

**MASTER OF ARTS IN DIPLOMACY
AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE
&
MASTER OF ARTS IN GLOBAL
PEACE, SECURITY AND
STRATEGIC STUDIES**

VESALIUS COLLEGE

INITIAL ACCREDITATION • PANEL REPORT

18 November 2018





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1 Executive summary

The Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) received a request for an initial accreditation from Vesalius College (VeCo) for two initial master programmes. VeCo seeks initial accreditation for the proposed degrees *Master of Arts in Diplomacy and Global Governance* (MA DAGG) and *Master of Arts in Global Peace, Security and Strategic Studies* (MA GPSSS), both offered in part-time and full-time mode.

The expert panel was convened by the NVAO and agreed to by the institution. The panel has examined the available information. During a site visit it discussed the proposed programmes with representatives of the institution and the professional field. The programmes started in September 2018, and as a result, the panel was able to interview students who are currently enrolled in the programmes. In addition, the panel interviewed former (undergraduate) students. Based on this information the panel report to the board of the NVAO contains a positive advice on all standards and for each of the two programmes as a whole.

The VeCo programmes are founded in the Social Sciences and focus on the field of International Relations (IR). The MA DAGG combines two other subdisciplines in this field: diplomatic studies and global governance studies. The MA GPSSS combines three subdisciplines in this field: peace studies, security studies and strategic studies. The programmes combine a theory-oriented approach with a policy-oriented approach. The panel has established that the programmes performed a thorough benchmarking exercise. The learning outcomes of the programmes reflect what is regarded as MA-level programmes in an international context and answer to the need of the professional field for graduates with a comprehensive, theoretically founded approach to policy reality in international and diplomatic relations.

The programmes are offered in two different modes; students can either take the 90 EC option or the 120 EC option. The additional learning outcomes related to the extra 30 EC in the 120 EC option, as well as the rationale for offering both options were elaborated in the application file and during the site visit. The panel is positive on the decision of the programmes to offer both options, thereby catering to the needs of the various types of students who wish to obtain their degree. In addition, the programmes can be followed either full-time or part-time.

The programmes provide a very adequate teaching-learning environment which facilitates the learning process of students who wish to pursue a career in international relations. VeCo has strong ties with organisations in Brussels which allow students to get acquainted with the reality of policy-making from the perspective of the professional field. Both programmes coordinate a core team of staff of qualified academics as well as staff members from related institutions and last but not least visiting faculty' from other (research) Universities.

The structure of the programmes ensures that all students will have a thorough foundation in the respective subdisciplines of each programme and provides the opportunity for students to either broaden themselves or specialise themselves. Although the programmes are challenging, the design of the courses, the workload monitoring systems in place as well as the means of support for students to deal with the demands of the programmes, safeguard the balance between challenging students on the one hand, and on the other, overdemanding. The facilities provided by VeCo and its partners provide students with all means that are necessary to perform their studies. The educational model that is used within VeCo combines well with the combination of a theoretical and policy-oriented approach and also with the small-scale and international character of both programmes. Students who choose the 120 EC programme instead of the 90 EC programme will develop expansive knowledge in Risk Analysis and additional training in an intensive internship.

The assessment system and policies in place allow the programmes to stimulate students' active learning and at the same time, provide good and transparent criteria by which students' work is assessed. The programmes use a considerable range of assessment methods, which add to the variety in which students are assessed. The teaching manual, the rubrics and information meetings for lecturers, the pairing of core faculty with adjunct faculty and the extensive monitoring of assessment ensure that the practices on assessment are shared and understood, valid and reliable.

The internal quality assurance is comprehensive and functions very well. The panel is very positive about the external review of course material and grading by an academic peer in the relevant field. Although the system is efficiently organized, the panel suggests that VeCo keeps monitoring the system's 'fitness for purpose'.

The Hague, 18 November 2018

On behalf of the expert panel convened to assess the degrees Master of Arts in Diplomacy and Global Governance and Master of Arts in Global Peace, Security and Strategic Studies,

Prof. dr. M.H. Smith
(panel chair)

Jetse Siebenga Msc.
(secretary)

2 Assessment per generic quality guarantee

This chapter presents the evaluation by the assessment panel of the four generic quality guarantees, which the NVAO Assessment Framework is composed of. The panel has reproduced the criteria for each generic quality guarantee. For each generic quality guarantee the panel presents:

1. an outline of its findings based on the programmes' documents, on other documents provided by the institution and on the site visit;
2. the considerations the panel has taken into account and;
3. the conclusion of the panel. The panel presents a conclusion for each of the four generic quality guarantees.

2.1 Intended exit level (generic quality guarantee 1)

With respect to level, orientation and content, the intended exit level reflects the current requirements that have been set for the programme by the professional field and/or discipline from an international perspective.

Criteria: As for level and orientation (bachelor's or master's; professional or academic), the intended learning outcomes fit into the Flemish qualifications framework and, if available, relevant domain-specific learning outcomes. They tie in with the international perspective of the requirements currently set by the professional field and the discipline with regard to the contents of the programme.

Outline of findings

Learning outcomes

The application files contain the aims and learning outcomes of the programmes, demonstrating their levels and orientation. The main aim of both programmes is to provide students with unique high-level, high-quality and policy-relevant academic graduate programmes. Students interested in an international career can gain strong theoretical foundations, practical skills and will experience important policy-making exposure. The programmes aim to prepare graduates for careers in government (ministries of defence, development, interior and foreign offices), international organizations (NATO, EU, UN, IMF), think tanks and NGOs and regional diplomatic representations (such as the African Union, League of Arab States or the Gulf Cooperation Council).

The learning outcomes of the MA DAGG stress knowledge and understanding of major theoretical debates in diplomacy and global governance on the one hand and students' problem-solving capacities on the other, for which students are trained to use interdisciplinary knowledge and insights generated by theories of diplomacy.

The learning outcomes of the MA GPSSS emphasize knowledge and understanding of the major theoretical debates related to peace studies, security studies and strategic studies. In addition, students are supposed to develop autonomy in the application of theoretical insights to policy practice.

Vesalius offers both programmes in a 90 EC study programme as well as the option to subscribe to a 120 EC study programme. Students who take the 120 EC programme will develop knowledge and skills with regard to risk analysis and the ability to apply modern IT tools for open source intelligence. The diploma transcript lists the additional achieved qualifications which have been defined in learning outcomes. Another rationale for offering a 120 EC option is that some organisations (f.e. ministry of foreign affairs) demand a 120 EC MA programme as a prerequisite for certain job positions.

During the site visit, one of the students explained that he wouldn't have subscribed to the programme if the 120 EC option had not been available, because it is his ambition to work as a diplomat for Germany whose ministry of foreign affairs demands a 120 EC MA.

Discipline

IR is a discipline encompassing several subdisciplines. Both programmes approach IR from a combination of different subdisciplines, which are reflected in the learning outcomes. The combination of the various subdisciplines serves several purposes. In the first place it reflects the intellectual debate in which the exploration of touch points and commonalities between the different sub-disciplines has been emphasized lately. In addition, it allows the programmes to have a comparative perspective and thereby strengthen students' analytical skills and critical thinking. Last but not least, students get a complete overview of the most important paradigms and theories within IR.

