

Report on the Accreditation of Study Programmes

at the

National Research University

Higher School of Economics, Moscow

- Faculty of Law -

Reference Number I-1758-1



9th Meeting of the ZEvA Commission on March 17, 2020

Study Programme	Degree	Programme Duration	Type of Programme	Maximum annual intake
Private International Law	LL.M.	2 years	full-time	35
Law of International Trade, Finance and Economic Integration	LL.M.	2 years	full-time	35

Accreditation contract signed on: 13th June 2019

Date of site visit: 26th-27th November 2019

ZEvA programme officer: Leonie Pessara

Expert Panel:

- **Prof. Dr. Helmut Grothe**, Freie Universität Berlin, Institute for Private International Law, International Civil Procedure and Comparative Law (representative of academia)
- **Prof. Dr. Bernd Oppermann**, Leibniz University Hanover, Law Faculty, Head of Chair of German, European and International Civil and Commercial Law (representative of academia)
- **Sergey Vershinin**, Rödl & Partner, Lawyer, Associate Partner, Head of Real Estate, Construction and Environmental Law Department (representative of the profession)
- **Lina Irscheid**, University of Potsdam, Law Faculty (students' representative)

Hanover, 07 January 2020

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I Final Vote of the Expert Panel and Decision of the Accreditation Commission

1 Decision of the ZEvA Commission

I. Final Vote of the Expert Panel and Decision of the Accreditation Commission

1. Decision of the ZEvA Commission

The ZEvA Commission follows the experts' report and recommendations and takes note of the university's response.

The Commission decides to accredit the following degree programmes as offered by the Higher School of Economics (HSE) Moscow, Department of General and Interdisciplinary Legal Studies:

- 1. Private International Law (LL.M.)*
- 2. Law of International Trade, Finance and Economic Integration (LL.M.)*

The accreditation of the study programmes is valid for a period of six years.

This decision is based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), the Framework of Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area and the recommendations of the ECTS Users' Guide as referred to in the ZEvA Manual for the External Assessment of Study Programmes.

I Final Vote of the Expert Panel and Decision of the Accreditation Commission

2 Final Vote of the Expert Panel

2. Final Vote of the Expert Panel

2.1 General Aspects

2.1.1 General Recommendations:

- The applied tools for quality assurance could be more strongly formalized. Moreover, a wider range of quality assurance methods could be used: for example student satisfaction surveys (with guided interviews) could be conducted regularly. The monitoring of the student workload should be part of course evaluation.
- The internationalization strategy of the Faculty of Law until 2024 which was laid out during the on-site-talks should be formalized.
- A formalized E-learning strategy should be developed.
- It should be made clear to future applicants that the study programmes are primarily directed at graduate students who hold a full-time working position.
- The curricula of both study programmes might benefit from more theoretical elements in order to develop “legal thinking based on theory”.
- Working contracts for staff and teachers with a longer duration might contribute to the teaching quality in long-term-perspective.
- An extension of the “Mago Lego” elective pool might enhance student-centred learning.

2.2 Masters’ programme “Private International Law”

2.2.1 Recommendations:

- It should be pointed out that the programme is focused on international business and economic law.

2.3 Masters’ programme “Law of International Trade, Finance and Economic Integration”

2.3.1 Recommendations:

- It should be pointed out that the programme is focused on international public law.

1 Final Vote of the Expert Panel and Decision of the Accreditation Commission

2 Final Vote of the Expert Panel

2.3.2 Recommendation to the ZEvA Commission for International Affairs:

The expert group recommends the accreditation of the Masters' programmes "Private International Law" and "Law of International Trade, Finance and Economic Integration" for the duration of six years without conditions.

II. Evaluation Report of the Expert Panel

Introduction: Purpose, Design and Context of the Accreditation Procedure

It is the purpose of the accreditation procedure to assess the quality of the study programmes **Private International Law (LL.M.) and Law of International Trade, Finance and Economic Integration (LL.M.) run by the Faculty of Law at the Higher School of Economics (HSE) Moscow** against international standards. The assessment is based on ZEvA's "Assessment Framework for the Evaluation of Study Programmes" as laid out in the "Manual for Evaluation and Certification of Study Programmes". This assessment framework is in part based on the "European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ESG)" (ENQA 2015), the "Framework for Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area" (2005) and the "ECTS Users' Guide" (European Communities, 2015).

In line with the ESG, the assessment was organized as a peer review procedure, involving an expert panel composed of two university professors in the discipline, one professional from outside academia and one student.

For the purpose of assessing the study programmes, the Faculty of Law at HSE was asked to submit a self-report in English containing a detailed description of the university, the faculty and the study programmes. Along with the self-report, a number of additional documents were submitted, including detailed course syllabi, CVs of teaching faculty, comprehensive statistical data as well as relevant rules and regulations. All documents were submitted in English translation. By special request of the expert panel, examples of Master theses written in English of both study programmes were provided in the course of the two-day site visit in Moscow in November 2019.

In Moscow, the expert panel conducted separate interviews with the leadership board of the faculty, the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, academic supervisors and programme coordinators, teaching faculty, students, graduates and employers. Also, the experts were given a tour of the university campus, especially of the newly opened library in central Moscow.

This report is based on the experts' assessment of the self-report submitted by the university and on their findings during the site-visit. It will serve as a basis for the ZEvA Commission to decide on the accreditation of the university's study programmes. In the case of a positive decision by the Commission, ZEvA will award its quality seal for a limited time period, after which the university can reapply for accreditation.

