

ASSESSMENT OF ADDITIONAL DIMENSIONS IN THE ACCREDITATION OF RECOGNISED BACHELOR'S AND MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMMES: INTERNATIONALISATION

Programme information

Programmes: Master's degree in International Relations
Master's degree in International Security

Centre: IBEI Barcelona Institute for International Studies

University: Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF)

Date of the site visit: 16/05/2017

Introduction

Accreditations are assessments with the goal of assuring the quality of the educational service provided within the university system according to certain guidelines; they are designed to guarantee minimum thresholds within the dimensions established ("doing what needs to be done properly"). As stipulated in the *Framework for the validation, monitoring, modification and accreditation of recognised university degrees* (AQU Catalunya, 2016), in the case of the Catalan university system the specific procedure for accreditation is set out in the *Guide to the accreditation of recognised Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes* (AQU Catalunya, 2016). Nevertheless, accreditation of degree programmes is less conducive to encouraging continual improvement beyond these established minimums (Westerheijden et al., 2006).

On the other hand, the accreditation of additional dimensions presumes that minimum Quality levels have already been verified in the accreditation procedure, and the aim of this additional accreditation is to assess whether the dimensions stand out above average levels in specific areas of interest. In the same manner that accreditation provides a vision of quality as perfection (doing what needs to be done properly), these additional dimensions provide a vision of quality as an exception or mark of excellence, which is taken on when embarking on an assessment procedure in order to stand out from other institutions or programmes in specific segments of study or research. Accreditation assessment standards, based on European quality assurance standards, are independent from the operation of other degree programmes in said standard. However, within certain standards, additional dimensions add an element of comparison or distinction. The degree programmes or institutions aspiring to the additional dimension must demonstrate commitment and results that stand out above the average.

The *Guide to the assessment of additional dimensions in the accreditation of recognised Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes* (AQU Catalunya, 2016) provides an explanation

of what these dimensions consist of in order to allow interested parties to assess whether it would be appropriate to apply for the respective accreditation, whilst detailing the entire assessment procedure that has been designed on the context of the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) (ENQA, 2015).

Result

The application for the assessment of the additional dimension of INTERNATIONALISATION has been approved by the Institutional and Programme Review Commission (CAIP) on 3 July 2017, based on the external review report annexed.

The result of the assessment is as follows:

Master's degree in International Relations

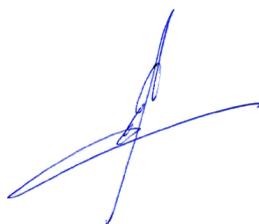
Dimensions	Result
1. Study programme for internationalisation	Quality-level compliant
2. Internationalisation of teaching staff	Quality-level compliant
3. Internationalisation results	Quality-level compliant
Overall rating Progressing towards excellence	

Master's degree in International Security

Dimensions	Result
4. Study programme for internationalisation	Quality-level compliant
5. Internationalisation of teaching staff	Quality-level compliant
6. Internationalisation results	Quality-level compliant
Overall rating Progressing towards excellence	

The President of the Institutional and Programme Review Commission

Martí Casadesús Fa



Barcelona, 24 July 2017

ACCREDITATION PROGRAM: ASSESSMENT
OF INTERNATIONALISATION (ADDITIONAL
DIMENSION)

External review report

**Center: IBEI Barcelona Institute for International
Studies**

Institution: Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF)

Date of the site visit: 16/05/2017

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A. Introduction

1. Description of the review

Center:	IBEI Barcelona Institute for International Studies
Venue:	Barcelona
Code:	08071007
Type:	Affiliated school
University	Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF)

Programmes (data from 2014-2015 academic year)

4312127 - Master's degree in International Relations

ECTS	Ex-ante assessment	Delivery start	Places	Enrolment	Type
60	07/05/2010	2010-2011	100	82	Classroom learning

4313296 - Master's degree in International Security

ECTS	Ex-ante assessment	Delivery start	Places	Enrolment	Type
60	28/12/2012	2012-2013	20-30	12	Classroom learning

2. Panel composition

Role	Name	Institution
Chair	David Croke	Royal College of Surgeons Ireland
Academic	Turo Virtanen	University of Helsinki
Student	Alejandra Pérez	Universitat Ramon Llull
Secretary	Concepción Herruzo	AQU Catalunya

3. Aim of the report

This document reports on the analysis conducted by the panel on the internationalisation developed by the accredited master's programs taking into consideration the criteria for internationalisation of study programmes included in the [GUIDE TO THE ASSESSMENT OF ADDITIONAL DIMENSIONS IN THE ACCREDITATION OF RECOGNISED BACHELOR'S AND MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMMES](#), by AQU Catalunya.

