

**Evaluation Report for the Accreditation of Study Programmes  
offered by  
the School of International Economic Relations and  
the International Institute of Energy Policy and Diplomacy of  
MGIMO University, Moscow**

Name of Programme	Degree Awarded	ECTS credit points	Programme duration	Type of programme	Annual admission capacity	Taught in
Economics	Bachelor of Economics	240	4 years	Full-time	220	Russian
Economy of the European Union	Master of Economics	120	2 years	Full-time, Academic studies + in-service training	120	Russian
International Economic Cooperation in the Electric Power Industry	Master of Economics	120	2 years	Full-time	20	Russian
International Banking	Master of Economics	120	2 years	Full-time	20	Russian
Economic Strategies of International Oil and Gas Companies	Master of Economics	120	2 years	Full-time	10	Russian
Oil and Gas Sector Economy and Energy Policy Issues (w/ Bocconi University, Italy)	Master of Economics	120	2 years	Full-time	5	English Russian Italian

Name of Programme	Degree Awarded	ECTS credit points	Programme duration	Type of programme	Annual admission capacity	Taught in
International Energy Economics and Business Administration (w/ University of Leipzig, Germany)	Master of Economics	120	2 years	Full-time	15	German Russian English
International Business in the Oil and Gas Sector (w/ University of Nordland, Norway)	Master of Management	120	2 years	Full time	15	English
Financial Economics: Securities and Derivatives Market	Master of Economics	120	2 years	Full-time	25	Russian
International Accounting, Analysis and Auditing	Master of Economics	120	2 years	Full-time	20	Russian
International Finance	Master of Economics	120	2 years	Full-time	25	Russian
International Insurance and Risk Management	Master of Economics	120	2 years	Full-time		Russian
World Trade & International Economic Organizations	Master of Economics	120	2 years	Full-time	30	Russian
International Economics	PhD in Economics	179	3 years	Full-time/Part-time	25	Russian

Date of on-site talks at MGIMO University: 23-24 October 2012

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Hannover, Germany, March 12, 2013

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## 1. Evaluation Report

### 1.1 Introduction: Purpose, Design and Context of the Accreditation Procedure

By contract dated June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012 the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO University) has entrusted the Central Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (ZEvA) with the accreditation of its entire portfolio of study programmes. For this purpose, the programmes were grouped according to academic disciplines. All in all, five different clusters were formed, each of which was evaluated separately by a review panel consisting of experts from the respective scientific and/or professional background.

This is one of five evaluation reports following a series of on-site talks at MGIMO University between October and December 2012. As indicated in the survey table above, this report focuses on the study programmes in the field of Economics and Management.

The evaluation of the study programmes is based on the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ESG, 2009), the Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area and the ECTS Users' Guide. Among other things, the ESG require "established processes, criteria and procedures that are used by [quality assurance] agencies which should be also pre-defined and publicly available" (ESG 2005, p. 25). Hence, ZEvA has largely applied its established procedures and evaluation criteria for the accreditation of study programmes, which are all fundamentally rooted in the European-wide standards and guidelines mentioned above. Among others, one central procedural rule is the representation of all institutional stakeholders in the expert panel. Thus, ZEvA decided to include representatives of the Russian labour market and a Russian student representative in each of the five review panels.

Russia signed the Bologna declaration in 2003 and since then has continuously implemented its basic objectives both at national and at institutional level. In the year 2004, MGIMO introduced the ECTS system with its central focus on the learners, the learning process and learning outcomes.

However, slight modifications of the accreditation framework were necessary, especially when it came to aspects that do not lie within the power of the institution alone: for example, the reviewers took a less narrow approach to issues of curricular structure and modularization, as the design and content of the curricula depend to a relatively large extent on nationwide standards defined at ministerial level, not at institutional level.

In case of a positive accreditation decision, the study programmes will receive the ZEvA quality seal (instead of the seal of the German Accreditation Council). As a recognized actor in quality assurance at European level, ZEvA also awards the quality seals of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).

This evaluation report is based on the self-report and documentation submitted by the responsible schools and institutes of MGIMO University, additional documents provided on request during the on-site visit or shortly thereafter and the on-site talks with deans, teaching faculty, students and members of the rectorate on October 23<sup>rd</sup> and October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Both in the self-report and during the talks the English language was used as a medium of com-

munication, partly with the help of simultaneous translators.

The procedural rules and the criteria for the accreditation of the study programmes were made transparent to MGIMO at the time of contracting. Also, a template including all central evaluation criteria was created to assist the university in generating the self-report.

The experts would like to thank the leadership board, faculty, staff and students of MGIMO University for the friendly and open atmosphere during the on-site talks and the careful organization and planning of the site visit.

## **1.2 Outline of the Institutional Profile, Organizational Structures and Management of MGIMO University**

The Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO University) was founded in 1944 and quickly became Russia's leading diplomatic training institution. Still today, MGIMO is closely linked to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, although operating as an independent higher education institution. Until the present day, MGIMO has retained its humanistic, decidedly non-technical profile with a focus on International Relations and Diplomacy, Economics, Law and Social Sciences.

