

**Assessment Report**  
**on the Joint Master's Programme**  
**“Global Studies – A European Perspective”**



**following the**  
**European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes**

**10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ZEvA Commission on 10 July, 2020**

Study Programme	Joint Degree	ECTS	Programme Duration	Type of Programme	Annual Intake Capacity
Global Studies – A European Perspective	Master of Arts	120	2 years	full time	25

**Degree-Awarding Partners:**

- University of Leipzig (Coordinating Institution)
- London School of Economics and Political Science
- University of Vienna
- University of Wroclaw
- Roskilde University
- University of Ghent
- Addis Ababa University

**Associate Partners:**

- Dalhousie University/Canada
- Fudan University/China
- Jawaharlal Nehru University/India
- Macquarie University/Australia
- University of Otago/New Zealand
- University of California, Santa Barbara/USA
- University of Stellenbosch/South Africa
- Université de Yaoundé/Cameroon

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- **Matthew Kitching**  
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- **Bartłomiej Nowak, Ph.D.**  
President of the Vistula Group of Universities, Poland
- **Dirk Rupnow**, Full Professor, Faculty of Philosophy and History, Department of Contemporary History, University of Innsbruck/Austria

**ZEVA Project Officer:** Anja Grube

**Hanover, 12 June, 2020**

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## **I. Outcomes of the Review Process and Accreditation Decision**

### **1. Accreditation Decision of the ZEvA Commission**

*Based on the experts' report and recommendations, and in due consideration of the written response of the Global Studies consortium,*

*the ZEvA Commission accredits the Joint Master's programme*

*"Global Studies: A European Perspective"*

*offered by the University of Leipzig in cooperation with the University of Vienna, the University of Wrocław, London School of Economics, Roskilde University, the University of Ghent, Addis Ababa University and various associate partners outside the European higher education area*

*without conditions for a period of six years until September 30, 2026.*

*The accreditation is based on the standards and criteria stipulated in the European Approach for the Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes.*

## **2. Central Outcomes of the Assessment and Final Vote of the Expert Panel**

### **2.1 Summary of the Experts' Findings**

In the course of the past accreditation period the joint Master's programme in Global Studies has seen a relatively dynamic development while maintaining a high standard of quality in teaching and learning. New perspectives and ideas have been brought in by additional consortial partners from Europe and beyond, and the programme has further diversified both in terms of content and as regards the students and faculty involved. The experts commend the consortium on this general strategy of diversification and its attempt to leave Eurocentric viewpoints behind in favour of increasingly transregional and transdisciplinary approaches.

In spite of the multitude of topics and methods addressed, the programme still follows a clear joint structure, providing both a broad range of theoretical perspectives and various options for specialization. All participating universities, including associate partners, are actively involved in the joint design and delivery of the programme. At all study places, students benefit from excellent support services and a high-quality learning environment. Their special needs are accounted for at all levels. According to the results of the most recent alumni survey, graduates of the programme meet with excellent employment prospects in a large variety of sectors and positions.

The experts found some room for optimization as regards the transparency and consistency of assessment criteria and joint standards for course descriptions. Also, some students may need more support in finding accommodation at their places of study. Otherwise, the experts were impressed by the high level of student satisfaction that became apparent in the course of the quality assessment.

### **2.2 Recommendations:**

The experts give the following recommendations for the further development and enhancement of the programme:

- Efforts to extend the regional scope of the programme to Latin America should be continued.
- The subheading "A European Perspective" should be dropped from the programme title as it is not in line with the current and prospective development of the programme.
- Blended learning elements should be more frequently applied in order to create a "global classroom" which connects students and lecturers at all study places.
- The consortium should further intensify co-ordination and communication regarding the design of the course descriptions. In particular, it should be ensured that intended learning outcomes, teaching contents and assessment methods are sufficiently transparent in all course descriptions.

*1 Outcomes of the Review Process and Accreditation Decision*

*2 Central Outcomes of the Assessment and Final Vote of the Expert Panel*

- The consortium should take increased efforts to improve the consistency and transparency of assessment and grading criteria across the programme.
- Extracurricular internships should be more closely monitored for the purpose of quality assurance.
- The students should be more intensely supported in finding suitable and affordable accommodation, particularly in Ghent and Roskilde.
- All students should have the opportunity to take foreign language classes free of charge. In line with attempts to develop a truly globalised programme the consortium should especially look to offer more non-European languages.
- All measures for improvement taken in response to the feedback of internal and external stakeholders should be more comprehensively documented and more widely communicated to the students and to the general public on the webpages of the programme.

### **2.3 Final Vote of the Expert Panel**

The expert panel recommends the Joint Master's programme "Global Studies – A European Perspective" for re-accreditation. In accordance with the stipulations of the European Approach for the Quality Assurance of Joint Study Programmes, accreditation is recommended for a period of six years.

## II. Assessment Report of the Expert Panel

### 1. Purpose, Design and Context of the Assessment Procedure

In February 2019, ZEvA Hannover received the mandate from the University of Leipzig to conduct an external quality assessment of the Joint Master's programme "Global Studies – A European Perspective". ZEvA had accredited the programme twice before, most recently in the year 2012. This accreditation procedure had been based on the standards of the German Accreditation Council (*Akkreditierungsrat*), whose quality label had been awarded by the agency for the standard period of seven years, i.e. until 30 September, 2020. The accreditation decision had been valid in Germany only, without any legal or formal effect in the partner countries.

The Global Studies consortium has now decided to apply for a re-accreditation within the framework of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Study Programmes (hereinafter: EA). The European Approach has been implemented in all European member countries of the consortium, with some formal restrictions in Austria and Germany, which, however, do not apply to the Master's programme in Global Studies.

Prior to the start of the review procedure, the German Accreditation Council was officially notified by the University of Leipzig, as stipulated in § 33 of the German "*Musterrechtsverordnung*". The Accreditation Council also confirmed that the programme's degree-awarding regulations did not impair its eligibility for the application of the EA (and a subsequent recognition of the accreditation decision by the Accreditation Council).

All members of the consortium (including non-European partners) signed an addendum to the general Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, confirming their willingness to undergo re-accreditation of the joint programme within the framework of the European Approach. The document was submitted to the experts as part of the self-evaluation report.

As stipulated in the EA framework, ZEvA assembled a panel which combined expertise in the relevant subject disciplines (Political Science, International Relations, History, Economics), knowledge of the labour market(s) for graduates of the programme as well as experience in quality assurance in higher education. The panel is composed of experts from five European countries – four of them member countries of the consortium – and also includes one student. The panel was approved by the ZEvA Commission and by the GS consortium.

The experts received written background information on the European Approach and further documents and templates for their assistance from the agency.

The consortium jointly submitted a self-evaluation report in English, which contained extensive information about all partner institutions and their respective national frameworks, as well as an appendix of relevant documents (contracts, regulations for student assessment, selection and admission, CVs of core faculty, information material for students, selected Master's theses, course handbooks/module descriptions, results of surveys for evaluation etc.). The self-report was forwarded to the experts for desktop validation.

*II Assessment Report of the Expert Panel*

*1 Purpose, Design and Context of the Assessment Procedure*

On-site talks with the representatives of the GS consortium were going to take place at the University of Leipzig on April 23/24 2020, but had to be cancelled due to the restrictions caused by the global Corona pandemic. Instead, a virtual site visit was conducted on the same date. Representatives of all degree-awarding universities participated in the talks, including members of the university management, administrative staff, programme coordinators, teachers, students and graduates.

Prior to the talks with the members of the consortium, the experts and the ZEvA project coordinator met online to discuss the documents provided and to clarify their roles and tasks. The consortium also received a questionnaire for preparation which listed the most central issues that were going to be addressed by the experts during the talks.