B. Agenda

Tuesday, 16 May 2017

Time	Activity
08.45 - 09:00	Panel reception
09:00 - 11:00	Panel internal meeting
11:00 - 12:00	Meeting with Faculty Board and the program coordinators
12:00 - 13:00	Meeting with students
13:00 - 14:30	Lunch
14:30 - 15:30	Meeting with academic staff (PDI)
15:30 - 16:30	Meeting with support staff (PAS)
16:30 - 17:15	Panel internal meeting
17:15 - 17:45	Preliminary feedback

C. Assessment of specific Internationalisation dimensions

C1. Study programme for internationalisation

The study programme is designed to encourage knowledge and skills acquisition to favour academic and professional development in international settings. The programme content, the selection of students and the support provided by the institution are aligned to achieving the internationalisation of the programme.

Non-compliant

Compliant

Quality-level compliant

1.1 Study programme focus or orientation

The study programme is designed with a clear international calling: all elements (programme structure, teaching, training placements, mobility, etc.) are integrated in such a way as to favour professional development in international settings.

The Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals (IBEI) is an inter-university graduate school and research institute co-founded by UPF, UB & UAB with the specific intent to develop a centre of excellence for international studies in Catalunya. The Masters Degree in International Relations (MIR), which has been running for eight years, is described as IBEI's 'flagship programme' while the Masters Degree in International Security (MIS) is more recent. Both programmes have an internationally-oriented professional career focus, well aligned with the aims of the institution. The programmes have a 'core plus options' design with an extraordinary variety of optional course modules available to students. The programme philosophy in both cases prioritises the theoretical underpinnings of the subject area, analytical and research skills and generic/transferable skills. The international focus and relevance of the MIR & MIS curricula are maintained through the scholarly activity of the academic staff and the guidance of the IBEI International Advisory Board. MIR & MIS students can avail of a range of academic mobility opportunities through ERASMUS+ and other bilateral exchange agreements, and a wide variety of internships is available (a proportion of which are student-led). The degree programmes also offer a considerable degree of flexibility in permitting students to transition between full- and part-time options, and in allowing the course duration to be extended to incorporate exchange mobility.

In this context, the Panel wishes to highlight two examples of best practice:

[1] The establishment of an International Advisory Board which provides input to course & curriculum development, research development & prioritisation, reviews of systems & processes, tenure-track review, etc.;

[2] The 'Shopping Week' held during Semester 1 is an innovative event which allows academic staff to introduce their individual specialist courses to students so that they can make better-informed choices of optional modules.

1.2 Students

The institution has implemented processes to assure appropriate selection of students and applies effective mechanisms (agreements, acknowledgments for learning, etc.) that favour their mobility.

The institute has implemented a rigorous student selection process focused on academic excellence. It was evident to the Panel that this process has been successful in recruiting an impressive international cohort of engaged, enthusiastic and high-achieving students. The Panel was impressed both by the range of academic mobility and internship opportunities available to students, and by the IBEI policies and procedures implemented to support and facilitate student engagement with them. It is clear that the IBEI marketing strategy & aspirations for further diversification are based upon a real desire to enhance the international focus of the curriculum and the student experience.

1.3 Support for internationalisation

The institution has implemented mechanisms to support local and international students which are viewed as highly appropriate by the body of students on the degree programme.