In the course of the large-scale social, political and economic changes that Russia saw in the 1990s, MGIMO also underwent a process of restructuring and modernization. In 1994, it officially gained the status of a university. In recent years, the institution's educational scope has been continuously widened through the foundation of several new schools and institutes. During the past decade, MGIMO has also gradually got in line with the European-wide educational standards developed in the course of the Bologna Process, for example by introducing two-tier study programmes (Bachelor's/Master's programmes) and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) at all educational levels. What has remained, however, is the strong emphasis on internationality which is reflected, for instance, in the special importance attached to foreign language acquisition and a significant percentage of graduates entering diplomatic service for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A relatively large number of international students and numerous joint programs offered in cooperation with other European universities are also evidence of MGIMO's overall strategy of internationalization.

At present, MGIMO University comprises eight different schools and five associated institutes which cooperate with the schools in matters of teaching and learning, but are independent of them in terms of organization. All schools and institutes consist of several departments. Also, there are independent departments responsible for the general coordination and administration of Master's and PhD programmes and academic supervisors in charge of the individual Master's programmes.

The study programmes discussed in this report are offered by the School of International Economic Relations (founded in 1958 and with about 1000 enrolled students the largest school of MGIMO) and by the Institute of Energy Policy and Diplomacy (MIEP). The latter is still a relatively new part of MGIMO University (founded in the year 2000). The institute's prime task is the training of experts for management positions in the international oil and gas sector. To this end, the institute has forged co-operations with major players on the national

and international energy market (as e.g. Gazprom, Rosneft and Statoil) and universities in Germany, Italy and Norway. Although the Master's programmes constitute its core profile, the institute also contributes to the Bachelor's programmes of the various MGIMO schools. In terms of administration, management and coordination, the Master's programmes lie in the responsibility of the Department of Master's programmes.

MGIMO offers one Bachelor's programme in Economics comprising both theoretical and practice-oriented courses in Micro- and Macroeconomics, Accounting and Auditing, Money and Banking, International Finances, Marketing, Management, International Economic Relations and Supply Chain Management, as well as general studies in the humanities, mathematics and IT. There are also Master's programmes (at MIEP) which blend Economic theory with practical training in Business Administration and Management. Master's graduates may also proceed to postgraduate level.

### **1.3 Evaluation of the Study Programmes, the General Infrastructure and Related Managerial Aspects**

#### **1.3.1 Qualification Objectives of the Study Programmes**

The central qualification goals of all Bachelor's, Master's and PhD programmes offered by MGIMO are based on nation-wide governmental standards which are defined by the Ministry of Education for each academic discipline. As the Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area, these standards describe the level of knowledge and the analytical, generic and communicative skills and competences that graduates should have acquired at completing a programme.

This chapter provides a brief introductory outline of the general aims and purposes of the study programmes referred to in this report. More detailed information on goals and learning outcomes is provided in the chapters 1.3.2 and 1.3.3.

#### **Bachelor Level**

The qualification objectives of the Bachelor's programme in Economics have been made transparent in the self-report and the course descriptions submitted by MGIMO. Some of them are also mentioned in the Diploma Supplement.

Apart from acquiring a broad general education in History, Philosophy and Politics as well as different mathematical disciplines and IT, students are to receive a profound education in Economics and general management that prepares them for professional positions in the finance sector. This includes developing competencies in practical analysis and forecasting, modelling, data collection and interpretation as well as the ability to generate economic analyses as a basis for management decisions. Also, Bachelor graduates are qualified to teach economics in educational institutions.

In line with MGIMO's international orientation, foreign language acquisition plays a central role especially at undergraduate level, i.e. the knowledge of foreign languages is an essential part of the graduates' special educational profile. Whereas courses in English are compulsory for everyone, students must also choose at least one out of 20 other European and non-European languages on offer. Hence, foreign language classes take up a large part of the

curriculum, making for about one third of the total workload.

Furthermore, the Bachelor students are meant to develop general personal and social competences as e.g. the ability to cooperate with others within a team, the capability of self-development and self-improvement as well as analytical skills. Intercultural competence is also imparted in the context of the language classes.

### Master level

The educational goals of the Master's programmes vary depending on the professional field that the graduates are supposed to enter (as e.g. banking and finance, trade, state organizations etc.). As most of MGIMO's Master's programmes are, by definition, very much practice-oriented rather than research-oriented, the needs and requirements of future employers seem to be of higher significance than advanced scholarly training. This goes especially for the programmes offered by the Institute of Energy Policy and Diplomacy, many of which are run in cooperation with leading companies of the energy sector and prepare students specifically for a career in this field. It must be kept in mind, however, that this is well in line with the overall profile of the institution: the peers have gained the overall impression that the main focus of the university still lies on higher professional education, i.e. on educating future leading figures in business, law, diplomatic services and politics instead of producing top-class scholars and researchers. It should also be stressed in this context that a large part of Russia's research output is still attributable to scientific academies and institutes, rather than higher education institutions.

At Master level, students further develop their own professional profile and personal skills, including language skills. According to the self-report of the university, the Master's students are also to learn how to act responsibly in professional contexts and to adhere to ethical standards.

### PhD Level

As distinguished from the Bachelor's and Master's programmes, the research abilities of the students lie in the centre of attention at PhD level. Graduates are expected to demonstrate the ability to conduct independent research and critical analyses, to communicate their research results to peers and the general public and to contribute actively to scientific advancement.

