows for broad-based general competences as well as in-depth specializations with regard to all relevant aspects of political science and the professional field of international affairs. However, they advise a less strict structure of compulsory courses, giving the students more flexibility in developing a personal academic profile. In order to make this possible, no additional courses are needed – some of the existing ones could be offered alternatively and thus be transformed into electives.

Overall, the experts have no doubt that the programmes succeed in imparting the level of knowledge and skills as described by the Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area. The programmes build on the students' level of knowledge from secondary education.

The applied forms of teaching and learning are adequate to help students reach their desired goals. Already at Bachelor's level, students learn to apply their knowledge in diverse contexts and to solve practical problems within their field of study (as e.g. by means of discussion, case-work, seminars). Furthermore, they acquire the necessary theoretical and methodological basis for undertaking further study autonomously. Also, students learn to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions. Due to the small size of most classes there is the opportunity for group discussions and interactive teaching, even if a more lecture-oriented teaching style is used.

For all these reasons the experts have come to the conclusion that the Bachelor programmes are in line with the Bologna framework in terms of educational goals and learning outcomes.

Yet, there should be an encompassing module catalogue (making up a central part of the programme handbook) with an adequate description of content, learning outcomes, forms of teaching, exams, literature used etc. for each course.

The Bachelor's degree in Political Science is a fully recognized third level degree, i.e. it enables graduates to enter qualified positions on the employment market. However, the great majority of the school's students proceed to Master's level after completing the Bachelor's programme, as this greatly increases their chances of finding attractive, adequately paid working positions, e.g. in the Foreign Ministry and diplomatic service.

Master's programmes

Master's programmes at MGIMO usually comprise 2 years and 120 ECTS credit points. The taught courses are allocated either to the "general scientific" (philosophy, languages) cycle or to the professional cycle, the latter consisting of both compulsory and elective courses.

The desired learning outcomes of Master's programmes are generally closely in line with the Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area: for example, graduates are to be able "to use methods of applied political analysis of international processes in their professional sphere", "find, gather and sum up information [and] make correct deductions from the information given" or "take responsibility and show leadership qualities as well as [having the] ability to work in a team" (programme "World Politics").

With the programmes "Politics and Economics in Eurasia" and "Governance and Global Af-

fairs”, MIGMO offers two Master’s programmes in English. They are modelled along the general structure with three cycles and taught by largely the same faculty. While both programmes share a considerable number of courses (e.g. “Political Process in Contemporary Russia”, “Russia-EU Relation”, “History of Political Ideas/Thoughts”), the former grants an MA in Political Science and its curriculum has a stronger focus on regional politics and foreign policy (in courses like “Conflicts in the Belt of Russia’s New Frontiers” or “Economy of the Former Soviet Union Countries and Eurasia”). The programme “Governance and Global Affairs”, which ends with an MA in International Relations, is more aimed towards disciplinary and methodological aspects of International Relations in courses like “International Security” and “International Political Analysis”. Although it is possible to study both programmes entirely in English, students have to take Russian language courses and can also visit Russian-taught, but non-credited, courses. During the site-visit, students welcomed the recently increased share of Russian language instruction, but also asked for a more flexible curricular structure with a larger share of ‘electives’ in the programme.

Based on the written descriptions of the curricula and the information provided during the on-site talks in Moscow, the experts have come to the conclusion that the graduates of the Master’s programmes reach the desired learning outcomes for the second cycle as described by the Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area.

The Master’s programmes generally build on the broad knowledge base laid at Bachelor’s level. Compared to the Bachelor’s programme, the general cycle lays a stronger focus on the core disciplines of the programmes – i.e. in all parts of the Master’s programmes the emphasis is on specialized rather than general knowledge. Some of them offer a certain focus on special fields of International Relations (e.g. relationships between governments and the economic sector or policy and institutions of the European Union) while others are specializations on certain world regions (programme “World Regional Studies and IR”). While not entirely transparent in the self-reports, it became obvious during the talks on-site that also theories and methods of International Relations are taught in a considerable number of courses, even if no specific course on theories and approaches might be included in the curriculum.

