



# MASTER IN INTERNATIONAL LAW WITH INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & MASTER IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

BRUSSELS SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF KENT

ACCREDITATION • ASSESSMENT REPORT

*16 June 2022*

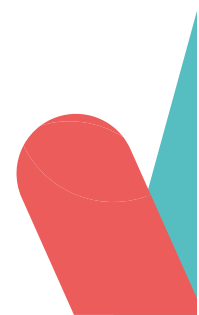
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## 1. Abstract

The panel that conducted the accreditation review of the MA in International Relations (IR) and the LLM in International Law (IL) at the Brussels School of International Studies (BSIS) of the University of Kent advises the NVAO to make a positive accreditation decision for both programmes.

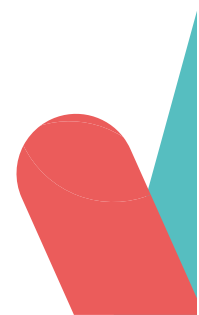
The panel comes to this positive conclusion based on its investigation into the quality of both programmes. IR and IL have strong and attractive profiles, combining an international outlook with the diversity of staff and students and flexibility in the programme. Their learning objectives and intended learning outcomes are well-described, clearly defined, and intellectually ambitious.

The curriculum of both programmes is structured in such a way that it allows students to attain the intended learning outcomes. While students enjoy a lot of freedom in creating their own trajectory, the IR programme still has a clearly recognizable international relations core; and the IL programme has a distinctly identifiable international law basis. Zooming in on the IR programme, the panel highly values the efforts towards decolonizing the curriculum. As for IL, the panel appreciates the contextual and problems-based approach to international law. The teaching-learning environment at BSIS is very supportive of students' personal and (transferable) skills development and the valorization of Brussels as a hotspot for international policymaking is a clear strength. Also, internationalization and diversity are very strongly developed in both programmes. Staff is of high quality and highly committed, BSIS' facilities are modern, and its support services well-developed.

The panel concludes moreover that assessment at BSIS is transparent, valid and reliable. The selection of dissertations the panel looked at demonstrate that the programme allows students to realize the intended learning outcomes, which is supported by alumni and the professional field. Finally, BSIS strongly invests in continuous quality enhancement.

In addition to strong points, the panel also identified points for improvement. Against this background, the panel formulates a number of recommendations, which do not detract from the panel's positive conclusion. The recommendations apply to both the IR and the IL programme:

- Emphasize more effectively the combined strength of a university following UK standards and the opportunities of the Brussels location in the recruitment strategy;
- Strengthen the support system for those students who want to engage in more complex research methodologies in their dissertation;
- Further develop the joint delivery of student support services with the Canterbury campus to continue to ensure that students get the help they need;
- Better involve alumni and the professional field in the programmes' quality enhancement;
- Further develop graduate tracking and organization of alumni services.



## 2. Report of the panel's investigation

The Brussels School of International Studies (BSIS) of the University of Kent provided two information files. They allowed the panel to obtain a first impression of and insight into the two programmes under consideration: the MA in International Relations (IR) and the LLM in International Law (IL). Parallel to this first impression, several questions emerged that remained unanswered. The panel used the dialogue with representatives of the University of Kent and BSIS during the site visit to complete its first impression.

Below, the panel reports on its findings based on the information files and the site visit. The panel's findings are structured according to the four coherent questions of the NVAO assessment framework. Whenever the findings for the IR and the IL programmes overlap, they are discussed jointly; where they diverge, they are considered separately.

The two information files concentrated understandably on the two programmes under review. The panel though would have appreciated the provision of the broader context of BSIS, including reference to and data on student numbers, staff and relationship of the other programmes offered at BSIS, as to provide context to the IL and IR programmes. The panel only learned during the site visit (and to some extent through the website) that these are the oldest but also the smaller - in student numbers - programmes at BSIS.

### 2.1. What do the programmes intend?

#### 2.1.1. IR

The information file explains that the IR programme focuses on the complexity of international and transnational processes and offers students the necessary tools to understand the different dimensions of and actors in international relations. The panel welcomes that the programme wishes to reflect the expansion of the conceptual, empirical, and methodological focus, as well as the interdisciplinary nature, of international relations in recent years. In this sense, the panel values BSIS' aim to firmly embed the IR programme in the social sciences. Also, the ambition to include non-Western, postcolonial and intersectional approaches to international relations in the programme is to be commended.

#### 2.1.2. IL

The information file indicates that the IL programme wants to enable its students to understand and evaluate public international law and its role in international affairs. In doing so, the programme aims to provide a level of integration between international law and international relations. The panel considers this to be an interesting, distinguishing feature of the IL programme at BSIS. There is also a clear emphasis on not only exploring international but also transnational dimensions, which focus on the contributions and situation of non-state actors in international law. The ambition is furthermore to diversify the contextual evaluations of international law, offering students lenses and perspectives from different disciplines, which the panel values. In doing so, it is aligned with the Kent Law School tradition, so the panel learned during the site visit.

The panel was curious to learn whether new subjects such as Health Policy, Sustainable Development and the Environment, and Social Science Subjects with Data Science are included in the IL programme. The panel learned that their importance is clearly on the radar

of the programme management. Both students and staff explained that these topics do receive attention in current modules. Programme management explained that adding extra modules dedicated to these topics is on the table, but that expanding on certain topics is not always easy due to the limited size of the programme. The panel supports BSIS in its plans to better integrate modules that are offered at the Canterbury campus in its own programmes in order to be able to better cover areas of increasing importance.

### 2.1.3. IR + IL

The panel found the sections in the information files on the BSIS' intentions for both programmes to be well-thought out and carefully constructed. The learning objectives and intended learning outcomes of both the IR and IL programmes are well-described, clearly defined, and intellectually ambitious. The panel values that the learning outcomes include subject-specific knowledge, understanding, and skills as well as more generic skills (such as intellectual skills and transferable skills). The achievement of national and international standards is transparently explained and fully convincing for both programmes.

Both the IL and IR programme share some additional special features that define their profile in comparison to other IL and IR programmes. First, the flexible setup of the curricula at BSIS and the presence of other programmes allows students to combine optional modules to broaden and or deepen their understanding of IL and IR respectively. Secondly, the location in Brussels enables students to gain first-hand experience in international organizations, giving the programmes a more practical dimension in comparison to other similar programmes. Third, BSIS' student population is highly diverse, allowing for a truly diverse teaching and learning environment. The site visit confirmed for the panel that these defining features, mentioned in the information file, are also what drew students and alumni to BSIS. During the interviews, students and alumni emphasized the attractiveness of the combination of a British institution located at the heart of the EU. They also consistently pointed at the flexible and practice-oriented curriculum as an important factor for choosing for BSIS.