## 1.3.2 Compliance of the Study Programmes with the ECTS Users' Guide

In 2004 MGIMO was the first Russian university to introduce the European Credit Transfer System based on the awarding of credit points for achieved learning outcomes. Courses are worth between 1 and 10 ECTS credit points.

Bachelor's programmes at MGIMO comprise 240 ECTS credits to be acquired within a span of four years (60 credits per academic year). As a general rule, the courses are not grouped into larger educational components (modules) but are instead allocated to one of the three following "cycles" (Russian: *cikl*):

- Humanities, social and economic cycle (42 ECTS points)



- Mathematic cycle (40 ECTS points)
- Professional cycle (140 ECTS points)

The “cycles” may be most appropriately described as courses of lectures in different disciplinary fields. On principle, all Russian undergraduate students must fulfil general education requirements instead of focusing exclusively on a particular academic discipline. (In this sense, the Russian education system is comparable to that of the United States. In both countries, students leave school at a considerably younger age than in most EU countries. Hence, they receive a large part of their general education at third level.) The general educational parts of the programme are represented by the first two courses of lectures mentioned above. Therefore, the term “cycle” may not be a fully adequate translation of the Russian “cikli”. However, for the sake of convenience it shall be further used in the context of this report.

The three educational strands of the programme are not studied successively, but simultaneously, i.e. each semester students take courses from more than one cycle (i.e., from each course of lectures). Each cycle includes both compulsory elements (as prescribed by ministerial directive) and a range of varying electives that lie in the responsibility of the institution itself.

Additional ECTS points are awarded for foreign language training, internship placements, the final state examinations (cf. Chapter 1.3.5) and the final paper. The content and didactic purpose of the individual cycles will be described in more detail in Chapter 1.3.3.

Graduates of the Bachelor’s programme are awarded the degree “Bachelor of Economics”.

At Master level, a total of 120 ECTS points is awarded (60 credits per year). All Master’s programmes in Economics consist of the following cycles/courses of lectures:

- Humanities, social and economic cycle (10-20 ECTS points)
- Professional cycle (40-50 ECTS points)
- Internship and thesis (45-50 ECTS points)
- Examination (10-15 ECTS points)

ECTS points are also awarded to PhD students, even though there is very little teaching input in the programme: out of a total of 179 ECTS points, independent research work (that is, the generation of the doctoral thesis) accounts for 165 ECTS points.

By ministerial directive, one ECTS credit point equals a total workload of ca. 36 hours at all levels of qualification (both contact hours and self-study time are included in this value, which applies to all higher education institutions in the country). In total, this amounts to a workload of about 2,160 hours per academic year, which clearly exceeds the average workload recommended in the ECTS Users’ Guide (25-30 hours per ECTS point, 1,500-1,800 hours per year). Although the average annual student workload is high by international comparison (in most Bologna countries it does not go beyond the limit of 1,800 hours), the experts still regard it as manageable, especially for MGIMO students, who are usually of exceptional scholastic aptitude (cf. Chapter 1.3.4).

Graduates of the Master’s programmes in Economics are either awarded the degree “Master

of Economics” or the degree “Master of Science”.

In accordance with the ECTS Users’ Guide, ECTS points are awarded based on the assessment of these desired learning outcomes by means of different forms of examination.

A Diploma Supplement including an ECTS grading scheme has been submitted for the Bachelor’s programme and most of the Master’s programmes. Examples of other ECTS key documents like Learning Agreements or Transcripts of Records were not included in the documentation. However, in the course of the on-site talks, MGIMO submitted a draft version of an ECTS handbook (in English), in which both Learning Agreements and Transcripts of Records are mentioned as standard documents. The procedures in connection with the issuance of the documents are described in detail in the draft handbook.

### General remarks regarding the practical components of the curricula

As already indicated in Chapter 1.3.2, all of MGIMO’s study programmes at Bachelor’s and Master’s level consist of both general education (including compulsory physical training for undergraduates) and subject-specific parts. The members of the panel were particularly impressed by the intense practical training MGIMO students receive from an early stage and by the close transfer between theory and practice which forms a core part of MGIMO’s educational philosophy. As a general rule, students gather practical experience in the context of internship placements in a professional field closely related to their studies. In many cases, successfully absolved internships result in the permanent employment of interns after graduation. MGIMO assists students in finding suitable partners for the internships (MGIMO has forged cooperations on internships with numerous companies, governmental and non-governmental organizations) and has set up written regulations (in Russian) for the organization of internships.

For undergraduates, there are two different practical phases (curricular practical training and off-campus employment) whose exact nature and goals, however, do not become clear in the institutional self-report. Neither do these parts of the curriculum appear in the course descriptions or the Diploma Supplements. The same goes for the longer practical phase to be absolved by the Master’s students. According to the ECTS User’s Guide “the teaching staff should define the learning outcomes to be achieved through work placements when designing the curriculum” (ECTS Users’ Guide, 2009, p. 20). As students must submit a report on their internship in order to receive credits for it and all internships are supervised both by an MGIMO lecturer and a representative of the company, the experts assume that general agreement exists among the members of faculty regarding the educational goals/desired learning outcomes of internships. Yet they consider it advisable to outline these goals explicitly in the course handbook and/or to describe them in more detail in special Learning Agreements to be signed by the student, the training company and MGIMO.

At Master’s level the internship phase is tightly linked to the final thesis, as students usually generate their thesis while absolving the internship at the same time, that is, in the course of the final semester. In most cases, the internship comprises three successive months of full-time work, but may also be absolved part-time.