While professional training can be the main objective for some of the programmes, rather than scientific education in the narrow sense of the word, one central goal of all Master’s programmes is to enable students to conduct scientific research independently and autonomously. The experts thus come to the conclusion that the students of the Masters’ programmes in International Relations and Politics reach this goal, especially through generating the Master’s thesis, which can be chosen in cooperation between the student and his or her supervisor.

Furthermore, the experts are certain that students acquire the necessary soft skills they need to take up leading positions in their field of professional and academic specialization. Through further intense language training, students’ communicative skills reach an advanced level. All in all, the panel members were generally impressed by the strong individual commitment of many members of the faculty to use a variety of innovative teaching styles, methods and materials. Therefore they support to further advance the use of modern, interactive styles of courses at the expense of traditional, lecture-based teaching. For the English-taught programme, the experts recommend to increase the possibilities for individualizing the curricular structures by introducing a more flexible course-selection.

Double Degree Master's Programmes

Three Master's programmes are offered in cooperation with other European universities. Graduates of these programmes receive one degree from each of the participating institutions (double degree). In addition, there is an English-taught programme aimed at international students. As these programmes differ in some significant ways from MGIMO's other Master's programmes, it seems apt to discuss them in a separate chapter.

Two programmes are variants of the programme "World Politics".

- The Russian-German programme is based on a cooperation agreement between MGIMO on the one hand and a consortium of three German universities that offer together a programme in "International Relations": Free University Berlin, Humboldt University Berlin and University of Potsdam. MGIMO as well as the consortium selects up to four students each year, which need to have very good language skills in German, Russian and English. The group of eight spends its first year at the German universities and the second at MGIMO. In the respective host country, an internship is obligatory and the Master's thesis is supervised by both sides and defended in front a joint German-Russian committee at the end of the second year.
- The Russian-Italian programme basically has the same structure; each side selects two to four students each year. The first year has to be spent at the University of Florence, the second at MGIMO. The internship is again obligatory and the supervision and defence of the Master's thesis is jointly taken.
- While both former programmes were set up more recently (2006 and 2011), the Joint Programme with the "Institut d'études politiques de Paris" (Science Po Paris) already started in 1994 and currently offers 20 places for MGIMO students. Again, the first year is spent in Paris and the second in Moscow and by now the thesis is supervised and defended with participation of both parties.

Each programme is based on a contractual agreement between the participating institutions which regulates the design of the curricula, the organization of the programmes and the selection and supervision of students. The agreements were all included in the self-reports.

All three joint study programmes aim at preparing students further for working in an international context, either academically or vocational. As mobility is a basic underlying principle of the programmes, the above remarks regarding the crediting of courses and student mobility do not apply to them.

The experts regard all programmes as being well-organized and continuously reviewed and improved by all partners involved. The selection of students and the evaluation of their work are also joint responsibilities of all partners. The panel members strongly appreciate the double degree programmes as a strong enhancement of MGIMO's international profile and a significant contribution to the further internationalization of European higher education.

PhD Programmes

The qualification objectives defined by the ministry for third cycle programmes are in line with the Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area. Holders of a PhD should be capable of independent analysis, synthesis and assessment. Also, they should be

able to plan, structure and manage large-scale scientific projects and to contribute to the extension of existing knowledge.

Besides working on their research projects, PhD candidates in either History or Political Science must also take a number of courses on e.g. “Contemporary Issues in World Politics” and “History of International Relations”. PhD-Students thus have about three or four classes a week, thus leaving time for developing the thesis. At the end of the first year, they must sit intermediate examinations in order to continue the programme.

The final examination has three steps: first, the thesis has to be approved by the supervising department and then has to be defended in front of a council with about 20 members. If this is successful, it must be approved by the state’s Higher Attestation Commission.