The MA DAGG offers students the possibility to focus on theories related to global governance and diplomacy and diplomatic relations. Questions with regard to international conflict and cooperation, multilateralism and multi-layered problem-solving are central to this programme. The programme is explicitly designed to bridge the artificial gap between (still mostly) state-centric approaches of IR and Diplomatic Studies and the multi-layered, multi-actor approaches of global governance approaches. The overarching aim of the programme is to make students (some of which might choose to become diplomats, policy-makers or analysts in the field) aware of both the differences and commonalities of the 'state sovereignty', 'polylateral diplomacy' and 'multi-level, multi-actor global governance' lenses as well as the potentials for synergies and combined perspectives among the two pillars and approaches. Globalization is a central concept that is dealt with by the programme. The programme aims to explore, as an underlying context, the positive and negative impact, changing nature and future of globalization and how both diplomacy and global governance approaches change and challenges related to globalization. Processes like the trade regime, cyber revolution, terrorism and pandemics, migration, climate change, intercultural relations and cultural diplomacy and last but not least the promotion of peace and management of crises and conflicts need a collective approach, superseding state autonomy.

The perspective which is central to the MA GPSSS revolves around the fluid line that draws the subdisciplines of peace studies, security studies and strategic studies together. The application file describes the discipline-specific framework and scholarly debates within these three subdisciplines which are approached by the programme in a holistic manner. The overarching aim of MA GPSSS is to make students (some of which might choose to become policy-makers or analysts in the field) aware of both the differences and commonalities of the 'security', 'peace' and 'strategy' lenses as well as the potentials for synergies and combined perspectives among the three pillars. The 'strategy' element highlights strategy and strategy-making in an integrated manner, giving equal importance to military and non-military, state and non-state, traditional and non-traditional perspectives and solutions. Since the programme will educate (future) policy makers and analysts, the programme has a strong focus on policy and policy research. Despite the strong link to Brussels-based perspectives and institutions, the programme expresses the ambition to give due regard to 'global' and non-Western regional perspectives throughout the core and elective courses in order to allow students to acquire knowledge and skills beyond an overly Western-dominant approach. The programme is explicitly designed to bridge the artificial gap between the approaches of 'hard' military security and 'softer' peace studies and differing interpretations of strategy and geopolitics.

Both programmes allow graduates to pursue a career in similar professional fields, such as foreign offices, ministries of defence, development and interior, international organizations, NGOs, think tanks and academia. However, students within the MA DAGG tend to look for jobs with a stronger focus on diplomacy, where students in the MA GPSSS have a stronger focus on policy analysis and roles in for example think tanks.

Combining theoretical and policy-oriented approaches

The programmes combine a theoretical and policy-oriented approach and provide core foundations related to theories and applied issues. The programmes aim to equip students with the theoretical and policy-oriented, practical knowledge, skills and attitudes required for understanding, analysing and applying core issues in the various subfields. The graduates will have a mind- and skill-set that brings solution-oriented insights from different theoretical, conceptual and policy-oriented angles together in a comprehensive approach.

Benchmark

Vesalius conducted an initial feasibility study and survey of international programmes in the field of Global Governance, International Relations and Diplomacy studies in wider Europe and North America. VeCo claims that the MA DAGG provides students with a broader perspective on these matters than most other institutions do, partly due to the fact that it's a 90 or even 120 EC programme, instead of a 60 EC programme. Another asset is the combination of a strong foundation in theory combined with a strong focus on policy reality, that is seldom found as integrated and balanced in other programmes in comparison to the MA DAGG.

With regard to the MA GPSSS, Vesalius conducted a study and survey of international programmes in international peace, security and strategic studies in Europe and North America, as well as in Africa and in India. In comparison to a number of programmes in mainland Europe, the MA GPSSS offers a broader scope and offers the dimension of war and strategic studies. The VeCo programme intends to pick up on a trend in Great Britain where programmes have recently been developed which build bridges between security and a variation of peace studies. In comparison to some leading Universities in North America, the MA GPSSSS cannot match a number of well-resourced programmes which cover the full spectrum including cultural studies, peace movement, communication, historical and sociological approaches, although many of these perspectives are covered by electives offered by VeCo. VeCo however seeks to cover the core topics on the one hand and on the other intends to cooperate with and learn from some Universities abroad.

Considerations

The programmes have been thoroughly benchmarked and the assets of the VeCo programmes in comparison to other programmes seem justified to the panel. The intended exit levels of the programmes reflect the current requirements, as set for the programmes by the professional field and the discipline from an international perspective. The initiative to bridge insight and knowledge from the various sub-disciplines of IR is innovative and leads to fruitful combinations. The integration of the sub-disciplines in each programme leads to a clear and distinctive focus and allows for an intensive training of analytical skills and critical thinking.

With regard to the MA DAGG, the panel applauds the choice of the programme to integrate a non-western perspective. In addition, the committee is convinced that the programme will attract students who appreciate the strong links with the professional field and see the programme as an opportunity to kick-start or enhance their career. Even though in the eyes of some future students, the academic character of the programme seems to be of less relevance, VeCo keeps the strong combination of practice and theory which is appreciated by the professional field.

With regard to the MA GPSSS, the panel is positive about the global perspective and the attention to non-western perspectives and especially appreciates the integration of human rights, humanitarian law and refugee issues, which are relevant to peace, security and strategic studies, as a distinguishing asset of the programme.

The combination of a strong theoretical foundation with a focus on policy-reality, providing students with relevant problem-solving skills, makes the programmes attractive to students who wish to be well-prepared for or enhance their career in the field of international organisations dealing with global issues or organisations representing national interests in a globalized context. Employers need graduates with a strong foundation in analytic skills and a capability to act in an international, diplomatic context.

The added value of the 120 EC study programmes is clearly expressed by the programme, the professional field and will be of relevance for some of its prospective students.

Conclusion

For the MA DAGG programme the panel assesses the generic quality guarantee 1 *Intended exit level* as **satisfactory**.

For the MA GPSSS programme the panel assesses the generic quality guarantee 1 *Intended exit level* as **satisfactory**.

2.2 Teaching-learning environment (generic quality guarantee 2)

The teaching-learning environment enables the students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Criteria: The content and the design of the programme, including the programme-specific teaching and learning formats, the staff to be deployed and the facilities will enable the admitted students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. Curriculum, staff and facilities will form a cohesive teaching-learning environment for the students. The planned investments are sufficient to create the programme and to be able to offer the complete educational route.

Outline of findings

Partnership

VeCo closely cooperates (based on MoU's) with the following institutions in delivering the programmes:

- The Egmont Institute – Royal Institute for International Relations is its main think tank partner in foreign affairs.
- The Belgian Royal Military Academy has the security and strategic studies expertise;
- The Institute for Economics and Peace brings in the peace perspective.

Learning outcomes

The application files provide a detailed overview of the relation between learning objectives and course modules. These overviews show that all learning outcomes of each programme are addressed and developed in the various modules and other elements of the programmes. The course descriptions provide more detail on the subjects that will be addressed in each course. The learning outcomes are listed in the more detailed course manuals.

