



Agency for
Quality Assurance
and Accreditation
Austria

Accreditation Report of the Bachelor-Programme „International Relations“

University of International Business

3 February 2016

Index

| | | |
|----------|---|-----------|
| 1 | General Information | 3 |
| 1.1 | Basic principles of the procedure | 3 |
| 1.2 | Information on the study program and brief description of University of International Business5 | |
| 1.3 | Accreditation procedure at University of International Business..... | 6 |
| 2 | Assessment results | 7 |
| 2.1 | Standard 1: Study programme and programme management..... | 7 |
| 2.2 | Standard 2: Staff | 12 |
| 2.3 | Standard 3: Quality assurance | 13 |
| 2.4 | Standard 4: Funding and infrastructure | 15 |
| 2.5 | Standard 5: Research and development and appreciation of the arts | 16 |
| 2.6 | Standard 6: National and international co-operations | 17 |
| 3 | Summary of results | 19 |
| 3.1 | Final assessment | 19 |
| 3.2 | Recommendations of the Panel | 20 |

1 General Information

1.1 Basic principles of the procedure

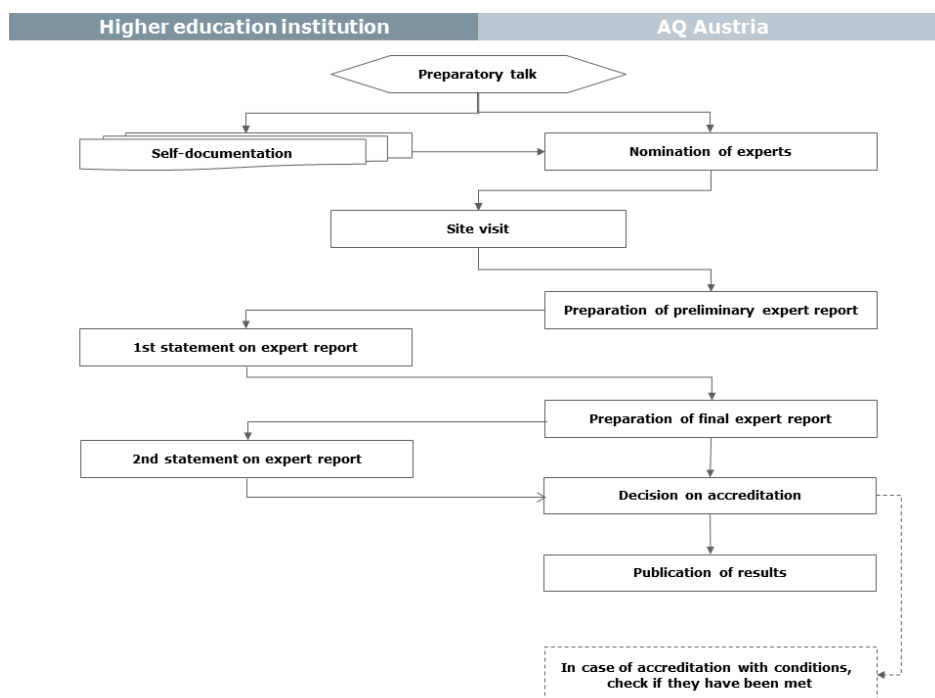
AQ Austria is the Austrian agency for quality assurance and accreditation in higher education. The agency is operating in Austria and other countries of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). It is committed to serving the common good and is based on the values of the European Higher Education Area, in particular the autonomy and diversity of higher education institutions and independent quality assurance.

AQ Austria has been admitted to the “Register of accreditation agencies” by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan to carry out accreditation procedures of study programmes at higher education institutions in Kazakhstan.

By granting international accreditation to a study programme, AQ Austria confirms the compliance of the study programme with European quality standards. These standards are derived from the principles laid down in the Bologna Process and the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ESG).

- Standard 1 Study programme and programme management
- Standard 2 Staff
- Standard 3 Quality assurance
- Standard 4 Funding and infrastructure
- Standard 5 Research and development and appreciation of the arts
- Standard 6 National and international cooperation

The accreditation pursues the principles of peer review and follows the procedural steps:



The accreditation report of the Panel and the higher education institution's statement constitute the basis for the accreditation decision, which is taken by the 14-members-board of AQ Austria. There are three options for the decision:

Accreditation without conditions

The quality requirements are being met. Any recommendations given on the basis of expert opinion are supposed to help the higher education institution to continuously develop the study programme. The agency grants the accreditation for a period of six years.

Accreditation with conditions

Deficiencies have been detected which are likely to be corrected within nine months. The higher education institution proves that the conditions have been met, and this will be verified by AQ Austria.

Denial of accreditation

Serious deficiencies have been detected which are not likely to be corrected within nine months.

If the accreditation decision is positive, AQ Austria will issue a certificate to the higher education institution.