While the peers are basically convinced that the PhD candidates succeed in reaching the desired goals and that the compulsory courses are reasonable, it did not really become transparent, how the research part of the programmes is implemented. In addition, while the workload especially in regard to (in-between) exams appears manageable, it remained less clear how the relationship between supervisor(s) and PhD-candidate is structured. It seems as if PhD-candidates are normally associated with one supervisor. In this respect, the experts recommend taking steps to further modernize the postgraduate education. Among others this includes allowing for a stronger (and more independent) research orientation, lessening the burden of examinations, and expanding the number of subject-related supervisors, for instance in the context of a supervisory committee of three faculty members which are experts in the field of the respective PhD-candidate’s research project.

1.3.4 Students and Study Conditions

Admission Procedure

To be admitted to MGIMO, applicants must complete their secondary school education (Unified State Exam) with excellent grades. High performance in Russian, Mathematics and foreign languages is held especially important in the selection of students. Furthermore, MGIMO is one of only a few higher education institutions in Russia conducting their own additional entrance examinations – in case of the Bachelor’s programme in International Relations and Politics, applicants must take a written foreign language exam. Considering the central importance of foreign language training for MGIMO’s educational concept, this selection procedure is regarded as adequate by the panel of experts.

As mentioned above, a majority of MGIMO’s Bachelor graduates go on studying at Master’s level. Also, Bachelor graduates from other Russian universities are enrolled in postgraduate programmes at MGIMO. So far, there seem to be very few non-nationals absolving a complete Bachelor’s or Master’s programme at MGIMO (apart from those Master’s programmes especially designed for foreign students).

Formally, foreigners have the opportunity to apply, but it seems that until now it is quite difficult to get foreign degrees and diplomas recognized. To further MGIMO’s own aim of internationalization, the experts recommend that MGIMO should set up regulations and procedures

for the admission of foreign students, especially to their (Russian-taught) Master's programmes. It must be made clear, if and how foreign graduates with a 3 year-Bachelor's degree (180 ECTS credits) can enter MGIMO's Master's programmes. Furthermore, the 'nostrification' of foreign degrees, i.e. the legalization prior to continuing higher education, as practised by the Russian government, might hinder the vertical mobility of incoming students. Since Russia has signed and ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention in 1999/2000, each party shall recognise higher education qualifications conferred in another party unless a substantial difference can be shown.¹ While the current practice of recognition by the Russian government might be in line with the Convention, the criteria and procedures for the nostrification and, if applicable, for further admission procedures by MGIMO should be made transparent (e.g. online).

Apart from excellent academic performance in a similar or related Bachelor's or "Specialist" programme, admission requirements for the Master's programmes in the field of International Relations and Politics include proficiency in the English language and a solid base of knowledge in the relevant disciplines of IR, Political Science or Regional Studies, which must be demonstrated in two entrance examinations. An exemption is the Master's programme offered by the European Studies Institute with a committee-based selection procedure.

General study requirements and workload

MGIMO students spend the largest part of the day in class (teaching hours are usually from 9 am until 4 pm on six days a week); the rest of the time is dedicated to independent self-studying and extracurricular activities. As stipulated in the Russian Law on Education, the weekly study time cannot exceed a total 54 academic hours, which includes both contact time and self-study time. The maximum number of contact hours per week does not exceed 27, excluding physical training. From the third academic year onwards, one day per week is dedicated to research and thus kept free of taught classes.

As described in Chapter 1.3.3, practical placements might also consume a certain amount of time which must be brought in line with the theoretical part of education, both in organizational terms and in terms of content. Also, the frequent tests and examinations cause a considerable amount of work on the students' side (cf. Chapter 1.3.5).