In talking to management and staff, the panel gained a deeper insight into the relationship between the University of Kent's Canterbury campus and the BSIS Brussels campus. The interviews illustrated that BSIS has ample freedom to determine the profile and content of its programmes, as long as these adhere to the general frameworks defined at the university level. At the same time, being part of the University of Kent brings the solid support of a large university following UK standards of quality control and level of service provision. The panel is of the opinion that this combined strength could be more effectively be brought into BSIS' branding.

The panel explored what processes are in place to keep the pulse of new evolutions in the domains of international relations and international law. The panel observed that lecturers and management of both programmes actively use their network to informally stay up to date of evolutions, and that this information is used to update the programmes. This is illustrated by the example of Health Policy, Sustainable Development and the Environment, and Social Science Subjects with Data Science mentioned above; and the inclusion of non-Western approaches in IR. However, the panel also noted that employers and alumni are not involved in a systematic way to provide input on the programme. The panel is of the opinion that BSIS has a lot to gain from structurally and frequently involving these stakeholders.



## 2.2. How do the programmes realize their intentions?

### 2.2.1. Curriculum

#### *IR + IL*

Both programmes consist of 180 UK credits, with each taught module being 20 credits and the dissertation accounting for 60 credits. The information file explains that the UK system of conversion to ECTS counts one UK credit as 0.5 ECTS, hence the programmes equate to a total curriculum of 90 ECTS. Both programmes run over a full 12 months with 2 taught terms of 12 weeks each and a period of 4 months for completion of the dissertation, making it longer than the standard academic year of 30 weeks. A variant of each programme allows students to complete an extra 60 credits (30 ECTS) by one further term of study. During the site visit, the panel learned that a significant share of students uses this option. This option and its added value could have been better explained in the information file and also in the information for the students.

Programmes at BSIS have a modular structure and contain three elements: a compulsory part, a set of optional modules, and the dissertation module ('Fundamentals, Dissertation, Research' – FDR). The learning outcomes are achieved through a combination of lectures and seminars, coursework within each module, and dissertation research and writing. The information file explains that each module involves critical reflection on key themes, verbal discussion and the written analysis and interpretation of the relevant material. Lectures, staff-led seminars, and project work promote general intellectual and domain-specific skills. In addition, transferable skills are incorporated within modules and related to relevant assessments.

#### *IR*

In the IR programme, students are required to take two compulsory modules: 'International Relations Theory' and FDR. Furthermore, they choose two elective modules from a limited list of five modules from the 'International Relations' stream at BSIS. Finally, they select three further elective modules from a broader list of modules offered at BSIS. The panel concludes that the programme is well-structured and brings a diverse offer of relevant courses. It offers a good mix between compulsory and eligible modules. The latter is appreciated by the students, so the panel learned during the site visit.

In its discussions with lecturers, students and alumni the panel wanted to find out whether the setup of the programme, with its many optional modules, offers students a sufficiently solid subject-specific core to be able to deliver on its intentions. The two further elective IR-related modules add to the IR core of the programme. The panel learned furthermore that the IR orientation of the dissertations is closely monitored. The template for the research proposal requires the students to fill out how their research proposal relates to their field of study, and supervisors ensure that the dissertation stays firmly within scope. This was also evident from the sample of dissertations the panel could consult (see also below).

During the site visit, the panel received ample evidence that the ambition to bring other disciplines into the programme is realized. Lecturers explained that the modular structure allows students the freedom to take modules from other programmes, offering new perspectives (e.g. international law, political communication, political economy). Students and alumni expressed their appreciation for the degree to which the perspective of other disciplines is also present in the modules. Alumni were very positive about the far-reaching and diverse approaches offered to international relations, with a strong connection to recent

events. The external examiner of the programme mentioned the strong combination of disciplines in the coursework and the dissertations.

The panel was very pleased to find that the ambition to include non-Western, postcolonial and intersectional perspectives has been brought into practice in the course materials. These efforts towards decolonizing the curriculum are to be applauded and the panel highly values that the lecturers have gone beyond the low hanging fruit. Students also expressed their appreciation for the degree to which lecturers translate current critical approaches and challenges in their courses.

## IL

The curriculum-related topics that the panel explored with the interviewees of IL were very similar to the ones discussed with IR. A first point was the presence of a sufficient core of IL courses for an LLM degree in IL. The panel learned that the curriculum set-up that applies for IR, is also relevant for IL. IL students must follow two compulsory modules: 'Legal Aspects of Contemporary International Problems' and FDR. The elective modules are grouped into a core set of five electives in the International Law Stream, from which students choose two modules. The IL students furthermore select three modules from a wider set of electives, from which at least one must be law-related. Moreover, like in the IR programme, the scope of the thesis is monitored, to ensure that it has a solid IL core. As mentioned below, this is also observable in the dissertations the panel consulted.

The panel concludes that IL offers a well-devised teaching programme which makes good use of the IL-IR ties. The panel agrees with the information file that the current set-up enables a balance between ensuring that students understand core concepts in IL and providing for students to broaden their understanding of cognate areas. The panel welcomes the attractive mix between compulsory and eligible modules.

The panel discussed whether and how the programme brings its ambition into practice to offer students different disciplinary lenses. It learned that the flexibility of the curriculum allows students on the one hand to choose modules from different disciplines. On the other hand, bringing other perspectives into the law modules lies at the core of Kent Law School's perspective on teaching law. Lecturers and programme management explained that, rather than using the legal aspects as a starting point, a thematic approach is preferred, drawing in dimensions from other disciplines. Students and alumni told the panel that this approach had taught them to adopt a questioning attitude towards assertions of truth in international law. The programme's external examiner commented that the thematic approach of Kent Law School is an ambitious way to examine international law, which he also sees reflected in the choice of topics for essays and dissertations.

The panel was pleased to learn that the IL programme has the same intentions as the IR programme when it comes to incorporating non-Western, postcolonial and intersectional perspectives in the programme. As mentioned above, the need to include new subjects such as Health Policy, Sustainable Development and the Environment, and Social Science Subjects with Data Science is also clearly on the radar. The panel understands that the small scale of the programme makes integrating certain topic even more difficult than for IR. The panel agrees with BSIS that the information about and opportunities to make use of what is offered at the Canterbury Campus could be further strengthened. The panel asked about plans to offer specific 'Canterbury courses' remotely to BSIS students. Institutional and programme management explained that the potential of collaboration was made visible in the midst of the corona pandemic and is now further developed strategically.