The integration of the various sub-disciplines within each programme takes place within each course as such but the courses are also designed to speak to each other, thereby providing students with a comprehensive outlook.

Students start with a broad overview of important theoretical paradigms and concepts, theoretical underpinnings and the methodologies applied in related research. In the elective courses, students develop deeper knowledge of the sub-disciplines and application of theory.

During the courses, students are often required to present a comprehensive approach towards a policy problem, thereby combining relevant aspects of several subdisciplines. In the Capstone project and MA-thesis students show their ability to deal with various theoretical viewpoints and combine these into a comprehensive approach.

The two approaches (theory and practice oriented) reside in a broader educational model which Vesalius developed for all its programmes and which is called TPEL (Theory-guided, Practice-embedded and Experiential Learning). During the site visit, representatives of the professional field elaborated on the added value of staff members who are both academically developed and have a firm grounding in for example diplomacy practice.

Work forms range from the basic seminar (split into an ex-cathedra didactic part and an interactive student-centred discussion and reflection) to intensive block seminars, simulations, group work, think tanks, conferences, workshops and research seminars. Further work forms include blended learning seminars. The small-scale character of the programmes allows staff members to facilitate the learning process of each individual student. It also amplifies the activating teaching forms used by the college.

Structure of the programmes

The programmes are scheduled in one intensive academic year (or two years, for part-time students who take approximately 15-18 credits per trimester) and is divided into trimesters. The 120 EC optional programmes have an additional 3-months period. Courses are taught over a 15 week span.

For students choosing the full-time 90 ECTS version, the modular structure is as follows:

Trimester 1 (September – December):

The first 30EC semester contains five courses and will provide students with the core foundational knowledge required for understanding the main theories, concepts and applied issues across each subdiscipline. Research & Methods and Preparation for the Capstone Project are important components in this semester. Theoretical insight into the different levels of policy making will be gained through the course 'The role of International and Regional Organizations', which is taught in both programmes.

In the MA DAGG programme, two courses are defined as core courses within this semester: The theory and Practice of International Relations and The Theory and Practice of Diplomacy and Global Governance.

In the MA GPSSS programme, the core courses are The Theory and Practice of International Relations and Theory and Applied Issues of Global Peace, Security and Strategic Studies.

Trimester 2 (January – April):

During Trimester 2 students in the MA DAGG take the course Current and Future Challenges in Diplomacy (6EC) and the course The Success, Failure and Future of Global Governance (6EC). These courses belong to a track, which structures the semester, respectively the Diplomacy Track and the Global Governance Track. In addition to the two core courses, the students have two options. Either they take the specific track-courses or they take courses from both of the tracks and may choose to take an elective of the parallel MA GPSSS programme. As such, students can choose to either broaden or deepen their knowledge.

The MA GPSSS students choose five electives (30 ECTS in total), 6 ECTS per elective. The electives are structured in three tracks, each consisting of three courses: peace studies, security studies and strategic studies. One of the courses of each set of three courses is identified as the compulsory course of that specific track. Students have two options: either they take the three track-specific courses and the two compulsory courses of the other tracks or they take the compulsory course of each track and take any other additional course from either the tracks or an elective of the parallel MA DAGG programme. As such, students can choose to either broaden or deepen their knowledge.

During Trimester 3 students broaden and deepen their core knowledge in the MA thesis, Capstone-Practicum and internship. Students regularly present their progress in research colloquia and meet with their supervisor. The Capstone project is focused on working on a real-life policy problem. Since students develop their MA thesis parallel to the Capstone Practicum, and all students are challenged to combine the training of knowledge development and application. In addition, students either take an internship or an elective.

The purpose of the 200-hour internship is to acquaint students with a setting that broadly corresponds with the conceptual themes and professional outlets of the programmes. Internships in such organisations afford students the opportunity to ‘plug into Brussels’ in a practical way, by participating in activities like working groups, drafting papers, attending events and debates in the Brussels peace, security and strategy policy-making community as well as in a more diplomatic context with a stronger focus on global governance.

In the Capstone-Practicum students form their own think tank groups in order to advise an external senior policy-maker on a specific, concrete and ‘real’ policy issue. For this a final paper and presentation has to be produced through individual and group work. This practicum draws in a summative and integrative fashion on all acquired knowledge and skills. The policy-maker, in turn, will provide both the student cohort and the faculty member leading the course with vital informal feed-back on the closeness of fit of students’ abilities with professional requirements.

Extended track: (September – December)

The 120 EC programme accommodates students with a need for expansive knowledge and practical training. Students follow the 90 EC programme and in addition earn additional 30 ECTS during the last trimester (September –December) by enrolling into the extensive internship of 9 ECTS, instead of 6 ECTS internship, and taking a concentration in Global Risk Analysis (15 EC in 5 weekend modules). In addition, they take the Theories and Applied Issues in Diplomacy and Global Governance course (6 EC).

The additional programme is set up in such a way as to allow for greater flexibility on the part of the students: they need to take only one course and an intensive internship during the week, whereas half of the trimester’s load is relegated to the weekend modules of the risk analysis course. These modules follow the TPEL approach (Theory-guided, Practice-embedded and Experiential Learning), with Friday evening roundtable discussions and Saturday intensive ten-hour lectures, seminars and simulations.

Admission and intake

Vesalius offers a BA programme in International Affairs, on which both MA programmes naturally build. Other BA graduates will be admitted on the basis of a detailed application file, to be submitted by August of the year during which they intend to start their studies. Students must have a good command of the English language, reflected by a 7.0 overall in IELTS and 100 in TOEFL. In addition, students must have completed a course in Methodology of the social sciences or in Statistics and a course in Politics or International Relations.

The programmes are intended for students with an International Affairs/Social Science background. Students with different backgrounds can be admitted (e.g. Humanities, Law and Economics/Business) on the basis of an oral interview. Students with insufficient background are required to take the intensive 10-day Summer School, offered in July by the College and the Royal Military Academy as a pre-requisite. Prior to the programmes also an intensive 3-day 'onboarding' training in International Affairs methods and perspectives is on offer for orientation.

Staff

VeCo brings together academics and policy-relevant staff members, from both a European as well as a wider international background. Both programmes are delivered by a staff team which consists of a mixture of:

- experienced full-time VeCo faculty;
- embedded VeCo Adjunct Professors (at the intersection of academia and practice);
- a wider network of international part-time associated visiting faculty'.

Core Faculty:

The MA DAGG programme will be headed by interims at Vesalius, namely the Dean and the Co-Director (an Adjunct Distinguished Professor with a linked role at VUB's Institute for European Studies, who will function as interim coordinator for at least 3 years (combined with a Horizon 2020 grant). To ensure a link to the core staff in the first year the Associate Dean for Research (50% BA and 50% MA) will also be involved in programme coordination.

The MA GPSSS programme will be headed by a senior practitioner with strong academic training (50% NATO and 50% VeCo). The core staff involved consists of one professor and 10 adjuncts (all with a PhD). The Dean and the Associate Dean for Research are involved in the core staff. In addition, the College will hire one further full-time International Affairs professor in January 2019 (50% BA's and 50% MA's).