### General remarks on credit transfer and mobility

Student exchange and mobility are part of MGIMO's overall strategy of internationalization and participation in the Bologna process. Each year, MGIMO takes in a large number of international students and in return sends its own students to universities abroad. The members of the panel strongly appreciate this lively exchange, even though the rules and procedures applied by MGIMO for the recognition of credits earned abroad remained somewhat unclear in the documentation. As mentioned above, there were no examples of Learning and Training Agreements included in the documentation.

However, the draft ECTS handbook submitted during the on-site talks clearly and transparently describes a process of recognition based on comparable learning outcomes as recommended in the ECTS Users' Guide. As there were hints during the on-site talks that the described procedure is not yet fully implemented (prior recognition of credits still seems to be to a large extent dependent on individual lecturer's judgments instead of transparent criteria), the panel members strongly recommend developing a binding policy on the recognition of credits as soon as possible. The criteria and procedures for the recognition of credits should also be published online.

### 1.3.3 Structure, Teaching Contents and General Concept of the Study Programmes

#### Bachelor's programme in Economics

Like all Bachelor's programmes offered by MGIMO, the Bachelor's program in Economics consists of several "cycles" (i.e., courses of lectures), each of which has its own didactic purpose and desired learning outcomes defined in nation-wide standards. By and large, these standards are closely aligned with the desired learning outcomes described in the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area. Students are to learn to apply basic methods of (applied) research (as e.g. econometric models), identify economic problems and offer solutions for them based on their acquired knowledge and the interpretation of socioeconomic data. Also, graduates should be able to communicate the results of their work in various written forms directed at different types of audiences and by means of oral presentations.

During the four-year program, students receive a broad general education in the Arts and Humanities (Philosophy, History, Politics and Sociology) and take courses in those fields of Mathematics and Information Science most relevant for economists. At the same time they acquire specialized knowledge in the area of Economics and receive in-depth training in at least two foreign languages. Apart from the language training, the Professional Cycle includes compulsory courses in Micro- and Macroeconomics, Statistics, Banking and Finance, Accounting, Commerce etc., as well as electives in Economics and related subject areas.

Looking at some of the central textbooks listed in the course descriptions, the peers noticed a discrepancy between the basic classes on Micro- and Macroeconomics and the elective courses (as e.g. Money, Credit and Banking): whereas the basic introductory textbooks are fully in line with international standards, the more specialized publications seemed outdated

and often ignorant of current developments in economic theory. The peers therefore recommend a thorough revision of the reading lists for the elective courses in order to effectively integrate the general and specialized parts of the programme and to make sure that students keep up with the state of the art in their discipline.

On the other hand, the members of the expert panel were especially impressed by the advanced level of teaching in the field of marketing, which has only quite recently been introduced as a subject at Russian higher education institutions.

All in all, the experts have no doubt that the programme succeeds in imparting the level of knowledge and skills as described by the Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area. The programme carefully builds on the students' level of knowledge from secondary education, which is generally quite high by international standards, especially in the field of Mathematics. Hence, students usually have no significant problems in managing the coursework requirements.

The applied forms of teaching and learning are adequate to help students reach their desired goals. Already at Bachelor's level, students learn to apply their knowledge in professional contexts and to solve practical problems within their field of study (as e.g. by means of econometric software, case studies, business games etc.). They are enabled to gather economic and socio-economic data and to interpret their findings based on standard theoretical and econometric models. Furthermore, they acquire the necessary theoretical and methodological basis for undertaking further study autonomously.

Also, students learn to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences. Due to the small size of most classes there is plenty of opportunity for group discussions and interactive teaching. Sometimes there are also special classes offered which aim at enhancing communicative skills, as, for instance, a Russian language class especially designed to familiarize students of Economics with the Russian Economic terminology. The development of intercultural competences (along with foreign language acquisition) is particularly significant in this context, as a relatively large number of MGIMO graduates takes up working positions in international environments.

For all these reasons the experts have come to the conclusion that the Bachelor's programme is in line with the Bologna framework in terms of educational goals and learning outcomes. Yet, in view of current international standards they would like to give some recommendations for further improvement: for instance, the subject of accounting should gain a higher significance through a wider choice of electives already at Bachelor's level. Also, there should be more courses imparting mathematical and statistical methods which enable students to generate not only quantitative but also qualitative analyses, as well as courses imparting the necessary technical skills (as e.g. micro-oriented simulation). Furthermore, the experts recommend widening the range of electives by introducing courses on environmental economics and resource economics, public economics or behavioural economics.

In a school for future diplomats which takes pride in the language skills of its graduates, it seems surprising that nearly all of the textbooks recommended to students are in Russian language. Instead, students should be encouraged to also consult the latest English editions of leading international textbooks.

The Bachelor's degree in Economics is a fully recognized third level degree, i.e. it enables graduates to enter qualified positions on the employment market. For example, graduates are entitled to teach economic subjects in educational institutions.

However, the great majority of the school's students proceed to Master's level after completing the Bachelor's programme, as this greatly increases their chances of finding attractive, adequately paid working positions.

### Master's programmes

Master's programmes at MGIMO usually comprise 2 years and 120 ECTS credit points. The taught courses are allocated either to the "general scientific" (humanities, social and economic) cycle or to the professional cycle, each consisting of both compulsory and elective courses.