The experts would like to thank all involved members of the HSE faculty and staff for the professional organization of the site visit and for the friendly reception at the HSE campus in Moscow.

1. Governance, Management and Profile of the University

1.1 Mission and Profile of the University and the Faculty

Within a period of only about 25 years, the Higher School of Economics (HSE) has developed into one of the most renowned higher education institutions of its kind in Russia and beyond. Since its establishment in the early 1990s, HSE has risen to the top league of Russian universities and – as one of about 30 universities – has been granted the status of a National Research University.

At present, about 44.000 students are enrolled at HSE. Apart from the main HSE campus in Moscow, smaller branch campuses have been opened in St. Petersburg, Perm and Nizhny Novgorod.

The university's core focus in research and teaching is still on Economics and Social Sciences, although the spectrum of disciplines has been constantly extended over the years, now including programmes in the humanities, engineering, physics and computer science. According to the self-report (p.7), HSE offers about 110 Bachelor's programmes and more than 170 Master's programmes at present.

In its development strategy dating from 2009, HSE has defined the following strategic goals (cf. self-report, pp. 12-13):

- *HSE will become one of the world's R&D (Research and Development) leaders in several advanced areas of socioeconomic science as well as in some areas of mathematics, computer science, and humanities;*
- *HSE will reorganize the teaching process to put more emphasis on students' individual work, reduce the teaching load on faculty members, and individualize learning trajectories;*
- *HSE will design and ensure world-level quality of teaching programmes and R&D work in areas where Russia is largely lagging behind the developed countries (for example, international finance, cognitive studies, economic analysis of law, quantitative methods and computer modeling in the socioeconomic sphere, knowledge management, and cliometrics), etc.;*
- *HSE will achieve world-level quality of all teaching programmes (this will include recognition of HSE programmes and courses by the leading foreign universities, having at least 50 percent of faculty members from each department and school publishing in international peer-reviewed journals, etc.);*
[...]
- *HSE will provide students with academic and extracurricular services required for efficient learning and personal development, as well as for successful careers, at the level of world's leading universities; [...]*

In the course of a large-scale structural reform in the year 2014, the academic units at HSE were re-organized into bigger faculties ("mega-faculties"), each one comprising a number of departments or schools. A major goal of this reform was to de-centralize the management structures of the university by assigning a higher degree of responsibility and decision-making powers to the collegial bodies at faculty level.

The study programmes in Law are offered by the Department of General and Interdisciplinary

Legal Studies which was established in 2018 as part of the Faculty of Law at HSE. The Department of General and Interdisciplinary Legal Studies encompasses disciplines previously housed in the former Chairs of Public and Private International Law, Labor Law and Social Security law, Theory and History of Law. Currently, the Department has about 90 faculty members, including 6 full professors and 10 associate and assistant professors teaching at the programmes evaluated. The Head of the Department is also Member of the HSE Academic Council.

On the HSE website, the university's mission is described as follows:

The Higher School of Economics is a research university that carries out its mission through academic, programming, peer review and sociocultural work based on international academic and organizational standards. We perceive ourselves as a part of the global academic community and believe that international partnership and engagement in global university cooperation are the key elements of our movement forward. As a Russian university, we work for the welfare of Russia and its citizens.

The basis of our work is theoretical and empirical research and the dissemination of knowledge. Without compromising the quality of research and not being limited to teaching fundamental disciplines, we seek to make a practical contribution to the building of a new Russia.

Our university is a community of faculty, staff members, graduate and undergraduate students who are distinguished by their deep commitment to supporting high academic standards in their work. We seek to guarantee that each member of our community has the most favourable conditions to develop.

Though at times we take different positions on a variety of historical and contemporary issues, we are united by the following common values:

- *striving for truth*
- *collaboration and commitment to one another*
- *honesty and openness*
- *academic freedom and political neutrality*
- *professionalism, self-discipline and accountability*
- *public engagement*

During the talks in Moscow strong emphasis was put on the fact that professional education in Law at HSE is about practical skills and a sound command of English as a foreign language. Hence, the Department puts a particular emphasis on a rigorous practical training and on enhancing students' capability for self-management and stress resilience. Graduates of the Department are to be able to compete with graduates from other high-profile Russian universities, especially in the realm of practicing the Law in international companies or governmental organizations. Accordingly, many of the Department's students and future graduates are already employed in the respective fields while being enrolled in the Master's programmes.

Experts' Appraisal

The on-site talks with the members of the HSE Vice Rector for academic affairs and the Dean of the Faculty of Law have confirmed that the Department of General and Interdisciplinary Legal Studies has developed its own distinctive institutional profile, which is closely in line with the general HSE strategy, but attaches particular importance to practical skills. These strategic cornerstones are also clearly reflected in the two programmes assessed here. However, the convincing outline of the development strategy of the Faculty of Law until 2024 should be formalized. This applies also to the internationalization strategy of the two study programmes and the Faculty of Law in general.

The competition between HSE and other leading Russian universities for the most attractive study programmes and the best students clearly has a positive effect on the general development of the institution and results in a convincing portfolio of state-of-the-art study programmes at the Faculty.

