



Maastricht University



Faculty of Law

Self-evaluation report Master International Laws



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Administratieve gegevens



Instelling

Naam instelling:	Universiteit Maastricht
Status instelling:	Bekostigd
Resultaat instellingstoets:	Positief geaccrediteerd voor de periode 2019-2024

International Laws

Oriëntatie en niveau:	WO - master
Aantal studiepunten:	120 EC
Specialisatiemogelijkheden:	n.v.t.
Locatie:	Maastricht
Variant:	voltijd
Joint programme:	n.v.t.
Onderwijstaal:	Engels
CROHO registratienummer:	60168



1. Profile and ambition of the programme

the objective of the master's programme International Laws (ILs) is to train graduates who are able to excel in a highly globalised and internationalised legal marketplace. Graduates of this programme possess knowledge, understanding and skills in the field of international and European law to be able to work independently in a broad range of legal roles. They understand the impact of globalisation in various main areas of law and have combined their legal training with training in foreign languages (French and one other language, not being English or the student's mother tongue).

ILs graduates are equipped with the academic, analytical, practical and linguistic skills that are necessary to enable them to successfully compete for positions in organisations involved in transnational, European and/or international activity and to be of added value for these organisations.

The ILs programme is a two-year master programme (120 EC). The ILs programme has a number of notable features which distinguish it from other master's programmes offered by the Faculty of Law, and internationally.

First, it is a small-scale selective programme. Students are selected on the basis of previously obtained degrees (applicants must possess a bachelor's degree in law), their grade point average (GPA), language skills, letter of motivation, reference letter and extracurricular experience. The average enrolment number is 24 students. Second, ILs is a two-year programme. In the first year students study in Maastricht; in the second year they study (at least half of the year) abroad at partner universities/faculties. Third, the ILs programme includes mandatory language courses. Fourth, ILs students write an extended thesis (18 EC).

Fifth, ILs students follow the masterclass 'Current Issues of International and European Law'. Sixth, ILs students can take up to 12 EC in non-law courses.

The ILs programme prepares students for the challenges of the legal profession in the 21st century. Due to globalisation and European integration, there is an increasing demand for graduates with a strong academic background, who are confident in an international environment and are able to work in different languages. As the ILs programme provides students with the opportunity to combine academic training in European law, international law and the influence of globalisation on law in addition to the learning of foreign languages and a stay abroad at a partner university which allows students to be introduced to a foreign legal system, the ILs programme has a unique profile and stands out from the other law masters offered at the faculty. For this reason, selective admission aims to guarantee an optimal match between the abilities and aspirations of applicants and the objectives of the programme.

The courses are all taught by members of the departments of International & European Law, Public Law, Criminal Law and Criminology, and Private Law. Research activities, as covered by the various research institutes of the Faculty, are included in teaching.



2. Reflection on previous accreditation and midterm

The 2017 accreditation panel stated that the master programme International Laws is well-designed and enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The panel held that it was clear that the content of the ILs programme prepares its students for a specific professional field (that of international, European and transnational organisations) which requires a distinctly academic outlook and an understanding of the way legal issues touch upon other academic fields and processes.

Nevertheless, the panel advised ILs to better capture the programme's specific substantive focus, which it considers ambitious and distinctive, in the intended learning outcomes. More specifically, the panel indicated that these learning outcomes are rather generic and that they could express more clearly how the central theme mentioned in learning outcome 1 (the role played by international and European law in today's era of globalisation and Europeanisation) is elaborated in the other outcomes, which refer to international and national law but do not mention globalisation or Europeanisation. These observations are well-founded and hence the ILOs were further refined (see standard 1).

With regard to the programme's **substantive focus**, the ILs programme has undergone quite some changes since the master revision that has taken effect as of academic year 2023-2024. While the general aims of the programme have not changed and the programme still focusses on the specific role that law plays in the process of Europeanisation and globalisation, students are now guided more when it comes to the courses they choose in their first ILs year. As noted by the Midterm Review Panel in December 2021, student cohesion could have been improved by the reduction of the amount of free choices. A sense of 'belonging' to a group can lead to better study results, the panel noticed. As the amount of courses to choose from was indeed very high (students could choose and combine any courses from both the ELS and GAL master programmes), the faculty realised that there was a risk that the combination of these courses is randomly selected (or is for example completely filled in only EU law courses or only international law courses) without leading to a certain profile. This may reduce chances on the labour market as students are not sufficiently specialised, or less specialised than students following a one year master programme, such as ELS and GAL. For this reason, it was decided that as of academic year 2023-2024, students can choose to either follow a business centred legal orientation or a path that is not (directly) business oriented in their first year. Students can hence combine European business law courses on the one hand and international trade courses or commercial law courses on the other hand; OR international human rights law courses on the one hand and European public law courses or courses related to the law of sustainable Europe on the other hand. These fields reflect the specialisation tracks of the European Law School (ELS) programme and the Globalisation and Law (GAL) programme. By combining an equal amount of ELS and GAL courses students will study European, international and global law approaches with regard to their chosen orientation.

In their second year students are required to go to a partner university in another country. Students are encouraged to connect the language courses they have taken in year 1 with the language spoken in the country of exchange in year 2 so that they can more easily integrate in the host country and can potentially register for law courses in the language of the host country. As students have still a lot of freedom when it comes to the courses they take up in their second year abroad, it is believed that this change in policy does not lead to an inflexible programme. Students who decide to only go abroad for one semester can take up electives from other master programmes and can even take up 12 EC in non-law courses.

The 2017 committee also expressed that the central theme of the master programme can be better linked to the acquisition of **foreign language skills**. For this reason the faculty has decided that the second language course that a student has to take (not French) should now be linked, if possible, to the language spoken in the country of exchange.



Since the master revisions students are now expected to take up 6 EC in this second language (and not 2 x 3 EC which could be two different languages of 3 EC) to increase students' ability to read, listen and express themselves in this language and hence increase the students' chances to take up legal courses in that language when abroad.