The desired learning outcomes of Master's programmes defined by the Russian Ministry of Education are closely in line with the Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area: for example, graduates are to be "able to define, independently and critically analyse complex scientific and professional problems", "integrate knowledge of various fields, contribute to the creation of new knowledge, research or the development of new professional working methods, demonstrate understanding and ethical responsibility for the possible impact of the scientific results or professional activity on environment and society".

Based on the written descriptions of the curricula and the information provided during the on-site talks in Moscow, the experts have come to the conclusion that the graduates of the Master's programmes reach the desired learning outcomes for the second cycle as described by the Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area.

The Master's programmes build on the broad knowledge base laid at Bachelor's level. Compared to the Bachelor's programme, the general cycle lays a stronger focus on the core disciplines of the programmes – i.e. in all parts of the Master's programmes the emphasis is on specialized rather than general knowledge. During the on-site talks, some Master's students mentioned that a repetition of material from the Bachelor's programme would sometimes be very helpful. The experts recommend taking this into account.

Also, research gains a stronger significance at Master's level. Even though professional training is still the main objective of the programmes, rather than scholarly education in the narrow sense of the word, one central goal of all Master's programmes defined by the Ministry of Education is to enable students to conduct research independently and autonomously. The experts have no doubt that the students of the School of International Economic Relations [and the MIEP] reach this goal, especially through generating the Master's thesis.

Furthermore, the experts are certain that students acquire the necessary soft skills they need to take up leading positions in their field of specialization. Through further intense language training, students' communicative skills quickly reach a very advanced level, which was also impressively demonstrated by the students participating in the on-site talks. From their own experience the Russian members of the panel can also confirm the great communicative skills and capability for team-leading that MGIMO graduates show in professional contexts.

## Double Degree Programmes

The Institute of Energy Policy and Diplomacy offers several Master's programmes in cooperation with other European universities. Graduates of these programmes receive one degree from each of the participating institutions (double degree). As these programmes differ in some significant ways from MGIMO's other Master's programmes, it seems apt to discuss them in a separate chapter.

MIEP runs the following double degree programmes, all of them in the field of Energy Economics:

- International Business in the Oil and Gas Sector (in cooperation with Nordland University, Norway)
- Oil and Gas Sector Economy and Energy Policy Issues (in cooperation with Bocconi University Milan, Italy)
- International Energy Economics and Business Administration (in cooperation with the University of Leipzig, Germany)

Each programme is based on a contractual agreement between the participating institutions which regulates the design of the curricula, the organization of the programmes and the selection and supervision of students. The agreements were partly included in the self-report.

All three study programmes aim at preparing students for leading positions in the international energy sector and hence impart highly specialized knowledge in this particular field. In all programmes, different academic disciplines are touched upon, as e.g. Law, Business Administration and Management, Energy Policy and Energy Security etc. All programmes are open to students from Russia and other European and non-European countries.

As mobility is a basic underlying principle of the programmes (all students spend at least one semester abroad, where they mostly take a set of predefined courses), the above remarks regarding the crediting of courses and student mobility do not apply to them. Although tuition is primarily in English, especially in those courses taken by students from different national backgrounds, students may be required to undergo basic training in the language of their host university. This applies particularly to the Russian-Italian programme, where students spend an entire year at each of the cooperating institutions. While at MGIMO, students also receive advanced training in English, as all other Master's students.

All programmes are continuously reviewed and further developed by all partners involved. The selection of students and the evaluation of their work are also joint responsibilities of all partners. By and large, the panel members appreciate the double degree programmes as a strong enhancement of MGIMO's international profile and a significant contribution to the further internationalization of European higher education. The programmes are also important in the sense that they help to forge long-term economic relationships, with cooperative relationships between universities in major energy-providing countries (Russia, Norway) or between MGIMO and institutions located in the main cooperating and consuming countries on the European energy market (Germany, Italy).



## PhD Programme

The qualification objectives defined by the ministry for third cycle programmes are in line with the Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area. Graduates should be capable of independent analysis, synthesis and assessment. Also, they should be able to plan, structure and manage large-scale research projects and to contribute to the extension of existing knowledge.

Besides working on their research projects, PhD candidates in Economics must also take some taught courses on Economic Theory, Money, Credit and Finance and Global Economy during their first year of study. At the end of the first year, they must sit intermediate examinations in order to continue the programme.

The peers are convinced that the students are provided with the methodological basis they need to conduct their own research. Also, the experts have no doubt that students receive intensive supervision and assistance throughout the programme.

### 1.3.4 Students and Study Conditions

#### Admission Procedure

To be admitted to MGIMO, applicants must complete their secondary school education (Unified State Exam) with excellent grades. High scholastic aptitude in Russian, Mathematics and foreign languages is held especially important in the selection of students. Furthermore, MGIMO is one of only a few higher education institutions in Russia conducting their own additional entrance examinations – in case of the Bachelor's programme in Economics, applicants must take a written foreign language exam. Considering the central importance of foreign language training for MGIMO's educational concept, this selection procedure is regarded as adequate by the panel of experts. Russian Federal Law also grants special rights of admission to certain groups of persons, as e.g. disabled or orphaned applicants.