1.2 Information on the study program and brief description of University of International Business

| Name of the programme | International Relations |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Academic degree awarded | Bachelor |
| Date of introduction | 2010 |
| Regular study period | 8 semester/ 4 years |
| Number of ECTS credits and Kazakh credits | 251 ECTS credits / 138 Kazakh credits |

Information about UIB (provided by UIB):

University of International Business was created in 1992 as the (then) School of International Business. It obtained university rights in 2000 and then changed its name to UIB,.

Today, the institution has degree awarding powers, granted to UIB by the Kazakhstan Ministry of Higher Education and Science in:

- 24 Bachelor degrees, of which 19 are standard degrees following Ministerial norms/formats and 5 are "experimental licenses" for unique degrees developed by UIB for 2015-2016;
- 11 Master degrees;
- MBA degree;
- 3 PhD programmes.

The programmes are operated in Kazakh, Russian, English Bachelor degrees are 4 years in length, while master programmes have two modes: 1-year ("profile") for students progressing from the same Bachelor degree and a 2-year ("pedagogic") for student changing degrees and those wishing to pursue an academic future.

The university educates approx. 2500 students across its entire range of programmes.

UIB has two Faculties that host its range of degrees:

- Faculty of Economics & Accounting, which hosts Department Economics & Management (...) and Department of Journalism & International Relations.
- Faculty of Information Technologies & Finance, which hosts the Department of Finance & Credit (...) and the Department of Marketing & Information Systems.

Education is tuition-based, but UIB successfully applies each year to receive several dozen governmental scholarships, as well as awarding internal scholarships to the best or most disadvantaged students (performance-based or social-based). Similarly each year UIB successfully applies for Ministry-issued research funding.

1.3 Accreditation procedure at University of International Business

Timetable of the accreditation procedure

| Procedural step | Date |
|--|-------------------|
| Delivery of self-evaluation report by UIB | 4 November 2015 |
| Decision on Panel members by the Board of AQ Austria | 2 October 2015 |
| Preparatory Skype meeting of the Panel | 20 November 2015 |
| Site-visit to UIB by the Panel | 2-3 December 2015 |
| Draft report of the Panel | 21 December 2015 |
| Formal statement by UIB | 18 January 2016 |
| Final report of the Panel | 03 February 2016 |
| Statement on the final report by UIB | 18 February 2016 |
| Accreditation decision by the Board of AQ Austria | 11/12 May 2016 |

Members of the Panel

| Name | Institution | Role |
|---|--|---|
| Ass. Prof. Dr hab. Dorota Pietrzyk-Reeves , | Institute of Political Science and International Relations, Jagiellonian University in Krakow | Peer from academia and head of the Panel |
| Yerbol Modakassimov | JSC 'Information-Analytical Center' under the Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan | Peer with professional practice Peer from Kazakhstan |
| Michael Schabhüttl | University of Graz | Student peer |

AQ Austria coordinator

Barbara Schinwald

2 Assessment results

2.1 Standard 1: Study programme and programme management

Study programme and programme management

- 1.1 The study programme is aligned with the objectives of the institution and is logically connected with its strategies and goals.
- 1.2 The qualification objectives of the study programme (learning outcomes of the study programme) have been clearly defined and meet the technical, scientific and professional requirements and are in accordance with the respective levels of the qualification framework of the European Higher Education Area.
- 1.3 The contents, structure and scope of and teaching methods applied to the curriculum and the modules meet the technical, scientific and professional requirements and are suited to achieve the intended learning outcomes.
- 1.4 The application of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is appropriate and plausible. It meets the recommendations of the European Commission¹.
- 1.5 The study programme is structured consistently with regard to formulated qualification objectives.
- 1.6 The students' workload required for the study programme is devised in a way so as to allow them to reach the aspired qualification objectives in the study period specified.
- 1.7 The examination methods are suitable to assess whether the defined learning outcomes have been achieved.
- 1.8 Issuance of a diploma supplement is guaranteed.
- 1.9 Admission requirements for the study programme are clearly defined, meet the statutory requirements and contribute to achieving the educational goals of the study programme. Recognition rules for external achievements pursuant to the Lisbon Recognition Convention² and achievements outside of higher education institutions have been defined.
- 1.10 If e-learning, blended learning and distance learning are part of the programme, suitable didactic, technical, organisational and financial preconditions have been created to ensure the achievement of the study programme's qualification objectives.
- 1.11 *If applicable:* The organisation of the study programme and the workload of a part-time study programme can be reconciled with a regular job.
- 1.12 *If applicable:* Placements form an educationally relevant part of the curriculum. The job profile, the selection, support and assessment of placements contribute to achieving the study programme's qualification objectives.
- 1.13 *not applicable*
- 1.14 *not applicable*

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/ects/guide_en.pdf (ECTS Users' Guide)

² Applicable to states that have ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention and where it has come into force. See: <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/ChercheSig.asp?NT=165&CM=1&DF=07/10/2009&CL=ENG>

1.1. The Bachelor programme International Relations established in 2010 is well defined by the applying institution as playing a vital role in the future development of the University of International Business (UIB). Its aim is to provide a university degree that should be widely sought in today's Kazakhstan with its resource-based-economy and strategic position in Central Asia (UIB is aiming at establishing a leading position in certain degree programmes/university disciplines in Kazakhstan). The four year-long programme is skill-oriented and aims at providing not only theoretical, but also practical knowledge of international relations and global processes as well as various types of trainings (internships).