With regard to the period of study abroad, the members of the midterm review committee indicated that 'the outsourcing of education' comes with risks when it comes to the course quality of the faculty's foreign partner universities, especially as half of the ILs programme can be followed abroad. In this regard it should be noted that the number of partner universities has been narrowed down over the years. The 2017 panel noted with appreciation that only universities with which the staff and students have good experiences are retained on the list of options and this strategy is still used today. In this way, the faculty is better able to assure the quality of the students' individual trajectories. Quality assurance is in addition ensured by verifying information provided by Nuffic, clear agreements with partner universities and the conclusion of individual learning agreements. These agreements include the courses an individual student will follow abroad and are individually approved/not approved by the Coordinator of the ILs programme. Furthermore, experiences of Maastricht staff members who teach or closely collaborate with partner universities, and/or the reputation of the partner are also taken into account. Only after the ILs Coordinator has scrutinised the necessary documents (course book, reading materials, course level etc) a course can be followed. As all partner universities are accredited, it is assumed that assessment is in conformity with the required level as well. For EU partners, the European principle of mutual trust plays an important role, too. At the end of the exchange period, students are also asked about their experience abroad when it comes to the level of quality. If on the basis of this information concerns arise, the ILs Coordinator will immediately contact the partner university to verify these issues and to see if and how problems can be solved. With regard to two specific exchange networks (CIEL and THEMIS), twice a year the academic ILs Coordinator and the exchange coordinator take part in meetings with the representatives of the partner universities of these networks to closely discuss relevant issues, including quality assurance.



3. Evaluation according to the four standards

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

As noted in section on the profile and ambition of the programme, the aim of the master ILs is to produce graduates possessing the knowledge, understanding and skills in the field of international and European law and being able to work independently in different legal professions at academic level. The programme aims to deliver graduates with a strong academic background who are trained to understand the impact of globalisation in various main areas of law, are confident in an international environment and are able to work in different languages. The combination of these elements provides graduates with a unique profile.

The general aims of the ILs-programme are:

- (i) to offer students knowledge and understanding of the specific role that law plays in the process of Europeanisation and globalization,
- (ii) to enhance students' legal-analytical skills needed to identify and solve complex legal problems that arise in the process of globalization and
- (iii) to enable students to improve their legal writing, presentation and debating skills,
- (iv) to enable students to improve their proficiency in one or two foreign languages.

On the basis of the comment of the 2017 assessment panel, some changes have been made in the existing learning objectives. Under the heading 'knowledge and understanding' the reformulation/additions are as follows;

ILs graduates will have up-to-date knowledge and understanding of:

1. the role played by international *and* European law in today's era of globalisation and Europeanisation
 - In the previous version of the learning objectives the word 'and' was 'or' as students could choose to predominantly focus on EU law or on international law. This is no longer possible as the programme aims to train lawyers that have knowledge in the field of international and European law.
2. the impact of international and European law on national law
3. the impact of globalisation and Europeanisation on international and European Law
4. the impact of globalisation and Europeanisation on national law
 - Outcome nr 2 and 3 were not mentioned in the previous version of the learning objectives. As the 2017 assessment panel indicated that the learning outcomes could express more clearly how the central theme mentioned in outcome 1 (the role played by international and European law in today's era of globalisation and Europeanisation) is elaborated in the other outcomes, which do not mention globalisation or Europeanisation. As the ILs courses study the impact of globalisation on law and the role of law in a globalising world, this is now captured in the learning outcomes. The mandatory new course 'Foundations of Global law' is a crucial course in this regard as it provides the conceptual and normative tools required to critically assess current global issues and their impact on our understanding of the law. In addition it focuses on new challenges which demand a thorough re-examination of our current legal institutions and their place in a globalised world. In many other courses (e.g. European Competition Law) the impact of globalisation and Europeanisation on the law is also discussed.
5. the specific interaction between international and/or European law and national law in the fields studied
6. enforcement of international and European law, including dispute settlement procedures *and the influence of globalisation and Europeanisation on enforcement*
 - The influence of globalisation on enforcement is added as an intended learning outcome as many courses such as Corporate Social Responsibility, European Competition Law, International Commercial



Dispute Resolution, Intellectual Property Law and International Human Rights Law focus on recent developments in enforcement and dispute settlement and private enforcement regimes.

7. the main substantive rules of international and European law in the fields concerned.

Under the heading '*Applying knowledge and understanding*', the reformulation is as follows:

8. ILs graduates are able to apply the knowledge obtained to identify and solve concrete/complex problems that arise in the shaping, application or enforcement of international, *European* and, *if applicable*, national norms governing cross-border activity.
9. ILs graduates possess analytical skills that enable them to identify and solve concrete/complex problems that arise in the shaping, application or enforcement of international, European and national norms governing cross-border activity.
 - The changes in nr. 8 and 9 were made as ILs students now equally focus on international and European law and to a certain extent on national law
10. ILs graduates understand the context and interrelated conditions in which the law exists, operates and develops both at international, European and national level.
 - This intended learning outcome has been added after giving careful thought to the remarks of the assessment committee of 2017. The ILs programme aims to educate and train lawyers who are competent in their discipline and engaged in wider society. They do not only apply analysis and critical evaluation to their thinking but are also capable of synthetic, abstract thought. Several courses contribute to this goal, such as the mandatory course Foundations of Global Law which provides the conceptual and normative tools required to critically assess current global issues and their impact on our understanding of the law.

Further reflections on ILOs

These learning outcomes reflect what is necessary from an academic master student and tie in with international, European and national perspectives and the requirements set by the professional field and pay specific substantive focus to the central theme of the ILs master programme.