1.2 Internationalization

Increasing internationalization is a core strategic goal of both HSE as a whole and the Faculty of Law in particular. According to the self-report provided to the experts, the university's main objectives in internationalization are to:

- *strengthen the international profile and reputation of HSE,*
- *develop key international academic partnerships,*
- *achieve international excellence in teaching and research,*
- *increase and diversify the international body of faculty and students.*

In order to reach these objectives, HSE has decided upon a number of strategic initiatives which are contained in a general action plan ("Global Competitiveness Programme") launched in 2013. In the realm of teaching and learning, strategic measures include

- *Introduction of a new major-minor study model and a system of tutorial support (individualized learning trajectories)*
- *Increasing the use of English as the language of education and communication by expanding the range of courses and educational programs offered in English*
- *Widening the range of joint programmes and courses conducted in conjunction with top international universities*
- *Supporting greater student mobility and exchange*
- *Upgrade of programme content to meet international standards and employee expectations*
- *Development of preparatory courses affiliated with Master's programmes, as well as preparatory training courses for international students*
- *Creating mechanisms for attracting talented students to Master's and Ph.D. programmes, including a scholarship fund for international students, summer/winter*

schools, and Olympiad competitions.

Both in the self-report and during the talks in Moscow, the representatives of the Department took a rather critical view at the achievement of their objectives in internationalization. Especially from the leadership's point of view, the overarching goal of increasing the university's international reputation and visibility is not yet reached to a satisfying extent. The academic supervisors of the programmes mentioned that they were working on involving more exchange professors and organizing summer schools in order to add further international elements to the Masters' programmes.

The university's internal regulations ensure that credits earned abroad are recognized based on a learning agreement. Short-term mobility, like the participation in international moot courts, is encouraged and financially supported by the university. The full implementation of the Masters' programme "Law of International Trade, Finance and Economic Integration" in English since September 2019 is surely an important step in the overall internationalization process.

Employers reported that international experience was rather not perceived as a competitive advantage for job applicants. Moreover, the majority of the students interviewed on site stated that they preferred not to go abroad, as this may seriously interfere with their professional duties and may therefore constitute a serious risk to their employment situation.

Experts' Appraisal

The topic of internationalization was repeatedly and extensively discussed with HSE students, faculty and staff throughout the on-site talks in Moscow. As a result, the experts have gained the overall impression that HSE has already come a long way in enhancing its international profile – especially when keeping in mind that, like all Russian universities, HSE is facing considerable external challenges in this undertaking, including Federal Educational Standards, language barriers, financial obstacles, and not least a lack of solid, long-term relationships and networks with partners abroad. Additionally, the realm of Law is regulated by national legal standards, which might generally hinder internationalization endeavours. Without doubt, there is still need for optimization in some regards, but the general direction taken by the university is certainly promising. This also applies to the planned implementation of a double degree programme with a partner university, which was mentioned during the on-site-talks.

The experts see that given the circumstance that most students are already full-time employees, the international dimension of the study programmes should be rather measured by the number of incoming students rather than by the number of outgoings. The full implementation of the Master's programme "Law of International Trade, Finance and Economic Integration" in English in September 2019 is a useful asset in the university's efforts to attract more international students. In addition, both study programmes rather qualify for positions in international companies and organizations based in Russia, which explains that the majority of incoming students come from former Soviet countries. Nonetheless, the university provides organizational support and the opportunity to study abroad for one or two semesters. Interna-

tional Summer Schools are another helpful means to make short-term stays abroad possible for domestic students.

1.3 Teaching Faculty

Most of the teaching staff of the two Law Programmes is of Russian nationality. Moreover, most of them are also practitioners in the respective fields. Some teachers are currently enrolled as Ph.D. students or are graduates of HSE.

For each study programme HSE appoints an Academic Director or “Supervisor” from among the teaching faculty. The Academic Directors bear the main responsibility for the design and contents of the programme, and for the appointment and coordination of the teaching staff.

CVs of the core teaching faculty were submitted to the experts as part of the self-report. Also, the experts had the opportunity for talks with the Academic Supervisors of the programmes and other members of faculty during the site visit.

As a general rule, faculty members are employed on a temporary basis and have to undergo a process of internal re-evaluation (and re-application) on a regular basis. All professional activities of the staff members (research output/publications, results of course evaluation, projects, etc.) are included in the evaluation process. There is also an annual “Best Teacher Award” to reward particular excellence in teaching, which also comes with a financial bonus.

There are multiple options for further professional development. During the site visit the program “Teach for HSE” was mentioned, which is meant to increase the quality of teaching in general. There is another staff development programme in place, designed to enhance the use of digital tools and resources for teaching purposes.

The teaching staff in the “Private International Law” programme is primarily composed of practitioners, whereas the teachers in “Law of International Trade, Finance and Economic Integration” are more strongly rooted in academia. According to the information provided during the on-site talks, this is in line with the profile of the programmes and the common Russian understanding of these subject disciplines

Experts’ Appraisal

The experts were very impressed by the academic credentials, professionalism and motivation of the members of the teaching staff they met during the on-site talks in Moscow. The teachers and researchers at the Department of General and Interdisciplinary Legal Studies seemed very engaged and driven to connect high-quality teaching with the realities of working in the field.

It appears that the interaction between students and teachers is shaped by flat hierarchies and that the teaching staff strives to meet the needs of the students. Communication and interaction between teachers and students, as well as between teachers and administrative staff seems to be working very well. As far as the experts can see, there is a good match between the qualifications of the teaching faculty and the general profile of the study pro-

grammes.

The number of teaching staff at the Department also seems sufficient to the experts. However, they recommend recruiting more teaching staff from outside the pool of HSE graduates, as this might enhance the variety of teaching contents and methods in the long run.

The expert panel welcomes the plans to give longer contracts to the teaching staff in order to attract more qualified personnel and increase the quality of teaching.