Yet, while the students present during the on-site talks described their schedules as "intense", they also described it as manageable and comparable to other European universities (Science Po, St. Gallen). The workload appears to be highest in the first three years of the Bachelor's programme, due to exclusively compulsory courses plus a considerable workload for the language classes. All in all, the experts see the workload as high, but manageable. This is supported by the self-perception of the students as being self-confident. Nevertheless, the panel recommends a closer monitoring of student workload: the university should check on a regular basis whether there is a discrepancy between the anticipated workload and the time actually taken by the majority of students to reach the expected learning out-

¹ Cf. Lisbon Recognition Convention, Section VI;
<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/165.htm> (access February 4, 2013).

comes. This could be achieved, for example, in the context of course evaluations or general surveys on study condition. If necessary, adequate measures should be taken to revise the estimated workload, the teaching and learning methods applied or the desired learning outcomes, as recommended by the ECTS Users' Guide.

Counselling and advisory services

The members of the expert panel were satisfied with the presented counselling and advisory services at MGIMO, including an Ombudsman. The faculty appears to be accessible. Yet, the different levels and forms of counselling should be described in more detail (and also in English) in a general part of programme handbooks.

General organizational and social aspects

As far as the members of the expert panel can see, students profit from relatively small group sizes and an impressive teacher-student ratio. In addition, MGIMO offers a number of social and extra-curricular activities that students can get involved in, as e.g. several student associations or the Model United Nations. On the MGIMO campus, students also have a variety of sporting grounds and facilities, a well-equipped canteen and several cafeterias at their disposal.

Generally, the students participating in the on-site talks displayed a high level of identification with the institution while at the same time being outspoken and critical. Hence, the further integration of students into institutional decision-making as well as in internal quality assurance would help to improve curricula as well as overall study structures. The experts thus recommend to strengthen the role of students and other stakeholders in these procedures as recommended in the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA" (ESG).

1.3.5 Examination System

Examination regulations and the evaluation criteria for student assessment at MGIMO are based on several internal acts, guidelines and directives, most of which are publicly available on the university's Russian website. As English translations of these documents are not at hand, they were listed in the institutional self-report, but not included in the documentation.

Final course examinations are held twice a year, i.e. at the end of each semester. The number and scope of examinations within that span of time does not exceed a manageable measure (a maximum of five exams per semester). However, in each course there are usually three additional tests or assignments like 'response papers' for readings that serve to monitor students' progress throughout the term. Even though students excelling in these tests may be exempt from the end-of-semester exam, the peers consider the overall workload caused by tests and examinations to be relatively high (up to 30 tests/exams per semester are possible). Thus, the peers recommend a closer monitoring of student workload (cf. Section 1.3.4).

Depending on the subject, there are either written examinations (with a maximum duration of

2 hours) or oral examinations that last about 15 minutes. Oral exams may also be taken in groups of up to five students. As a general rule, there are at least two examiners for each exam, and each paper is corrected by two lecturers to ensure objectivity. The evaluation criteria seem to be made transparent to the students both orally and as part of the course syllabi.

Furthermore, both Bachelor's and Master's students must undergo final 'state examinations' in order to be awarded their degrees. At MGIMO, these usually consist of a final thesis (including oral defence) and two examinations: one foreign language exam and one interdisciplinary exam in the core scientific discipline of the programme. The Bachelor's thesis comprises between 40 and 70 pages, a Master's thesis around 130 pages.

All in all, the experts regard tests and examinations as being well distributed over the academic year and thus remain feasible for students at all times. The applied forms of examination are fit to measure the desired learning outcomes of the courses, including different types of written and oral exams. In the final theses, students can show that they have learned to apply methods of scientific research and to apply their knowledge to a concrete topic or problem.

Based on the on-site talks and the self-report the experts have thus come to the conclusion that the procedures for the assessment of students applied at MGIMO comply with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. However, as the relevant institutional regulations and legal acts could not be provided in English, some details have remained unclear. Hence, the experts recommend making the information regarding student assessment and examination available in English. The experts are fully aware that translated versions and/or summaries of such official documents cannot be legally binding, but would still like to make this recommendation for the sake of transparency and student-friendliness, especially with a view to the needs of foreign students (cf. Chapter 1.3.8).