In contrast to our bachelor programmes, the ILs master leads to a specialized degree as the programme provides in-depth knowledge and specialized expertise in business or public law. In the master thesis students are not just expected to 'describe' a legal problem, but to critically assess a certain topic and add personal views. By combining knowledge, skills and academic citizenship (which includes that students have a societal responsibility toward fellow students, tutors, ...) ILs graduates possess the academic, legal-analytical, legal-practical and social skills necessary for entering the labour market and are able to compete for jobs in organisations operating in cross-border settings or, as regards the better ones, to proceed with a PhD. The practical case studies and the PBL system stimulate students' interests in for societal problems and the role of the law in society. The master thesis is an important part of the curriculum as it allows students to intensively work on their research and writing skills

The two-year duration of the ILs programme is not an 'objective' as such, but it is a 'result' of the objectives and the learning outcomes of the programme. Indeed, the learning objectives and outcomes of the ILs programme necessitate that the programme is a two-year course of studies for a couple of reasons. First, the need to satisfy a varied combination of requirements underlies the ILs programme. Those requirements are the acquisition of knowledge of European and international law, comparative law, and basic principles of some foreign legal systems as well as foreign legal cultures. In addition, students in the ILs programme must gain thorough legal knowledge of at least two languages. Second, there is an ever-increasing need on the job market for lawyers who can find their way in legal systems that are different to their home system and who are acquainted with foreign legal languages. These are also intended learning objectives of the ILs programme. A period abroad is considered essential in the ILs programme in order to enable students to truly gain experience of these invaluable learning objectives of the programme.



With regard to the domain-specific frame of reference it can be said that ILs graduates are able to work in different settings and understand that the law operates in different contexts. Students of the ILs programme can opt for different orientations (see for more information nr. 1. Brief Reflection on previous accreditation and midterm). Two of the orientations are more focussing on a business law context (orientations A and B) and two are more focussing on public law (orientation C and D). As this division is new, conclusions relating to the labour market cannot yet be drawn, but it is expected that students with orientation A and B are more likely to work for private companies and divisions of public institutions dealing with trade and commerce and students with orientation C and D are more likely to work for administrations, embassies and divisions of institutions focussing on public law. Whether they can become a member of the bar, depends on the national law of their home state.

Effort will need to be made to engage more with alumni and the labour market to gather more data in order to reflect on the programme and its effectiveness in preparing students for the envisaged labour market.

The academic dimension of the program is strengthened by the fact that the teaching staff includes in the courses topics and output of their own research. As a result, students are guaranteed of being informed about the most recent academic debates in the respective fields studied. In addition, several courses have guest lecturers so that students also get insights from the labour market.

Standard 2: Educational learning environment

Aspects of the teaching and learning environment that apply to or are relevant for all programmes offered by the Faculty, notably including the PBL system, are described in the general chapter. The information below specifically focuses on the ILs-programme.

Programme

ILs is a two-year academic programme comprising in total 120 EC and has 4 orientations. The main language of instruction is English, with significant training in French and scope to develop skills in another language. These decisions were made as English and French are the primary languages of international and European law and relations. They are official languages of the EU and UN, and are the two working languages of many international courts and other organisations.

The coordinator of the ILS programme provides students with tips and suggestions regarding the development of their curriculum at the open days and during the introduction week at the end of August. Individual students also make use of the possibility to make an individual appointment to get personal advice.

Year 1

During the first year ILs-students study in Maastricht.

During their first year students take the following courses:

- Advanced European Law (6 EC)
- Foundations of Global law (6 EC)

These two courses take place in period 1 (September-October)

The introduction of the mandatory course 'Foundations of Global law' as well as the continuation of the other mandatory course 'Advanced EU law' both allow students to reflect on the role played by international and/or European law in today's era of globalisation and Europeanisation. The course 'Foundations of Global law' aims to solidify the central theme of the master programme and to provide the conceptual and normative tools required to critically assess current global issues and their impact on our understanding of the law.



- Language courses (6 EC French; 6 EC other language). The level is depending on the students level. The French course is offered in January and the other language course takes place in fall and/or spring). The other language cannot be English or the student’s mother tongue and should, if possible, be the language of the country of the host university to which the student is going in the second year. The language courses are offered by the Language Centre of Maastricht University.
- The Masterclass ‘Current Issues of International and European Law’ (0 EC) in which recent developments in international and European law and policy are discussed, outside a specific course-context. This allows students to get a broader knowledge and understanding of international and European legal developments.

For the remainder students are expected to combine courses of the GAL and ELS master programmes as follows:

- 3 courses ELS, specialisation European Business law in combination with 3 courses GAL, specialisation International Trade and Investment Law (orientation A) OR
- 3 courses ELS, specialisation European Business Law in combination with 3 courses GAL, specialisation Corporate and commercial law (orientation B) OR
- 3 courses ELS, specialisation European Public law in combination with 3 courses GAL, specialisation Human Rights (orientation C) OR
- 3 courses ELS, specialisation Law of Sustainable Europe in combination with 3 courses GAL, specialisation Human Rights (orientation D)

The combination of the ELS and GAL courses in different orientation is based on content alignment so that students graduate with a certain profile (either business law oriented or public law oriented).

To ensure that the selected group of ILs students does not loose the advantage of increasing its knowledge outside their specific orientation, all ILs students follow in year 1 the compulsory courses Advanced European Law (which provides an integrated study of EU law, emphasising the interaction between institutional EU law and substantive EU law) and Foundations of Global Law (which provides the conceptual and normative tools required to critically assess current global issues and their impact on our understanding of the law). In addition all ILs students follow the Masterclass Current Issues of International and European Law. Finally, it should be noted that students can always take up additional courses that are not earmarked to a certain specialisation of ELS/GAL, such as Law of the Sea or International Dispute Settlement.

While this first year constitutes 60 EC, it is acknowledged that the concurrently-running language courses and the addition of the *Current Issues* course results in a higher typical studyload for ILs students. The higher amount of 18 EC that can be obtained with regard to the master thesis demonstrates that ILs students are expected to invest more in their research and (analytical) writing skills. These decisions were made in light of the general quality (selective programme) of the ILs cohort and a desire to provide opportunity for these students to challenge themselves. Effort will be made to monitor this aspect of the programme as more experience is gained of the new additions.

**ILs programme year 1 orientation A:
European Business law (ELS) + International Trade and Investment Law (GAL)**

Period 1	Period 2	Period 4	Period 5
Advanced EU law	European Competition Law International Commercial Law	Comparative Company Law European Labour and Social Security Law Corporate Social Responsibility	State aid and Public Procurement in the EU
Foundations of Global Law	Intellectual Property Law International Trade Law	Customs Law International Investment Law	Advanced International Trade Law

Students should select three courses from row 2 (ELS) and three courses from row 3 (GAL).