It is evident that IBEI has established a comprehensive and effective system of supports for students, both informal and formal, at all stages of the MIR & MIS programmes. Student satisfaction was evidenced by survey data and in the Panel's meeting with students. Students spoke of the 'open-door' policy adopted by the academic staff, of the assistance provided by the administrative staff and of the beneficial role played by Mentors and Personal Tutors. It is clear that IBEI has built an academic community in which alumni are active participants. The Panel was impressed also by the degree to which social media and a range of social activities (including 'International Day' and an annual IBEI Student Trip', this year to Geneva) are used to foster a real sense of academic community.

In this context, the Panel wishes to highlight two examples of best practice:

[1] The 'International Assistance Programme for Incoming Students', which 'pairs' new students with IBEI alumni mentors, provides very useful support to new students and serves also to strengthen integration of students and alumni into the academic community of IBEI;

[2] The availability of a bilingual (Spanish-English) 'track' in the MIR programme open to both local and international as a means to promote language acquisition and to enhance graduate employability.

C2. Internationalisation of teaching staff

The institution guarantees that the teaching staff on the study programme have a profile incorporating international academic and networking experience to effectively aid in reaching the internationalisation goals set.

Non-compliant

Compliant

Quality-level compliant

2.1 Teaching staff profile

The teaching staff on the programme include a substantial number of academics that have acknowledged international standing or a track record incorporating stays abroad and who take part in international projects awarded by leading international organisations. The body of teaching staff includes a significant number of foreign academics that take part in teaching occasionally or on a long-term basis.

The 'core' academic staff of IBEI are a most impressive group of international scholars, >50% holding PhDs from foreign institutions (many from extremely prestigious universities) and >60% being foreign nationals. The Human Resources policies and procedures of IBEI clearly favour the recruitment of academics of the highest calibre and promote professional development throughout the career track. The 'core' staff is complemented by Affiliated Professors from the partner universities and other Catalan universities, and by a significant number of Distinguished and Visiting Professors each year. IBEI provides for one semester of sabbatical leave after six semesters for each staff member. Additionally, the institute provides financial support for conference participation and for teacher-exchange visits.

In this context, the Panel wishes to highlight as an example of best practice the requirement on the part of IBEI that staff undertaking a period of sabbatical leave must travel abroad for this period.

2.2 Integration of the programme's teaching staff in international networks

The institution actively favours teaching staff involvement in international research and/or teaching cooperation networks and it fosters the establishment of agreements for the mobility and exchange of teaching staff, obtaining satisfactory results. Lines of action are defined according to criteria established in the institution's vision of internationalisation.

IBEI academic staff are all highly research-active, involved in international research collaborations/networks, involved in the organisation of conferences and Summer Schools and active in teaching exchanges. It is clear that the institute's prioritisation of internationalisation, given effect through its policies regarding staff recruitment and ongoing professional development, optimises their integration in international research networks.

C3. Internationalisation results

The internationalisation of the degree programme is managed on the basis of a process of continual improvement ensuring satisfactory results by making use of state-of-the-art technologies.

Non-compliant

Compliant

Quality-level compliant

3.1 Students

The institution benefits from an international activity management system incorporated into its IQAS. The institution reviews the results of internationalisation beyond qualitative information, it considers those results and it assesses the effect of the internationalisation actions carried out on stakeholders. Stakeholder satisfaction carries particular importance in the review conducted.

IBEI uses a specific internal QA system supported by UPF and makes much of the data generated by QA activities available via its web-site. A wide range of surveys are run annually (including surveys of alumni, surveys of students and of staff, teacher satisfaction/performance surveys) and these are supplemented by meetings with class representatives and, of particular importance in this context, by /interviews with students completing internships and/or exchange placements. The Panel members were given multiple examples (both by students and staff) of examples of situations where the Faculty has 'closed the feedback loop' with students effectively in terms of implementing concrete measures in response to student feedback

3.2 Graduates

Internationalisation indicator results are optimal and show that the degree programme is well-ranked among its international equivalents.

Evidence presented to the Panel documented the success of MIR & MIS graduates in securing employment in their chosen specialist areas around the world. These and other data presented affirm the reputation of the IBEI Masters programmes both in terms of attracting international students and in facilitating graduates to find employment internationally.

3.3 Programme enhancement and sustainability

The degree programme effectively incorporates new technologies applied to teaching/learning processes into the study programme to foster internationalisation.