The programme seems to be well-integrated with the strategy of UIB development which includes building strong linkages with business and industry, as well as focusing more and more on academic research, international cooperation and a broad curriculum that reflects major concerns of today's world. The UIB objectives are clearly defined and include focus on students' development in terms of both knowledge and wide-ranging and professional skills as well as research and learning competencies.

The University also aims at assuring high quality of the whole study process through implementation of international standards, new technologies and suitable teaching methods. The IR degree is supposed to further reflect the implementation of these objectives.

Recommendation:

The BA-programme would benefit if the University offered a follow-up MA degree in International Relations. If it aims at educating future diplomats, negotiators and IR specialists, the BA-programme can only be treated as a preliminary stage in an international or diplomatic career-building track.

1.2. Learning outcomes of the IR BA-programme are defined in accordance with the state standards as approved by the Kazakhstan Ministry of Higher Education and Science and refer to Dublin Descriptors. These are defined as qualification descriptors designed as general statements of the typical achievement of learners who have obtained a qualification on successful completion of a cycle of studies.³ They include the following categories: 1. Knowledge and understanding; 2. Applying knowledge and understanding; 3. Making judgements; 4. Communication; 5. Learning skills. Learning outcomes are statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and be able to do at the end of a period of learning. Learning outcomes include three categories: knowledge, skills and wider competences.

It is stressed in the UIB application that the learning outcomes for the Bachelor programme in IR have been defined in accordance with Kazakhstan regulations. The list of learning outcomes includes five groups (in accordance with the Dublin Descriptors): 1) Knowledge and understanding; 2) Applying knowledge and understanding; 3) Making judgements; 4) Communication; 5) Learning skills. It sounds like UIB uses interchangeably the terms 'level descriptors' and 'learning outcomes'.

The course syllabi developed for the IR programme provide quite substantial lists of learning outcomes (descriptors), but without further indication how each learning outcome is to be accomplished by the students.

³ Shared Dublin Descriptors for the Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral Awards (2004), p. 4.

Recommendation:

The revision of the IR programme learning outcomes which UIB plans for 2015-2016 should pay close attention to the requirements of the respective level of qualification framework of the European Higher Education Area. It should aim at providing information on how the accomplishment of each learning outcome is to be checked (exam, presentation, essay etc.).

1.3. The Curriculum of the programme is to a large extent determined by the state regulations, especially all fundamental and core subjects defined by the Ministry of Higher Education and Science, but the UIB department of IR takes a lot of effort to introduce new courses that respond to students' interests and needs when it comes to knowledge of contemporary international processes and challenges (eg. courses: Oil Factor in IR, Management of Energy Resources, and Process of Global Integration). Course syllabi are well developed and detailed. They include short course description ("the aim of the module"), intended learning outcomes (which, however, seem not to differ too much between different courses), content of the module, learning and teaching methods, assignments, assessment, core literature, and supplementary literature. This consistency definitely helps the students to achieve their learning outcomes.

It was suggested during interviews that the teaching methods allow not only acquiring knowledge, but also various skills and that they are adequate to the content of their modules. However, the major problem that we have noticed concerns core and additional literature that is included in the syllabi, which leads us to formulating our first condition (see below).

Graduation requirements include a bachelor thesis whose form and requirements are broadly defined by the University, state examination and defence of the bachelor thesis. They should be more clearly defined in the BA-programme description. Only upon several interviews it was possible to determine how exactly the process of the final graduation works.

1.4. UIB implemented two different credit systems, the Kazakh own credit system as well as the equivalent European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). They are not easily compatible. Kazakh Ministry-approved a table of conversion between Kazakh credits and ECTS whereby 1 KZ equals 2 ECTS, 2 KZ equals 3 ECTS and 3 KZ equals 5 ECTS. This in a way limits further implementation of ECTS, and provides a stiff structure which should be modified in the future. 1 KZ credit (2 ECTS according to Kazakh conversion) requires 15 hours of classes. Thus we need to assume that the total amount of contact and non-contact hours is 50-60 hours for 1 KZ credit. But if 2 KZ equal 3 ECTS then the amount of student work is now between 75-90 hours. This suggests that further work is needed to implement the Bologna process requirements at the state level.

Recommendation:

Kazakh credit system should be modified at the ministry level to allow full implementation of the European Credit Transfer System.