ILs programme year 1 orientation B

European Business Law (ELS) + Corporate and Commercial Law (GAL)

Period 1	Period 2	Period 4	Period 5
Advanced EU law	European Competition Law International Commercial Law	Comparative Company Law European Labour and Social Security Law Corporate Social Responsibility	State aid and Public Procurement in the EU
Foundations of Global law	<i>(European Competition Law)</i> <i>(International Commercial Law)</i>	<i>(Comparative Company Law)</i> <i>(Corporate Social Responsibility)</i>	Comparative Corporate Governance International Commercial Dispute Resolution

Students should select three courses from row 2 (ELS) and three courses from row 3 (GAL).

ILs programme year 1 orientation C

European Public Law (ELS) + Human Rights (GAL)

Period 1	Period 2	Period 4	Period 5
Advanced EU law	European Fundamental Rights Law Internal Market Law and Governance	European Migration and Asylum Law European and National Constitutional Law	External Relations of the European Union
Foundations of Global law	International Human Rights Law International Humanitarian Law	Human Rights of Women Human Rights and Human Development	International Criminal Law

Students should select three courses from row 2 (ELS) and three courses from row 3 (GAL).

ILs programme year 1 orientation D

Period 1	Period 2	Period 4	Period 5
Advanced EU law	European Fundamental Rights Law Global Environmental Law	Corporate Social Responsibility	Global Tax Policy and Sustainable Government
Foundations of Global law	International Human Rights Law International Humanitarian Law	Human Rights of Women Human Rights and Human Development	International Criminal Law

Students should select three courses from row 2 (ELS) and three courses from row 3 (GAL).

Year 2

- In year 2, students write their (extended) master thesis (18 EC) as ILs students have more time to focus on their thesis and their research and writing skills and have gained more insights during their course of study. In this way they can expose these skills more prominently and benefit from the knowledge obtained abroad as well.
- Students should obtain 42 EC in course credits of which at least 24 EC should be obtained abroad at one of the Faculty's partner universities (list available on request). Students can choose among the universities listed in the Table below. As to courses, students have the liberty to select any course at master level. They get an elaborate information session by the master coordinator in October of their first year and can always contact our internationalisation office in case of questions.



Quality assurance of education abroad

As the Faculty of Law awards the ILS diploma, it has to ensure the quality of the education that students follow abroad and ensure that it is of the required master's level. The Faculty relies on the fact that its partner universities have been accredited and further relies on information provided by Nuffic, course materials that can be obtained from the partners in combination with experiences of students, the experiences of Maastricht staff who have taught at the partner universities or have closely collaborated with them and/or the reputation of the partner. The number of partner universities has been narrowed down over the years. In this way the faculty has a better oversight and is better able to assure a high level of quality.

CIEL and Themis programmes

The Faculty of Law participates in two specific exchange networks: *CIEL* and *Themis*. Students who choose to spend their stay abroad at one of these network-partners can obtain a separate certificate. This option is open to ILS-students only.

The *CIEL* network aims to encourage the mobility of master's students studying comparative, international and/or European law. In addition to the Faculty of Law of Maastricht University, it comprises Universiteit van Antwerpen (Antwerp), Zagreb University, Université de Toulouse, Universität Mannheim, University College Dublin, Universitat Pompeu Fabra (Barcelona). Each of these universities annually selects a small group of students for the CIEL programme. ILS students can participate and may qualify for a 'CIEL certificate'. The certificate will be handed out at graduation provided the student obtained at least 30 credits at one of the CIEL partners, and has found an additional thesis supervisor at the partner university. The thesis is written under Maastricht rules. The 'Maastricht supervisor' determines the final mark. The supervisor at the partner university marks the thesis on a pass/fail basis and discusses his or her assessment of the level of the thesis with the home supervisor.

The *Themis* network focusses on commercial and international law. The network comprises next to the Faculty of Law of Maastricht University, Università Bocconi (Milano, co-ordinating university), Université de Paris XII (Val de Marne), Freie Universität (Berlin), Esade (Barcelona), Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien, and Singapore Management University and University of St. Gallen (Switzerland). Each of the partners offers English taught courses in the fields of commercial and international law. ILS-students who participate in the *Themis* program will receive an extra certificate when they graduate. Requirements to qualify for the certificate are (1) taking courses worth 30 EC, (2) participation in the yearly *Themis* seminar and (3) completion of an 'international' internship.

Dual degrees

- Selected students have the possibility to obtain a dual degree with Bocconi University or the University of Zürich. With regard to Bocconi, students follow the LLM entitled The Law of the Internet Technology. Part of the Italian/Swiss programme (48 credits) is also used for the mandatory study abroad component in the Master in International Laws. For both dual degrees, a separate thesis must be written for both programmes, which meets the requirements of that programme.

Admission

ILS is a selective program to which only students are admitted that stand out. Students are admitted based on their merits.

Applicants must possess a bachelor's degree in law and are selected on the basis of:

- a. the results obtained in the bachelor's programme on the basis of which admission is requested;
In selecting the students significant weight is given to the bachelor in law (or Master) program students have completed, the university or other institute of higher education where they have obtained their diploma, and



the courses they have followed. The GPA obtained by students in their prior education is a particularly important indicator for the quality of students. Students who have obtained a bachelor degree in law from a Dutch university and whose GPA is below 7,0 have a quite small chance to be selected, whereas students with a GPA of 8,0 or higher have a good chance of being chosen. As regards students with a GPA between 7,0 and 8,0 other factors are decisive. Because grading systems may differ from country to country (or from university to university), the GPA from students who have completed their bachelor program abroad are analyzed and assessed so as to make a fair comparison with the GPA from students who have a bachelor in law from a Dutch university.