Embedded Adjunct Professors:

Two RMA professors are established Adjunct Professors at Vesalius, three members of the Egmont Institute's think tank are involved in teaching the curriculum and Egmont will provide internships. The Institute of Economics and Peace will provide input in the skills training and the Capstone project.

Associated visiting faculty:

In addition, a network of leading international scholars is involved as associated visiting faculty, teaching the elective courses. Most of these professors (from the universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Yale, LSE, King's College etc.) have already been involved in the College through the Academic Advisory Council of a certificate programme and will provide additional expertise and international quality to the programmes.

The coherence of the faculty is secured by several measures. In the first place, the programmes instruct all faculty on the practices for course convening during a training session and via documentation. Issues addressed are how to develop a syllabus, the use of the new Learning Management System Canvas, workload, assessment and course evaluations and the role and position of the Academic Quality Committee (AQC). All adjunct instructors are paired with VeCo core faculty when convening elective courses. From adjunct professors the committee learned that they received help and feedback from various colleagues of the core staff in convening a course.

Also bridging the policy-orientation with academic development is taken into consideration. During the site visit, the committee was informed about the preparation of a course by 'Visiting Faculty' member and Adjunct Faculty member which contained several meetings. In addition, the head of department reviews all course manuals. When the course has started, the complete course documentation is reviewed by the Head of Department.

The student learning coordinator functions as a liaison between the Head of Department and Faculty members. This coordinator who has personal experience with teaching at VeCo provides intensive support to faculty, amongst others in administrative matters. With regard to staff workload, VeCo has a clear system in place.

Workload for students

The programmes challenge students in terms of workload which is therefore carefully organized and monitored by the programmes. Measures in place include the requirement to all instructors to use an online workload calculator when convening their course. The outcome of the workload calculations needs to be within specific borders and is otherwise not accepted. The Academic Quality Committee assesses whether courses are actually operating within these borders. In addition, the small-scale character of the programmes, as well as the attention for workload in the various evaluations held during the runtime and after the course, make it easy for students to give feedback about the workload to course instructors. In addition, the programmes monitor students progress closely and has a student learning coordinator in place to provide students who seem to struggle with certain aspects of the programmes with remedial teaching. During the site visit, full-time and part-time students informed the committee that the workload of the programmes is high as expected, but doable.

The third trimester consists of 10 intensive weeks, with mainly supervision of the individual thesis' work and of the group work related to the Capstone. The Capstone as an intensive course demands 12 hours of study and group work weekly. The Master's thesis corresponds with 18 ECTS to a total of between 450 and 540 hours. However, students start thinking about their research questions in the second week of the programmes in the thesis preparation course and develop their research methodology in the methodology course in the first semester, preventing them from having to do the complete thesis work in the final semester.

In order to ensure balanced programmes in terms of workload, Vesalius has an Academic Quality Committee (AQC) in place which guides, estimates and verifies work-load by performing work-load assessments and uses a device which is called the "Work Load estimator". The AQC bases its recommendations on previous experience of self-reported study times and internationally bench-marked study estimates in the academic literature.

Vesalius plans an in-depth study time and work-load survey with samples from 1st year, 2nd year and 3rd year undergraduate students. This may give important insights for the estimate of the work-load for the MA programmes.

Internship

The internship in the programmes allows students for a 4-months internship which is organized as a course. Students are guided in selecting their internship in terms of academic interest and career planning. There are extensive contacts with international organizations within Brussels that are useful to VeCo in internship selection and placement. The academic advisor visits the student in their organization after the first two weeks. Students write an internship report, there is course syllabus for the internship available. The company supervisor provides assessment according to discussed criteria which are listed on an assessment form. During the site visit, representatives from the professional field were positive about the fact that the internship is integrated into the study programmes.

Facilities

In 2016, VeCo invested in a new infrastructure with teaching rooms, computer facilities and researcher space. The building accommodates classrooms, and offices for administrative and academic staff. Infrastructure and learning environment (library and computer rooms) of the VUB (Free University of Brussel) are accessible to VeCo students. In addition, VeCo offers diverse provisions for students in need of support on various subjects including Academic Writing, Mathematics and Statistics, an internship programme and Advisory Services, offering flexible and personalized guidance to students. Advisors are staff members who work in close contact with the Registrar and the Associate Dean. VeCo in addition has an in place an Information and Registration Office, Counselling Services, Career Services and Housing Services.

Planned investments

Both programmes aim to start with a maximum of about 40 students. As VeCo receives no government subsidies, the fees have to finance the programmes. To start the 90 ECTS version of the programme, the institution's assumption is to have a total enrolment of at least 11 full-time students for each programme (8 EU and 3 non- EU students). Vesalius expect a modest growth in the next four years. The eventual total enrolment is planned for at least 30 students (20 EU-students and 10 non-EU-students). Total costs are estimated on 141.000 Euros per year per programme.

Considerations

The panel has established that the teaching-learning environment provides students with all they need to be able to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The implementation of the dual approach of the programmes provides students with a rigorous academic training and at the same time with a strong emphasis on policy reality and diplomacy. The unique environment of VeCo and its partners, as well as the close relation to the practice of international organizations allow students to carefully plan their career.

The committee is positive about the connection between the courses in the programmes and the relation to the learning outcomes. The combination of the disciplines in each programme allow the students to develop strong analytical skills. The combination of theory-oriented elements and a strong orientation on policy practice leads to graduates who are able to develop a comprehensive approach towards policy problems. The courses contribute to the ability to interpret global events, developments and policies in national, regional and local frameworks and contexts (MA DAGG) and to a critical multi-level understanding of institutions, policies and dynamics (MA GPSSS). The courses form a coherent unity.

The admission procedure allows the programmes to manage the influx of students considerately. The presence of several nationalities among the student population and staff members amplifies the ambition of the programmes to include a non-western perspective and establish the international character of the programmes. In addition, the opportunity to follow the programmes in part-time mode, leads to a fruitful combination of students with more and less working experience.

The committee identified several measures in place to monitor the workload. In addition, the availability of student support and remedial teaching allows the programmes to ensure the balance between the challenging character of the programmes and students' capability to deal with this workload. The small-scale character of the programmes in addition makes it relatively easy to support individual students in terms of remedial teaching. Further support offered in terms of course planning and career planning makes the programmes advantageous to students. The appointment of the student learning coordinator is therefore very much appreciated by the committee. This person performs a crucial role for the programmes.

In addition, the information provision to students is streamlined throughout the various courses. Canvas provides a useful platform of which the possibilities with regard to blended learning are structurally explored by VeCo.

The panel has met with experienced Faculty which are of high quality. During the site visit the panel spoke with the core and some adjunct faculty and was impressed by the commitment to deliver high-standard education. In addition, faculty with actual experience in policy reality are a major asset to and distinguishing character of the programmes. The programmes have an adequate system in place to align the core staff, adjunct staff and the visiting faculty and support them with the stringent administrative demands. The organization of the programmes in terms of Faculty management seems to be good.

Concerning continuity, the institution presented a detailed financial plan. The programmes are estimated to be rather profitable from the third year. The programmes have planned to develop an even more comprehensive resource strategy in 2019 and will hire a third party to assist on this.

Conclusion

For the MA DAGG programme the panel assesses the generic quality guarantee 2 *Teaching-learning environment* as **satisfactory**.