1.4 Learning Environment and Student Support System

The infrastructure, resources and student services provided at HSE are described in detail in the self-report. In addition, the experts were given an extensive tour of the HSE premises in central Moscow, especially the central library which was opened only about three months ago on Pokrovsky Boulevard. In addition to that, the experts also visited the library of the Faculty of Law, which offers sources in Russian, English, French and other languages. Moreover, the experts got a chance to talk to some members of the administrative staff of the library as well as the programme coordinators and the International Coordinator of the faculty who are responsible for providing support and advice to students.

The main library comprises over 700,000 books and periodicals and is subscribed to approximately 400 Russian periodicals and 130 international journals. It is open 24/7. Approximately 500 workplaces are provided to the students for self-studying. According to the HSE website, the library provides access to a wide range of electronic resources, including e-books and journals, databases of peer-reviewed literature, patents, business data and other data collections. There are numerous workplaces for students on campus, as, for example, in the library or in separate rooms that are put at the students' disposal. Students mentioned that books are ordered by the library according to their needs and interests.

Student services include amongst others a career development center and a center for psychological counseling. HSE takes high efforts to create equal opportunities for students with disabilities. For instance, a social project was launched in 2016 with the aim of improving the learning environment for disabled students. As a general rule, disabled students can receive special assistance during the final state examination by using technical aids or by taking the exam in an alternative format. Student volunteers act as special consultants and tutors to disabled fellow students in order to support them in their academic progress. HSE takes further equal opportunities measures for the benefit of socially vulnerable or disadvantaged students: for instance, special scholarships or other forms of financial assistance are provided.

In all matters concerning programme-related administrative issues, students can approach the support staff at the responsible programme office. In all academic matters, they may turn to their lecturers or to the Academic Director of their programme, depending on the particular question.

Students can also contact the central Student Council or to the student councils at Faculty level for information and support. The members of this board are elected by the students in

order to represent their interests.

The alumni network seems to be vivid and working effectively. As was stated during the on-site talks, a lot of alumni stay in touch with HSE and distribute information about vacancies or internship openings at their current workplaces through the HSE network. On top of that, career fairs are held on campus twice a year.

Experts' Appraisal

The experts have come to the conclusion that the students of the Department of General and Interdisciplinary Legal Studies are provided with an excellent learning environment in Moscow. Infrastructure and equipment are modern and in very good condition, providing a motivating atmosphere and enough workspace for students. The central location of the campus is already a big advantage in itself. Teaching and learning methods appear modern and motivating, which was emphasized both by students and teachers. The overall atmosphere amongst students and staff seemed very collegial, open and engaged.

Volunteering as mentors or tutors also provides a great opportunity for students to further develop their social skills and prepares them for active citizenship. Teaching and learning at the Department of General and Interdisciplinary Legal Studies are clearly aimed at producing articulate, confident and independent personalities with highly developed self-management skills.

Considering all that, the experts were not surprised to find that the students and graduates of the Law programmes were very enthusiastic about their university and their studies and displayed a high level of satisfaction and commitment to their institution during the on-site talks.

1.5 Quality Assurance

The main responsibility for the quality of the study programmes lies with the Academic Director and with the so-called Academic Boards (one for each degree programme).

Various measures for the quality assurance and enhancement of teaching and learning have been implemented at HSE. These activities involve all relevant internal and external stakeholders, including students, teaching staff, employers and alumni. Students reported that they generally felt their voice was heard and that changes were implemented in response to their feedback, including modifications at class level.

HSE Moscow applies several instruments for the quality assurance and enhancement of teaching and learning. As a general rule, students evaluate each of their classes based on standardized survey questionnaires. The surveys serve to determine the students' level of satisfaction with the quality of their courses, programmes and teaching staff. It is compulsory for the students to evaluate their courses. If students do not participate in the evaluations, the student council is consulted. Lacking participation in evaluation can lead to a remark in the personal record or even to expulsion.

The results of the surveys are made available to the teachers and – in aggregated form – to

other interested parties within the university (as e.g. deans, academic supervisors and programme managers) and serve as a basis for the continuous improvement of the programmes. The questionnaires are relatively short and concise, comprising only about eight questions, but also free comment options.

In addition, students may also provide face-to-face feedback to their teachers or, in case of general complaints, use the so-called “Expressive Button” hotline. Via this anonymous hotline, participants in the educational process at all HSE campuses may provide all kinds of feedback, lodge complaints or queries, or give recommendations for improvement.

In case the general evaluation of a course turns out to be substantially below average (reaching only three out of a maximum of five points), the Heads of Departments are entitled to exclude lecturers from teaching a course.

On the other hand, HSE does not only apply sanctions for “substandard” evaluation results, but also a number of “moral” and financial incentives for particularly good teaching. These include an internal “Best Teacher Award” that also entails monthly supplements to the winning lecturer’s salary. In addition to that, the publication activity of the permanently employed teachers is evaluated annually. An automatic rating of the publication index is being conducted and made available to the teachers through their personal profile webpage. The publication index is not evaluated for practitioners.

The on-site talks have also shown that potential employers are often in close touch with the university, especially in the context of teaching and alumni networks, and hence provide a lot of informal input, too. On top of that, regular round tables with foreign professors and professors from other Russian universities, as well as with representatives from the Russian Ministry of Justice were mentioned.

These means of quality assurance are complemented by graduate surveys. One survey is annually conducted in September among graduates just after their graduation, followed by a second survey six months later. It contains questions about the graduates’ current salary, their satisfaction with their current employment situation or about whether the skills obtained at university are of use to them. This information is used for the further development of the study programmes.