This assessment report is based on the self-evaluation report of the GS consortium and the outcomes of the online talks on April 24, 2020. It is meant to serve as a basis for the ZEvA accreditation decision and, where applicable, as a reference document for the recognition of this decision by the responsible national bodies, including the German Accreditation Council.



## **2. Introduction: The Study Programme at a Glance**

The joint Master's programme "Global Studies – A European Perspective" was first launched in the year 2005. Since then, it has been constantly supported by the Erasmus Mundus fund of the EU and has continuously extended its network of partner institutions. It has produced over 750 graduates from 80 countries and takes in 70-120 new students per year.

The programme unites the specific strengths of the participating partner universities in the field of globalization research. It integrates perspectives from different subject disciplines (Global History and Developmental Studies, Economic History, International Relations, Political Science, Area Studies) and attracts students from various academic and professional backgrounds.

Within a period of two years, all students enrol at two different European universities (one year at each institution). Alternatively, they may choose to spend the third semester at an associate partner university outside Europe, with full recognition of credits. Depending on the chosen mobility track, graduates receive either a joint degree or a double degree from the European universities of their choice.

Initially, the programme consortium consisted of the University of Leipzig, the University of Vienna, the London School of Economics and the University of Wrocław as degree-awarding institutions. Associate universities in the USA, Australia, Canada and South Africa were clustered around this core of institutions. These partners participate in the programme as described above, but without awarding a degree. The University of Leipzig has functioned as the main coordinating university of the consortium from the beginning until the present day.

In addition to that, the University of Roskilde and the University of Ghent joined the Global Studies network as degree-awarding partners (Roskilde in 2010, Ghent in 2017). Furthermore, several non-European universities were integrated as additional associate partners in recent years. The consortium is seeking to further expand this global network for the benefit of the programme in the near future.

The University of Addis Ababa in Ethiopia has a special position within the consortium, as it offers a focus on Peace and Security Studies which is embedded in the general Global Studies programme. Students who choose this track spend three semesters in Ethiopia and one semester in Leipzig and receive a joint degree from both universities. Alternatively, students may choose to spend only one semester in Addis Ababa and receive their degree(s) from two European universities instead.

English is the main language of instruction, examination and general communication within the programme, even though knowledge of at least one or even two additional European languages is recommended. Annual participation fees lie between 4,000 and 5,500 Euros. Fee waivers based on individual merit are possible.

### 3. Quality Assessment of the Study Programme

#### 3.1 Eligibility

##### 3.1.1 Status

*The institutions that offer a joint programme should be recognised as higher education institutions by the relevant authorities of their countries. Their respective national legal frameworks should enable them to participate in the joint programme and, if applicable, to award a joint degree. The institutions awarding the degree(s) should ensure that the degree(s) belong to the higher education degree systems of the countries in which they are based.*

All degree-awarding partners within the Global Studies consortium are public research universities, among them some of the oldest and most renowned higher education institutions in Europe. As such, they are of course fully recognized by the authorities in their respective countries and are entitled to participate actively in a joint programme, as practice has proved across the past 15 years.

Among the partners of the core consortium only Leipzig, Vienna and Wroclaw are entitled to award a joint degree (Master of Arts in Global Studies). This is formally stipulated in a Joint Degree Agreement between the three institutions, which was closed in the year 2009. As already mentioned, the University of Addis Ababa may award a joint Master of Arts together with the University of Leipzig, as stipulated in a separate agreement between the two institutions. All other partners can only issue a double degree due to their national legislative frameworks. London School of Economics and the University of Roskilde award a Master of Science, the University of Ghent a Master of Arts. However, there are plans to integrate both Roskilde and Ghent into the Joint Degree Agreement in the near future, as changes in national legislation have opened up this possibility.

All awarded degrees are clearly associated with the second cycle of qualifications in the Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area (Master's level).

#### Experts' Appraisal

The experts have no doubt whatsoever that the members of the Global Studies consortium and the degrees they award fulfil all formal requirements of the European Approach. With a view to the long history of the programme and its large number of graduates, it can also be safely assumed without further proof that the degrees awarded by the partner universities are in accordance with national legislative demands and are therefore fully recognized in the respective countries in which the universities are located. This also applies to the University of Addis Ababa as a degree-awarding partner.

The experts appreciate the efforts taken by the consortium to include the universities of Ghent and Roskilde into the Joint Degree Agreement.

***The experts regard the standard as fulfilled.***

### 3.1.2 Joint Design and Delivery

*The joint programme should be offered jointly, involving all cooperating institutions in the design and delivery of the programme.*

As already described above, student and staff mobility are a core feature of the Master's programme in Global Studies. In the course of the two years of study, all students spend the first year at one university and move to one of the European partner universities for the second year. About 20-30% of the students take the opportunity to spend the third semester at one of the non-European associate partner institutions. Each of the European partners hosts an average of between eight (LSE) and 46 GS students (Leipzig) per year.

The joint nature of the programme is secured in a number of ways. First of all, the programme is governed by a Steering Committee in which all degree-awarding universities are represented. The Steering Committee is responsible for the overall management of the consortium and the general strategic development of the study programme, which includes the acceptance of new partners to the consortium. The committee meets at least once a year.

In addition, the consortium has set up a joint examination board and a joint committee for the selection of students.

At the curricular level, the consortium has created a "standard curriculum" and basic modular structure for the programme in order to ensure that all partners share a common understanding of the general programme progression path and the intended learning outcomes associated with each phase of the programme. Frequent co-teaching activities of lecturers from different universities contribute to the continuous joint development and enhancement of the curriculum. As was reported during the virtual site visit, there is also a constant informal exchange with the associate partners about matters of curricular development.

The self-evaluation report describes further dimensions of "jointness" in the programme, particularly highlighting the annual winter and summer schools. Students and faculty from across the GS consortium participate in these events, which provide recurrent, regular opportunities for close exchange and joint quality enhancement of the programme (cf. chapter on quality assurance below).

#### Experts' Appraisal

It has become very clear in the course of the assessment procedure that the Master's programme in Global Studies is a joint endeavour of all participating partner universities which could not be realized in this form by any of the partners on their own. The consortium has developed convincing and functional procedures for the joint management and delivery of the programme, including joint committees for student selection and examination. A continuous close exchange between the partners is warranted, as was also demonstrated in the course of the virtual site visit.

**The experts regard the standard as *fulfilled*.**

### 3.1.3 Cooperation Agreement

*The terms and conditions of the joint programme should be laid down in a cooperation agreement. The agreement should in particular cover the following issues:*

- *Denomination of the degree(s) awarded in the programme*
- *Coordination and responsibilities of the partners involved regarding management and financial organisation (including funding, sharing of costs and income etc.)*
- *Admission and selection procedures for students*
- *Mobility of students and teachers*
- *Examination regulations, student assessment methods, recognition of credits and degree awarding procedures in the consortium.*

The terms and conditions of the joint Master's programme in Global Studies are stipulated in a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. The agreement was first closed in 2010 and updated in February 2018 to include all European partner universities and all non-European partners with an Erasmus Mundus full member status.

The agreement denominates the degrees awarded in the programme and outlines the procedures and prerequisites for the awarding of degrees and the mutual recognition of credits within the consortium. It also defines the responsibilities of the partners as regards the management and organization of the programme. This includes basic regulations on tuition fees, the responsibilities of the Steering Committee and local coordinators, the selection of students and the mobility of students and teachers within the programme.

Also, the consortium has developed some common rules for essays (as the main form of assessment in the programme), the supervision of Master's theses and for the organization and recognition of internships, which are annexed to the general cooperation agreement. Additional progression rules outline the general regulations applied by each degree-awarding partner as regards course attendance and the repetition of failed exams.