1.3.6 Cooperative Relationships

MGIMO has forged cooperative relationships regarding its study programmes in International Relations and Politics with on the one hand institutions of state government, especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but also the State Duma, the Federation Council or other government offices, and on the other hand with a wide range of foreign higher education institutions. These co-operations are used for internship placements and practical training for students, but also for offering practice-related courses, workshops and guest lectures. The Double Degree programmes also developed from such intense cooperative efforts.

The panel members welcome the impressive efforts of MGIMO and its respective Schools and Departments to establish strong relationships with national institutions and internationally renowned universities. They regard MGIMO as a premier partner in establishing such cooperative relationships and recommend using them further for increasing student and faculty mobility in both directions (cf. Chapters 1.3.7).

1.3.7 Resources and Infrastructure

Teaching staff

In total, MGIMO has a faculty of about 1.200, including 160 full professors, 430 associate professors as well as assistant professors and other supporting lecturers of various qualifications. Students are usually taught by lecturers from several MGIMO schools and departments.

After an extensive and open discussion with the teaching faculty, the panel members come to the conclusion that the faculty members exhibit a high level of knowledge, professional experience, skills, qualifications and commitment that are necessary for effective and successful teaching. The experts especially welcome the efforts of faculty members to use a broad range of forms of teaching and examination.

Teaching staff is also given the opportunities to develop and extend their teaching capacity by participating in professional training programmes. Also, students can provide feedback on the quality of teaching in the context of regular surveys (cf. Chapter 1.3.9).

As indicated above, to further sharpen its international profile, MGIMO should aim at recruiting more teaching faculty from abroad, both for short-term stays and on a permanent basis. The impressive efforts for cooperation should be used to strengthen the incoming and outgoing mobility not only of students, but also for faculty members. As discussed during the on-site talks, the current praxis mainly consists of inviting international scholars for one or two talks or as seminar guests. This is certainly a valuable didactic tool, but it cannot substitute longer stays for at least one semester or more. Offering visiting positions at all levels of qualification (from professorial level to the lecturer level), which are explicitly tied to teaching certain subject matters of the curriculum, would broaden the exposure of MGIMO students to different teaching styles and, thus, the internationalization of the Study Programmes.

Infrastructure and Equipment

MGIMO provides its students with excellent infrastructure and learning resources, both by Russian and international standards. There are five different buildings on the premises which primarily serve academic purposes and comprise more than 200 lecture rooms, computing facilities, multimedia labs and language laboratories as well as a high-standard research library which also provides access to online literature databases like EBSCO host, LEXIS-NEXIS and Wolters Kluwer.

Beyond the academic realm, the university also caters for other needs of students and staff: apart from the sports facilities already mentioned above, there are several dormitories on the premises, another one with an intake capacity of up to 1.800 students is currently in the process of construction. Furthermore, MGIMO has its own medical center, pharmacy and shops.

1.3.8 Transparency and Public Information

According to the ESG, higher education institutions “have a responsibility to provide information about the programmes they are offering, the intended learning outcomes of these, the qualifications they award, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, and the learning opportunities available to their students”. As has already been outlined above, the most important regulations regarding student assessment, internships, final theses etc. seem to be published on the Russian website of MGIMO, but are not yet available in English. The English version of the website provides information on the institution as a whole, but only few facts regarding the (Russian-taught) study programmes.

Some course descriptions/syllabi in Russian (presented in print and on the MGIMO intranet) were available during the on-site visit. Even though these documents contain extensive information regarding the content and desired learning outcomes of the courses, they deviate from the Bologna standards in structure and design. The programme and course descriptions in English that were submitted as part of the documentation do not yet include all information that the ECTS Users’ Guide recommends for the description of study programmes and course units (MGIMO should, according to its own curricular structure, label them “courses” instead of “modules”). Based on these observations, the members of the expert panel would like to recommend the following measures for improvement:

First of all, the English version of the MGIMO website should be extended to include more detailed information regarding the study programmes, the central regulations and evaluation criteria for student assessment and the institutional quality assurance policy.