- b. the level of proficiency in the English language;
As adequate proficiency in the English language is crucial for successful participation in the PBL-system in the first year (in Maastricht) as well as in many cases for the studies (in the second year) at one of the partner universities, much weight is given to this criterion. The language proficiency is checked ex ante by requiring students, who are non-native speakers or who did not follow a bachelor training in English, to pass for the IELTS/TOEFL / Cambridge CAE test. The exact scores that need to be obtained are mentioned on the programme's website.
- c. the relevant extracurricular experience;
- d. the content of the letter stating reasons;
To select students who are truly committed to the IIs programme the letter of motivation is crucial. In the letter the students must adequately explain their interest in the IIs program, and in what way the program contributes to their career plans.
- e. the content of the (preferably academic) letter of reference. These criteria are considered in combination with each other in the assessment.
Not one of these factors is on its own decisive; each of them is taken into consideration. Students can apply for the IIs program throughout the year. The selection is made by the programme coordinator.

Students are on average registered for 2,5 years, which is compared to students from other master programmes rather short, especially as students have to adapt to yet another university during their studies.

Student population

Due to its focus on the role played by international and European law in today's globalisation and Europeanisation, the student population of the master IIs is very diverse. There are currently 21 different nationalities (considering the total intake of the two years that the IIs programme last). As the programme aims to prepare its graduates for the legal profession in the international labour market (or for positions in the national labour market with a significant international orientation), the language of instruction is English. Both internationally and Europe wide, English is the lingua franca of the legal profession and in international (nongovernmental) organisations.

In case students face any difficulties, they can always contact study advisors or the master coordinator, whose door is always open. The coordinator assists with questions about the programme, including information on electives, questions on language classes and exchange, and the thesis. The coordinator also meets with the IIs cohort throughout the year to provide opportunity for questions and discussion.



Law Faculty Teaching Staff

Tutors are, as a rule, at least of the rank of assistant professor and hold a PhD. PhD candidates are only by way of exception, and upon careful analysis of their knowledge and teaching skills, included in the programme and strictly supervised by the course-coordinator. All teaching and coordinating staff has or is working towards the completion of the University Teaching Qualification (*Basiskwalificatie Onderwijs, BKO*), meaning they have shown to have acquired the necessary teaching qualifications.

The teaching staff has to engage with the CCCS principles to obtain their University Teaching Qualification (UTQ) at the Law Faculty and/or if the UTQ has (already) been obtained, must continue to engage with these principles through their individual Continuous Professional Development (CPD). Pursuant to CPD, employees are entitled (but also expected) to dedicate 16 hours per year to continue the development of their teaching skills and educational philosophy.

PBL approach and teaching methods

The above noted PBL approach ensures the active involvement of students in the learning environment in line with the four CCCS principles, the last one being the principle of students' self-directed learning. A very concrete illustration of the latter can be seen in the reform of the thesis trajectory noted above. Since, under CCCS, students remain responsible for their own learning trajectory the problem of the excessive average time to write the thesis was not addressed by imposing a mandatory trajectory but by communicating proactively and more intensively to the students and by suggesting a model trajectory.

For more concrete information on teaching and assessment methods, reference is made to the ELS and GAL self-evaluation reports, since ILS students follow these courses.

Standard 3: Assessment

All assessment at the faculty is carried out under supervision of the Board of Examiners. The general chapter refers to the assessment methods and safeguards at the faculty. Within the ILS programme each course coordinator has the freedom to choose from the list of available methods in the Education and Examination Regulations (EER) the most appropriate method of assessment.

As the ILS programme consists of courses from the programmes European Law School and Globalisation and Law, the remarks in the respective reports apply to the ILS programme as well: the form of the examination is determined by the course's planning group or the course coordinator. Either way, the selected form should be appropriate to test whether the student has attained the learning objectives for the course. With regard to the courses offered, there is sufficient discrepancy in the form of assessment, even though there are still some courses that only have a final examination (see ELS and GAL report).

In practice, the course coordinator asks the lecturers, as well as the members of the planning group, to review the exam (the four-eyes principle). More specifically, this review is meant to ensure the quality and level of the exam as well as its coverage of the topics and goals related to the course. The development of assessment components is done by staff with the BKO qualification. All exams are evaluated (through student evaluations). The Board of Examiners checks the quality of assessment for some courses (by a rotating system) beforehand. Afterwards, the evaluations of all exams are discussed in the Board of Examiners/Education Committee. In case of poor results, the course coordinators are informed of and consulted on the matter. Most courses conclude with a written final exam or a combination of essay or (written or oral) assignment plus final exam. An overview of the exams used in 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 will be available for inspection during the panel's visit.



Every effort is made to ensure the transparency of assessment methods throughout the programme. The assessment criteria are communicated to students beforehand, typically in the coursebook and throughout the course. Rubrics are provided, where appropriate, particularly for assignments. Final exams are typically assessed by the course coordinator and tutors. Effort is made to ensure one member of staff is responsible for specific (sub) questions so as to ensure consistency. The 'four eyes' principle is borne in mind during the drafting of examinations and the development of answer indications. Feedback is given to students via inspection procedures, rubrics, and feedback sessions.

Internships are assessed by a member of academic staff assigned by the Internships Office. The assessment is based on the communication from the student during the internship and the final internship report, in which students explain and reflect on law-related tasks completed during their internship period.

As regards the courses that ILs students follow in the second year at one of the partner universities abroad, examination and testing takes place in accordance with the rules and practices at the university concerned. The ILs degree certificate that the faculty awards, is based on the passing of the exams at the partner university. The marks concerned are not adjusted in accordance with the marking system applied in Maastricht. Students may, however, receive a separate transcript of the courses they have followed and completed from the partner university.

For the newly-added 0 EC *Current Issues* course, the course coordinator monitors the attendance and participation of students. There is no assessment done in addition to this (such as a paper or exam). The Programme Coordinator remains in consultation with the course coordinator on how this course progresses. So far, attendance and participation has been excellent and the enthusiasm for the course from students is very high.

The extension of the number of credits for the thesis to 18 EC brings with it questions on the assessment of this component. The Programme Coordinator, the Director of Studies, the education policy team, and the Vice Dean of Education remain in consultation so that a detailed and transparent vision on thesis assessment will be communicated to students and assessors ahead of the start of the new thesis trajectory in the second year. The existing criteria for thesis assessment will serve as a basis, with inspiration from the extended thesis that is required from Honours Research Track **students**.