A separate agreement has been closed between the University of Leipzig and the University of Addis Ababa on the implementation of the Global Studies programme with a special emphasis on peace and security in Africa. This agreement covered the DAAD funding phase from 2012 to 2020. As funding was renewed until 2024, a new cooperation agreement is currently being negotiated between the two institutions.

#### Experts' Appraisal

The experts conclude that the consortium has sufficiently regulated all central issues regarding the joint management and coordination of the study programme in its partnership and cooperation agreement and in the supplementary documents and agreements. The roles and responsibilities of all partners are laid out clearly, and there are binding regulations on all central formal aspects as, for example, the awarding of degrees. The experts also appreciate the recent inclusion of several non-European partners into the agreement.

More detailed rules, especially on examination, grading and assessment, can be found in the specific local and national regulations of the participating universities, all of which are available in the respective national languages and in English translation.

From the experts' point of view, the agreements underlying the study programme in Global Studies fully satisfy the requirements of the European Approach.

**The experts regard the standard as *fulfilled*.**

### 3.2 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

#### 3.2.1 Level

*The intended learning outcomes should align with the corresponding level in the Framework for Qualifications in the European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA), as well as the applicable national qualifications framework(s).*

The mission and the intended learning outcomes are published on the website of the study programme. They are also made transparent in the Diploma Supplement, where they are described as follows:

*The Master's course enables its students:*

- (i) *to develop a multidisciplinary understanding of processes of globalisation (Global History, International Studies, Political Economy, Human Geography, Transregional and Area Studies etc.), knowing how concepts of globalisation worked out in the past and today in different world regions, and*
- (ii) *to have insight into the production of social scientific knowledge and to relate this knowledge production to concepts of globalisation.*
- (iii) *to develop the necessary social and communicative skills to work both independently and in collaboration with others, in a profoundly multidisciplinary and multicultural context*
- (iv) *to be aware of one's own rootedness in a specific discipline and academic culture, and to develop general and professional skills for a wide range of possible future employment via internships as well as via the teaching in class of skills that are required in specific labour markets (such as simulations of international conferences, presentations of short memos on complex topics, explanations of the organizational consequences of certain political ideas in a multilevel governance system, etc.)*
- (v) *to be able to compare and apply socio-political concepts and configurations and to investigate their mutual interactions*
- (vi) *to be able to apply these insights and concepts in the design and execution of an independent study or research project, and present it in a scientifically sound paper, a report or thesis.*

Furthermore, the programme is meant to contribute "to Europe's socio-economic and cultural cohesion, particularly since dealing with the consequences of globalisation will become a major task of Europe's future elites [...]" (cf. Diploma Supplement).

All partners have committed themselves to the intended learning outcomes of the programme as part of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement.

### 3.2.2 Disciplinary field

*The intended learning outcomes should comprise knowledge, skills, and competencies in the respective disciplinary field(s).*

As drawn out in the ILOS, the study programme takes a multidisciplinary approach to the central topic of globalization, uniting specific perspectives, methods and theories from the fields of Area Studies, Geography, Political Science, Political Economy and Cultural Studies. Each partner institution contributes its specific strengths to the programme, depending on its general profile in teaching and research. In the course of their studies, students may choose a disciplinary focus, while still retaining a broad understanding of globalization which may even transcend the traditional limits of academic disciplines. As was emphasized in the self-report and also during the online interviews, the programme favors “a post-disciplinary organization of knowledge production” (cf. programme website).

### 3.2.3 Achievement

*The programme should be able to demonstrate that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.*

To date, the programme has produced hundreds of graduates, whose career trajectories were monitored on a regular basis. The statistics provided show that the unemployment rate among the GS alumni is very low, and that graduates usually have very little difficulty in finding employment shortly after graduation. The 2015 alumni survey showed that about 25% of the respondents held positions as Ph.D. students, researchers or lecturers, whereas the share of positions as consultants, managers or coordinators outside academia had risen significantly in comparison to the 2011 survey. The majority of Ph.D. students had chosen a thesis topic in the field of Political Science, History, Area Studies or Sociology.

It was also reported to the experts that about 40% of the graduates took up working positions outside their native countries. A high percentage of the graduates from the EU also find employment in a non-EU country. The most popular working sectors for GS graduates include Politics, Development Cooperation, as well as Higher Education and Research, followed by a large variety of private sectors and public administration.



### 3.2.4 Regulated Professions

*If relevant for the specific joint programme, the minimum agreed training conditions specified in the European Union Directive 2005/36/EC, or relevant common trainings frameworks established under the Directive, should be taken into account.*

Not applicable.

### Experts' Appraisal

The experts assert that the intended learning outcomes of the programme are fully in line with the Master's level as described by the Framework for Qualifications in the European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA) and the respective national qualifications frameworks deriving from it. Also, they are compliant with Level 7 of the European Qualification Framework (EQF).

By and large, all central elements of the FQ-EHEA are clearly reflected in the ILOs of the Master's programme in Global Studies: these include the acquisition of specialized knowledge in a complex and multidisciplinary field, as well as the enhancement of the students' critical awareness, their research capacities and their sense of their social and political responsibilities as European citizens (even though, in view of the general development the programme has recently taken, this goal should be extended to encompass the notion of global citizenship, cf. Chapter 3.3.1).

Acquisition of advanced soft skills, especially those of relevance for academic and non-academic labour markets, is also an integral part of the ILOs.

The experts find the ILOS well-suited to the special profile of the study programme. The strong research orientation and the multidisciplinary approach of the programme are clearly recognizable in the ILOs and are also drawn out in the online descriptions of the programme.

It seems reasonable to the experts that foreign language training is not part of the ILOs, as students are expected to have excellent command of two or even three foreign languages at the point of time they enter the programme. Nevertheless, voluntary participation in extracurricular language classes should be more strongly encouraged and supported by the consortium (cf. chapter 3.6 below). In line with attempts to develop a truly globalised programme the consortium should especially look to offer more non-European languages.

The results of the most recent alumni survey can be regarded as proof that, by and large, the intended learning outcomes of the programme are achieved. The strong research orientation of the programme which becomes apparent in the ILOs is clearly reflected in the high percentage of graduates pursuing careers as academic researchers. Meanwhile, the programme is even recruiting lecturers from among its own graduates, as was reported during the virtual talks. Also, graduates find adequate employment positions in a wide variety of non-academic sectors, as set forth in the ILOs. In line with programme profile, many graduates also work in international environments outside their native countries.

The graduates participating in the online interviews reported that the programme had contributed especially to enhancing their research skills and their general capacity for critical thinking and reflection.

The experts have found that the academic standard and quality of the selected Master's theses submitted as part of the self-report is fully in accordance with this statement.

Some of the students and graduates mentioned that classes on data analytics and the application of standard software like R or SPSS would be desirable with a view to the requirements of the labour market. Such courses are on offer at some of the partner universities, but cannot always be credited against the programme in Global Studies. The consortium should keep this aspect in mind, even though not all graduates may need skills in applying quantitative methods in their future careers. Otherwise, the experts are convinced that the programme clearly reaches its goal of ensuring the graduates' employability inside and outside academia.

**The experts regard the standard as fulfilled.**

### **3.3 Study Programme**

#### **3.3.1 Curriculum**

*The structure and content of the curriculum should be fit to enable the students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.*

Across the consortium the curriculum of the Master's programme in Global Studies follows the same basic structure, while leaving much flexibility for variation as regards teaching contents and disciplinary approaches to the central topic of globalization.