### 2.2.2. Methodological training and thesis

#### *IR + IL*

The FDR-module is 60 credits (30 ECTS) and thus accounts for one third of (the standard version of) both the IR and IL programme. The set-up of, and the rules and regulations for the FDR are the same for both programmes. The module is composed of three parts: four core lectures; seminars; and interactive workshops. The core lectures introduce key methodological and theoretical issues in the social sciences and key analytical approaches. The accompanying seminars address practical questions of research and writing the dissertation. Furthermore, students select four of seventeen two-hour workshops, which are each centered around one particular method or theoretical approach. The panel learned during the site visit that the core lectures and interactive workshops are organized for the whole BSIS community and are thus the same for IR and IL. Only the seminars are organized separately. Students are allocated a supervisor based on the draft dissertation proposal. They are expected to write a dissertation of 14,000 words on an approved topic. Given the preparatory work done in FDR over Terms 1 and 2, each student can focus entirely on research and writing in the period following the final assessments. In general, the panel concludes that the set-up towards the dissertation is solid.

During the site visit, the panel zoomed in on the amount and specificity of the methodological training IL and IR students receive in the set-up described above. It learned that methods that are specific to IL and IR are introduced in two-hour workshops. After the workshops, students are stimulated by their lecturers to develop one or more methods by means of self-study. Students confirmed that this process takes place by means of self-study, for which they receive support from the lecturers.

The panel finds it laudable that BSIS exposes its students to a broad range of methods. It learned from programme management that providing more room for methodological training in the curriculum would go at the cost of taught courses. While the panel understands the current constraints, it also observed that the methodological component was usually not strongly developed in the sample of dissertations it looked into (see also below). It therefore recommends BSIS to make sure that they offer the necessary support to students to deliver methodologically in the thesis. It advises that BSIS further strengthens the support system for those students who want to engage in more complex methodologies. This could be done by more systematically directing them to self-study materials, or by tapping into (online) resources and courses available from the Canterbury campus.

In talking to staff and students during the site visit, the panel was pleased to learn that ample attention is given to good scientific practice, comprising training on ethics of research, citation rules and plagiarism. Also, students can use the services of the Canterbury Campus writing center remotely.

### 2.2.3. Link to the professional field and position of the internship

#### *IR + IL*

The information files explain that BSIS has over the years built close relationships with a range of international organizations based in Brussels. This close link has enabled students to meet with the professional field, through guest lectures, workshops or internships. A career coaching service is offered in the school to help students apply for internships. All in all, the panel clearly found that both programmes have, due to their location, a close link to professional practice, which the panel highly values. A potential point for further improvement could be to offer more (extracurricular) opportunities to improve certain directly applicable professional skills (e.g. setting up online meetings).

During the site visit, the panel wanted to gain a better understanding of the process of finding internships and the way they are embedded in the programme. Students and alumni expressed their appreciation of the quality of support they received in applying for internships. The panel learned that the career service supporting students in this process is outsourced to 'Key2Advance', which is something that according to the panel should have been more clearly addressed in the self-assessment report. This organization supports students to compose their CV and helps them broaden their network in order to gain access to internships. Also, Key2Advance provides information to students on current internships that may be of interest to them. In talking to students and alumni, the panel found that many of them are doing internships while being in Brussels. They explained that Key2Advance, in combination with the specific profile of the BSIS programmes and the network offered by the lecturers, had helped them secure high-profile internships.

The panel learned from the BSIS management that while most students do an internship parallel to their studies, some approved internships allow students to gain additional credits if completed successfully. The credits appear on the student's transcript but do not contribute to the award. The panel learned that BSIS chose for this specific setup, in which the internship is optional and non-credit bearing, because it is impossible to guarantee an internship for all students given Brussels' competitive internship environment. Also, adding the internship as a required element would come at the cost of taught modules. The current compromise allows students to formally work as an intern and makes the internship visible for future employers. It entails that students are trained and given all information, and then to individually make the best of the opportunities offered. The students and alumni the panel talked to explained to be happy with the current system and the flexibility it offers to make the most of the time in Brussels, combining the advantages of an internship and taught courses. They also mentioned the combination had been feasible, though they had worked hard. Nevertheless, the panel recommends to monitor students' work-life-study balance.

While there seem to be no issues in terms of quality currently, leading the panel to the conclusion that the current set-up is working well, it is important that BSIS continues quality assurance of internships, even if they are optional and non-credit bearing. In this context, the panel welcomes that BSIS has tightened quality assurance of the services it has outsourced to Key2Advance. The University of Kent's Dean for Europe explained that annual meetings with Key2Advance now review Key2Advance's services on a regular basis. Additionally, the Head of Operations of the Brussels campus monitors any issues that come up during his weekly meetings with the organization. Finally, there are feedback sessions with the student union.

#### 2.2.4. Internationalization and exchange

##### *IR + IL*

The panel learned from the information file that all students at BSIS can apply for a period of study, usually of one semester, at a partner university on an exchange basis. Two exchange arrangements are currently in place with China Foreign Affairs University in Beijing and the School of Public and International Affairs at Virginia Tech (VT), Washington DC. The panel learned from staff and students that not many students participate in the current exchange schemes. Students and alumni explained that they chose the programmes at BSIS for the Brussels location. Coming from abroad and being part of the internationally diverse BSIS community already offers the international experience they are looking for. BSIS management explained that the strategy going forward is to better strengthen the cross-regional links in the 3i-network, linking the Universiteit Gent, KU Leuven, the Université de Lille with the University of Kent.



The panel concludes that exchange does not seem to exist in a meaningful way in the IL or the IR programme, and that there is no need to do so. Internationalization in both programmes is a clear strength even without these exchanges: in the number and diverse origins of international students that choose Brussels as a study location, in the diversity of staff, and in the international and diverse perspectives present in the programmes and modules. BSIS should feel confident in the intrinsically international nature of the programmes.

#### 2.2.5. Teaching and learning environment

##### *IR + IL*

Taught modules at BSIS are structured either as a formal lecture followed by a small group seminar or as a two-hour interactive session, depending on the nature of the module and the number of students. The information file explains that lectures, seminars and workshops are designed to give structure and to develop insights interactively, but that additionally, students are motivated to broaden and deepen their knowledge through self-study. Also, they are required to apply their learning to problems of their own choice and to produce substantial research papers. Students and alumni of both programmes expressed their appreciation of the interactive nature of the modules. They confirmed that contact time is efficiently and effectively used to deepen insight based on reading done at home. Teaching staff active on both the Brussels and the Canterbury Campus added that the small-scale environment in Brussels allows teaching staff to be more accessible for questions on additional reading or even informal discussions on the reading done. Several students and alumni gave examples of how they had been encouraged to challenge dogma and rethink assumptions. They explained how the critical point of view they had developed at BSIS was still very helpful in their current occupation. The panel was impressed with the degree to which the teaching learning environment at BSIS is supportive for students' (personal) development.

The site visit provided the panel ample evidence that the international classroom is more than just a slogan at BSIS. The teaching and learning environment is truly enriched by diverse staff meeting a diverse student body. The international composition of the student body helps to provide an environment in which such discussions can be informed and enriched by personal experience. Students added that the diverse student body in the modules in terms of disciplinary backgrounds further adds to this richness.