1.5. There are three different types of courses taught: fundamental and core modules determined by the state regulations, elective modules determined by the UIB (students and lecturers of the programme) as well as profile modules and two foreign languages. The BA-programme structure is logical and introduces the most fundamental, introductory and general courses in years one and two while adding more specific and elective courses in years three and four. It might help in the future to offer some kind of specializations (two initially) so that students can focus on eg. diplomacy or security or international development.

The programme also includes three types of internship that are linked with the programme objectives and its focus on skills and practical knowledge. For that purpose UIB seek to employ specialists/practitioners who teach certain modules, for example former

ambassadors or other members of diplomatic service of Kazakhstan who teach courses on diplomacy.

1.6. The student's workload required is not clearly defined in the syllabi in terms of number of hours, we can only assume how much work is needed to achieve each component of each module as indicated by the number of KZ credits and ECTS. Students are given several different assignments to complete each module which indicates that the workload is sufficient to reach the aspired qualification objectives.

During interviews we have learned that the required student workload is adequate, and it was also indicated that different forms as assignments allow students to acquire and practice different skills as described in the syllabi.

Most resources, such as lecture notes, lecturers' presentations and various readings needed for studying on each module are available through the Moodle online teaching platform. Students also use the UIB library, especially for the purpose of preparing various course assignments. Extensive work is required upon programme completion (diploma thesis) which includes pre-diploma defence based on the planned work outline to ensure that the work that is being prepared meets all necessary standards.

1.7. The examination methods used by the lecturers include mid-term and final exams of either written (mainly) or oral form, group projects, presentations, seminar discussion, various in-class assignments, essays, 'opinion papers' and reviews. The difference between an essay and a review is not clearly explained in the syllabi. Most syllabi provide very helpful criteria on how different types of assignments, eg. presentations will be graded, what key components need to be taken into consideration while preparing them. The methods seem to be more or less adequate to assess whether defined learning outcomes have been achieved. It would help, however, if the syllabi specified clearly which learning outcome is supposed to be achieved with each method of assessment.

Forms of exams are dealt with by the Faculty Academic and Methodical Council a cross-faculty body, where all academic subdivisions are represented and decisions are made regarding university-wide academic policies as well as narrower, regarding Departments, degrees and courses. AMC members are operational managers of the academic section (Deans, Department Heads), representatives of lecturers, students and academic administrators. The AMC focuses, among other things, on the development of teaching methods.

1.8. Issuance of diploma supplement is guaranteed to each student. It is issued in three languages: Russian, Kazakh and English. During interviews we have been provided a sample of the diploma supplement. Each diploma supplement includes information on all internships, a list of all modules taken during the entire course of studies and the grades earned, total number of credits/ECTS, the title of bachelor thesis, all final grades including state examination and defence of the thesis.

1.9. Admission requirements are to a large extent defined by the state regulations. UIB follows the standards set by the Kazakhstan Ministry of Higher Education and Science which require the following: completion of secondary education and high school diploma, successful completion of the nationwide university entrance examination which takes place in June and has a form of electronic test in four general subjects as well as in a fifth subject chosen by UIB. For IR candidates the fifth required subject is a foreign language (students usually take English). For different language tracks that IR students choose candidates are required to provide a language certificate or they are examined in a written form (test) and an oral form (interview) to assess their language skills.

Candidates for BA-programmes who completed a foreign education and are citizens of Kazakhstan need to pass the state university entrance examination. Those who are not citizens of Kazakhstan must acquire nostrification of their previous educational credentials from the Ministry's Centre for Bologna Process. The selection of candidates suitable for the IR programme is not very flexible, but it is assumed by the University that candidates have sufficient knowledge of the nature, scope and character of the BA programme they are applying for. To that purpose UIB engages in various promotional campaigns to attract suitable candidates

Foreign diplomas are recognized upon the process of nostrification. Introduction of ECTS and Kazakh credits comparison method allows for recognition of credits – ECTS in particular – earned abroad.

It is unclear whether UIB implemented rules for recognition of achievements that come from outside of higher education institutions.

1.10. *Not applicable.*

Recommendation:

The UIB Moodle online teaching platform could help in the future to develop some forms of e-learning at the UIB.

1.11. *Not applicable.*

1.12. Placements (internships) seem to play significant role during the whole process of studies and are supposed to contribute substantially to achieving the IR programme qualification objectives. All students are required to complete three different types of internship during the course of studies which include: academic internship during the second year, professional internship during the third year, and pre-diploma internship during the fourth year. The University offers placements on the basis of signed agreements with various state and cultural institutions as well as companies. Each internship is documented with a report that needs to be approved by the University upon its completion.