According to the information provided on site, a nation-wide system of graduate monitoring will be established in Russia in 2020. HSE will of course participate in it and is currently taking part in the development of this national graduate monitoring system.

Experts’ Appraisal

During the on-site talks, the experts got the overall impression that quality assurance activities at the Faculty of Law basically fulfil their purpose. Students confirmed that their voice was usually heard, and that course evaluation led to noticeable changes and improvements. The “Expressive Button” hotline is also a good idea that seems to be working well in practice.

HSE makes use of a wide variety of instruments for the continuous monitoring and review of its programmes. Apart from written surveys, these also include the analysis of performance

indicators as e.g. dropout rates or the number and profile of applicants.

As regards course evaluation, the experts recommend expanding the survey questionnaires by additional questions, especially concerning student workload. It became clear during the on-site talks that this aspect still seems to be a “blind spot” in quality assurance. For the sake of educational quality, it would nonetheless be helpful to monitor it more closely, as course requirements do actually seem to be a challenge at times, especially since most students work full-time. As an alternative to integrating such questions into course evaluation, separate workload surveys at programme level may be another option.

Moreover, the experts recommend the use of a wider variety of formalized quality assurance mechanisms in order to ensure a high level of teaching quality. For example, regular student satisfaction surveys by means of guided interviews could be established.

Another particularly strong point is the tight network between the university and the employment market, which is especially facilitated by the compulsory internships and the high percentage of professionals among the teaching faculty. By repeatedly accepting HSE students as interns many employers stay in touch with the university on a permanent basis and get a chance to provide regular feedback not only on the performance of the interns, but on the study programmes in general. This serves the prime purpose of both study programmes: the preparation of graduates for the labour market.

1.6 Transparency and Public Information

All key information on the Department and its study programmes (intended learning outcomes, profile, contents, course syllabi, etc.) can be found on the HSE website, almost all of it in both English and Russian language. Also, there is extensive additional information available for international students, concerning, for example, admission regulations and exchange programs, possible sources of funding etc.

University-wide regulations on student assessment, term papers and theses, projects and internships are officially documented and accessible to students at all times. During the on-site-talks, the students mentioned that they were able to connect and engage in students' initiatives through the website.

Experts' Appraisal

The experts commend HSE on the high degree of transparency and easy accessibility of its website. For all enrolled students, maximum transparency regarding course requirements and assessment procedures is also warranted.

However, especially with regard to international students, it should be clearly indicated on the website that both study programmes are primarily directed at graduate students who hold a full-time working position. In order to be compatible to their professional schedules, classes are run during the evening and on Saturdays. Moreover, it should be clearly indicated that

II Evaluation Report of the Expert Panel

1 Governance, Management and Profile of the University

the content of the courses are mostly of practical nature, enabling students and graduates to work e.g. in international companies or organizations.

2. Assessment of the Study Programmes

2.1 Common Features and Strategic Dimension of the Programmes

General Structural Features

In terms of structure, the study programmes follow the Russian “4 + 2” model, which comprises four-year undergraduate programmes (240 credit points) and 2-year Master’s programmes (120 credit points). HSE was the first university in Russia to adopt this two-tier model and has now fully disestablished the pre-Bologna “specialist” programmes.

The study programmes are based both on Federal Educational Standards that are binding for all higher education institutions in the country, and on HSE’s own standards, which it is entitled to apply due to its status as a National Research University. The self-report names the following innovative features that distinguish HSE educational programmes from those offered by other universities (cf. p. 16):

- *General cycle of courses in all Bachelor’s programmes: taken by students from different departments, these courses are to broaden intellectual horizons and to cast a firm foundation for the development of a scientific worldview;*
- *Bachelor’s students get not only a specialized education in a selected area (Major), but can also choose a secondary specialization in a different area (Minor) to complement the Major;*
- *Master’s and Bachelor’s programmes offer a lot more research, project and internship activities than required by Federal Educational Standards.*

Methods of Teaching and Assessment

As already mentioned above, the Department of General and Interdisciplinary Legal Studies generally puts a very strong emphasis on providing students with practical skills, especially regarding the future demands of the labour market. Accordingly, practice plays a central role in all curricula. Students are taught to draw on practical skills both in the context of academic research and in non-academic professional environments. To this end, they regularly get involved in projects and internships/work placements inside and outside the university that give them the opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge in practice.

Apart from practice and self-management skills, the Department also places high value on developing students’ legal writing skills and their general capability of critical, analytical thought. Hence, besides traditional lectures, independent project work, business games, self-learning and regular paper-writing are of particular importance. In addition to that, compulsory internships, the participation in Moot courts and the involvement in research projects through research labs are part of the students’ learning experience. Some courses are fully or partly taught online via the platform Coursera.

The applied methods of student assessment are also very diverse, ranging from regular written assignments, research essays and text analyses to projects and presentations and of

course the final thesis. The thesis is reviewed by two persons, one holding an academic background and one coming from the practical field.

For each educational component, a detailed course syllabus is provided which describes the intended learning outcomes and contents of the course, the applied methods of teaching and assessment. A detailed reading list is included in each syllabus. All course syllabi were made available to the experts as part of the self-report and are also published on the university website.

The students reported that they received a detailed exam schedule at the beginning of each academic year in order to help them prepare well in advance.