Standard 4: Realised learning outcomes

The general quality of ILs graduates is very high. ILs students tend to achieve higher grades and many go on to highly successful careers in relevant fields. There are several ILs graduates who went on to complete PhDs in Maastricht (and beyond) and there are a number of ILs graduates among our permanent academic staff. As part of a university-wide initiative, the Faculty has set in place mechanisms to stay in contact with alumni. With regard to employment, the Alumni survey that is carried out by the university is not significant due to a low response rate. Of the ILs students that responded 84 % had a job at master level, 89% had a job in the own field of study and 74% would choose the exact same study again.

One of the best tools – if not the main tool – for establishing whether or not the learning objectives have been achieved is the master's thesis to be written by students. The topic of the thesis must fit within the framework of the programme. See general chapter for the thesis procedure. In general, the quality of ILs theses is high, in line with the general excellent performance of ILs graduates throughout the programme.



4. Student chapter

The student chapter aims at presenting how the students perceive the program and the extent to which it complies with the expected ILOs, teaching and learning activities assessment and achieved learning outcomes. The student chapter was curated by five ILS student representatives. To have a broader and more complete perspective on the students' perception and satisfaction with the LL.M. International Laws, the five student representatives designed a survey to involve students of two cohorts (2021-2023, 2022-2024). The questions were developed on the false line of the four standards' aims and objectives, as well as the program's general expected performance and outcome. The five student representatives used the answers to orient and specify their contribution to the report. Both the questionnaire and the results are available upon request.

Standard 1: Intended learning outcomes

As the legal profession is increasingly becoming international, the Master programme of International Laws intends to provide students with a thorough understanding of International, European and/or comparative national law, as well as fluency in at least one foreign language.

The structure of the whole programme, i.e. the two mandatory courses, the possibility to choose electives, the language courses and the opportunity to go abroad, is clear to the students and serves the purpose of preparing them for a career in the International and European legal landscape. These guidelines were communicated to the students through the curriculum accessible on the website, as well as during the introduction week. Additionally students have the chance to ask questions to student advisors.

Standard 2: Educational learning environment

The international background of the student body is a very attractive feature of the programme. This element, combined with the knowledge and expertise of the teaching staff, equips students with a thorough understanding of International, European and/or comparative national law and prepares students for an international work environment and career. Moreover, the restricted number of students in the programme is an asset, as it facilitates close contact between students, which not only provides for a supportive learning environment, but also will be beneficial for a future professional network.

Content and coherence of the curriculum

Overall, the students perceive the curriculum structure and its content as very clear and consistent. In the first period, all students are required to take two mandatory courses: "Public International Law", and "Advanced European Law". Most students indicate that this requirement creates a common level-playing field, which was perceived as functional to the intended learning outcomes of the programme.

In order to fulfill the ambitions and interests of the students, the programme leaves room for variation with regards to the other courses available. In fact, students can tailor their degree from both the European Law Master Programme and the Globalisation and Law Programme, allowing students to specialise in specific areas of laws of relevant interest to their intended goals. While this opportunity is highly appreciated, a noticeable percentage of students are favorable to the introduction of optional subtracks, either in form of a minor or specialisation, to better reflect their academic curricula, also in light of their future career. However, the flexibility and duality of the available courses in both fields, International and European legal frameworks, remains one of



the most singular features of the programme and thus should be maintained. It is suggested that the name programme could reflect these two subject areas better, for instance, International and European law.

Didactic approach, study methods and study load

The method of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) in the Law Faculty is twofold, being composed of lectures and tutorials. This combination of methods of learning allows one to deepen their knowledge and to apply the self-taught output to practical cases. Overall, this learning method is perceived as an efficient approach by the students.

At the Faculty of Law, and more specifically within the International Laws Master, a high standard of education is maintained and required from students. This entails that most of the studying is carried out by students independently and only few contact hours with teaching staff are available. Due to the high standard of education, the workload is considered intense. More specifically, students perceived that more than 6 EC should be granted for the majority of courses, since the actual workload is more than what the EC indicate. In theory, all the Master courses have a workload of 6 EC, however students indicated that there is a discrepancy within the different courses' preparation. The students perceive the teaching staff as overall approachable and open to questions and discussions.

By way of the programme structure and the learning method, students are incentivised to develop independence and strong academic skills in legal research and writing. The vast experience of the teaching staff, which includes well-known academic scholars, further provides for an excellent resource available to students.

The combination of Problem-Based Learning and the possibility to engage with the teaching staff and other students nourishes diverse and scrutinising discussions in relation to the topics treated. Students indicate that this exchange could further be facilitated if integrated in the programme's curriculum through critical theory courses, such as Critical Approaches to International Law. These opportunities would not only enhance independent thinking, but also provide students with different theories and approaches to legal subjects.

Programme specificities

As part of the programme, students are required to take 12 EC in a **language course**. One course in the first semester, one course in the second semester and a mandatory intensive French course in the month of January. Overall the students considered these courses an asset to the programme. However, some criticism is raised in relation to the intensive French course, with regards to the native French speakers. The mandatory participation requirement for French native speakers, who did not get an exemption, provides for no added value to the programme.

Concerning the possibilities to **study abroad**, students indicate that this was one of the reasons for choosing the programme. The partner universities are diverse and offer different exchange possibilities, including THEMIS and CIEL programmes and dual degrees, which is appreciated and allows the students to design their Master experience even further. Unfortunately, some students expressed their disappointment concerning the organisation of the exchange. Critics is targeted at the fact that communication with the exchange office is difficult and as a consequence, people were not happy with the specific information they received concerning their partner university. While the general information session given was very helpful, the criticism refers to split placements; consequences of difficult or unclear communication with the exchange office and the assignment process.

Extracurriculars

The opportunity for extracurricular courses and programmes offered to all Law Faculty students as, for instance, Moot Courts or the participation in the Honors Programmes or the Premium Programme, constitute an attractive addition to the general International Law curriculum. While these opportunities for academic and personal development in this programme are highly appropriated, students also suggest for it to be honored by awarding EC.



Additionally, the possibility of substituting up to 12 EC for an internship is welcomed by the students, and considered by half of the student body. This opportunity also reflects the aim of preparing students for an international legal/academic profession.