For the MA GPSSS programme the panel assesses the generic quality guarantee 2 *Teaching-learning environment* as **satisfactory**.

2.3 Exit level to be achieved (generic quality guarantee 3)

The programme has an adequate assessment, testing and examination system in place to ascertain whether the intended learning outcomes are being achieved.

Criteria: The programme formulates a policy with respect to assessment, testing and examination that shows how it ensures that the evaluation is valid, reliable and transparent, and how the assessment, testing and examination of the students will show (or has shown) the level achieved. The intended evaluation formats are congruent with the different forms of teaching.

Outline of findings

Coordination of assessment

The application file provides tables in which the courses learning goals are related to the learning outcomes and which combine the assessment forms used to assess students' development. These include written exams, policy papers, portfolios, literature reviews, essays and presentations. The Teaching Manual provides course convenors with guidelines concerning assessment. There are rubrics in place for the core courses and at the moment of the site visit, the programmes are in the process of developing rubrics for the electives. All staff members are instructed on the use of the rubrics and assessment policies in a meeting and by documentation. If they need support, the student learning coordinator is available to answer questions and explain the practices. Before the actual application of a rubric, it is pre-approved by the College's Academic Quality Committee. The AQC consists of the Heads of Departments (HODs), the Programme Directors, the Associate Deans, the Dean and External Examiners (see quality control section below).

Another policy in place which strengthens the transparency of assessment to students is the early-warning system, requiring students to evaluate the course and their progress at an early stage of the course. If necessary, students who lack progress, receive an early warning, in order to stimulate them to either catch up or reconsider their participation in the course. Course requirements and assessment methods are elaborated upon in the course manuals.

Several assessment moments (at least two) are required during any course. Students who fail a course are able to resit an assessment or, if applicable, partial assessment assignment.

Each course description in the information file explains the assignments (and the weighting of each assignment). As a rule there is more than one assignment per course (and always an individual element of assessment; not only a group assessment). The course assignments of the five thematic core courses usually consist of one final written exam as well as one additional assignment tailored towards testing other major course learning objectives (e.g. research paper, position paper, oral presentation, group assignment).

Grading systems

In order to graduate in the 90 ECTS track, students need to have passed all courses of the Core Foundations Trimester (30 ECTS), all courses in the Electives track (30 ECTS), the Capstone, the research seminar and defended successfully the MA Thesis (18 ECTS). Overall, students need to have a grade point average of 'C' or above to graduate.

Vesalius College equally grades all students' work according to the formal grade point average (GPA) as well as the Flemish legal criteria, from 0 to 20. Convergence criteria between the three grading systems have been made explicit in the information file.

Students who are dissatisfied with their grade have the possibility to discuss this with their instructor. If a student still disagrees with the mark given, the student can ask the Head of Department to request a second opinion and second marker. If the student disagrees with the outcome of the second opinion and/or second marker, the Academic Quality Committee will be asked to decide whether the mark given is justified and within the standards provided by the institution. If the student still disagrees, he or she can appeal to the VUB Ombudsperson.

Assessment of thesis

The programmes are developing a rubric for the assessment of the MA-thesis. For the MA-thesis, students for example are contrasting perspectives or study multiple cases in a 12.000 to 15.000-word (excluding bibliography and endnotes) strategically designed research project. For the MA DAGG, students in their thesis display their capacity to:

- Formulate a research question concerning an issue related to Diplomacy and Global Governance;
- Apply theories and research methodologies of International Relations (IR) and/or the sub-fields of Diplomacy and Global Governance to an in-depth research project – either exploring a conceptual and theoretical puzzle, or a theory-guided analysis of a policy issue;
- Select the scientific approach and methods most appropriate for the research;
- Analyse a policy issue from various relevant perspectives, with due regard to the comprehensive and global nature of the programmes;
- Correctly report on sources and methodology;
- Synthesise the research in a coherent, clear and well-written document;
- Formulated well-substantiated conclusions and clear conclusions that address the initially formulated research question.

For the MA GPSSS, students display the capacity to:

- Formulate a research question concerning an issue related to Global Peace, Strategic and Security Studies;
- Apply theories and research methodologies of at least one of the core pillars of the programmes to an in-depth case study;
- Select the scientific approach and methods most appropriate for the research;
- Analyse a policy question from various relevant perspectives, with the possibility of policy-oriented applications;
- Correctly report on sources and methodology;
- Synthesise the research in a coherent, clear and well-written document;
- Formulated well-substantiated conclusions and clear conclusions that address the initially formulated research question.

Objectives of the thesis further include thorough familiarity with the relevant theoretical approaches and paradigms of at least one of the sub-disciplines of the programmes, with a preference to a holistic perspective that cuts across the sub-disciplines. The committee discussed this during the site visit.

All theses will be marked by the supervisor and a co-marker and in addition, all marked theses are sent to an external examiner who validates the marking of the thesis.

Considerations

The panel considers the programmes to have an adequate assessment, testing and examination system in place to ascertain whether the intended learning outcomes are being achieved. The assessment of courses stimulates students learning, both by offering a balanced number of assessment moments per course as well as by offering a variety of assessment methods.

The Teaching Manual and rubrics are useful in guiding faculty in assessing students and strengthen lecturers in the structuring of the feedback given to students. The appeal procedure in place allows students to appeal and have an independent judgement on their work. The committee is positive about the scheduling of the assessments, but suggests that the programmes closely monitor whether the planning of the resits is convenient in terms of students' workload.

The committee is positive about the assessment of the thesis. That students can write their thesis without cutting through the various subdisciplines of the specific programmes, is a deliberate choice of the programmes that is supported by the committee. Students who do so, will have to argue why they chose to address a question from the viewpoint of mainly one subdiscipline and in order to do so also demonstrate their knowledge and overview of the various fields. Students with specific interests, internship experiences or job market orientation should be able to address a research question that aims to investigate phenomena that are dealt with exclusively in one sub-discipline.

Conclusion

For the MA DAGG programme the panel assesses the generic quality guarantee 3 *Exit level to be achieved* as **satisfactory**.

For the MA GPSSS programme the panel assesses the generic quality guarantee 3 *Exit level to be achieved* as **satisfactory**.

2.4 Set-up and organization of the internal quality assurance (generic quality guarantee 4)

The set-up and the organization of the internal quality assurance are aimed at systematically improving the programme with the involvement of the relevant stakeholders.

Criteria: The programme will periodically be evaluated, based in part on testable objectives. The outcomes of this evaluation will form the basis for verifiable measures for improvement that contribute to the realisation of the objectives. Staff, students, alumni and the relevant (professional) field of the programme will be actively involved in the internal quality assurance.

Outline of findings

Internal quality assurance system

VeCo has renewed its quality assurance system. Through the system, curriculum design and reform as well as learning objectives, course material assessments and workload are monitored by the programmes. The system includes feedback on the basis of peer review and student evaluation which is managed by the Academic Quality Committee (AQC) and consists of the Head of Departments, the Programme Chairs, the Dean and the Associate Deans as well as External Examiners. It meets twice a year and reports on the close inspection of all academic courses. The cycle includes an *ex ante* and an *ex post* quality control.