It is difficult to evaluate whether pre-diploma internship during the final semester does allow for "complete integration of received knowledge with organizational practice and provides students with research opportunities for writing of the dissertation" as it is formulated in the UIB Accreditation application. The list of approved IR topics for bachelor theses that we received suggests that in many cases such opportunity cannot be easily available (eg. what kind of internship would allow a student to research the topic 'Israeli-Palestinian conflict' or "The Asia-Pacific region in current global world"?).

As we were informed, internships sometimes help to find permanent or temporary employment after graduation.

The UIB maintains an internship database of institutions and companies with which the University has signed agreements of cooperation, but students can also apply to other institutions of their choice providing their profile falls within the IR degree profile. UIBs Career Centre is responsible for the signing of internship contracts between the University, the host and the students, and monitors the effectiveness of undertaken internships.

(a) Statements

- This standard is of crucial importance for the assessment of the whole programme.
- Most of its components are implemented to a relatively good standard; however, there are some aspects of the study programme that require improvement.

- Programme management seems to be satisfactory; its content is slightly more problematic due to stiff state regulations that limit further development of the core subjects taught and thus specializations.

(b) Assessments

- The Panel agree that the standard is *partially met* subject to the following

condition:

All syllabi should be checked carefully when it comes to core literature/reading lists used for each course to ensure that the list given includes not only relevant academic textbooks and articles, but also those which are up to date and recognized internationally (especially textbooks in English). They must strictly correspond with the content of the course. The current syllabi include hardly any academic articles which for an IR programme are a necessary sources of knowledge on current international processes and challenges.

Accordingly, the list of all core readings should be revised and updated in the syllabi, and library access to classical subject textbooks by world-recognized scholars studied internationally should be provided. The lists of core readings should also include academic articles accessible through electronic journals databases already available at UIB. This is necessary if UIB aspires at bringing in international level knowledge and "globalizing its curriculum".

The UIB should also consider fulfilling the above recommendations of the Panel.

2.2 Standard 2: Staff

| Staff | |
|--------------|---|
| 2.1 | A sufficient number of scientific or artistic teaching and research staff is available for the study programme, who are scientifically qualified, have adequate vocational experience and are qualified in terms of their teaching methods. |
| 2.2 | The composition of the faculty meets the requirements of a profound scientific and artistic education and ensures adequate student support. |
| 2.3 | Teaching and research staff have access to human resource development and further education measures. |

2.1. UIB management and especially the Head of the Department make sure that each year they have sufficient number of teaching staff to provide all IR courses. They also meet the Kazakhstan Ministry of Higher Education and Science provision and requirements when it comes to a "core staff minimum". All vacancies are advertised in accordance with Kazakhstan law. Some members of teaching staff are experts who teach in two languages. 68% of the teaching faculty have a PhD or higher degree, around 30% are full-time professors.

New members of staff are employed upon a careful process of selection that includes detailed questionnaires' and interviews (first with the Head of the Department and upon his or her recommendation with the senior management panel). Recently, upon implementation of three-year long contract policy (Ministry requirement) all members of staff went through a review process to ensure the quality of teaching and research.

The University seeks to employ more specialists in different areas of IR which would be essential if the plans to develop BA specializations and an MA degree in IR are going to be implemented.

We have gathered a lot of information from UIB documentation as well as during interviews about various professional trainings that the members of staff are involved in. There is also significant involvement of students when it comes to assessment of courses and teaching methods.

2.2. The teaching staff on the IR programme come from different departments of UIB, but it does help to make sure that the qualification requirements of the BA-programme are met and students are provided with knowledge and expertise in various core disciplines that the programme comprises of as well as with language instruction which is provided by the language department at UIB. Students' feedback (assessment forms) available at the end of each semester help enhance teaching quality and meeting student's needs and expectations.

2.3. UIB provides access to human resource development. This includes favourable teaching arrangements (limited number of teaching hours) for those who are completing their PhD degrees. Teaching staff are provided with financial resources which they can apply for when they plan to attend conferences, publish articles or books, or attend professional trainings.

There are also internal trainings available as well as workshops on teaching and research methods that involve invited speakers, usually from abroad, who can share their experience and expertise in both teaching and research.

Members of the teaching staff meet regularly in order to discuss their study methods and various quality assurance measures.

(a) Statements

- The composition of the teaching staff for the IR programme is adequate and meets academic requirements.
- Lecturers are working as a team to ensure the quality of the programme as well as their professional development with some support from the UIB.

(b) Assessments

- The panel agree that this standard *is met*.

Recommendation:

The UIB should cater to attracting PhDs of Kazakhstani origin who completed their degrees in Europe or North America by offering them desirable salaries comparable to national faculty staff.

2.3 Standard 3: Quality assurance

| 3.1 | The study programme is supported by the institution's quality management system. |
|-----|--|
| 3.2 | The study programme is part of a regular quality assurance and enhancement process which takes into account the curriculum, the study conditions and the programme organisation, and which involves all relevant groups as well as external experts. |
| 3.3 | The participation of students in reflections on the study programme, the study conditions and the programme organisation has been institutionalised. |

3.1. In developing its quality management system (QMS) UIB, firstly, takes into account nationwide government regulations (Kazakhstan Ministry of Higher Education and Science).