Standard 3: Assessment

Regarding how assessment is conducted in the context of this programme, students have strongly indicated that expectations for assessments are properly made clear to them. Students also indicate their faith in the assessments, deeming them to be conducted on a fair and objective basis. Assessment in the context of this programme usually takes the form of a sit-in 3 hour exam or of research papers and assignments to be handed in. Questions on a sit-in exam almost always take the form of open questions after presenting students with a problem statement or a set of facts, allowing students to demonstrate the extent of their knowledge on the subject being tested. It has been indicated that students find the assessment format adequate for the programme and its aims. On the matter of content being assessed, a strong majority of students have indicated that the assessments reflect the content being taught during class, although a non-negligible minority have indicated feeling that questions addressed matters not covered in class.

A complaints mechanism is made available to students should they wish to challenge the results of an examination. Regarding this matter, a majority of students indicated it being sufficiently accessible and transparent, with the remaining students either not having an opinion due to lack of engagement with it, or feeling that it was insufficient in those regards. Finally, it is also possible for students to complete a student evaluation form subsequent to an assessment in order to submit feedback. In this regard, a simple majority of students found that this mechanism provides them with a way to make improvements to the assessment methods, with the remaining being split equally in either not engaging with this student evaluation, or finding it ineffective.

Standard 4: Realised learning outcomes

As stated above under the intended learning outcome, the programme intends to give the students a thorough understanding of International, European and/or comparative national law in order to prepare them for an increasingly internationalised labor market. Students in general agree that the programme achieves these goals, due to the many different unique features of the programme as mentioned above.

By achieving the ILOs the Master International Laws creates a sought after and highly regarded English-taught Law degree. Because of the strong academic background and the professional skills acquired during the two years of the programme, the International Laws degree of UM gives its students a significant edge in their future professional career.

Final remarks

Some criticisms are levied at the programme, chief among them being related to the difficult communication and coordination with the Exchange Office in regards to the exchange opportunity afforded in the second year. Students indicate that communication is difficult in two main aspects: Firstly, a lack of timely response to inquiries and communication; and secondly to the transparency of the overall process. Considering the weight of the exchange in the overall academic structure of the programme, this criticism is important to raise awareness of.

However, students are generally very happy with the programme. Besides some points of criticism, the students suggest maintaining the overall unique tailor-made structure of the programme. Due to the aforementioned positive aspects, the great majority of the current student body would recommend this programme. With the knowledge of hindsight, students would choose this programme once again.



5. Global SWOT analysis

Strengths

- The ILs programme allows students to combine legal knowledge in the fields of international law and European law and allows students to understand the impact of globalisation in various areas of law.
- The ILs programme allows students to increase their legal knowledge and to refine their skills while learning foreign languages (French and one other language, not being English or the student's mother tongue) which is relevant and useful due to the increased need for lawyers who are able to work in different languages.
- The ILs programme allows students to increase their knowledge in comparative law. While there are some courses explicitly labelled as comparative in nature, such as Comparative Corporate Governance, many other courses contain comparative law aspects as well. For example, the course International Commercial law consider national systems as not all issues relating to international business transactions are dealt with by international or European measures.
- The ILs programme, which is composed of a selected group of students, allows students to challenge themselves by means the additional Masterclass 'Current Issues of International and European Law' (0 EC) in which recent developments in international and European law and policy are discussed, outside a specific course-context. This allows students to get a broader knowledge and understanding of contemporary international and European legal developments.
- Students following the ILs programme obtain international experience by studying abroad at renowned universities where they can become familiar with a foreign legal culture and language. This allows students to contextualise the law and to compare different legal systems and increases their confidence to work in an international legal environment.
- ILs students learn to contextualise law by focussing on the interrelated conditions in which the law exists, operates and develops both at international and European level, and to a certain extent at the national level.
- Priority is accorded to ILs students when compared with other students of the Faculty of Law (eg those wishing to go on Erasmus) when it comes to getting a place at a foreign university.
- ILs students have a lot of flexibility. They can focus on their chosen field of interest (see for more information on orientations the information provided in chapter 1 while at the same time not losing sight of relevant overarching legal principles, doctrines and developments which are covered by the compulsory courses Advanced European, Foundations of Global Law, and Current Issues of International and European Law.
- ILs students can include non-law courses in their programme for up to 12 EC. - ILs students can take part in the THEMIS or CIEL network, which requires students going on an exchange to one of the CIEL or THEMIS partner universities to participate in additional academic activities, such as an international traineeship or an international seminar, thereby enhancing the learning objectives of the ILs programme. Students who successfully participate in these networks receive the certificate of 'European Master in Comparative, International and European Law (CIEL) or the Joint Certificate in International and European Business Law (THEMIS)
- Students have the possibility to obtain a dual degree with Zürich University (Switzerland) where they follow at LLM or with Bocconi University (Milan, Italy) or where they follow the LLM Law of Internet Technology.
- As the ILs cohort is very small, there is a lot of possibility for community building. The faculty provides a small budget to enhance the creation of a community among ILs students. In recent years this budget has been used for informal meetings with staff including drinks and to pay for the train costs when students went to Liège within the framework of the French language course. For students of the THEMIS Network, a specific Linked-In Group has been created, gathering all THEMIS students from all participating universities. There are plans to do this for the CIEL network as well.
- The size of the cohort also enables greater interaction between students and the ILs Coordinator. The Coordinator provides students with tips and suggestions regarding the development of their curriculum at the open days and



during the first week of their stay in Maastricht. Sessions are organised to inform students about their period abroad as well. Individual students also make use of the possibility to make an individual appointment to get personal advice.

- In the departmental meeting of the International and European Law department, ELS and GAL staff members meet and discuss pertinent teaching issues. Separate meetings are organised by the ELS and GAL coordinators with course coordinators teaching in their respective programmes in order to streamline education. In addition, all master coordinators meet regularly in the Board of Admissions to discuss teaching issues and align curricula. The ILs Coordinator works in close collaboration with the ELS and GAL coordinators.
- 40% of the ILs alumni who filled in the alumni survey for academic years 2018-2022 have leadership roles in their current jobs five years after graduation.