Faculty is instructed on these matters via the previously mentioned Teaching Manual. This document outlines the standardized requirements for course contents, progression, work load requirements as well as transparent and standardized grading rubrics. The guidelines have been developed by the AQC under the leadership of the Associate Dean for Teaching and in cooperation with faculty members. The College follows strict guidelines and standardizes e.g. the syllabus templates, the valid, transparent and objective testing of learning objectives, and the weekly workload for students.

Before the start of the semester, course convenors submit syllabi in order to receive feedback on course objectives, content, assignments and up-to-datedness. Corrections have to be implemented before the start of the semester. Each syllabus also includes an overview table on how learning objectives of the course address the major degree objectives, how they are going to be taught, how evaluated and when feedback is given to students.

By week 4, lecturers have to submit their exam questions. They are evaluated against the overview table (e.g. Do the exam question test the correct learning objectives? Is it at the right academic level and of adequate academic rigour?). In week 4, the College also conducts College-wide “Early Warning Student Evaluations”, in order to implement corrective measures at an early stage in the course if applicable. During the site visit the committee learned that with regard to one of the courses, students expressed the wish to have more hours in class. The course instructor could respond almost immediately and was able to raise the class hours by 30%.

During week 10 and 11 of each semester, students evaluate the teaching on a course-by-course basis anonymously. The purpose of this evaluation is to provide a structured opportunity for students to inform the instructor and the College of their judgments concerning the course content and teaching methods. The course evaluations will be sent to the Head of departments and AQC.

In week 16, AQC members and External Examiners (external professors with significant expertise in the field, appointed for three years) review all course folders and check the course content, quality of assignments and overall quality of the course according to standardized procedures. During the site visit, the committee read through some of the external evaluations. The results are communicated in personal feedback meetings with the Instructors in the following semester. If a course is given the overall category of “In need of improvement”, clear recommendations and requirements are given.

Furthermore, the following committees and activities will be involved in quality assurance and improvement:

- Student Academic Standing Committee monitors overall student progress throughout their stay at the College. The SASC is in charge of collecting the formal GPA data and keeps track of students’ graduation progress, dismissal or re-admission.
- Student Conduct Committee on academic integrity.
- Vesalius Student Government: The VSG president and the VSG Academic Affairs officer meet with the Dean at least twice per semester to discuss issues of concern or provide feed-back. The VSG is also invited to faculty meetings.
- Dean’s Graduate Feedback Interviews: All students in their last semester, before graduating, will meet in a personal feedback interview with the Dean and the Head of Alumni Relations.

Alumni Advisory Board: This will include former professors and alumni wanting to contribute to the alumni culture of the College world-wide (In April 2017 the Vesalius College Board of Trustees approved the plan).

Considerations

The quality assurance system as described and as performed by the programmes is in the eyes of the panel very comprehensive. It covers all relevant aspects of quality assurance and involves all relevant stakeholders. VeCo’s quality assurance procedures are beyond what is often found in other Higher Education Institutions. For example the involvement of a peer which is external to the institution who comments on detailed aspects of a course as well as grading, is seldom found in other institutions. The impression the committee got was that the organization of the quality assurance system is quite efficient. However, it recommends VeCo to monitor the administrative workload involved in the system and keep track of the fitness for purpose of it.

Conclusion

For the MA DAGG the panel assesses the generic quality guarantee 4 *Set-up and organization of the internal quality assurance* as **satisfactory**.

For the MA GPSSS the panel assesses the generic quality guarantee 4 *Set-up and organization of the internal quality assurance* as **satisfactory**.

3 Assessment procedure

NVAO received a request for an initial accreditation procedure regarding the proposed degrees Master of Arts in Diplomacy and Global Governance and Master of Arts in Global Peace, Security and Strategic Studies. The request was submitted by Vesalius College on 31 August 2018.

The panel based its assessment on the generic quality guarantees and criteria described in the NVAO Assessment Framework for the initial accreditation of higher education programmes in Flanders 2015-2021, dated 28 May 2015.

The following procedure has been undertaken. The panel members studied the documents (please refer to Annex 5: Documents reviewed) with regard to the proposed programmes. Their first impressions were sent to the secretary, who listed these remarks and questions, to be clarified during the site visit.

Based on their preliminary findings, the panel held a preparatory meeting on 6 November 2018. During this meeting, the panel discussed their findings and listed a number of questions to be put to the programmes' representatives during the site visit. The site visit took place on 7 November 2018 at the Brussels campus (see also Annex 4: Schedule of the site visit). The discussions during the site visit were, in the panel's opinion, informative and constructive. These discussions allowed the panel to obtain an in-depth view of the programmes' main characteristics and dominant features.

Immediately after the site visit, the panel drafted its assessments for the generic quality guarantees of the NVAO Assessment Framework. These assessments were based on the findings during the site visit, building upon the review of the programmes' documents.

Thereupon, the secretary drew up a draft report, which was sent to the panel members. The panel members forwarded their comments, included in the text to the secretary. The report was finalised on 18 November 2018.

4 Overview of the assessments

The panel presents their assessments per generic quality guarantee, as outlined in chapter 2, in the following table for the MA DAGG

Generic quality guarantee	Assessment
1 Intended exit level	Satisfactory
2 Teaching-learning environment	Satisfactory
3 Exit level to be achieved	Satisfactory
4 Set-up and organisation of the internal quality assurance	Satisfactory
Programme as a whole	Satisfactory

And in the following table for the MA GPSSS

Generic quality guarantee	Assessment
1 Intended exit level	Satisfactory
2 Teaching-learning environment	Satisfactory
3 Exit level to be achieved	Satisfactory
4 Set-up and organisation of the internal quality assurance	Satisfactory
Programme as a whole	Satisfactory

Annex 1: General information on the programmes

Name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, website institution	Vesalius College Pleinlaan 5 B-1050 BRUSSEL BELGIUM +32 (0)2 614 8170 Vesalius@vub.ac.be www.vesalius.edu
Status institution	Registered institution
Name association	-
Name, function, telephone, e-mail address of contact person	Prof. dr. Joachim Koops – Dean +32 (0)2 614 8178 jkoops@vub.ac.be
Name programme (degree, qualifications of the degree, specification of the degree)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master of Arts in Diplomacy and Global Governance (MA DAGG); • Master of Arts in Global Peace, Security and Strategic Studies (MA GPSSS)
Level and orientation	Academic Initial Master
Title that holders of the degree earned from this programme can place with their name	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master of Arts in Diplomacy and Global Governance (MA DAGG); • Master of Arts in Global Peace, Security and Strategic Studies (MA GPSSS)
(Part of a) Field of study, fields of study in which the programme is classified	International Relations
The ISCED name of the field of study in which the programme is classified	031 Social and behavioural sciences 0312 Political sciences and civics: Political sciences and civics is the study of government and political principles or practice. The study of the rights and duties of the citizens are included here.
Corresponding programme(s) (Flanders if any, or neighbouring countries)	New programme for the institution and for Flanders. Neighbouring countries: no programmes
Specialisations	-
Languages used to teach	English
Location in which the programme is offered	Brussels
Length of the programme expressed in credits	90 ECTS (full time, part time) Extended 120 ECTS (full time, part time)
New programme in Flanders	Yes
The post-graduate study opportunities and the possible post-graduate courses (bachelor)/ The required previous qualifications and admission requirements (master)	Admission to the programmes requires at least three years of university studies, comprising at least 180 ECTS. Students typically will have a university degree in one of the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Relations/Affairs • Social Sciences All applicants hand in an application file. Students with a university degree in a different area can be admitted but will have to have an interview and can only be admitted if they have completed a course in