At all European partner universities the first semester is dedicated to providing a solid methodic foundation by means of several modules which introduce students to the key concepts, methods and theories of Global Studies. Depending on the profile of the university, these introductory classes approach the topic from different angles, as e.g. from the perspective of History, International Relations, Economics or Political Science. The first semester is considered essential for a successful further progression of the students through the programme, as it helps them to position themselves and their own academic background in their field of study and to develop a multidisciplinary understanding of globalization processes. The introductory classes are usually accompanied by tutorials, too.

In addition to that, a winter school takes place in December, which includes co-taught classes on the key concepts of globalization.

In the second and third semester students may choose regional and thematic specializations according to their own interests and the pool of electives offered by their host universities. Most courses are taught in a traditional seminar or lecture format, complemented by occasional projects. Students are expected to specialize on at least two world regions, not least in order to study their entanglements and interconnections. In the past years, the regional focus



of the programme has been constantly widened, now encompassing Asia and the Middle East, Africa and the Americas. Most recently, increased efforts have been taken by the consortium to take Latin America more strongly into view, also by looking for a suitable partner university in that particular area.

The final semester is mainly dedicated to the Master's thesis, which goes along with a research seminar and a colloquium. In fact, students usually start drafting ideas and collecting materials for their thesis well in advance, i.e. in the context of the summer school at the end of the first year. The summer school always encompasses a thesis workshop and also serves to prepare students for the challenges of the labour market by inviting alumni for presentations on their career paths.

The programme track with a focus on Peace and Security in Africa (Leipzig/Addis Ababa) follows the same underlying structure, but with a more narrow topical and regional focus in the specialization part.

### Experts' Appraisal

The experts are impressed by the continuing success of the Master's programme in Global Studies and by the dynamic development it has taken in recent years, both in terms of content and as regards the diversity of the programme consortium, the teaching faculty and the student body.

The virtual talks have shown that both lecturers and students are very much aware of the dangers of Eurocentrism and strive to leave such narrow perspectives behind in favour of transregional and transdisciplinary approaches to globalization issues. The experts strongly support the consortium in its effort to further extend its regional scope to Latin America and to find adequate partners there. However, considering the truly "global" profile and outlook that the programme has now adopted, the subheading "A European Perspective" appears somewhat outdated and misleading. The consortium should therefore consider modifying the programme title by dropping the subheading.

The experts have come to the overall conclusion that the curricular structure is well-aligned with the intended learning outcomes, progressing from general theory and methods training to increasing regional and disciplinary specialization. The programme seems to live up to the challenge of addressing students from very diverse academic and cultural backgrounds. The wide range of methods addressed within the programme is also a particular asset and an added value brought along by the joint programme profile, even though the experts are not entirely sure whether the students actually acquire comparable methodic skills across all study places.

From the experts' point of view, the curriculum is well-balanced, covering a broad range of perspectives while still imparting in-depth knowledge and research skills as appropriate for a Master's programme. In the course of the two years of study, particular attention is given to the Master's thesis, which is in line with the strong research-orientation reflected in the ILOs. All study places provide training in academic writing, as e.g. in the introductory modules of

the first semester, and students may get involved in ongoing research projects at their universities. The expert panel particularly appreciates the annual award for the best Master's thesis.

The experts are in no doubt that the students also acquire advanced soft skills throughout the programme, both in the context of seminars and projects and during the summer school meetings.

**The experts regard the standard as *fulfilled*.**

**Recommendations for further development:**

- Efforts to extend the regional scope of the programme to Latin America should be continued.
- The subheading "A European Perspective" should be dropped from the programme title as it is not in line with the current and prospective development of the programme.

### 3.3.2 Credits

*The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) should be applied properly and the distribution of credits should be clear.*

As already mentioned above, the consortium has stipulated a basic modular structure for the programme to which all degree-awarding partners adhere. The ECTS is applied throughout the programme. Each partner university awards 30 ECTS credits per semester (apart from LSE, where there are 60 credits per year, but either 36 or 24 credits per semester). All compulsory and elective classes offered within this structure are fully credited, provided the intended learning outcomes are achieved. The majority of classes at the Universities of Leipzig, Vienna, Ghent, Addis Ababa and Wroclaw are credited with 10 ECTS, LSE awards either 12 or 6 credits per class. The winter and summer schools are credited with a total of 10 ECTS across the consortium.

Internships may be conducted and are encouraged by the consortium, but are not an integral part of the curriculum and are therefore usually not credited, but remain a voluntary, extracurricular activity. Students wishing to replace regular courses by an internship may apply for recognition based on the knowledge and skills acquired in the course of the internship.

The partner universities have different rules and regulations as regards the number of credits awarded for individual classes and for the final thesis. In particular, the weighting of the thesis varies strongly across the consortium due to differences in national regulations, ranging from 15 to 30 ECTS credits.

The distribution of credits at all universities is made transparent by means of a survey table and in the course handbooks of the partner universities. The majority of the course descriptions also outline the intended learning outcomes and contents of each curricular component, as well as the applied methods of teaching and assessment and the estimated average student workload.

During the virtual site visit some students and graduates mentioned that there had been some confusion about the allocation of credits for some courses in the past. However, the consortium had remedied these difficulties by providing more comprehensive and transparent information.

### Experts' Appraisal

The experts find that the ECTS is applied consistently throughout the study programme. The distribution of credits across the four semesters is clear, with only minor variations between the different universities. Course units are of regular size across the consortium, comprising a minimum of five and a maximum of 15 credits. The virtual talks have shown that transparency as regards credit allocation has strongly improved during the past accreditation period.

Apart from a few exceptions, intended learning outcomes have been defined for each educational component. Credits are awarded if students can demonstrate that they have achieved the ILOs.

The course descriptions provided by each university are largely in line with the recommendations of the ECTS Users' Guide. In spite of this general observation, the experts find that there are great variations in quality between the course catalogues, some of which are very vague as regards course contents or intended learning outcomes, contain dead links or omit important information, for example on methods and criteria of assessment. Even though the experts are fully aware that the universities need to adhere to different national or institutional standards as regards the design of course catalogues, and that a full harmonization of the syllabi can therefore never be achieved, a higher level of co-ordination should be aimed at.

**The experts regard the standard as fulfilled.**

### **Recommendations for further development:**

- The consortium should further intensify co-ordination and communication regarding the design of the course descriptions. In particular, it should be ensured that intended learning outcomes, teaching contents and assessment methods are sufficiently transparent in all course descriptions.

### 3.3.3 Workload

*A joint bachelor programme will typically amount to a total student workload of 180-240 ECTS-credits; a joint master programme will typically amount to 90-120 ECTS-credits and should not be less than 60 ECTS-credits at second cycle level (credit ranges according to the FQ-EHEA); for joint doctorates there is no credit range specified.*

*The workload and the average time to complete the programme should be monitored.*

As outlined above, the joint Master's programme in Global Studies awards a total of 120 ECTS credits (60 ECTS credits per year), which equals an average annual student workload of 1.800 hours. In case students choose to spend the third semester at a non-European uni-

versity, the courses taken there are regarded as equivalent of 30 ECTS and are fully credited based on the agreement with the associate partner university.

The student workload is continuously monitored, both by the consortium as a whole (as part of the general programme evaluation survey conducted by the University of Leipzig) and by the partner universities as part of course evaluation. Students may also directly approach the local programme coordinators or committees about problems concerning workload.

Evaluation results and possible measures for improvement are regularly discussed between students, lecturers and coordinators across the consortium, as e.g. at the occasion of the winter and summer school meetings. At a local level, measures may be decided upon by local programme committees or examination committees, as has happened, for instance, at the University of Ghent where – following student complaints – minor curricular changes were made in order to achieve a more even distribution of the workload across the first year.

The average time needed to complete the programme is also monitored continuously. It currently lies at around 2 years and 3 months.