Moreover, the university uses an anti-plagiarism software in order to detect copied text passages in the students' papers and theses. The documents are double checked in both Russian and English. Plagiarism may result in penalties or even expulsion from the university, depending on the particular case. As was mentioned during the talks on site by the Dean of the Faculty of Law, cases of expulsion due to plagiarism have happened in the past.

Experts' Appraisal

From the experts' point of view, the talks in Moscow have confirmed that both study programmes have so far been successful in reaching their educational goals. Graduates confirmed that studying at HSE had prepared them well for the requirements of work life. Both graduates and employers named drafting skills, fluent command of English and a committed working attitude as a particularly distinguishing feature of HSE graduates, along with the capability to do legal research. Scientific methods are not studied as an end in themselves, but in order to apply them to practical problems in a large variety of professional fields and contexts. In this respect, the internships, moot courts and business games seem to fulfil their function as central didactic elements very well. The panel commends the Department of General and Interdisciplinary Legal Studies on the coherent design of both study programmes, distinguished from other Law programmes offered at leading Russian universities. The target audience is very clear-cut.

The expert panel recommends, however, a stronger integration of scientific elements into both currently practice-oriented study programmes. The experts suggest that the implemented practical approach could benefit from a rather academic groundlayer in theory and methods. This might generally provide the students with a broader understanding of the creation of Law that goes beyond its mechanical application. In order to distinguish a high-ranking university programme targeting the international business and law scene from a professional school, the scientific foundations of law should be more visible. More focus on systematic foundations of private law, public law and criminal law could be expected for the outcome of analytical, critical and innovative thinking. Alternatively, courses in jurisprudence, economics or legal history could support these aspirations. More input on research methods could enable the students' ability to reflect upon legal cases.

The Vice Rector for Academic Affairs and the programme managers of both Master's programmes mentioned that they saw the capacities to enroll 60-70 students per year in each

programme. The expert panel principally agrees. In case of expansion of enrolment numbers, the panel recommends to reflect thoroughly upon the content of the study programmes in order to ensure their quality. A wider choice of electives could be a useful asset in case of a further increase in student numbers.

All in all, the assessment system seems fair and plannable for the students, regardless of their overall dense timeframe. The use of e-learning elements and distance learning seems well-considered from a didactic point of view. The internal discussion around the use of digital elements at HSE and the Faculty of Law seems vivid and leads to decisions that appear reasonable. The panel appreciates the application of the above mentioned anti-plagiarism software as a general standard procedure.

As far as the experts can see, the methods of teaching and assessment applied at the Department are adequate, well-balanced and in line with the educational goals of the programmes and courses. The experts particularly appreciate the Department's strong emphasis on dialogue and exchange between students and teachers.

2.2 Key Data

Annually, HSE offers 35 places on both programmes, of which 15 are state-funded, 10 are for fee-paying Russian students and 10 are for fee-paying international students.

Master's programme "Private International Law"

The "Private International Law" Master's programme was launched by the Faculty of Law in 2014. It aims at combining academic and practical elements as well as teaching methods of legal science and the comparative approach to the law. This includes comparative Conflicts of Law. It is taught in Russian, though some courses are offered in English. According to the self-report and the on-site talks, the increase of English-taught elements is foreseen.

In the academic year 2018 a total of about 43 students were enrolled of whom 50% were female and 5% came from abroad. The admission process is highly selective, as the number of applicants usually exceeds enrolment capacities by about 4 times. Amongst others, students are selected among the winners of the HSE Olympiad Competition for university students.

According to the self-report, the drop-out rate is relatively low. Between 2017 and 2019, an average of 7% of the students dropped out of the programme, and 97% of the students completed their studies in nominal time.

The majority of graduates are employed in Russian or international law firms, in the field of in-house counselling or government bodies. A smaller percentage works in advocacy or teaching. The career trajectories are monitored through graduate surveys.

Master's Programme "Law of International Trade, Finance and Economic Integration"

The "Law of International Trade, Finance and Economic Integration" Master's programme was launched by the Faculty of Law in 2016. When it was launched, about 20% of the clas-

ses were taught in English, since September 2019 it has been taught entirely in English. According to the self-report, it aims at meeting the “growing demand for lawyers from export-oriented and transnational companies, governmental bodies and international organizations.” (p. 60). This should be achieved through the implementation of a large share of courses on international law and international economic relations, an international team of course instructors and a focus on the applied aspects of international economic law in the form of project work.

In the academic year 2018 a total of 67 students were enrolled in the study programme. Around two thirds of the students were female and 10% came from abroad. The admission process is highly selective, as the number of applicants usually exceeds enrolment capacities by about 3.5 times. Amongst others, students are selected among the winners of the HSE Olympiad Competition for university students.

According to the self-report, the average dropout rate lay at around 12% within the last three years.

The majority of graduates are employed in the field of in-house counselling, in Russian or international law firms. About 25% of the graduates continue their professional careers in government agencies or teaching.

2.3 Intended Learning Outcomes

The university has defined Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) for the Master’s programmes. They are rooted both in the Federal Educational Standards and in the HSE standards. The ILOs include *Universal, General Professional and Professional Learning Outcomes*. All three categories cover academic research skills as well as soft skills and professional/management skills, with a clear focus on practical aspects.

Master’s programme “Private International Law”

According to the self-report of HSE University (cf. p. 46), the mission of the programme is

“to train qualified specialists who can (1) draft legal opinions on different matters of business activities with foreign element, (2) represent companies in their negotiations with foreign companies – counter-parties, (3) draft contracts in accordance with Russian and foreign law, including jurisdiction clauses (prorogation and arbitration agreements), (4) elaborate the foundation documents of companies and internal documents of companies, (5) organize general meetings of shareholders and prepare due documentation, (6) represent customers in courts and arbitration tribunals, including filing of actions, preservations of proofs, participation in proceeding, and (7) draft high-quality analytical and other documents.”