	Methodology of the social sciences or in Statistics and a course in Politics or International Relations. The programmes demand English proficiency at the level of 100 TOEFL or 7.0 IELTS.
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Annex 2: Programme-specific Learning Outcomes

Programme-specific learning outcomes MA DAGG

The proposed MA DAGG has six major and general learning objectives (categories):

1. To provide students with interdisciplinary **knowledge and understanding** of the major theoretical debates related to diplomacy and diplomatic studies as well as to global governance as a process and policy goal; the main differences and common threads between diplomacy and global governance as well as the concrete policy-making procedures and outcomes generated by key actors (state and non-state), processes and dynamics in major policy areas that cross national borders. This should form the basis for applying theory-informed arguments with a level of originality.
2. To facilitate and foster students' **problem-solving capacities** by drawing on the interdisciplinary knowledge and insights generated by theories of diplomacy and global governance, and to apply major concepts and paradigms in a multidisciplinary and integrative manner to concrete policy cases, challenges and solutions related to global economic governance, global justice, global peace and security, sustainable development as well as to related wider contexts and conundrums.
3. To develop and hone students' ability of **integrating knowledge and complex insights** and to develop **evaluation and judgment capacities** related social and ethical issues and dimensions. Particular emphasis is placed on students' ability to identify major societal and moral challenges related to diplomacy and global governance and their real-life implications.
4. **To develop and demonstrate a variety of communication skills** related to presenting research, major conclusions, rationales, arguments and research limitations in a clear, precise and effective manner to specialist and non-specialist scholarly and policy-maker audiences in the field of diplomatic studies and global governance as well as related issues.
5. **To develop and demonstrate life-long learning skills, autonomy of thought, self-directed research as well as a critical assessment of one's strengths, weaknesses and paths towards improvement and continuous learning.**
6. **To develop further skills, competences and attitudes**, such as effective team-work, leadership, intercultural awareness, an attitude of open-mindedness, academic integrity and critical (self-)reflection with a view to contribute to rigorous analysis and diverse academic debates.

Programme-specific learning outcomes MA GPSSS

The proposed MA GPSSS has six major and general learning objectives (categories):

1. The graduate demonstrates thorough knowledge and understanding of the major theoretical debates related to Peace Studies, Security Studies and Strategic Studies and is capable of independently formulating theory-informed arguments with a level of originality to address a complex situation.
2. The graduate demonstrates autonomy when applying major concepts and paradigms in a multidisciplinary and integrative manner to complex policy challenges related to peace, security and strategic issues as well as when proposing alternative solutions to complex problems by drawing on the interdisciplinary knowledge and insights from theoretical literature.
3. The graduate recognizes major societal and moral challenges related to global peace, security and strategic studies and their real-life implications and to autonomously draw on interdisciplinary knowledge to offer original policy proposals to mitigate them in a way suitable for specific context.
4. The graduate demonstrates the ability to communicate effectively major conclusions, rationales, arguments and research limitations to specialist and non-specialist scholarly and policy-maker audiences in the field of peace, security and strategic studies and beyond.
5. The graduate demonstrates the autonomy of thought and critical self-assessment skills necessary for life-long learning and continuous improvement.
6. The graduate possesses diverse skills, competences and attitudes--such as effective team-work, leadership, intercultural awareness, an attitude of open-mindedness, academic integrity and critical (self-)reflection--to contribute to rigorous analysis and diverse academic debates.

Annex 3: Composition of the panel

The composition of the panel that assessed the quality of the Master of Arts in Diplomacy and Global Governance and the Master of Arts in Global Peace, Security and Strategic Studies of Vesalius College was as follows:

- Prof. dr. M.H. (Michael) Smith (chair member);
- Prof. dr. A. (Agnes) Batory;
- dr. C. (Carina) van Eck;
- Prof. dr. P. (Peter) Lawler;
- Yaroslav Orlov (student member).

Prof. dr. M.H. (Michael) Smith

Michael Smith is Professor in European Politics in the Department of Politics and International Studies, Warwick University, UK. Previously, he was Professor of European Politics and Jean Monnet Chair at Loughborough University, where he also was Co-Director of the Centre for the Study of International Governance and of a Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence. He was Chair of the University Association for Contemporary European Studies (1994-1997), of the Standing Conference of Heads of European Studies (2000-2002) and of the UK Research Assessment Exercise Sub-Panel on European Studies (2008). He has published extensively on EU external policies and on EU diplomacy, on the EU and world order, on EU-US relations and on EU-Asia relations. Among his major monographs (books) are: *The European Union's Roles in International Politics: Frameworks and Analysis* (edited with Ole Elgström) (Routledge, 2006); *The European Union and the United States: Competition and Convergence in the Global Arena* (co-authored with Steven McGuire, Palgrave-Macmillan, 2008); *International Relations and the European Union* (co-edited with Christopher Hill, Oxford University Press, second edition 2011 – third edition planned for publication in 2017); and *The Diplomatic System of the European Union: Evolution, Change and Challenges* (co-edited with Sophie Vanhoonacker and Stephan Keukeleire, Routledge, 2016). He has also edited special issues of the *Journal of Common Market Studies* and the *Journal of European Public Policy* as well as contributing articles to those and to a range of other leading journals. He was principal investigator for the Jean Monnet Multilateral Research Network 'The Diplomatic System of the European Union: Evolution, Change and Challenges' (2009-2012), and principal investigator for a work package on EU diplomacy within the context of the INCOOP (Inter-Institutional Cooperation in the European Union) project under the Marie Curie Programme in FP7 (2010-2014). He has extensive experience of academic programme and research evaluation both within the United Kingdom and at the European level.

Prof. dr. A. (Agnes) Batory,

Agnes Batory is a Professor at CEU's School of Public Policy and a Research Fellow of the Center for Policy Studies. She is Director of the Erasmus Mundus Masters Program in Public Policy (Mundus MAPP), a joint program delivered by four European universities and funded by the European Commission. She holds a PhD from Cambridge University. Her research interests include corruption and corruption control, party politics, and policy implementation and compliance problems in EU governance. She is co-editor of the recent book *Policy experiments, failures and innovations*, and her articles appeared, among others, in *Governance*; the *Journal of Common Market Studies*; the *Journal of European Public Policy*; *Public Administration*; *Democratization* and the *European Journal of Political Research*. She contributes to the Horizon2020 project TropicO dealing with collaborative governance.

dr. C. (Carina) van Eck,

Carina van Eck is Commissioner at the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights, Utrecht.

Carina has worked in various areas and fields prior to her current position:

- Researcher and lecturer on European Union law at the University of Hamburg, Germany;
- Senior advisor at the Ministry of Justice and delegation leader for EU negotiations on various legislative proposals;
- Senior advisor at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva (UNHCR);
- Senior advisor to the national Coordinator for Counter Terrorism;
- Programme Manager at the Ministry of Justice on addressing public violence and threats;
- Commissioner at the Netherlands Equal Treatment Committee.