Students and graduates reported during the online interviews that their workload had generally been well-balanced throughout the programme, even though it depended to a certain extent upon individual educational background and experiences. The majority of students evaluated the workload as challenging (at least in some phases), but generally feasible.

In accordance with that, the results of the quality surveys submitted to the experts show a mixed picture as regards the students' perception of their overall workload.

### Experts' Appraisal

As regards the average student workload and the number of credits awarded, the Master's programme in Global Studies is in accordance with the Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area. Student workload is continuously monitored both at the level of the educational components and at programme level. It has become fully clear in the course of the assessment procedure that wherever possible, the consortium does take swift action in response to student complaints about workload issues.

The students' perception of the programme demands seems to depend very much on their place of study, their choice of classes and also on their previous educational paths and professional careers. In particular, certain methods classes were perceived as tough, though rewarding. However, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that the programme is feasible for the large majority of the students. This assumption is supported by the fact that most students do not or not significantly exceed the regular study period of two years. In addition, many students conduct voluntary internships on top of studying full-time.

**The experts regard the standard as fulfilled.**

### **3.4 Admission and Recognition**

#### **3.4.1 Admission**

*The admission requirements and selection procedures should be appropriate in light of the programme's level and discipline.*

Formally, the admission and selection process follows the general regulations of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Philosophy of the University of Leipzig, which also coordinates the admission procedure. Regardless of that, the selection decisions are taken by the consortium as a whole, i.e. by the joint Selection Committee. For the programme track with a special emphasis on Peace and Security in Africa, the selection criteria are the same, but there is a separate selection committee equally composed of colleagues from Europe and Africa.

All applications are first checked by the University of Leipzig for compliance with the admission requirements. According to the programme website, these are:

- *A three-year bachelor's degree or recognized equivalent from an accredited institution in the humanities or social sciences, with a minimum of 15% global studies–relevant courses*
- *Excellent English skills [...]. Native English speakers must provide proof of knowledge of a language other than English at the A2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*
- *Knowledge of another foreign language at the A2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*

The selection of students is based on the following criteria:

- *50%: Academic excellence and quality/recognition of home institution that has awarded the first degree*
- *15%: Motivation and academic potential [to be described in a letter of motivation]*
- *20%: Compatibility of previous degree(s) with the EMGS programme*
- *15%: Work experience/professional qualifications*

For each criterion a number of points on the scale between 0 and 100 is awarded.

If applicants score the same number of points they are selected by drawing lots.

The consortium decides on the students' individual mobility tracks, even though applicants may name their preferences in the context of the application.

#### **Experts' Appraisal**

The experts regard the admission and selection criteria for the programme as appropriate, both from a formal perspective and in light of the programme's content, intended learning outcomes and the subject disciplines involved. The joint admission and selection procedure

is long-established and well-tried.

In the course of the virtual site visit the experts learned that applicants from the US do not need competencies in any other language apart from English. The experts appeal to the consortium to refrain from this practice, as it gives US applicants an unfair advantage over applicants from other countries.. No exceptions from the general admission regulations should be allowed in this regard.

**The experts regard the standard as fulfilled.**

### 3.4.2 Recognition

*Recognition of qualifications and of periods of studies (including recognition of prior learning) should be applied in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention and subsidiary documents.*

In all matters concerning recognition of qualifications and prior learning, the exam regulations of the University of Leipzig apply, no matter at which university students are enrolled. Applications for recognition have to be directed to Leipzig as the coordinating university of the consortium. The recognition decision is taken by the Board of Examiners at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Philosophy in Leipzig.

The exam regulations stipulate that qualifications obtained at other universities or outside the higher education system are recognized, unless the university finds substantial differences between the competencies acquired within and outside the programme. In case an application is rejected, the university has to provide a written statement giving the reasons for the rejection.

Along with the application, students need to provide written proof of their qualifications, e.g. in the form of module descriptions, course materials, internship reports or other documents.

#### Experts' Appraisal

The experts assert that the procedure and regulations for the recognition of qualifications and prior learning are in line with the central principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention. No difficulties regarding recognition issues were reported to the experts.

**The experts regard the standard as fulfilled.**

## 3.5 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

### 3.5.1 Learning and Teaching

*The programme should be designed to correspond with the intended learning outcomes, and the learning and teaching approaches applied should be adequate to achieve those. The diversity of students and their needs should be respected and attended to, especially in view of potential different cultural backgrounds of the students.*



As can be expected in such a big, multinational consortium, a multitude of teaching methods and didactic approaches is applied within the programme. Across the consortium the traditional teaching formats of the Social Sciences and Humanities – seminars and lectures or a combination of these – are the most predominant, as becomes apparent in the module descriptions. Especially in the first semester, additional tutorials are offered to help students through the starting phase of the programme.

In the specialization phase (second and third semester) research and project seminars become more frequent. In this way students adopt the necessary methodic skills in preparation for their Master's thesis from an early stage. In the context of project seminars students form teams and present the results of their work in class.

According to the self-report, the consortium is planning to introduce a joint simulation game into the programme, which will involve the building of international student teams. Also, the use of blended learning components is to be intensified, especially to integrate the non-European partners more closely.

From the second semester onwards the GS students do not stay amongst themselves, but take classes in mixed groups together with students enrolled in other programmes. However, as the majority of classes is held in English, the students usually have no difficulty to follow, as was confirmed during the virtual talks. The students and graduates interviewed were also very enthusiastic about the large variety of teaching approaches applied at the different universities, and about the interdisciplinarity of the programme. The co-teaching experience during the summer schools was also regarded as valuable. All in all, the students and graduates perceived the quality of teaching as very high across all study places.

### Experts' Appraisal

The experts commend the Global Studies consortium on the didactic quality of the programme which became evident in the course of the assessment procedure. The teaching formats are fit to help students achieve the intended learning outcomes, offering a good mixture of traditional and innovative approaches, and sufficient opportunities for both theory-based and project-based learning, for intense self-study and group work. Good conditions are provided for students to significantly enhance both their research skills and their social skills.

The diversity of the student body does not seem to cause any significant problems or impediments to the learning process. The foundation courses of the first semester are particularly important in this regard, as they help students to reach a common level of knowledge and competencies to build upon during their further studies.

The experts particularly appreciate the principle of co-teaching and the consortium's openness towards new and innovative didactic methods such as blended learning or simulation games. The experts recommend further enhancing these blended learning elements in order to connect students and lecturers at all study places directly via a "global classroom".

**The experts regard the standard as *fulfilled*.**

### **Recommendations for further development:**

- Blended learning elements should be more frequently applied in order to create a “global classroom” which connects students and lecturers at all study places.

#### 3.5.2 Assessment of Students

*The examination regulations and the assessment of the achieved learning outcomes should correspond with the intended learning outcomes. They should be applied consistently among partner institutions.*

As a general rule, the students are assessed based on the exam regulations of their current host university. Joint assessment takes place during the winter and summer schools. Also, the Master's thesis may be co-supervised by faculty from two institutions if necessary. All partner universities have installed examination committees, which supervise and monitor the execution of student examinations. The joint examination board of the GS consortium consists of one representative of each local examination committee. This panel supervises the awarding of degrees and the issuing of the relevant documentation and may also be consulted in case of student complaints and appeals against examination results. However, such complaints may have to be dealt with and solved at a local level, as they relate to the local rules and regulations of the partner universities. The joint examination board also regularly reviews grade conversion scales and adapts them if necessary.

Essays are still the dominant form of assessment across the programme consortium. Therefore, all students are introduced to the standards of academic writing and research during the first semester. Other common types of examination are oral exams, presentations or written assignments, depending on the disciplinary approach and the local regulations of each university.