Amongst others, graduates of the programme should be able to “systematize, draw up and present legal information as a result of professional activity using methods, methodology and techniques of presentation”, “prepare and submit draft analytical documents in accordance with the relevant regulations, distributing them according to their legal force”, and “collect,

process and interpret data necessary for forming judgements on various types of problems on the basis of their legal analysis”.

Professional and soft skills include the ability to communicate and interact in a multilateral environment, to take management decisions and to plan and organize professional research and meetings.

Master’s Programme “Law of International Trade, Finance and Economic Integration”

Just like the above mentioned Masters’ programme “Private International Law”, the Masters’ programme “Law of International Trade, Finance and Economic Integration” is strongly tailored to the demands of the labour market.

According to the self-report of HSE University (cf. p. 62), the mission of the programme is:

“to train qualified specialists with (1) fundamental knowledge of the legal regulation in the sphere of international economic law: general public international law, law of international treaties and international organisations, (2) ability to participate in international negotiations and litigation, (3) analytical skills in monitoring and evaluation of changes in national and international regulation of transboundary movement of goods, services and capital, (4) competence in development of proposals on national and international regulation on international trade, finance and integration, (5) expertise in drafting and interpretation of international treaties and national legislation, (6) command and fluency in English in professional career, and (7) ability to scientific research and professional training.”

Graduates of the programme should for example be able to “disseminate legal knowledge, advise employees of management bodies, enterprises, institutions and organizations in dealing with issues of their activity”, “identify the needs and interests of society and its individual groups, to offer mechanisms for their coordination with the legal argumentation”, and “assess the legal consequences of program and project activities of management bodies; to carry out legal expertise of programs, projects, normative and legal acts, methodological materials”.

Professional and soft skills include the ability to communicate and interact in a multilateral and multicultural environment and to systematize, draw up and present legal information.

Experts’ Appraisal

From the experts’ point of view, the intended learning outcomes are formulated in a very detailed, yet precise manner and fully match the actual profiles of the programmes. The intended learning outcomes are closely aligned with the taxonomies of the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area. It becomes clear from the descriptions that the programmes prepare young lawyers for the requirements of the local and international labour market. Especially graduates of the Master’s programme “Law of International Trade, Finance and Economic Integration” are competitive on the international labour market since the programme is fully implemented in English. Graduates of both programmes appear to be in high demand on the labour market, thus the programme seems to fulfil its purpose effectively.

Due to their dense schedules, students are not only to gain the skill sets mentioned in the Intended Learning Outcomes, but also develop resilience to stress and good self-management skills.

2.4 Contents and Profile of the Programmes

Master's programme "Private International Law"

For students who did not study law in their Bachelor's programmes before, the introductory course "Theory of Law" is compulsory.

During the first year, students attend a number of courses that belong to a "general cycle" or "block" within the curriculum which is meant to provide students with a solid basis of knowledge about the "contemporary problems of law in the field of private international law" (taught entirely in Russian).

First year core courses include units on international civil procedure, property in private international law, bankruptcies and international investment law. This core curriculum is complemented by electives covering topics such as the evolution of private international law, international intellectual property law, European business law and one course from the general, university-wide "Mago Lego" pool of free electives.

In addition, the first year curriculum includes a cycle of research projects and research work. Students are engaged in various research seminars, covering topics like international contract law, international transport law, securities and derivatives or the structuring of international commercial transactions.

The second year begins with another cycle of internships and research work. Students can specialize depending on the electives they choose in international banking law, international commercial arbitration or European business law. Their research internships are accompanied by seminars with titles such as "mergers and acquisitions in private international law", "resolutions of international commercial and investment disputes" and "international tax planning: legal aspects". This cycle also serves as a preparation phase for the master dissertation.

The programme finishes with the Final State Certification exam which includes the preparation and defense of the Master's thesis.

During the visit in Moscow, students reported that they could take exams in English, even if the course was taught in Russian. They perceived this as a big advantage and opportunity to further develop their proficiency in English.

Master's Programme "Law of International Trade, Finance and Economic Integration"

For students who do not hold a university degree in Law, the introductory course "Theory of law" is compulsory.

During the first year, all students attend the compulsory introductory course "international

economic law: problem-oriented approach”. This course is followed by a cycle of core courses combined with electives. It is also referred to as the “specialization cycle”. It includes courses on European Union law, the law and jurisprudence of the World Trade Organization, international investment law, labor and migration law and legal writing/research methods. This core curriculum is complemented by electives on European business law and from the general, university-wide “Mago Lego” pool of free electives.

The first-year curriculum is complemented by a cycle of research projects and research work. According to the curriculum, students are engaged in various research seminars, covering topics like international trade, global finance and sustainable development, international regulation of the protection of intellectual property and information and the law of international treaties. These two cycles compose the first year of study in the Law of International Trade programme.

The second year begins with another cycle of general and elective courses, for example on anti-money laundering regulations, financing of terrorism and corruption, foreign investment and protection of national security or negotiations and resolution of international economic disputes. This cycle is complemented by internships and research work. The compulsory internship is accompanied by research seminars on the law of the Eurasian economic union and compliance procedures in international trade. This cycle also serves as preparation phase for the master dissertation which is defended in the fourth cycle.