As mentioned above, the great majority of MGIMO's Bachelor graduates go on studying at Master's level. Also, Bachelor graduates from other Russian universities are enrolled in postgraduate programmes at MGIMO. Formally, foreigners may also apply, provided their school leaving certificates are recognized at state level (so-called 'nostrification' of foreign degrees). However, there still seem to be very few students from outside Russia absolving a complete Bachelor's or Master's programme at MGIMO (apart from those Master's programmes especially designed for foreign students).

Apart from excellent performance in the Bachelor's programme, admission requirements for the Master's programmes in the field of Economics include proficiency in the English language and a solid base of knowledge in relevant economic disciplines, which must be demonstrated in entrance examinations. For the double degree Master's programmes, the selection procedure is slightly different: all cooperating partners participate in the selection of students on the basis of common selection criteria. Usually, these include high academic performance, good knowledge of the English language and the level of personal motivation and interest in the programme.

## General study requirements and workload

MGIMO students spend the largest part of the day in class (teaching hours are usually from 9 am until 4 pm on six days a week); the rest of the time is dedicated to independent self-studying and extracurricular activities. From the third academic year onwards, one day per week is dedicated to research and thus kept free of taught classes.

As described in Chapter 1.3.3, practical placements also consume a relatively high amount of time which must be brought in line with the theoretical part of education, both in organizational terms and in terms of content. Also, the frequent tests and examinations cause a considerable amount of work on the students' side (cf. Chapter 1.3.5).

All in all, the students present during the on-site talks described their schedules as tightly packed, but manageable. As the majority of MGIMO students stand out through strong ambition and above average scholastic aptitude, the expert panel agrees with this. The fact that only very few of the students need to sustain themselves through side jobs also plays a role here. During the on-site talks, the students also confirmed that lecturers took all efforts to adapt to the students' needs and wishes regarding issues of workload, organization of classes etc.

## Counselling and advisory services

The members of the expert panel were very impressed by the close relationship between teachers and learners they encountered at MGIMO and by the teaching faculty's high level of commitment. Most lecturers have an open door policy, and students may approach them personally, by phone or by email whenever they wish. In case of individually occurring conflicts between lecturers and students, a colleague may act as a mediator. In organizational matters, students may contact a member of the administrative staff. Faculty and students may also consult a team of psychologists who offer counselling and advisory services on campus or online.

For undergraduate students there are also frequent tutorials taught in small groups to further assist them in their academic progress.

## General organizational and social aspects

As far as the members of the expert panel can see, the design of the curricula and the course schedules has no negative impact on student performance. Students profit from relatively small group sizes (in seminars, the number of students does not exceed 25; in language training there is a maximum number of 8 students per class).

For most students, MGIMO is not only a place for studying, but the place where they spend much of their spare time, too: the university offers a large number of social activities that students can get involved in, as e.g. several student associations. The School of International Economic Relations has its own student initiative whose members help first year students find their way through the programme, invite experts to hold talks etc. On the MGIMO campus, students also have a variety of sporting grounds and facilities, a well-equipped canteen



and several cafeterias at their disposal.

Generally, the students participating in the on-site talks were recognizably proud of being part of MGIMO and displayed a very high level of identification with the institution. To a certain extent, students also have a say in the institutional politics and management of MGIMO: for example, student representatives may participate in the election of the rector and the deans. They may also lodge students' complaints and demands to the rectorate or the faculty. In most cases, recognizable measures for improvement are quickly taken.

### 1.3.5 Examination System

Examination regulations and the evaluation criteria for student assessment at MGIMO are based on several internal acts, guidelines and directives, most of which are publicly available on the university's Russian website. As English translations of these documents are not at hand, they were listed in the institutional self-report, but not included in the documentation.

Final course examinations are held twice a year, i.e. at the end of each semester. The number and scope of examinations within that span of time does not exceed a manageable measure (a maximum of five exams per semester). However, in each course there are usually three additional tests or assignments that serve to monitor students' progress throughout the term. Students excelling in these tests may be exempt from the end-of-semester exam.. In addition, both Bachelor's and Master's students must submit written course papers (one paper per academic year) and may also have to undergo further tests (so-called 'zachet') in order to receive credits for internships, workshops etc.

Furthermore, both Bachelor's and Master's students must undergo final 'state examinations' in order to be awarded their degrees. At MGIMO, these usually consist of a final thesis (including oral defence) and two examinations: one foreign language exam and one exam in the core discipline of the programme.

All in all, tests and examinations are well distributed over the academic year and thus remain feasible for students at all times.

Depending on the subject, there are either written examinations (with a maximum duration of 2 hours) or oral examinations that last about 15 minutes. Oral exams may also be taken in groups of up to five students. As a general rule, there are at least two examiners for each exam, and each paper is corrected by two lecturers to ensure objectivity. The evaluation criteria are made transparent to the students both orally and as part of the course syllabi. A lot of attention is paid to making the process of grading transparent: if necessary, lecturers take time to explain the reasons for the grades to the students.

The applied forms of examination are fit to measure the desired learning outcomes of the courses: for example, whereas in Maths and Statistics exams are primarily knowledge-oriented and hence conducted in written form, the ability to participate in multilateral negotiations can best be demonstrated in an oral exam. In the course papers and the final theses,

students can show that they have learned to apply methods of scientific research and to apply their knowledge to a concrete topic or problem.