Weaknesses

- Students follow most courses together with ELS and GAL students. This may provide them with a feeling of not being part of (separate) community, even though much is done to bring ILs students together, such as the new course 'Current Issues of International and European Law' and informal meetings (sometimes with drinks) of the students and the Programme Coordinator. It is not believed that the integration of ILs students in the classes of GAL and ELS is detrimental to the quality of education received, given the quality of those programmes.
- A challenge for the faculty is to be up-to-date informed about the quality and substance of the courses students follow abroad, as this may vary for any number of reasons (e.g. changes in the teaching staff, budget constraints at the partner university). The programme coordinator and exchange office staff are increasing opportunities for feedback from students and communication with partner universities in this regard.
- The curriculum does not include a specific course on research, analytical and presentations skills. Therefore, students without prior basic knowledge of such skills are at disadvantage, when compared to those students in possession of such basic knowledge. The existence of the Honours Research Track provides such training, but only to a selected group of students.
- Students do not necessarily take up (national) law courses in the language of the host country when they go on exchange in the second year. This is not always feasible due to the fact that students do not have the necessary level of language proficiency. However, all courses that students want to take up on exchange are ex-ante approved (or not approved) by the Programme Coordinator on the basis of their level and suitability for the ILs programme.
- Students write an extended master thesis but a policy still has to be developed in which the exact conditions are fully elaborated upon (not (only) in terms of the length of the thesis).

Opportunities

- As the Faculty gains experience with the revised masters programmes, it will be possible to evaluate the impact of recent changes such as to the tracks, the language requirements, the course *Current Issues of International and European law* course, and the extended thesis.
- There is significant scope for further community building among ILs students. The Faculty has allowed master coordinators to launch events for students from specific master programmes and provided budget for organising drinks, discussions etc. For example, the faculty subsidizes the transportation costs of ILs students with regard to a study visit to Liège in light of the French language course and to organize a visit by a Belgian judge. (More) actions like these help in terms of community building.



- When it comes to assessment at partner universities, it is possible to ask other universities whether we can have a closer look at their assessments.
- Partner university networks (CIEL and Themis) and dual degrees continue to be strengthened and provide further opportunities for high-quality international collaboration.
- There is the potential to make stronger connections to the labour market. The *Current Issues* is one potential avenue for connection with practitioners. Further, a renewed 'advise committee labour market' will be set up to create interaction between the academic and the professional world.
- A policy will be made in which the additional requirements for the extended master thesis will be better clarified.

Threats

- Students have liked the freedom of the previous ILs programme in which they could decide to only take international or European law courses (except for the mandatory courses). The same goes for the selection of the language courses. The proposal for a master revision has affected this freedom and may result in lower inflow. Effort will be made to emphasise that a significant degree of freedom remains, both with the restricted electives in first year and the freedom in course selection while on exchange during the second year.
- The mandatory course on legal French may discourage to follow the ILs programme. As this course has always been part of the ILs programme and the programme receives many applications, there are not too many worries in this regard.
- Due to the high amount of foreign students the Dutch Ministry of Education has prohibited Maastricht University to actively reaching out to international students to promote the programme. The outreach of the MA ILs is thus dependant on traditional word of mouth and prospective students actively seeking out information on the MA ILs themselves. As the MA ILs is selective this will however not lead to an easier intake but may lead to fewer (good) students applying.
- There may not (always) be a language course available that covers the language of the place students want to go on exchange. On the basis of past experience it can be roughly estimated which foreign universities and countries are often chosen by our students and this is also known by the language center, so that one can anticipate to a certain extent which language courses are most needed.
- There may not be a sufficient amount of places available at foreign universities of the language chosen by students. Exchange office staff are continually working to monitor our exchange network and update the list of partner universities, if necessary.
- When it comes to assessment at partner universities abroad, a request for more information on assessment could create a feeling of distrust which is not warranted. After all, all our partner universities are accredited so their level of academic performance and quality of assessment is already ascertained.
- With regard to better monitoring of alumni: ILs students are often abroad, even during their second year of study. It is not always easy to contact them to ask about their experiences after their study.



Appendix

Matrix master's programme International Laws

Dublin descriptors	Course ►	Advanced European law	Public International Law	Language Courses	Thesis	Electives
	Learning outcomes ▼					
A. Knowledge and understanding	the role played by international and/or European law in today's era of Globalisation and Europeanisation	E	E		depends on thesis topic	see master's programmes Globalisation and Law and European Law School
	the impact that these rules may have on national law	E	E			
	the specific interaction between international or European law and national law in the fields studied	E	E			
	the enforcement of international or European law, including dispute settlement procedures	E	E			
	the main substantive rules of international and European law in the field concerned	E	E			
B. Applying knowledge and understanding	Graduates can apply the knowledge obtained to identify and solve concrete/complex problems that arise in the shaping, application or enforcement of international and national norms governing cross-border activity	E	E		E	
	Graduates possess analytical skills that enable them to identify and solve concrete/complex problems that arise in the shaping, application or enforcement of international and national norms governing cross-border activity	E	E			
C. Making judgments	Graduates are able to translate knowledge (from textbooks, primary legal sources) into sound legal arguments or own legal points of view	E	E			
	Graduates are able to develop their own views or position in legal debates or disputes	E	E			
D. Communication	Graduates are able to express their legal arguments clearly, both orally and in writing	E	E			
	Graduates are able to express their legal arguments clearly, both to specialist and non-specialist audiences	E	E			
	Graduates can work in various environments and express their legal arguments clearly, in proper English	E	E			
	Graduates can express themselves at least on basic level in French			E		
E. Learning skills	Graduates possess the techniques legal experts need as regards the gathering, selecting, analyzing, interpreting and synthesizing information from primary sources of EU and national law (treaties, legislation, case law) as well as secondary sources (textbooks, law journals, etc.)				E	
	Graduates are able to deliver legally sound, well-researched papers (academic articles, commentaries, pleas, advises, etc.) on complex legal issues in the context of Europeanisation					
	Graduates can work both independently and in group settings	E	E			
	Graduates have an open-minded yet critical and scientific attitude	E	E		E	

E = both in teaching and examination

X = teaching only