Prof. dr. P. (Peter) Lawler

Peter Lawler is a professor in international politics in the School of Social Sciences and, from 2011, the founding director of the University College for Interdisciplinary Learning, at the University of Manchester, UK. Professor Lawler has been teaching and researching in the fields of peace research and international politics for more than 30 years and has published on the theoretical dimensions of peace research, notably in the work of Johan Galtung, the ethics of foreign policy, and the foreign policies of the UK, Denmark and Sweden. Professor Lawler has taught at both graduate and undergraduate levels, principally in Australia and the UK but also in Canada, Spain, India and Russia, and has been an external examiner or advisor at seven universities in the UK and Ireland. In recent years Professor Lawler has been increasingly interested in the development of interdisciplinary learning and to this end he established the Interdisciplinary Curriculum Group in 2014 which brings together principals in interdisciplinary programme development and delivery from more than twenty leading UK and Dutch universities. Professor Lawler is currently preparing an introductory textbook on theories of international politics for Oxford University Press.

Yaroslav Orlov

Yaroslav Orlov graduated from his MA in international relations of the University of Ghent in September 2018. During his studies he was a board member of the faculty student organization, Politeia. He also worked as a staff member for the Ghent Student Council where he mainly worked on the issue of student participation in university politics.

On behalf of the NVAO, dr. Dagmar Provijn, NVAO policy advisor, was responsible for the process-coordination. Jetse Siebenga MSc., Siebenga Advies, was the secretary and drafted the experts' report.

The panel's composition reflects the expertise deemed necessary by NVAO. All the panel members as well as the secretary have signed a statement of independence and confidentiality.

Annex 4: Schedule of the site visit

The site visit by the panel to the programme was conducted on 4 July 2017 as part of the external assessment procedure regarding the Master of Arts in Diplomacy and Global Governance and the Master of Arts in Global Peace, Security and Strategic Studies of Vesalius College. The schedule was as follows:

10:00 -11:00AM: Meeting of the panel with the Board of the Institution and with the Coordination Group of both programmes

- Prof. Dr. Joachim Koops (Professor of International Affairs and Chair of the Academic Quality Committee (AQC))
- Professor Richard Higgott (Deputy Director MADAGG, Course Convenor)
- Dr. Tongfi Kim (Director ad interim of the MA GPSSS, Head of the International Affairs Department and AQC member)
- Dr. Olesya Tkacheva (Acting Dean of Vesalius College and AQC member, Course Convenor Research Methods)
- Prof. Dr. Jonas Lefevere (Associate Dean for Teaching, Head of Global Communication Department, Co-instructor for MA Thesis Course)
- Giulia Tercovich (Coordinator for Student Learning and Faculty Development)
- Dr. Sven Van Kerckhoven (Head of the Economics and Business Department and Deputy Head of MA in Diplomacy and Global Governance)

11:00AM-12:00PM: Meeting of the panel with the “Intended Teachers” of the programmes

- Prof. Dr. Jonas Lefevere (Associate Dean for Teaching, Head of Global Communication Department, Co-instructor for MA Thesis Course)
- Dr. Gianluca Sgueo (European Parliament and VeCo, Co-instructor for Global Perspectives on the History and Ideas of Peace Course)
- Tomas Renard (Egmont Institute, co-instructor for Emerging Security Threats in Theory and Practice and Terrorism, Counterterrorism and (De-) Radicalisation)
- Dr. Georgios Terzis (VeCo, co-instructor for Mediation, Negotiation and Conflict Resolution in Theory and Practice)
- Dr. Vsevolod Samokhvalov (Liege University and VeCo, co-instructor for MA Thesis and Capstone Course)
- Dr. Sven Van Kerckhoven (VeCo, co-instructor for MA Thesis and Capstone Course)
- Dr. Olesya Tkacheva (VeCo, instructor for MA Research Methods Course)
- Dr. Tongfi Kim (VeCo, instructor for the Theory and Practice of International Relations and co-instructor for cap stone)
- Prof. Dr. Joachim Koops (VeCo, co-instructor for Global Peace and Securities Studies Course)
- Giulia Tercovich (VeCo, co-instructor for Mediation, Negotiation and Conflict Resolution in Theory and Practice)
- Clara Cotroneo (VeCo, Internship Coordinator)

12:00PM-1:00PM: Lunch + Review of Relevant Documents

1:00PM-1:30PM: Meeting of the panel with students and/or alumni of Vesalius College (including students from the programmes as they are running now)

- Barbara Benuskova, (VeCo and GRACM alumna, class 2013, currently is on DG ECHO’s Middle East Team, European Commission, Holds MA from Oxford University).
- Emiel Haeghebaert (VeCo alumnus, class 2018, MA student in the Security Studies Program at Georgetown University, joining via Skype).
- Sophie Veriter (VeCo alumna, class 2016, MPhil candidate in European Politics and

Society, Oxford University)

- Maxime Sierro (VeCo MA student in GPSS Program and MA student representative)
- Malte Peters (VeCo MA student in GPSS Program)
- Senve Tehmeh (VeCo MA student in DAGG Program)
- Lander Baillière (VeCo BA student in International Affairs and AI major representatives to VeCo Student Government)

1:30-2:00PM: Meeting of the panel with representatives of the professional field

- Peter Chase, Senior Fellow at the German Marshal Fund, Brussels Office
- Dr. Rainer Munz, Advisor on Migration and Demography to President Jean-Claude Juncker, European Political Strategy Center, European Commission
- Dr. Jordan Becker, defence policy advisor, speechwriter, US Mission to NATO

2:00-4:00PM: Closed meeting of the panel (possible: short meeting with Coordination Group)

4:00PM: End

Annex 5: Documents reviewed

During the site visit the programme management presented the following documents:

- Agenda (with names and functions);
- Supervision and Student Guidelines (e.g. rubrics);
- Brochures;
- Course Outlines
- Textbooks of courses, literature on GPSSS;
- Textbooks of courses, literature on DAGG
- Quality Assurance reports.

Annex 6: List of abbreviations

AQC	Academic Quality Committee
BA	Bachelor
ECTS	credits according to the European Credit Transfer System
GRACM	Global Risk Analysis and Crisis Management
HOD	Head of Department
IA	International Affairs
IEP	Institute of Economics and Peace
IR	International Relations
MA DAGG	Master of Arts in Diplomacy and Global Governance
MA GPSSS	Master of Arts in Global Peace, Security and Strategic Studies
NVAO	Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organization (Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatie Organisatie)
PSC	Programme Steering Committee
RMA	The Belgian Royal Military Academy
SASC	Student Academic Standing Committee
TPEL	Theory-guided, Practice-embedded and Experiential Learning
VeCo	Vesalius College
VSG	Vesalius Student Government
VUB	Free University Brussels (Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

The panel report has been ordered by NVAO for the initial accreditation of the **Master of Arts in Diplomacy and Global Governance** and the **Master of Arts in Global Peace, Security and Strategic Studies** the by Vesalius College.