Based on the on-site talks and the self-report the experts have come to the conclusion that the procedures for the assessment of students applied at MGIMO comply with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (even though the peers were irritated at the sight of the graduates' overall grades, which are top-scale in almost all cases and hence seem to make the application of an ECTS grading table as included in the draft ECTS handbook obsolete) However, as the relevant institutional regulations and legal acts could not be provided in English, some details have remained unclear – as, for example, the regulations covering student absence, illness and other mitigating circumstances. Hence, the experts recommend making at least the most central information regarding student assessment and examination available in English. The experts are fully aware that translated versions and/or summaries of such official documents cannot be legally binding, but would still like to make this recommendation for the sake of transparency and student-friendliness, especially with a view to the needs of foreign students (cf. Chapter 1.3.8).

#### 1.3.6 Cooperative Relationships

MGIMO has forged numerous cooperative relationships regarding its study programmes with business companies, political institutions, administration and higher education institutions inside and outside of Russia. This aspect plays a particularly central role for the programmes offered by the International Institute of Energy Policy and Diplomacy (MIEP), most of which are run in cooperation with major companies of the energy industry like Rosneft, Shell, Gazprom etc. and affiliated financial institutions. The industrial partners have a relatively strong influence on the design of the programmes, as they prepare students to take on leading positions and to fulfil specific tasks in these companies. The same is true for the double degree programmes that the institute offers in cooperation with other European universities, which also deal with questions of energy policy and energy economics. In spite of the strong impact the industry takes on the programmes and the importance attached to the practical training phases and professional education in general, the peers have come to the conclusion that students still receive a solid academic education at Master's level.

The School of International Economic Relations cooperates with a large number of other partners, mainly in the form of internship placements and practical training for students. Partners are, for example, major Russian banks or globally acting auditing and insurance companies. On principle, internships are integrated in the curriculum and supervised by an MGIMO lecturer (cf. Chapter 1.3.3). Also, students frequently spend their internships in political institutions or administration (embassy, ministries etc.)

In line with its international profile, MGIMO cooperates with higher education institutions around the globe, as e.g. through exchange of students and lecturers and joint research projects. To further enhance and intensify relationships with partners abroad, increased efforts should be made to attract more lecturers from foreign universities (cf. Chapters 1.3.7).

### 1.3.7 Resources and Infrastructure

#### Teaching staff

In total, MGIMO has a faculty of about 1.200, including 160 full professors, 430 associate professors as well as assistant professors and other supporting lecturers of various qualifications. The number of part-time assistant lecturers is relatively high (especially in the realm of language training), yet the main responsibility for a course always lies with a full professor. As the study programmes are – at least in parts – of interdisciplinary nature, students are usually taught by lecturers from several MGIMO schools.

After extensive discussions with numerous lecturers of MIEP and the School of International Economic Relations and a close reading of the relevant documents, the panel members are convinced that the requirements of the ESG concerning the quality assurance of teaching staff are satisfied. The faculty members possess the knowledge, professional experience, skills and qualifications that are necessary for effective and successful teaching and are given opportunities to develop and extend their teaching capacity on a regular basis by participating in professional training programmes. Also, students can provide feedback on the quality of teaching in the context of regular surveys (cf. Chapter 1.3.9).

The percentage of international lecturers at MGIMO is still relatively low: only 25 out of 1.200 lecturers are non-nationals. To further sharpen its international profile, MGIMO should aim at recruiting more teaching faculty from abroad, both for short-term stays and on a permanent basis. On the other hand, MGIMO lecturers should be given more opportunity for longer leaves of absence, as e.g. in the context of (international) research projects or for sabbaticals.

#### Infrastructure and Equipment

MGIMO provides its students with excellent infrastructure and learning resources, both by Russian and international standards. There are five different buildings on the premises which primarily serve academic purposes and comprise more than 200 lecture rooms, computing facilities, multimedia labs and language laboratories as well as a high-standard research library which also provides access to online literature databases like EBSCO host. During the on-site talks, students mentioned that they would appreciate longer working hours of the library in order to gain more time to prepare for classes. In view of the students' dense schedules, the panel members recommend further extending the (already student-friendly) opening hours of the library. Beyond the academic realm, the university also caters for numerous other needs of students and staff: apart from the sports facilities already mentioned above, there are several dormitories on the premises, another one with an intake capacity of up to 1.800 students is currently in the process of construction. Furthermore, MGIMO has its own medical center, pharmacy and shops.

### 1.3.8 Transparency and Public Information

According to the ESG, higher education institutions “have a responsibility to provide information about the programmes they are offering, the intended learning outcomes of these, the qualifications they award, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, and the learning opportunities available to their students”. As has already been outlined above, the most important regulations regarding student assessment, internships, final theses etc. are published on the Russian website of MGIMO, but are not yet available in English. The English version of the website provides extensive information on the institution as a whole, but only the most basic facts regarding the study programmes.

Course descriptions/syllabi in Russian (available in print and on the MGIMO intranet) were submitted at special request. Even though these documents contain extensive information regarding the content and desired learning outcomes of the courses, they strongly deviate from the Bologna standards in structure and design. On the other hand, the brief course descriptions in English that were submitted as part of the documentation do not yet include all information that the ECTS Users’ Guide recommends for the description of individual course units. Furthermore, a comparison of the Russian and the English course descriptions shows that the translations of the course titles are often somewhat misleading. Occasionally, the way in which technical terms (as e.g. auditing/controlling) are used is also confusing to the reader. Some course descriptions are apparently outdated (this applies especially to the Master’s programme “International Energy Economics and Business Administration”, which is run in cooperation with the University of Leipzig).