Secondly, a course catalogue in English should be generated for each study programme within the cluster. The design and content of the course catalogues should follow the recommendations of the ECTS Users’ Guide as closely as possible: each document should comprise a general introductory part providing general information on the institution and especially on the programme (including provisions for mobility, recognition, internships etc.), as well as course descriptions including at least a brief outline of the contents and the desired learning outcomes of each course. The handbooks including course catalogues should be made available on the MGIMO website.

1.3.9 Quality Assurance and Development

For the last few years, MGIMO has been developing an internal quality management system which is applied throughout the institution. The implementation and further development of this system are the responsibility of the Department for Quality Assurance and Academic Development which was established in the year 2007. An official quality assurance policy does exist, but is not yet available in English. The experts recommend generating and publishing a translated version of this document.

Apart from assuring compliance with the educational standards issued by the Ministry of Education and Science, quality assurance at MGIMO aims at further improving study pro-

grammes and educational processes on the basis of collected data. To this end, a new information system based on performance indicators has recently been introduced. The university gathers the necessary management information by continuously monitoring the students' academic progress and achievements and through regular surveys among students and alumni. At the end of each term, students get a chance to provide feedback on the quality of courses and teaching. Based on the survey results, analytical reports are generated which are passed on to the rectorate and the heads of the schools and institutes as a decision base for further action.

The members of the panel thus conclude that the internal quality assurance mechanisms of MGIMO are in accordance with the recommendations of the ESG. Nevertheless, they would like to make a few suggestions for further improvement:

Lecturers should be encouraged to discuss the results of course evaluations with their students, as some teachers appear to do already. If this is not possible for organizational reasons, it should at least be made sure that students receive feedback on the results of the surveys. Generally, students should get a chance to participate actively in all phases of the quality assurance cycle: for example, student representatives should be entitled to suggest measures for improvement, contribute to working groups etc.

1.4 Summary

The members of the expert panel were impressed by the modern infrastructure and equipment, the strong commitment of faculty, students and staff and the efficient organizational structures they found at MGIMO. The peers have no doubt that the students of the different study programmes get well prepared to analyse, understand and professionally tackle the challenges in domestic politics and international affairs. Students have excellent prospects on the employment market, both nationally and internationally. Also, the panel members strongly appreciate MGIMO's international orientation in teaching and learning as well as the alignment of the university's study programmes and management practices with European-wide standards. The experts recommend further pursuing this path towards internationalization – as, for example, by intensifying the exchange of teaching staff and students and by taking into account a broader outlook in substantive terms beyond the Russian perspective.

The experts got the impression that the general orientation of the International Relations-branch of MGIMO underwent a significant reorientation during the last ten years: Whereas it had traditionally focused almost exclusively on training diplomats for the Russian Foreign Service in a very hands-on and professional way, a broader and more theoretically based understanding of political science – including international relations as one area of the field – has been developed recently by parts of the (younger) faculty. This reorientation may prove very helpful in terms of the MGIMO's internationalization strategy, because it makes the academic teaching more attractive for international students. In order to achieve this goal, however, the different approaches as well as possible synergies between both Schools should be made more transparent and the reasons for their coexistence should be explained to students.

Final vote of the expert panel

1. General Recommendations

Institutional and Organizational Structures

- The experts recommend an increased cooperation between the two Schools to foster mutual synergies already on the Bachelor's level. At the same time, the distinct profiles of each should become more recognizable.

Qualification Objectives and Programmes' Structures

- The specific profiles of the study programmes should become more pronounced and visible in the qualification objectives as well as in the curricular structures.
- The experts propose to reconsider the strong emphasis on Russian politics and Russia's foreign policy in many of the programmes and courses, including course content which aims at familiarizing students with what presumably are "Russian national interests". The panel recommends that these highly normative (and, therefore, subjective) aspects should either be downgraded or balanced by teaching students the interests of other countries as well – or that the realization of such competences should be taken care of within the Foreign Ministry after the formal completion of the degree programmes at MGIMO. Such a professional separation of study programmes and political interests and priorities would strengthen the international appeal of the programmes.