An important feature of the BSIS programmes in shaping the teaching learning environment is the integration of Brussels as a hotspot for international policymaking, as is reflected in the high number of high-profile diplomats, policymakers, professional policy experts, and civil society members who contribute to the programme as visiting lecturers and guest lecturers on individual modules or for the whole BSIS community. The panel joins students and alumni in their appreciation for this feature, which is strongly developed in both the IL and IR programme.

#### 2.2.6. Staff

##### *IR + IL*

The panel learned from the information file that teaching in both the IL and the IR programmes is provided by a core group of permanent staff based in Brussels, who are the programme convenors, supplemented by staff from the university's main campus in Canterbury and locally recruited specialist teachers for some modules. All university staff have PhDs and are research-active members of their respective Schools. During the site visit, the panel met with both Brussels and Canterbury based staff. It talked to both core staff and

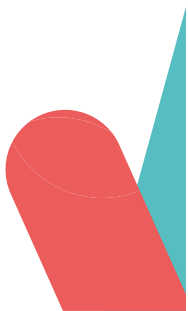
external lecturers. From the overview of staff in the information file, the panel concludes that both programmes have excellent lecturers, with a good diversity of permanent and guest teaching staff. During the site visit, the panel experienced the staff as very enthusiastic and involved. This impression was confirmed in the interviews with students and alumni. The panel learned that PhD students are also involved in teaching, which it welcomes. The panel considers the diversity of staff as a distinctive strength of the programme. Also, the involvement of practitioners is highly valued by alumni and students alike.

Students and alumni commented multiple times on the excellent availability of both teaching and support staff. Support staff illustrated how they function as a first point of contact for any questions regarding student services and can link to further services provided by the Canterbury campus if needed. While the panel highly appreciates the staff availability, it wishes to point out that there is also a risk involved. Considering the small scale of the IL and IR, and even the BSIS team, there is a risk for staff becoming spread too thinly. Although the current volume of staff seems to be doing a great job serving the students, more support from Canterbury and more volume of on-campus staff may be required if student groups grow as planned. The panel asks BSIS to closely monitor this, not in the least from the perspective of the wellbeing of staff.

The panel explored how staff cohesion is guaranteed with a small group of core lecturers and a substantial amount of external and guest lecturers coming in. The panel was pleased to hear that all external and visiting staff have an induction meeting and are subsequently coached by permanent staff. An external staff member confirmed that in the first two years she taught at BSIS, she was followed up closely so that her module was aligned with the programme objectives, and her assessment and marking adhered to BSIS standards. The panel learned that the second marker is always a BSIS core staff member.

Interestingly, the external lecturers from the IR and IL programmes the panel spoke to had been teaching at BSIS for a longer period of time. Although the panel sees this as an important factor in safeguarding continuity, this also comes with a risk. On the one hand, there is the question whether sufficient new impulses come into the programme if external staff remains the same for a long time. On the other hand, there is the risk of creating parallel career tracks as the external staff works with temporary contracts. The panel asks BSIS to closely monitor these risks.

The panel learned from the information file that the academic staff at the University of Kent are appointed on the basis of their academic excellence in terms of both teaching and research. It notes that the university has clear policies in place to ensure and enhance the quality of its academic staff. All newly appointed teaching staff of the university are expected to take the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education which is an accredited programme designed to train university teachers. The panel was pleased to learn that the standard policy towards study leave of the University of Kent also applies to the Brussels campus. This policy allows staff to apply to take one term's leave after two years. However, in talking to staff, the panel also noted that it is hard for staff to profit from this provision, due to the small group of lecturers, resulting in very little use of this option. The panel repeats its recommendation to closely monitor wellbeing of staff in light of this observation.



### 2.2.7. Admission and student numbers

#### *IR + IL*

Both programmes recruit students from around the world. In the past four years, the IR and IL have enrolled students from around 25 different countries with around 44% from Europe, 27% from North America and 19% from the rest of the world. In this period, 46 students enrolled in the IL programme and 70 students enrolled in the IR programme. The 2020-2021 cohort of IL had 10 students; for IR this was 11. This is a sharp drop in comparison to 2019-2020, when 14 students were enrolled in the IL programme, and 23 in IR. The panel learned that, according to BSIS, this drop is covid related.

The panel agrees with BSIS that attracting more students should indeed be a priority. This holds true for both programmes under consideration, but is most pressing for the IL programme, where pre-covid student numbers were also low. The panel was pleased to learn that both BSIS and the division managements of both programmes have this issue firmly on the radar and have ambitious plans. The panel welcomes in this regard that a new marketing and admission director has been added to the BSIS campus team.

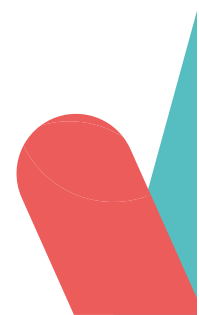
The panel zoomed in on the admission procedure at BSIS. It learned that students are selected on the basis of their undergraduate performance a minimum standard of English language. The panel was pleased to learn that the Brussels campus is in control of admissions, taking into account the general procedures of the University of Kent. BSIS has invested in a dedicated recruitment and admissions officer based in Brussels, who handles all cases from initial enquiry, through application, offer and eventual admission. BSIS explained that it attaches great value to looking at the individual pictures of applicants that go beyond getting the right grades. For example, post-graduate experience in a relevant occupation is also taken into consideration. The panel welcomes that rules are applied with some flexibility, so that promising candidates that are near the bar have a chance of being accepted. The panel received a few indications that there might be scope to review admission criteria, and particularly consistency of admission requirements. It suggests that BSIS further examines this.

### 2.2.8. Facilities

#### *IR + IL*

The panel was impressed with BSIS' modern, well-equipped facilities. They are designed to teach both smaller and larger groups of students, and provide students and staff with adequate space to study and work. The panel was impressed with the 24/7 access of students to part of the building, to allow them a silent working space whenever they need it. The panel learned from students that they lack a social space in the building. In talking to BSIS management and staff, it learned that there is a clear awareness of this issue. Students and the student union are supported as much as possible in the community building initiatives they take. The panel asks BSIS to continue to reflect on how to further improve this issue.

In the summaries of student evaluations that the panel consulted, some mention was made of inadequate library facilities. The panel explored this issue at length with management, staff, students, and alumni. It learned that BSIS has no separate library room or building, but that students have 24/7 online access to a large range of high-quality digital resources through the university's digital library. Additionally, key readings are available through the university's online learning platform, and the university has an inter-library loan agreement with the British Library in London. BSIS students are moreover allowed to use the study facilities at the nearby library of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel.



The panel was pleased to learn that BSIS has been working hard to identify what the students' issues with the library facilities are. The library team from the Canterbury Campus has talked with the Brussels Student Voice Committee to improve online accessibility of services. It was explained that access to legal databases is not very user friendly, which is why specific attention is paid to introductory sessions at the start of the academic year. While valuing this initiative, the panel asks BSIS to make sure that students are also informed on databases regularly. The information could currently get lost in the abundance of information students receive at the start of the academic year.