Based on these observations, the members of the expert panel would like to recommend the following measures for improvement:

First of all, the English version of the MGIMO website should be extended to include more detailed information regarding the study programmes, the central regulations and evaluation criteria for student assessment and the institutional quality assurance policy. A mission statement in English should also be available.

Secondly, a course catalogue in English should be generated for each study programme within the cluster. The design and content of the course catalogues should follow the recommendations of the ECTS Users’ Guide as closely as possible: each document should comprise a general introductory part providing general information on the institution and the programme, as well as course descriptions including at least a brief outline of the contents and the desired learning outcomes of each course. The panel members recommend having the English translations revised by a native speaker or a professional translator and to check the course descriptions for outdated information on a regular basis. The course catalogues should be made available for download on the MGIMO website.

### 1.3.9 Quality Assurance and Development

For the last few years, MGIMO has been developing an internal quality management system

which is applied throughout the institution. The implementation and further development of this system are the responsibility of the Department for Quality Assurance and Academic Development which was established in the year 2007. An official quality assurance policy does exist, but is not yet available in English. The experts recommend generating and publishing a translated version of this document.

Apart from assuring compliance with the educational standards issued by the Ministry of Education and Science, quality assurance at MGIMO aims at further improving study programmes and educational processes on the basis of collected data. To this end, a new information system based on performance indicators has recently been introduced. The university gathers the necessary management information by continuously monitoring the students' academic progress and achievements and through regular surveys among students and alumni. At the end of each term, students get a chance to provide feedback on the quality of courses and teaching. Based on the survey results, analytical reports are generated which are passed on to the rectorate and the heads of the schools and institutes as a decision base for further action. It should also be pointed out in this context that MGIMO's quality assurance system is not only about identifying weaknesses, but also about rewarding high performance in teaching and learning: incentives have been created for excellent students and lecturers in the form of bonuses, scholarships, fee reductions etc.

It can thus be concluded that the internal quality assurance mechanisms of MGIMO are in accordance with the recommendations of the ESG.

#### **1.4 Summary**

The members of the expert panel were very impressed by the modern infrastructure and equipment, the strong commitment of faculty, students and staff and the efficient organizational structures they found at MGIMO. The peers have no doubt that the students of Economics get well prepared for the challenges of the global economy and international politics and have excellent prospects on the employment market, both nationally and internationally. Also, the panel members strongly appreciate MGIMO's international orientation in teaching and learning as well as the alignment of the university's study programmes and management practices with European-wide standards. The experts recommend further pursuing this path towards internationalization – as, for example, by intensifying the exchange of teaching staff and students and by considering the work of foreign researchers in the design of curricula and reading lists.

## 2. Final vote of the expert panel

### 2.1 General Recommendations

#### Infrastructure and Study Conditions

- If necessary, Master's students should be given the opportunity to repeat teaching material from the Bachelor's programme in the context of classes or tutorials.
- The experts recommend extending the opening hours of the university library.

#### Internships and Practical Placements

- The educational goals and contents of practical placements should be defined in the course handbook and/or Training Agreements to be signed by the student, the training company and MGIMO.

#### Credit Transfer and Mobility

- The experts strongly recommend developing a binding institutional policy on the recognition of credits as soon as possible. The criteria and procedures for the recognition of credits should also be published online.

#### Teaching and Curricula

- The peers recommend a thorough revision of the reading lists for the elective courses at Bachelor's level in order to effectively integrate the general and specialized parts of the programme and to make sure that students keep up with the state of the art in their discipline. On principle, students should be encouraged to also consult the latest English editions of leading international textbooks.
- The experts recommend widening the range of electives at Bachelor's level by offering more courses on accounting and qualitative analysis. They also suggest introducing courses on environmental economics, resource economics, public economics or behavioural economics.

#### Transparency and Public Information

- The experts recommend making at least the most central information regarding student assessment and examination available in English.
- The English version of the MGIMO website should be extended to include more detailed information regarding the study programmes, the central regulations and evaluation criteria for student assessment, the institutional quality assurance policy and information on student exchange and mobility. A mission statement in English should also be available.
- A course catalogue in English should be generated for each study programme within the cluster. The design and content of the course catalogues should follow the recommendations of the ECTS Users' Guide as closely as possible. Each course cata-

logue should also include descriptions of compulsory practical placements/internships and their desired learning outcomes. The panel members recommend having the English translations revised by a native speaker or a professional translator and to check the course descriptions for outdated information. All course catalogues should be published on the MGIMO website.

### Internationality

- To further sharpen its international profile, MGIMO should aim at recruiting more teaching faculty from abroad, both for short-term stays and on a permanent basis. On the other hand, MGIMO lecturers should be given more opportunity for longer leaves of absence, as e.g. in the context of (international) research projects or for sabbaticals.

## **2.2 Recommendation to the Accreditation Commission**

The expert group recommends towards the Accreditation Commission the accreditation of the study programmes offered by the School of International Economic Relations and the Institute of Energy Policy and Diplomacy of MGIMO for the accreditation period of five years.