Infrastructure and Study Conditions

- The experts strongly recommend a closer monitoring of workload estimates at course and programme level. In order to achieve the ambitious academic aims of MGIMO programmes, it could be helpful to readjust the mode of calculation of workload (i.e. more free study time, less pre-defined obligations).
- Considering the impressive efforts of MGIMO in establishing cooperative relationships with foreign higher education institutions, the panel members strongly recommend to use those relationships to strengthen the incoming and outgoing mobility of students and faculty members. Offering visiting positions for longer periods and at all levels of teaching qualifications (from professorial level to the lecturer level) would broaden the exposure of MGIMO students to different teaching styles and, thus, the internationalization of the Study Programmes.

Practical Phases and Internships

- Information on obligatory or facultative internships as well as integrated practical phases in the programmes should be included in the programme handbooks.
- The contents, regulations and quality assurance procedures of practical placements/internships should be defined in the course handbook. Internship Agreements should be signed by the student, the training company/institution and MGIMO.

Mobility, Credit Transfer and Recognition

- The experts strongly recommend developing a binding and transparent institutional policy on the recognition of credits, periods of study and degrees. The criteria and procedures for the recognition (including nostrification of degrees) should be published online and in English.

Transparency and Public Information

- The English version of the MGIMO website should be extended to include more detailed information regarding the study programmes, the central regulations and evaluation criteria for student assessment, the institutional quality assurance policy and information on student exchange and mobility.
- A description and course catalogue in English should be generated for each study programme within this cluster. The design and content of the course catalogues should follow the recommendations of the ECTS Users' Guide as closely as possible. Each course catalogue should also include detailed information on crediting of different curricular aspects/components, a descriptions of compulsory practical placements/internships and the examination system. All course catalogues should be published on the MGIMO website.

Quality Assurance

- Course evaluations should become more differentiated and students should receive feedback on the results of course evaluations. In addition, students (and other stakeholders) should be given the chance to increasingly participate actively in all phases of the quality assurance cycle and related institutional procedures.

2. Specific Recommendations

Bachelor's Programmes

- For the *Bachelor's programmes*, the panel members recommend enlarging the individual choices (elective courses) in the curricula to further promote students' personal development and the development of individual academic profiles.
- For the *Bachelor's programmes*, the panel members encourage MGIMO and the respective Schools to reassess the necessity of a rather large extensive BA thesis. In addition, the experts recommend making the requirements and procedural rules for the BA thesis more transparent.

Master's Programmes

- For the *Master's programmes* on International Relations with three tiers – “World Politics”, “International Politics and Multinational Business” and “Foreign Policy and Diplomacy of the Russian Federation”, the panel members suggest to either accentuate the differences more clearly or to fuse the programmes into one Master's programme, possibly with some optional course specialisations.
- To keep the *Master's programmes* “International Relations” and “Area Studies” in line

with the desired international standards, the experts recommend increasing the use of non-Russian and especially English literature in these programmes.

- For the English-taught *Master's programmes "Politics and Economics in Eurasia" and "Governance and Global Affairs"*, the experts recommend to increase the possibilities for individualizing the curricular structures by introducing a more flexible course-selection.

PhD Programmes

- The experts recommend taking steps to further modernize the postgraduate education. This might include a stronger (and more independent) research orientation, a lesser burden of examinations, and an expanded number of subject-related supervisors (for instance in the context of a supervisory committee of three faculty members which are experts in the field of the respective PhD-candidate's research project).

3. Recommendation to the Accreditation Commission

The expert group recommends towards the Accreditation Commission the accreditation of the study programmes in International Relations, Political Science and Regional Studies, as offered by the School of International Relations, the School of Political Affairs, the Master's Programmes Office and the European Studies Institute of MGIMO for the accreditation period of five years.