The panel learned that the Personal Academic Support System (PASS) at Kent University provides academic and personal advice, guidance and support for students throughout their period of study. All students, also the students at BSIS, are assigned an Academic Adviser at the beginning of their period of study. The Academic Adviser is a member of the academic staff, and plays a proactive role in supporting the academic development of students by providing academic advice and guidance at key stages. Students and alumni confirmed to have an Academic Advisor (mentor) providing them the necessary study guidance.

The Academic Adviser refers students to specialist sources of advice when needed, including a range of professional services for students to meet a diversity of needs. These specialist advice sources are well-developed and publicized to students and staff at the Canterbury campus, yet the panel wanted to find out what is offered to Brussels students. Management explained that when specific problems are encountered, there are specialists available online in Canterbury. The pandemic has influenced the availability of these services to Brussels students in a positive way, with online modules, meetings and consultations now also open for the Brussels campus. If there is a need to speak to a professional in person, there is a network available to reach out to in Brussels. Students explained that although the double delivery can be at times hard to navigate, the local support staff helps them to direct them to whatever they need.

The panel explored specifically how students with special needs are accommodated in an appropriate way in Brussels. Support staff explained that when students are registered centrally, their individual needs are included in the database, already with an indication of the support they are entitled to according to University of Kent regulations. Local support staff then provides the necessary support.

In conclusion, none of the students and alumni the panel spoke to seemed to experience the double delivery of student support services as a problem. The panel wishes to emphasize that this has a lot to do with the excellent support staff at BSIS. Management explained that although the delivery of student services is distinctive at the two locations, a lot is to gain from more joint working and the strength of managing them in connection, which the panel endorses. The panel asks BSIS to closely monitor whether students are getting the support they need.

Finally, the panel also talked in depth about the job market orientation services available at BSIS. It learned that although the University of Kent's Canterbury campus offers career advice services, they are not sufficiently geared towards the international (Brussels) job market. This is why BSIS offers tailored career advice, networking, and workshops through the partnership with Key2advance, the quality of which students and alumni are very positive about.

The panel found that graduate tracking and alumni organization at BSIS could be further developed, also in view of labour market opportunities for students. While current alumni value the regular BSIS newsletter that keeps them up to date of BSIS activities and job and internship opportunities, they all agreed there is room for improvement in better linking up the network by means of social media. The panel was pleased to learn that steps have been

taken to also involve Key2Advance in this regard. Also, providing a better link with the Canterbury career services would provide opportunities for further improvement.

### 2.3. How do the programmes realize their intentions?

#### 2.3.1. Assessment policy (IR + IL)

The panel learned from the information file that BSIS adheres to the University of Kent assessment policy and examination system. Programmes are required to use a variety of assessment methods to ensure that both the specific and generic learning outcomes of the programme are met. The choice of modes of assessment is determined as part of the module approval procedure. Any revision requires approval of the Divisional Education and Student Experience Committee. The panel consulted the programme specifications of both the IR and IL programme and observed that both programmes comply with this policy. A variety of assessment forms is used, such as seminar presentations, examinations, short pieces of written work and longer research papers. The panel is of the opinion that the chosen assessment forms are well aligned with the teaching-learning environment at BSIS, which was confirmed by the students and alumni the panel talked to during the site visit. Students and alumni also explained that lecturers communicate clearly about learning goals of separate modules and modalities of assessment.

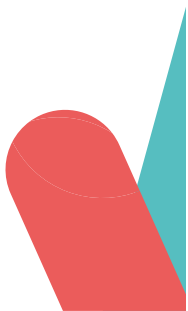
University policy moreover requires modules and their learning outcomes to be mapped onto the programme as part of the approval of the programme specification. The module mapping in the programme specifications allowed the panel to ascertain that all intended learning outcomes are assessed in both programmes.

All work which counts towards final assessment is graded according to a common university approved grading system which is stipulated in the University's Credit Framework. The panel observed that the marking protocols fully conform with the strict UK expectations. The module convenor assesses all coursework in first instance. Work which counts for more than 20% of a student's overall grade in a module is second-marked or moderated by an independent marker and made available for an external examiner to sample. Dissertations are all double marked. Final grades are confirmed by a Board of Examiners chaired by the Dean and attended by all programme convenors and the external examiners for each programme. External examiners, as well as reviewing students' work, check the assessment questions and check the consistency of marking. They write an annual report to the university, to which a reply is required. These reports and the responses are reviewed each year.

On the basis of the information mentioned above, the panel concludes that assessment at BSIS is transparent, valid and reliable.

The panel learned moreover that feedback and (provisional) marks are made available to students on Moodle within three weeks of submission of the work. Student concerns and suggestions about assessment methods and patterns can be taken up with the module convenor, the programme convenor, and through student representation on the Board of Studies.

In its discussions, the panel zoomed in on the quality of feedback that is given, as student evaluations indicated that this is a point of improvement. This concern was not shared with the students and alumni the panel talked to, who were all very pleased with the quality and quantity of feedback they received. Lecturers explained that the UK system of providing



feedback already is very extensive compared to the Flemish system, which was confirmed by an external examiner who described the quality of feedback at BSIS to be high, even to UK standards. The issue is that this feedback sometimes comes too late in the process, with students having expressed the wish to receive more formative feedback, during term. The panel supports BSIS lecturers in their ambition to look for ways to add mid-term feedback where this adds value to the learning process.

### 2.3.2. Final attainment levels

The panel learned from the information file that the overall success rate of both programmes is high. In the IL programme, 100% of students has completed the programme over that past four years, with 32% achieving a distinction and 50% a merit grade overall. In the IR programme 98% have completed the programme over that past four years with 27% achieving a distinction and 45% a merit grade overall.

The panel consulted a selection of dissertations from the past few years for both the IR and the IL programme. It concludes for both programmes that the dissertations demonstrate that the programme allows students to realize the intended learning outcomes. As mentioned above, IR-dissertations have a clear international relations focus and core. Similarly, IL-dissertations have a clear international law focus and core. The panel found the quality of the dissertations in both programmes in general to be high in terms of theory and literature review. Regarding methodology, the dissertations are up-to-standard, but less rigorous.

The panel also spoke to the alumni and professional field of both programmes. Alumni of both programmes expressed their appreciation of the direct applicability of what they had learned in the programme in their current jobs; they explained BSIS had made them well-equipped for the professional world. The panel was very impressed with the strong endorsements of the programmes from the representatives of the professional field. They made remarks about how BSIS students and graduates really stand out, with their integrated focus, their highly developed transferable skills, and critical point of view.