The students and graduates reported that at some study places there had been some confusion and uncertainty in the past about the exact expectations and the grading criteria for assessment. Students did not always feel sufficiently informed about either, especially as far as oral examinations were concerned. In some cases examiners apparently failed to account for the specific situation and background of the GS students, of which they had no full understanding. Also, the students' impression was that the standards and criteria of assessment varied strongly between the partner universities. The same applies to the feedback given to the students regarding their examination results, which was sometimes very detailed and timely and sometimes not provided at all unless asked for.

Some of the quality surveys made known to the experts reflect an equally critical evaluation of the assessment system.



### Experts' Appraisal

The experts have gained the overall impression that in spite of the relatively dominant role of essays and the Master's thesis, there is a good mixture of different forms of assessment applied across the programme. As far as the experts can see, the chosen types of assessment are well-aligned with the intended learning outcomes of the programme and of the individual course units/modules, equally addressing knowledge acquisition, research capacity and key skills. The introductory classes of the first semester ensure consistent standards regarding the writing and assessment of scientific essays.

The experts are aware that considering the large number of partners, a full harmonization of assessment criteria across the consortium can never be achieved. In spite of that, based on the report of the students and graduates, they recommend further improving co-ordination and transparency in this respect. The joint examination board could play a key role in this.

**The experts regard the standard as fulfilled.**

### **Recommendations for further development:**

- The consortium should take increased efforts to improve the consistency and transparency of assessment and grading criteria across the programme.

## **3.6 Student Support**

*The student support services should contribute to the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. They should take into account specific challenges of mobile students.*

The GS consortium has implemented both academic and administrative support schemes for students at all study places. Constant assistance is provided by the local administrative and academic coordinators, who have been appointed especially for the GS programme and who are at the disposal of both students and visiting faculty. In addition, there is an administrative coordinator for the consortium as a whole.

Upon admission to the programme, students receive written information material on organizational and academic matters, as, for example, the student handbook, which includes the course catalogues and exam regulations of all European partner universities. In addition, students are provided with practical information on housing, visa, insurance and other administrative issues of relevance for their stay abroad.

Before the start of the lecture period, orientation days are offered to introduce students to the programme and to their fellow students and to further assist them in administrative procedures like enrolment, residence permit, medical insurance etc.

Students are also encouraged to take classes in the local language if necessary in order to further facilitate their social integration. However, as the students and graduates reported, these classes are not always free of charge and are not covered by the tuition fees.

As internships can only be credited against the programme in exceptional cases, they remain

a voluntary activity that students undertake in their spare time. Hence, the student support system does not include assistance in finding internship placements, even though on principle the consortium does encourage the students to gather practical experience. The members of faculty reported that they had no detailed insight into what kind of internships the students were involved in, and whether the chosen placements always contributed to their professional or academic advancement.

By and large, the students and graduates displayed a high degree of satisfaction with the general support and advisory services provided, including career counselling, IT and library services. Faculty and coordinating staff had been exceptionally helpful even beyond requirements. Students were equally satisfied with the supervision of their Master's theses.

At some study places, a lack of adequate accommodation seems to be a recurrent problem due to very narrow housing markets. This was reported for Ghent and particularly for Roskilde, where some students had been forced to move repeatedly within the space of a few months. It was also mentioned that not all partner universities could provide a fully barrier-free environment for disabled students, but in case of need, all possible medical and organizational support had been given.

### Experts' Appraisal

The experts conclude that the Global Studies consortium provides students with an excellent support system which is especially tailored to the needs of mobile students. Comprehensive written and oral information on both academic and organizational issues is provided in due time, and in case of problems or questions the students may turn to the local co-ordinators.

The virtual talks have shown, however, that there are a few issues on which the consortium could place a stronger focus in the context of student support. Even though of course little can be done to relieve local housing markets, increased efforts should be taken by the universities to help the GS students tackling this long-term problem. For the sake of providing equal opportunities, it would also be fair to enable students at all study places to take one or two classes in the local language for free.

Furthermore, there should be a more systematic monitoring of voluntary internships and their contribution to the achievement of intended learning outcomes in order to improve the student advisory system in this respect.

**The experts regard the standard as *fulfilled*.**

### **Recommendations for further development:**

- Extracurricular internships should be more closely monitored for the purpose of quality assurance.
- The students in should be more intensely supported in finding suitable and affordable accommodation, especially in Ghent and Roskilde.

- All students should have the opportunity to take foreign language classes free of charge.

### 3.7 Resources

#### 3.7.1 Staff

*The staff should be sufficient and adequate (qualifications, professional and international experience) to implement the study programme.*

The consortium has submitted the full academic CVs of all core teaching faculty at all study places as part of the self-evaluation report, including the staff at the University of Addis Ababa. Detailed information was given on the institutional setting and the research profile of the participating faculties at the partner universities. In addition, the experts had an opportunity to conduct interviews with representatives of all European partner universities in the context of the virtual site visit.

The senior faculty members teaching in the programme are among the world's leading researchers in the field of Global Studies and possess many years of teaching experience. The faculty members are in close and regular exchange with their colleagues at the partner universities, and often engage in co-teaching activities in order to keep the programme dynamic and up to date.

It was drawn out several times during the virtual site visit that a change of generations is currently happening within the GS consortium, with more and more younger researchers and lecturers (including a higher number of female staff and staff from non-European countries) getting on board, while those who started the programme gradually move into the background.

#### Experts' Appraisal

Based on the talks and the written documentation provided, the experts are convinced that the Master's programme in Global studies profits from excellent and highly committed teaching faculty at all study places. Even though there is, of course, an extensive number of faculty involved (including visiting lecturers from outside the consortium), there is clearly a core team that guarantees an effective joint management and sustainable development of the programme. Students benefit highly from the extensive international experience of their lecturers and may also get involved in their various research activities, which is one of the programme's particularly strong points.

The experts also appreciate the fact that the faculty is now becoming increasingly diverse in terms of gender, age and ethnicity. This diversity holds the promise that the programme will continue to benefit from fresh ideas and perspectives and will thus be well-prepared to tackle the challenges ahead.

Nonetheless, this aspect should be continuously monitored in the years ahead.

**The experts regard the standard as *fulfilled*.**

### 3.7.2 Facilities

*The facilities provided should be sufficient and adequate in view of the intended learning outcomes.*

The consortium has provided core information on the general profile of all degree-awarding universities, as well as the profile, facilities and research foci of the departments and institutes involved in the Master's programme in Global Studies. The self-report contains further information, as e.g. on library facilities and on the financial resources of the programme.

The students and graduates appeared largely satisfied with the learning environment at their study places, particularly with the equipment of the libraries, which always offered sufficient sources in English. Some of the universities also dispose of additional, more specialized branch libraries at the departments or institutes hosting the programme in Global studies.

All partner universities offer student dormitories/residence halls. However, a place at a dormitory may be hard to obtain at some study locations, as the aforementioned examples of Ghent and Roskilde show.

The prime funding sources of the programme are the general budgets of the participating universities, tuition fees and the lump sum provided within the Erasmus Mundus framework. The consortium decides jointly on the financial plan each year. In order to provide more financial support for well-qualified candidates in the future, the consortium is planning to establish an association ("Friends of EMGS") to raise funds from members of the Global Studies community and other public and private sources.

### Experts' Appraisal

As far as the experts can see, the infrastructure and facilities at all partner universities are fully sufficient and adequate in view of the intended learning outcomes of the programme. All universities are long-established and renowned public institutions which provide a stimulating and lively research and learning environment. The library facilities, which are of particular importance for this programme, seem to be at least fully satisfactory, if not excellent everywhere. Barrier-free accessibility might still be an occasional problem and should therefore be kept on the monitor. The same applies to issues of housing and accommodation, as already discussed above.