Just like in the above mentioned Master’s Programme “Private International Law”, the programme finishes with the Final State Certification exam, which includes the preparation and defense of a Master’s thesis.

The students reported that the programme allowed them to follow their individual interests, for example through the possibility to take additional online courses offered by HSE. These courses are not credited, but are listed on the graduation diploma.

Experts’ Appraisal

As already mentioned above, the experts fully embrace the overall profile and concept of both Master’s Programmes. With a view to the formulated objectives and intended learning outcomes, the curricula are designed in a convincing and plausible way, offering a good balance of mandatory and elective courses and thus enabling student-centred learning.

The entry qualifications of the students are taken into account. The dense timeframe of the programmes, often topped up with professional activities of the students during the day, seem to be coupled with a high level of flexibility. This seems to meet the students’ needs and creates a general “atmosphere of comfort”, as it was put by the students during the on-site talks.

The experts have no doubt that the programme “Private International Law” fulfils its central goal of preparing students for future careers as lawyers, consultants or advocates in companies and ministries. The same applies for the study programme “Law of International Trade, Finance and Economic Integration” which qualifies for careers as lawyers, consultants or advocates in international companies or ministries.

However, the programme titles do not seem to fully comply with the content of the courses.

From the experts' point of view the programme "Private International Law" is rather focused on International/Business Economic Law while excluding other elements that are generally considered part of Private Law, e.g. Family Law, Inheritance Law or Tort Law. However, the panel concludes that the programme title doesn't need to be changed. They rather recommend that the actual profile of the programme should be made more transparent for future students, as for example on the website of HSE.

With regard to offering more aspects from the field of Private International Law, the range of elective courses and also the "Mago Lego"-pool could be extended. The already planned inclusion of international heritage law and notary law into the curriculum of "Private International Law" during the upcoming academic year proves the vivid and reflected development of the study programmes by the academic board. The inclusion of Family Law, Inheritance Law and Tort Law to the electives could be a further useful asset due to its importance for the traditional field of Conflicts of Law.

Just like for the "Private International Law" programme, the expert panel recommends making the profile and contents of the study programme "Law of International Trade, Finance and Economic Integration" more transparent for applicants and the general public. It should be particularly drawn out that public law is a central component of the programme.

The courses on offer of course also depend on whether qualified teaching staff is available.

All in all, the structure and content of the Masters' programmes are well-considered and convincing.

2.5 Summary of the Experts' Findings

The expert panel commends the HSE and the Faculty of Law on the design of two state-of-the-art Law programmes. The curricula are coherently structured and their implementation is convincing. The teaching body and students seemed enthusiastic about their tasks. The high workload is perceived as a chance for personal development and useful preparation for a future career in the realm of international law. The focus on the practical components during the educational process is highly welcomed by the employers who reported that graduates of both study programmes meet their demands. The study programmes are backed up by a system of quality assurance which is fit for purpose but might benefit from an enhancement. Further assets of the programmes are the new, modern library and state-of-the-art infrastructure.

III Appendix

1 Statement of the University in Response to the Expert Report

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Report comments

Both programmes would like to express their gratitude to the ZEVA accreditation office and the Expert Panel for the brilliant work either with the documents submitted by us, or in the course of site visit. We carefully read the Report on the Accreditation of Study Programmes and we do not have any objections, but we would like to clarify some points.

1) on the front page we ask to change the name of degree for both programmes from M.A. to LL.M., because the full name of degree in Russian is Master of Law which in western academic tradition corresponds to LL.M. (Master of Laws);

2) on page I-4, item 2.1.1 the second, third, sixth and seventh recommendations will be implemented better by us after adoption of the following document expected soon: The Strategy of the HSE Development up to 2030 (comment for the future work);

3) on pages II-2 and II-3 “the Department of General and Interdisciplinary Legal Studies” was inserted instead of “the School of Civil Law”, because we do not have the School, we have the Department within which both programmes are run; the Department has about 90 faculty members, including 6 full professors and 10 associate and assistant professors teaching at the programmes evaluated;

4) on pages II-4 “the Department of General and Interdisciplinary Legal Studies” was inserted instead of “the School of Civil Law” and “Faculty” instead of School;

5) on pages II-5 “the Department” was inserted instead of “the School”;

6) on pages II-6 “the Department of General and Interdisciplinary Legal Studies” was inserted instead of “the School of Civil Law”, “the Department” was inserted instead of “the School”;

7) on pages II-7 “the Faculty” was inserted instead of “the programmes”, because the student councils exist at Faculty level, not at programme level;

8) on pages II-8 “the Department of General and Interdisciplinary Legal Studies” was inserted instead of “the School of Civil Law” and “Academic” instead of “Programme” in correspondence with a correct “academic board” mentioning on page II-18;

9) on pages II-10 “the Department” was inserted instead of “the School”;

10) on pages II-11 “the Department of General and Interdisciplinary Legal Studies” was inserted instead of “the School of Civil Law” and “the Department” was inserted instead of “the School”;

11) on pages II-12 “the Department of General and Interdisciplinary Legal Studies”

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was inserted instead of “the School of Civil Law”;

12) on pages II-13 “the Department” was inserted instead of “the School”;

All corrections made were highlighted in order to make them more visible.

We have already started to implement recommendations of the Expert Panel, e.g., we are currently working on student satisfaction survey questionnaire specifically for our programmes with focus on monitoring of the student workload along with the quality of teaching.

With great respect and gratitude, Natalia Erpyleva, academic supervisor of PIL programme.

27 January 2020