### 2.4. How are the programmes investing in continuous quality enhancement?

The University of Kent has a quality framework to which BSIS adheres, so the panel learned from the information file. A Code of Practice sets out the principles, structures, and procedures through which the university monitors academic standards and improves the quality of its programmes. Areas that are covered in this Code of Practice include module and course approval; module and course specifications; annual monitoring; periodic review; the conduct of Boards of Examiners; external examining; the approval of research candidates and projects; student supervision; and progression and examination. The Code also allows interested parties, such as prospective and current students and staff as well as relevant external organizations, to evaluate the university's quality assurance processes and is therefore also aimed to be an aid to transparency. Adherence to this framework is monitored by a Compliance Officer, who the panel talked to during the site visit, and who confirmed that the Brussels campus is fully compliant with the stringent UK guidelines and procedures. The panel concludes that all structures and systems that are in place for quality assurance and enhancement seem to be mature and robust.

In talking to the different groups of interviewees during the site visit, the panel observed that the academic community at BSIS is clearly oriented towards continuous improvement. Potential issues seem to be on the radar of staff, and solutions are sought and implemented



whenever possible. For example, when discussing course provision the IL staff volunteered that it was a problem that there was no International Environmental Law course on offer, and that they were looking into remedying this in the near future. Another example was the acknowledgement that there is a risk to outsourcing career support to Key2advance and the related decision to put more monitoring in place.

The panel also learned that complementing the formal quality assurance structures and systems, the small-scale of the BSIS campus allows a substantial part of quality enhancement to happen informally. The distance between staff and students is small and issues that spring up can be addressed and dealt with immediately. If no satisfactory response or advice is given, students can turn to their programme convenor. The panel sees how this parallel informal system has many benefits. However, the panel is of the opinion that BSIS should still reflect on the possible disadvantages of the informality of their feedback system. Certainly, if the intention is to grow, BSIS needs to be aware that more structural elements need to come in place as this informality may not be sustainable in larger student groups.

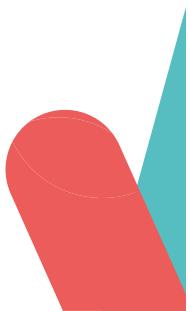
The panel also explored how stakeholders are involved in quality enhancement. It learned that the student voice is collected through module and annual evaluations. Additionally, the Brussels Student Voice Committee acts as a staff-student liaison committee for all Brussels programmes. This includes all members of full-time staff and student representatives who are the serving officers of the Brussels Graduate Student Union. Students explained that student representatives have direct contact with programme convenors and students can and do contact the representatives to take up issues.

Although the panel concludes that student participation in quality enhancement is up-to-standard, it also observed that there is room for improvement. For example, the panel learned that students had not been involved in drawing up the information file, and were not aware of its existence. Also, it noted that not many students participated in the site visit. It therefore strongly advises BSIS to look for further opportunities to work towards a more complete student participation.

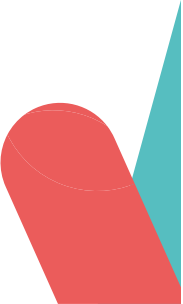
The panel also took note of the fact that involvement of external stakeholders could be improved upon. Although input from the professional field and alumni is gathered and followed up on in an informal way, the panel, while fully respecting the need for academic integrity in programme development and implementation, would suggest BSIS to involve these external stakeholders more structurally to more continuously improve the programme (see also above).

The panel explored whether information regarding the quality of the programmes is publicly accessible. It learned that the reports of external examiners are available online to the university community. Additionally, the Office for Students in the UK publishes the NSS National Student Survey Scores, which are broadly accessible. Also, registration of higher education institutions in the UK is based on the quality of student outcomes, the definition of quality being based on three metrics: continuing, completion, progression to professional employment. This means that all registered institutions comply with these quality requirements.

The panel also explored how line management works between the Brussels and Canterbury Campus. It learned that line management of staff is by the Head of School within the Division. The panel was pleased to hear this, as this ensures consistency with the main Divisional planning. Likewise, the University's Dean for Europe, who provides the strategic leadership



and development of BSIS, reports to the University's Pro-Vice Chancellor for Academic Strategy, Planning and Performance, thus ensuring alignment with the university's strategy.



### 3. Conclusion

Based on its inquiry into the IR and IL **programmes' intentions**, the panel concludes that both programmes are intellectually ambitious and clearly defined. Both programmes have strong and attractive profiles, combining an international outlook with the diversity of staff and students and flexibility in the programme. The panel sees room for improvement in more effectively branding the specific combination BSIS has to offer of a robust UK higher education institution and the specificities and opportunities of the Brussels location. The panel noted that both programmes keep the finger on the pulse informally of new evolutions in their respective disciplines. Still, BSIS has a lot to gain from more structurally and frequently involving alumni and the professional field to get their feedback on the programmes.

The IR and the IL programmes both have everything in place to allow students to **realize the programmes' intentions**. While students enjoy a lot of freedom in creating their own trajectory, the IR programme still has a clearly recognizable international relations core; and the IL programme has a distinctly identifiable international law basis. Zooming in on the IR programme, the panel highly values that this is a modern, nimble, responsive programme, and the efforts towards decolonizing the curriculum are to be applauded. As for IL, the panel appreciates the contextual and problems-based approach to international law. The panel noted that students' training in specific research methodologies is rather thin in both IR and IL. The panel asks both programmes to find ways to emphasize methodology training, especially for those students who want to engage in more complex methodological approaches.

The teaching-learning environment at BSIS is very supportive of students' personal and (transferable) skills development, and the panel applauds the way students' critical thinking is developed. The panel highly appreciates the valorization of Brussels as a hotspot for international policymaking and concludes that Key2Advance offers quality career services for students aiming for internships. Still, the panel recommends that BSIS further tightens its quality assurance of the outsourced services and reflects on how to better safeguard the quality of those internships that appear on the transcript. Finally, internationalization and diversity are very strongly developed in both programmes, in the international students that choose Brussels as a study location, in the diversity of students and staff, and in the international and diverse perspectives present in the programmes and modules. The panel concludes that these elements of internationalization should be more emphasized as the strength of the internationalization of BSIS and the IR and IL programmes, rather than a focus on exchange of students.

Staff is of high quality and highly committed. While the panel highly appreciates the staff availability to students, it asks to closely monitor staff wellbeing, especially against the background of the small scale of the teams. The panel noted that external staff is also very engaged. Many of them have been teaching at BSIS for a long period of time, safeguarding continuity, but also limiting the influx of new impulses and creating the risk of creating parallel career tracks. The panels asks BSIS to closely monitor these risks.

The panel was impressed with the modern, well-equipped facilities BSIS has at its disposal. The library facilities are online but up-to-standard. The panel asks BSIS to ensure that students are kept informed on database use throughout the academic year. That students have access 24/7 to a study area is applauded by the panel, yet the panel asks BSIS to keep on reflecting on the means to support students in finding locations for social activities in the absence of a social space in the building. Support services are well developed, and it

was reassuring to see that students do not seem to experience problems in navigating the complexity of the dual contact point (Canterbury/Brussels). The panel agrees that a lot is to gain from further strengthening the collaboration between the Brussels and Canterbury campus. Finally, the panel found that graduate tracking and alumni organization at BSIS could be further developed.