The MIR & MIS programmes use a wide variety of pedagogical approaches and technological supports including the IBEI virtual campus, assessed coursework uploads,

coursework downloads, on-line discussion fora, video-conferenced lectures by guest speakers and 'flipped classroom' approaches.

D. Final assessment result

It is the judgement of the Review Panel that the Masters Degree in International Relations and the Masters Degree in International Security offered by the Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals (IBEI) are **Quality-level Compliant** in relation to the Additional Dimension of Internationalisation.

E. Commendations

Study programme for internationalisation

The Panel commends

- We believe that the MIS and MIR programmes are strategically well aligned with the overall aims and objectives of IBEI as an inter-university institute
- The teaching philosophy is clearly articulated, is shared by the institute leadership and academic staff and is designed to meet the needs and career aspirations of the student cohort
- The programme curricula are relevant and responsive to changes in the field, with appropriate guidance for students to navigate their own individual career-relevant ‘tracks’, and are informed by the advice of the International Advisory Board.
- A cohort of truly engaged, enthusiastic and academically high-achieving students.
- The creation of a semi-formal academic / professional community of alumni, students and academics centred on IBEI.
- The provision of significant and meaningful opportunities for students to engage in mobility through academic exchange and through professional internships, evidenced by the high uptake of such opportunities by students, and by the flexibility and enthusiasm of academic and administrative staff in facilitating and supporting them.
- The marketing strategy and ambitions for further diversification are based upon a real desire to enhance the international focus of the curriculum and the student experience.
- The thorough support provided by all staff to ‘incoming’ and ‘outgoing’ mobility scheme participants, in particular the ‘International Assistance Programme for Incoming Students’.
- The range of grant aid made available to support student in the IBEI programmes
- The innovative ‘Shopping Week’ at the start of Semester 1 which allows students to get an overview of the range, diversity and relevance of optional courses available to them.
- The availability of a bilingual Masters option open to both local (i.e. Catalan / Spanish) students and students from overseas, which serves to further enhance graduate employability.
- The availability of additional optional courses to students either through undertaking additional studies on a fee-per-course basis, or through participation in mobility programmes.

Internationalisation of teaching staff

The Panel commends

- A Human Resources strategy which is internationally-focused and effective in recruiting highly qualified, motivated and enthusiastic staff and in furthering their international perspective and experience throughout the career-track.
- Impressive and committed administrative and support staff who are integral to all aspects of the programme, in particular to the exchange mobility programmes, to the professional internships and to the social integration of the students.

- The truly international nature of the scholarly activity of IBEI staff.

Internationalisation results

The Panel commends

- The high level of uptake by students of exchange mobility programmes and professional internships.
- The reported success of IBEI graduates in securing employment in their fields of expertise around the world.
- The degree to which student feedback is considered by IBEI staff and has an impact on programme structure and delivery to enhance the student experience.
- The flexibility of academic staff in the use of new technology for teaching and learning; e.g. 'flipped classroom' approaches, use of the Virtual Campus, assigned upload of videos and blogs and some use of videoconference platforms in teaching.

F. Suggestions for consideration

Study programme for internationalisation

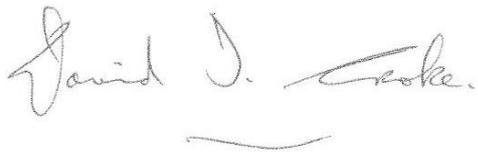
- Arguably the connexions between staff, students and alumni should be more formalised via 'graduate tracking' and similar initiatives.
- Develop a catalogue or record, accessible on-line, of student / alumni experiences of the exchange mobility and internship programmes offered at IBEI.

Internationalisation of teaching staff

- Perhaps a greater focus on acquiring research funding from international agencies.

Internationalisation results

- More formal graduate tracking could provide more data on international employment after graduation, which would add impact to the IBEI marketing message.
- Develop a strategy for the more systematic use of new teaching and learning technologies to enhance the international quality of the programmes.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David J. Croke". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a short horizontal line.

David Croke
Dublin, 14 June 2017