Within the university, the QMS operates at different levels (university, department, study programme) and the Quality Assurance Office is created to ensure continuous quality improvement. According to the UIB leadership, there are also different competitions held between lecturers designed to contribute to enhancement of the teaching and learning quality.

According to the organizational chart, presented by the University, the Quality Assurance Office is placed above all units and affiliated directly to the President. In the meantime, its powers and functions, as well as, staff composition are not clear.

In addition to that, no documentary evidence was provided to show how information is elicited from all units to the Quality Assurance Office and is fed back to improve the QA system of the University. There appears to be a lack of information exchange and consistency across units and members of staff. For instance, the Head of the Department mentioned that cameras in the classrooms are used to monitor every lecturer's teaching performance for making improvements. However, other colleagues reported that cameras were used only for security purposes, whereas some teachers and professors were not aware of the cameras at all.

3.2. The QA process with regard to the curriculum, study conditions and program organisation is implemented by involving the wide range of internal stakeholders (Academic Council, Academic-Methodical Council and everyday operational meetings) as well as external ones (employer feedback, internships). Obligatory course and lecturer evaluation procedure is in place. However, the lack of clarity in the way the Quality Assurance Office functions does not make it totally clear who should report to whom and how this information is used to enhance the academic quality. According to the UIB Self-evaluation Report (p. 27) one of the functions of the QAO is to develop normative documents for all levels of the organization, including reporting systems. The point is about closing the whole Q-loop with the QAO expected to play the central role in this process.

In addition to that, no study regulation is mentioned or provided to inform students comprehensively on what are the formal requirements/rules regarding the whole process of studying which they must follow and what they should expect if something is (not) done etc.

3.3. The students' say is ensured through the Student Parliament. There is a separate UIB web-site for student community (http://studik.uib.kz/o_proekte). Many good initiatives and clubs are geared towards improving the student life. In the meantime, no underlying document (constitution or charter) is posted on the web-site.

(a) Statements

In general, all of the quality assurance elements are present and functioning as required. However, they are sometimes not well-aligned and coherent to each other.

(b) Assessments

According to the Panel this standard is *partially met* subject to the following **conditions:**

1. Develop and present the Regulation about Quality Assurance Office, containing detailed information about its goals, functions, and job descriptions of the staff. The proposal is that UIB should develop (if not yet done) and present the Regulation (Polozhenie) about concise organizational structure, tasked with stipulating job/post descriptions, mapping inter-institutional interactions etc., and, thus, be aimed at reaching every aspect of QA, including, but not limited to, coherent university QM and closed quality circle.

2. Prepare or compile and make available Study Regulations in all languages of instruction for students and teaching staff. It should be a single document stipulating all rules and conditions applicable during the whole process of studying at the UIB for all programmes of studies (BA, MA, PhD), binding to all students and members of teaching staff. The regulations should include general provisions on, for example: 1. The rights and obligations of students; 2. Duration of studies; 3. Learning outcomes and credits; 4. Forms of assessment and grades; 5. Organisation of classes and semesters; 6. Changes in curricula; 7. Diploma theses, dissertations, final examinations, and graduation; 9. Expulsion and readmission of students; 9. Awards, distinctions, and disciplinary liability of students; 10. Any additional provisions. The Study Regulations should be available in all languages of instruction, published on the University website and known to students and members of teaching staff.

UIB should also consider fulfilling the following **recommendation**:
Elaborate and make publicly available the Student Parliament Constitution or Charter, including membership information, eligibility requirements for the Presidentship, and decision making procedures.

2.4 Standard 4: Funding and infrastructure

Quality Assurance

| Funding and infrastructure | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 4.1 | Transparent documentation of the funding of the study programme is available. |
| 4.2 | Adequate rooms and technical facilities required for the study programme are available. |

4.1. University of International Business (UIB) is a tuition-based institution, with the majority of its revenues coming in the form of fees for study. The tuition fee for the BA-programme in International Relations is about 710.000 KZT (Kazakhstani Tenge). Student tuition is collected based on two-party contracts with students, optionally signed by parents, if a student is underage. Every year, the level of tuition is decided upon during a meeting of the Recruitment Commission. In the beginning of 2014, the Commission decided to freeze prices for 2014-2015. In the middle of 2015, the Commission decided to continue the price freeze for 2015-2016.

The university could demonstrate that transparent funding mechanisms are in place. All documentation for state funding is transparent, there is no written information about numbers how much they spend on this programme, but the process of applying for the budget was described during the interviews. Figures (percentage) on how much was spent on research purposes (5%) and scholarships for students were also provided.