The admission process is well developed. The panel has some worry about the sustainability of both programmes. Especially the IL programme, with just 10 students in 2022-2023 and pre-covid numbers also low, is exposed to risks. The panel noted that this issue is clearly on the radar. The panel is of the opinion that BSIS could recruit more actively, building on the narrative of the attractive combination of a UK institute at the Brussels location. The panel received a few indications that there might be scope to review admission criteria and suggests BSIS further examines this.

The selection of dissertations the panel consulted allow for the conclusion that **the intended learning outcomes of both the IR and the IL programmes are reached**. The dissertations are up-to-standard, with theory and literature review standing out, yet with methodology less rigorously developed. The dissertations are firmly within the fields of IL and IR. The impressive endorsements of both programmes by both alumni and the professional field further support the conclusion that the programme delivers graduates that are up-to-standard.

The panel also concludes that assessment is transparent, valid, and reliable, and all intended learning outcomes are assessed in both programmes, with the marking protocols fully conforming with the strict UK expectations. Feedback culture at BSIS is strong, and the panel endorses BSIS ambitions to find ways to also provide feedback midterm instead of only at the end of term.

The programmes strongly invest in **continuous quality enhancement**. Quality assurance procedures are up-to-standard and fully compliant with stringent UK guidelines and procedures. The panel highly values that a substantial part of quality enhancement currently happens informally. The panel asks BSIS to continue to monitor whether this informality is sustainable should student numbers grow.

Following the conclusions above, the panel comes to the following advice:

- Based on the inquiry into the quality of the MA in International Relations at the Brussels School of International Studies (BSIS) of the University of Kent the panel advises NVAO to take a positive accreditation decision.
- Based on the inquiry into the quality of the LLM in International Law at the Brussels School of International Studies (BSIS) of the University of Kent the panel advises NVAO to take a positive accreditation decision.

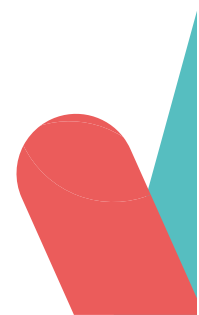
The panel formulates the following recommendations, which do not detract from the panel's positive conclusion. The recommendations apply to both the IR and the IL programme:

- Emphasize more effectively the combined strength of a university following UK standards and the opportunities of the Brussels location in the recruitment strategy;
- Strengthen the support system for those students who want to engage in more complex research methodologies in their dissertation;
- Further develop the joint delivery of student support services with the Canterbury campus to continue to ensure that students get the help they need;
- Better involve alumni and the professional field in the programmes' quality enhancement;
- Further develop graduate tracking and organization of alumni services.

## Annex 1: Administrative data regarding the institution and the programme

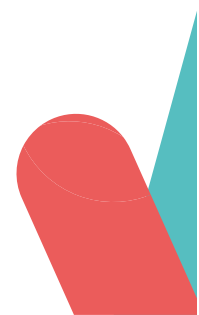
### MA International Relations

Institution	University of Kent
Address, institution website	University of Kent Brussels School of International Studies Boulevard Louis Schmidt 2 <a href="https://www.kent.ac.uk/">https://www.kent.ac.uk/</a>
Status institution	Other recognised higher education institution
Programme	MA in International Relations
Level and orientation	Master (academic)
(Additional) title	--
(Parts of) field of study(s)	Political and social sciences
Specializations	--
Programme routes	--
Location where the programme is offered	Brussels
Teaching language	English
Study load (in credits)	90 ECTS or 120 ECTS (extended)
New training in Flanders	No
Programme-specific learning outcomes	See annex 2
Connecting options and potential further education	--



## LLM International Law

Institution	University of Kent
Address, institution website	University of Kent Brussels School of International Studies Boulevard Louis Schmidt 2 <a href="https://www.kent.ac.uk/">https://www.kent.ac.uk/</a>
Status institution	Other recognised higher education institution
Programme	LLM in International Law
Level and orientation	Master (academic)
(Additional) title	--
(Parts of) field of study(s)	Political and social sciences/Law
Specializations	--
Programme routes	--
Location where the programme is offered	Brussels
Teaching language	English
Study load (in credits)	90 ECTS or 120 ECTS (extended)
New training in Flanders	No
Programme-specific learning outcomes	See annex 2
Connecting options and potential further education	--



## Annex 2: Programme-specific learning outcomes

### MA International Relations

The course provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas.

#### *A. Knowledge and Understanding of:*

1. Key historical and philosophical issues in the development of studies of the area of specialisation, together with familiarity with appropriate bibliographical sources;
2. How to apply general theoretical and conceptual frameworks to the analysis of specific issues and problems in domestic, regional, and international settings;
3. How to utilise qualitative and quantitative research methods and evaluate critically their application in the scholarly literature and in policy papers;
4. How to design and conduct a research project demonstrating awareness of epistemological and methodological principles appropriate to the subject of that research project;
5. How to carry out an independent research project and write in a scholarly manner demonstrating familiarity with academic conventions;
6. The nature of political, economic, social and technological problems, their emergence and dynamic.

#### **Skills and Other Attributes**

#### *B. Intellectual Skills:*

7. General research skills, especially bibliographic and computing skills;
8. Gather, organise and deploy evidence, data and information from a variety of secondary and some primary sources;
9. Identify, investigate, analyse, formulate and advocate solutions to problems;
10. Develop reasoned arguments, synthesise relevant information and exercise critical judgement
11. Reflect on, and manage, their own learning and seek to make use of constructive feedback from peers and staff to enhance their performance and personal skills
12. Manage their own learning self-critically

#### *C. Subject-specific Skills:*

13. Understand the different uses for theory in the relevant areas of specialisation and develop an individual stance on the appropriate application of theory;
14. Apply concepts, theories and methods used in the areas of specialisation to contemporary issues and problems;
15. Evaluate the interrelationships between the literatures and methodologies used in the areas of specialisation including salient material from anthropology, sociology, political science and demography
16. Describe, evaluate and apply different approaches to collecting, analysing and presenting social and technical information;

#### *D. Transferable Skills:*

17. Communication: communicate effectively and fluently in speech and writing; organise information clearly and coherently; use communication and information technology for

the retrieval and presentation of information, including, where appropriate, statistical or numerical information;

18. Information technology: produce written documents; undertake online research; communicate using e-mail; process information using databases;
19. Working with others: define and review the work of others; work co-operatively on group tasks; understand how groups function; collaborate with others and contribute effectively to the achievement of common goals;
20. Improving own learning: explore personal strengths and weaknesses; time management; review working environment (especially student-staff relationship); develop autonomy in learning; work independently, demonstrating initiative and self-organisation. Important research management skills include the setting of appropriate timescales for different stages of the research with clear starting and finishing dates (through a dissertation); presentation of a clear statement of the purposes and expected results of the research; and developing appropriate means of estimating and monitoring resources and use of time.
21. Problem solving: identify and define problems; explore alternative solutions and discriminate between them.
22. Personal career development: students are encouraged to manage their own career progression and development proactively and are supported in developing skills in researching and retrieving information on opportunities for employment and continuing personal and career development.