Sufficient arrangements appear to be in place to ensure the financial sustainability of the programme. Nevertheless, the experts appreciate the consortium's plans to raise additional sources of funding in the future, which may contribute significantly to preventing an indirect – an unintended – social selection of students.

**The experts regard the standard as *fulfilled*.**

### 3.8 Transparency and Documentation

*Relevant information about the programme like admission requirements and procedures, course catalogue, examination and assessment procedures etc. should be well documented and published by taking into account specific needs of mobile students.*

As already mentioned above, all students receive a detailed handbook which contains an outline of the module structure, the course descriptions, the progression rules and the applicable examination regulations of all degree-awarding partner universities. Disabled students are informed about educational support and compensation schemes that are implemented at the partner universities, and about whom to approach in such matters. The handbook is complemented by a joint style sheet for essays and general guidelines on how to write book reviews and exposés for the Master's thesis.

Extensive practical information on the individual study places can be found in additional welcome guides issued by each university individually. Samples of these guides were provided for the University of Leipzig and the non-European partner universities.

Further information on admission requirements and procedures, the intended learning outcomes, course contents and other aspects can be found on the website of the programme.

On principle, all internal and external information on the programme is provided in English.

#### Experts' Appraisal

The experts have found that both students, applicants and the general public are provided with all necessary information concerning the programme at all times. The positive impression left by the submitted documents and the website was fully confirmed by the students and graduates during the virtual interviews, who had not experienced any significant information gaps during the application phase or in the course of their studies.

**The experts regard the standard as *fulfilled*.**

### 3.9 Quality Assurance

*The cooperating institutions should apply joint internal quality assurance processes in accordance with part one of the ESG.*

The Global Studies consortium applies joint procedures for the quality assurance of the study programme which are described in the self-evaluation report. In addition, key statistical data and aggregated results of quality surveys from the past accreditation period were presented to the experts. These include the outcomes of the 2015 alumni survey and of the programme evaluation survey conducted in the summer of 2019, as well as selected results of course evaluation surveys at local level. Furthermore, the programme underwent external quality audits by the Course-Quality Advisory Board (Q-Board) of the Erasmus Mundus Association in 2014 and 2016. These surveys focused on the students' level of satisfaction with support

measures and services at their universities, as well as course assessment. The outcomes of both surveys are annexed to the self-evaluation report.

Course evaluation takes place at all partner universities, mostly by means of online surveys. The results, as well as possible measures for improvement deriving from them, are discussed both by the responsible commissions at local level and in the context of regular feedback sessions in which lecturers and students of all partner universities participate. These sessions usually take place as part of the winter and summer school meetings and serve to identify recurrent problems and best practices across the consortium. The feedback meeting at the summer school also functions as a follow-up session to the discussions of the previous winter school.

To provide a sufficient basis for discussion, all partner universities have to submit annual quality reports prior to the summer school, containing information on the outcomes of local course evaluation and the measures taken in response, the course contents at local level and their relation to the intended learning outcomes of the programme, as well as student performance and examination results. The reports also contain a statement by the student representatives.

In addition to that, students are asked to participate in an online survey for the evaluation of the study programme as a whole at the end of each semester. This survey is designed and conducted by the University of Leipzig as the coordinating university of the consortium. Its focus is relatively wide, encompassing the students' general motivation for enrolling in the programme, their adaptation to their study places, their satisfaction with lecturers as well as an evaluation of the curriculum and the achievement of intended learning outcomes. The survey results are made known to all partners of the consortium by means of a report, which in turn serves as another fundamental source of information underlying the joint quality assurance measures of the consortium.

Further evaluation surveys are conducted to assess the quality of the introductory weeks, as well as the winter and summer schools.

The consortium continuously collects and monitors data on student progression, success and dropout rates. Some key figures (as e.g. application and acceptance rates, student numbers and attrition rates of the last five years) were included in the self-evaluation report.

### Experts' Appraisal

The experts find that the Global Studies consortium has set up an effective and comprehensive system for the joint quality assurance and enhancement of the degree programme which is fully in accordance with Part 1 of the ESG. Regular quality surveys are conducted both at course level and at programme level and are made accessible to all partners of the consortium by means of transparent and detailed reports. The surveys cover all central aspects of relevance for the quality of the programme (quality of teaching and assessment, student support measures and learning resources, curricular structure and contents, workload etc.) and adequately reflect its special profile.

All stakeholders, including the students, are actively involved in discussing the survey results and deciding upon measures for improvement.

The provided data on student success does not indicate any particular problems. The number of applications has remained at a constantly high level throughout the past years, while the student attrition rate is extremely low.

In the course of the virtual site visit, the experts have gained the impression that the representatives of the consortium take all efforts to remedy quality problems wherever they are identified and react to oral or written student complaints as swiftly as possible. Their initial concerns raised by part of the evaluation results could therefore be widely dispelled. Beyond the regular written surveys, the work of the local programme coordinators is of special significance in this context.

Due to the special programme profile students usually do not get to experience any improvements made in response to their feedback, as they spend only short periods of time at each study place. This problem is also addressed in some of the quality surveys made known to the expert panel. The experts thus recommend improving the documentation and communication of improvement measures taken based on the input of internal and external stakeholders. In particular, this would allow future students to appreciate prior changes made in response to feedback from their predecessors.

**The experts regard the standard as *fulfilled*.**

**Recommendations for further development:**

- All measures for improvement taken in response to the feedback of internal and external stakeholders should be more comprehensively documented and more widely communicated to the students and to the general public on the webpages of the programme.



III Appendix

1 Response of the Consortium to the Expert Report (25 June, 2020)

### III. Appendix

#### 1. Response of the Consortium to the Expert Report (25 June, 2020)

The Erasmus Mundus Global Studies Consortium fully agrees with the content of the assessment report and is considering to implement following measures for further development of the programme according to the recommendations of the expert panel:

*1. Efforts to extend the regional scope of the programme to Latin America should be continued.*

The Consortium's universities will continue to explore the possibilities of expanding the cooperation to a Latin American university. This is particularly important with regard to the powerful intellectual contribution from Latin America concerning the recalibration of globalization theories.

The programme has already a series of seminars focusing on globalization processes in Latin America in place and is based upon strong research networks including Latin American scholars. A very important role in this process plays the Vienna University with its numerous contacts to leading scientists from this world region, the Latin America research group and the interdisciplinary Latin America Institute. All partner universities have an expertise on Latin America among the scholars teaching in the programme and we will continue to strengthen this part of the programme. Students from Latin America are one of the largest regional communities among the overall student body. Guest lecturers from various Latin American universities have taught and will teach in the future in the programme also thanks to the EM-funding.

*2. The subheading "A European Perspective" should be dropped from the programme title as it is not in line with the current and prospective development of the programme.*

The Consortium's universities share the view of the expert panel that the subheading "A European Perspective" is no more in line with the development of the curriculum and its enrichment with the contributions from Non-European partners in the last years. However, the change of the title of a joint Erasmus Mundus programme during a financing period implies the approval of the European Commission. The Leipzig University as coordinating institution of the consortium has already submitted the respective request.