4.2. We were told that the university's building by Abaya 8a conforms to the formal academic requirements of Kazakhstan's state standards for institutions and businesses, the national standards for fire & safety and the norms set for the operation of higher education institutions. Originally built in the 1960s, it is a single structural unit with 4 floors of offices.

During a semester students on Bachelor of International Relations programme utilise:

- 2-3 large auditoriums (in case of theoretical lectures)

- 15 classrooms for smaller lectures and seminars
- 3 IT classrooms

The expert panel is convinced that the available facilities are adequate and support the education process. The lecture rooms are sufficient and there are enough language labs for the language courses of the study programme. There is a wide and sufficient access to computers for the students of the study programme. There are also three cafes and a medical center for students and members of staff. There is a wide use of cameras in the classrooms although the review panel received contradicting information as to the purpose of their use. There is a library and several reading rooms. Library resources utilise 272 sq. meters and holds 110 000 volumes. There are enough books in total, but the expert panel is concerned that there are enough books in each language track.

(a) Statements

- Transparent documentation of the funding of the study programme is available.
- Adequate rooms, the library, and technical facilities required for the study programme are available.

(b) Assessments

- The Panel agrees that this standard is *met*.

2.5 Standard 5: Research and development and appreciation of the arts

| Research and development and appreciation of the arts | |
|---|---|
| 5.1 | The objectives and perspectives for research and development defined for the study programme are consistent with the strategic orientation of the institution. |
| 5.2 | The scientific and/or artistic staff is involved in the institution's research activities and/or activities regarding the development and appreciation of the arts. The interaction between research and teaching is ensured. |
| 5.3 | To the extent required by the type of study programme, students will be integrated into research projects and/or projects regarding the development and appreciation of the arts. |
| 5.4 | The (planned) organisational and structural framework conditions are sufficient and suitable to implement the scheduled research activities and/or activities regarding the development and appreciation of the arts. |

5.1. UIB is primarily a teaching institution, but its faculty do apply (often successfully) for ministerial research grants as well as for financial support provided by their home institution. Members of teaching staff are involved in individual projects, rather than projects at the departmental level. Publications record for recent years is not impressive.

The UIB publishes its own academic journal, but it is obvious to members of staff that they should publish also in national and international journals. Each department has its research budget for which they apply annually (unfortunately, we did not acquire copy of the

latest application for research budget from the Department of Journalism and International Relations).

There are plans to develop internal translation support for the lecturers in order to expand international recognition of their research.

5.2 One academic conference is organized yearly at UIB which IR members of staff regularly attend. There are attempts to increase the number of projects to develop PhD degrees, but University is limited by the lack of sufficient funds for research purposes and mobility. Close correlations between research and teaching is not always visible when comparing lecturer's CVs with the syllabi of courses they teach.

5.3. Students take part in some research activities, surveys, collecting data. However, there is no module on research methods provided at the BA level. When students work on their bachelor theses and those who plan to carry on studying at MA level these opportunities should be enhanced also through training in methodology.

5.4. The UIB budget for research is 5% of the total budget and members of teaching staff benefit from it when they go abroad to attend conference or conduct research. For any more substantial grants they need to apply to the Ministry of Higher Education and Science or to various international institutions on a competitive basis. It is also used for publishing.

There are regular academic skills oriented workshops organized for lecturers with the aim to support publications in international journals. All academic publications and achievements of lecturers need to be reported to the Kazakhstan Ministry of Higher Education and Science. In the university journal members of staff can publish their articles for free. There is also a journal that provides opportunity for MA students to publish their articles.

(a) Statements

- Strategic orientation of the UIB includes strengthening research potential of the institution although there are a number of obstacles that need to be overcome.
- It is teaching rather than research that is priority at the moment.

(b) Assessments

- According to the Panel, this standard is *met* at the basic level required for BA degrees.

Recommendation:

The members of staff should aim at strengthening the link between their own research and teaching. Courses taught should better reflect lecturers' expertise in various areas of IR.

2.6 Standard 6: National and international co-operations

| National and international co-operations | |
|--|---|
| 6.1 | In line with the study programme's profile, national and/or international co-operation projects with higher education institutions or institutions outside the higher education sector have been established. |
| 6.2 | The co-operation projects encourage and support the advancement of the study programme and the mobility of students and staff. |

6.1. The UIB was able to demonstrate that they have already existing international partners and there are plans about Erasmus +, Mevlana and a double degree programme in the future. UIB also disposes of the broad network of national partners within and outside higher education. Different types of student internships are organized with a broad array of national partners, some of whom are traditional employers. There is a *UIB Internationalization Implementation Plan for 2015-2017* bringing forward a clear rationale and direction for activities at each level of UIB operation.

Following Kazakhstan law, the major area of cooperation with external entities focuses on the organisation of work experience for students on their final years of study, a core component of every degree in Kazakhstan. Through its Career Centre, UIB has developed long-term cooperation arrangements with leading employers in Almaty and Kazakhstan, allowing its students to undertake work experience appropriate to their degree profile.