### LLM International Law

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas.

#### *Knowledge and Understanding of:*

1. All students who undertake this programme will have knowledge and understanding (to a level appropriate to the award) of:
2. The institutions, principles and structures of law in areas studied, and the policy background and interrelationships between these;
3. The key concepts, policy issues, principles; and relevant sources of law and policy in areas studied;
4. The substantive law relevant to a range of key areas of law and policy;
5. The theoretical, social and academic debates which underlie the substantive areas of law studied;
6. The practical contexts in which law operates;
7. The importance of evaluating law alongside its theoretical and practical contexts, and
8. The relationship and interrelationship between areas of law and politics studied. In addition to A1-A7, students who undertake one of the following pathways, whether as a primary or secondary specialisation, will have knowledge and understanding of that specialisation (to a level appropriate to the award) as follows:

#### **International Law**

9. The changes in the relative importance of the various sources of international law in the context of institutional proliferation and substantive differentiation;



10. The increasing role of non-state actors in the formulation, application, and implementation of norms in international affairs.

**International Relations**

11. The behaviour and interaction of state, non-state and supra-national actors;
12. Current challenges to international order, cooperation, identity, social formations and global issues, and possible strategies to address them.



## Annex 3: Composition of the panel

The assessment was made by a panel of experts convened and appointed by the NVAO. The panel is composed as follows:

Prof. Hans de Wit (chair), Emeritus Professor and former Director of the Center for Internationalisation of Higher Education, Boston College.

Prof. Veerle Heyvaert (panel member), Professor at LSE Law School and founding Editor-in-Chief of Transnational Environmental Law, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE).

Prof. Jan Orbie (panel member), Associate Professor and Director of the Centre for EU Studies at Ghent University.

Mr. Florian Pecenka (panel member), Head of Unit, Department for Education, Science and Research at Permanent Representation of Austria to the EU.

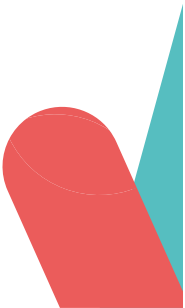
Prof. Marta Pertegás (panel member), Chair on Private International Law and Transnational Law at Maastricht University, part-time Professor of Law at University of Antwerp, Visiting Professor of the University of Johannesburg.

Ms. Mari Ruadze (student member), student in Teacher's Training Programme (subject: Geography) at Ilia State University, Bachelor in International Relations at Free University of Tbilisi, member of the Quality Assurance Student Experts Pool of the European Student's Union (ESU).

The panel was assisted by:

- **Mark Frederiks** (process coordinator), NVAO policy advisor.
- **Jetje De Groof** (external secretary), independent higher education consultant, Eduflow bv.

All panel members and the process coordinator/secretary have signed NVAO's code of ethics.



## Annex 4: Schedule of the site visit

19-20 May 2022

<b>Thu 19 May</b>	
08h30	Panel arrive
08h30-09h00	Tour of premises and installation into panel committee room
09h00-10h00	Session 1 - Management
10h00-10h15	Break/Review Panel meeting
10h15-11h00	Session 2 – Support Staff, QA and VLE
11h00-11h15	Break/Review Panel meeting
	<b><i>MA International Relations</i></b>
11h15-12h15	Session 3 -Staff MA IR
12h15-13h15	Lunch
13h15-14h15	Session 4 - Students MA IR
14h15-14h30	Break/Review Panel meeting
14h30-15h00	Session 5 - Alumni MA IR
15h00-15h30	Session 6 – Professional MA IR
15h30-15h45	Break/Review Panel meeting
	<b><i>LLM International Law</i></b>
15h45-16h45	Session 7 - Staff LLM IL
16h45-17h00	Break/Review Panel meeting
17h00-18h00	Session 8 - Students LLM IL
18h00-18h30	Review Panel meeting
<b>Friday 20 May</b>	
08h45	Panel arrive
09h00-09h30	Session 9 – Alumni LLM IL
09h30-10h00	Session 10 – Professional LLM IL
10h00-10h15	Break/Review panel Meeting
10h15-10h45	Session 11 – Clarification meeting with management
10h45-11h45	Break/Review panel Meeting
11h45-12h00	Informal Feedback Session
12h00	Panel departs



## Annex 5: Review process

The assessment was carried out in line with the 'Assessment framework programme accreditation – June 2020'.

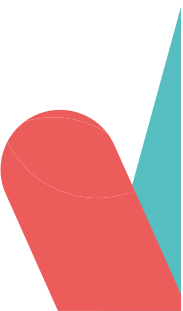
The panel prepared itself for the assessment on the basis of the information file submitted by the institution when applying for accreditation. Prior to the preparatory meeting of the panel, each panel member formulated initial impressions and questions were listed. During a preparatory meeting on 18 May 2022, the panel discussed all information received in the application file and also prepared the dialogue with the programme. Impressions and questions were updated before the dialogue with the institution.

The dialogue took place on 19 and 20 May 2022.

During the dialogue the panel investigated the context of the programme and the institution and collected all required information to make a judgement on the quality of the programme.

During a closed meeting of the panel on 20 May the panel discussed all information obtained and translated it into a holistic judgement. The panel took this conclusion in full independence.

All information obtained led to a draft assessment report that has been sent to all panel members. The feedback from the panel members has been processed. The assessment report adopted by the chairman was submitted to NVAO on 16 June 2022.



## Annex 6: Overview of the material studied

### MA International Relations

#### *Self-Assessment Report*

##### *Annexes to the Self-Assessment Report*

- Programme Structure and Electives 2021/22
- Teaching Staff and External Examiners
- Programme Specification
- External Examiner Reports
- List of Dissertations with Distinction
- Periodic Programme Review - Law 2016

### LLM International Law

#### *Self-Assessment Report*

##### *Annexes to the Self-Assessment Report*

- Programme Structure and Electives 2021/22
- Teaching Staff and External Examiners
- Programme Specification
- External Examiner Reports
- List of Dissertations with Distinction
- Periodic Programme Review - Pol IR 2017



## Colofon

MASTER IN INTERNATIONAL LAW WITH INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (VL10083-22)

MASTER IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (VL10087-22)

BRUSSELS SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF KENT

Programme accreditation • Assessment report

16 June 2022



Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie  
Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders

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