*3. Blended learning elements should be more frequently applied in order to create a "global classroom" which connects students and lecturers at all study places.*

Different mobility constraints have influenced the development of online learning methods and tools at the Consortium universities long before measures to deal with the corona pandemic made online learning a necessity. The current constraints to mobility are exceptional, but we have to confess that it is not the first time that we have been confronted with such



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difficulties: for example, late-issued visas and obstacles to enter certain European countries for students from various parts of the world or the overlapping of lecturers' commitments at different places. Without a doubt, the causes have been different and not as systematic and severe as the current crisis. However, these difficulties already impelled us long ago to think about various formats of blended learning. Already in the winter term 2017/18, lecturer Geert Castryck organized a blended learning seminar on global history as part of the MA emphasis "Global Studies with a Special Emphasis on Peace and Security in Africa", combining an e-tutorial on Moodle with a block (on-site) seminar in Addis Ababa. Additionally, in the winter term 2019/20, the Global and European Studies Institute of the Leipzig University started to establish an e-library project, envisioning a virtual space that contains a growing collection of teaching materials, such as video lectures, which would facilitate blended learning in different programmes. During the winter term 2019/20, lectures in two courses, "Global History" and "Methodology in Global Studies", were recorded, and these video lectures have been used in courses on methods for MA students during the summer term 2020.

In the summer term 2020 a series of new formats and tools could be successfully tested. The diversity of tools for online teaching allowed creativity in formulating tasks for students and different ways of collaboration on joint projects during the semester. Some of these tools (like journey trackers or discussion forums) could be used to follow the progress as students are developing their ideas and working on different topics. Open lines of communication (chat or video calls) enabled easier and more direct communication with students, who in turn felt encouraged to contact lecturers more frequently and more freely than during official consultations hours. The Consortium will use in the future the new competences acquired, the experience and the lessons learned in the summer term 2020 for the further development of the blended learning elements. A very important step into this direction is the summer school 2020, which will take place in a virtual format and will bring together the students and the lecturers from all study places in a global "classroom".

- 4. The Consortium should further intensify co-ordination and communication regarding the design of the course descriptions. In particular, it should be ensured that intended learning outcomes, teaching contents and assessment methods are sufficiently transparent in all course descriptions.*

The differences regarding the design of course descriptions can be explained with the different requirements to these documents at the Consortium's universities. The information regarding the intended learning outcomes, teaching contents and assessment methods is usually communicated to students at latest at the beginning of the semester and is also available on the respective teaching platforms. The Consortium will use its experience in the development of common standards based on best practices and will ensure that the intended learning outcomes, teaching contents and assessment methods are sufficiently transparent in the course descriptions at all study places.

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1 Response of the Consortium to the Expert Report (25 June, 2020)

5. *The Consortium should take increased efforts to improve the consistency and transparency of assessment and grading criteria across the programme.*

The consistency and transparency of assessment and grading criteria are regularly evaluated both in the courses evaluation and in the study programme evaluation. The assessment results show that the Global Studies students very much appreciate the efforts of the Consortium to develop high standards of teaching and assessment across the programme. In the meantime, at some study places students have also the possibility to choose courses offered within other study programmes. This possibility is very much appreciated by students, but it also implies the risk that the respective lecturers are not sufficiently familiar with the requirements and the standards of the Global Studies programme with regard to the assessment and grading criteria.

The Consortium will discuss in its next meeting the possibilities of a better communication of the assessment and grading criteria for all the courses offered to Global Studies students as quality standard of the programme.

6. *Extracurricular internships should be more closely monitored for the purpose of quality assurance.*

Internships, while not being an obligatory part of the programme, are, however, seen as an important contribution to the students' education and are therefore on a regular basis monitored by the programme. Students submit reports and get feedback on these reports; best practices are published on the website; a database with internship providers is on offer for students.

Although the internships are not officially part of the curriculum, the Consortiums universities enable students to integrate internships during the study period. Students that wish to replace a regular module by an internship need to apply for the recognition of the respective achievements on the basis of the provisions of the Lisbon Recognition Convention. The recognition is based on the learning outcomes, the procedures are described in the examination regulations. The recognition procedure is coordinated and documented by the Leipzig University (see the description of the procedure and the respective forms under annex 11).

For voluntary internships, the Consortium invites students to share their experiences during internships with other cohorts through short reports available online. Some students use the opportunity to apply for funding through the Erasmus internship programme. For these internships, similar to Learning Agreements, Internship Agreements will be signed between students, internship institution and the local coordinators. These agreements, contain among others the information about knowledge, skills and competences to be acquired by the end of the traineeship, as well as a monitoring and evaluation.

*III Appendix*

*1 Response of the Consortium to the Expert Report (25 June, 2020)*

*7. The students should be more intensively supported in finding suitable and affordable accommodation, particularly in Ghent and Roskilde.*

The Consortium is aware of students' difficulties regarding the accommodation in Ghent and Roskilde. At both universities places only a limited number of places in students' dorms is available and the study programme co-ordinators are limited in their possibilities.

In Ghent, for example, student accommodation is either offered through the university (limited contingent) or the private market. Over recent years, the growth of the university, both in terms of local and international students, has put the student housing offer under severe pressure, and in spite of efforts of the university to increase capacity, the pressure is still there. The UGent housing services each year reserve a number of rooms specifically for students enrolled in Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees. However, due to the late application deadlines EMGS offers, compared to other Ghent University EM programs, as well as the pressure on the housing services to fill out the rooms, not every EMGS student can be offered a room from this contingent. Students on the search for an alternative on the private market, need to fall back on the (more limited) support which the housing services and programme administrators can offer. The local coordinators try to remedy this by pointing to the directory of the City of Ghent for student housing offers on the private market, and by putting incoming EMGS students in touch with current EMGS students, so that the former might be able to take over the accommodation of the latter. At Roskilde University the local coordinators are currently working on a model to provide EMGS student preference among full-degree students.

*8. All students should have the opportunity to take foreign language classes free of charge. In line with attempts to develop a truly globalized programme the consortium should especially look to offer more non-European languages.*

At nearly all study places students have the possibility to attend free of charge practical language courses, also for non-European languages, offered by the respective language centers of the Consortium's universities. However, in some cases students need to pay for a language course, as these courses are not part of the Curriculum and thus also not covered by the tuition fee. At Ghent University for example practical language courses are offered by the UGent Language Center, which has a separate (budgetary and regulatory) status. As it is the case for other international and exchange students, EMGS students are offered a reduction in registration fees for non-curricular courses offered by the Language Center, on the account of the UGent international office's budget. For these courses to be offered entirely free of charge, separate arrangements need to be made between EMGS and the Language Center to cover the organisation costs, bearing in mind that at present at Ghent University this investment is only done in programs where the language courses are a part of the official curriculum. Similar situations apply also to other study places. The Consortium will collect this information and discuss the options for special arrangements. However, this would imply an adjustment of the tuition fee, which needs to be thoroughly discussed in the Consortium.

III Appendix

1 Response of the Consortium to the Expert Report (25 June, 2020)

9. *All measures for improvement taken in response to the feedback of internal and external stakeholders should be more comprehensively documented and more widely communicated to the students and to the general public on the webpages of the programme.*

The measures for improvement will be documented in minutes of the Consortium meetings and the respective supporting documents and communicated to students in the regular meetings with students' representatives. The Consortium will also publish on its webpage the accreditation report and the information on measures for further development of the programme.

In point 3.4.1 "Admission" the experts mentioned an issue related to language requirements for applicants from US. Although this was not officially formulated as a recommendation the Consortium would like to give a short statement on this topic.

According to the study regulations all applicants should meet the following requirements with regard to the language skills:

- Excellent English skills: Proficiency in English needs to be proven with an official English certificate, except for native speakers and applicants with a degree from a higher education institution with English as language of instruction.
- Knowledge of another foreign language at the A2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (to be proven by a high school certificate and/or an internationally recognized test, score certificates, or equivalent proof of participation in language courses)

Since these are entry requirements and not selection criteria, no exceptions are admitted. The comment during the site visit might be related to the fact that the programme can be studied entirely in English, which can be indeed interpreted as an advantage for students from English speaking countries. The experience shows that all applicants for this programme, including the applicants from US have no difficulties to prove the knowledge of a foreign language at the A2 level.