6.2. Some graduates continue education at BA level abroad. There is also limited incoming staff mobility (lecturers from Western countries). IR lecturers participates in various programmes and trainings abroad as well as seminars and conferences to gain further academic experience.

During the last three years 18 students studied abroad on one-semester mobility. Most of them have been to Poland. The UIB has good connections with partner universities in Poland and it is easier for students from Kazakhstan to afford a semester in Poland than in some other countries of the EU.

Incoming mobility remains a major problem for all Kazakhstan universities. UIB, despite actively working with its international partners has been unable to secure any incoming students due to two main reasons: The lack of own dormitories and the high living costs in Almaty.

At present the major system supporting academic staff mobility of the Presidential "Bolashak" Scholarship Foundation that funds several different types of foreign experience (1-2 month study visits, one year study visits, the pursuit of entire degrees abroad). As a national priority for the development of Kazakhstan's human resources and a prestigious achievement career-wise, Bolashak is seen as the Opportunity for individual academics.

(a) Statements

- International cooperation is one of the key strategic directions of UIB.
- UIB has a good network for national internships.
- National and international cooperation are to play significant role in the programme development although there are still financial and other obstacles. Staff and student mobility is of crucial importance for UIB. At the moment only some members of IR staff and students can benefit from mobility.

(b) Assessments

- According to the Panel, the standard is *met*.

3 Summary of results

3.1 Final assessment

Standard 1 is *partially met* subject to the following condition:

Condition 1

All syllabi should be checked carefully when it comes to core literature/reading lists used for each course to ensure that the list given includes not only relevant academic textbooks and articles, but also those which are up to date and recognized internationally (especially textbooks in English). They must strictly correspond with the content of the course. The current syllabi include hardly any academic articles which for an IR programme are necessary sources of knowledge on current international processes, debates and challenges.

Accordingly, the list of all core readings should be revised and updated in the syllabi, and library access to classical subject textbooks by world-recognized scholars studied internationally should be provided. The lists of core readings should also include academic articles accessible through electronic journals databases already available at UIB. This is necessary if UIB aspires at bringing in international level knowledge and "globalizing its curriculum".

The Panel also suggest considering the following **recommendations**:

1. The BA-programme would benefit if the University offered a follow-up MA degree in International Relations. If it aims at educating future diplomats, negotiators and IR specialists, it can only be treated as a preliminary stage in a career-building track.
2. The revision of the IR programme learning outcomes which UIB plans for 2015-2016 should pay close attention to the requirements of the respective level of qualification framework of the European Higher Education Area.
3. Kazakh credit system should be modified at the Ministry level to allow full implementation of the European Credit Transfer System.

Standard 2 is met.

The expert panel suggest considering the following **recommendation**:

The UIB should cater to attracting PhDs of Kazakhstani origin who were awarded their degrees in Europe or North America by offering them desirable salaries comparable to national faculty staff.

Standard 3 is *partially met* subject to the following conditions:

Condition 2

Develop and present the Regulation about Quality Assurance Office, containing detailed information about its goals, functions, and job descriptions of the staff. The proposal is that

UIB should develop (if not yet done) and present the Regulation (Polozhenie) about concise organizational structure, tasked with stipulating job/post descriptions, mapping inter-institutional interactions etc., and, thus, be aimed at reaching every aspect of QA, including, but not limited to, coherent university QM and closed quality circle.

Condition 3

Prepare or compile and make available Study Regulations in all languages of instruction for students and teaching staff. It should be a single document stipulating all rules and conditions applicable during the whole process of studying at the UIB for all programmes of studies (BA, MA, PhD), binding to all students and members of teaching staff. The regulations should include general provisions on, for example: 1. The rights and obligations of students; 2. Duration of studies; 3. Learning outcomes and credits; 4. Forms of assessment and grades; 5. Organisation of classes and semesters; 6. Changes in curricula; 7. Diploma theses, dissertations, final examinations, and graduation; 9. Expulsion and readmission of students; 9. Awards, distinctions, and disciplinary liability of students; 10. Any additional provisions.

The Study regulations should be available in all languages of instruction, published on the University website and known to students and members of teaching staff.

UIB should also consider fulfilling the following **recommendation**:

Elaborate and make publicly available the Student Parliament Statute or Charter, including membership information, eligibility requirements for the Presidentship, and decision making procedures.

Standard 4 is met.

Standard 5 is met.

Panel **recommendation**:

The members of teaching staff should aim at strengthening the link between their own research and teaching. Courses taught should better reflect lecturers' expertise in various areas of IR.

Standard 6 is met.

3.2 Recommendations of the Panel

Further to the abovementioned condition(s) per relevant standards, the Panel recommends granting accreditation of the UIB Bachelor programme "International Relations" *with conditions*.