

PROGRAMME REVIEW

Master of Science in European Economic Studies - Master of Arts in European Interdisciplinary Studies - Master of Arts in EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies - Master of European Law - Master of Arts in European Political and Governance Studies

College of Europe

Brussels - May 2026

PROGRAMME REVIEW COLLEGE OF EUROPE

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Preface VLUHR Quality Assurance Board

Dear reader,

This assessment report deals with the programme review of the Master of Science in European Economic Studies, Master of Arts in European Interdisciplinary Studies, Master of Arts in EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies, Master of European Law (LLM), and Master of Arts in European Political and Governance Studies at the College of Europe. This programme review was conducted by an independent panel of experts in between October 2024 and April 2026.

This report is intended for all stakeholders of the programmes and provides a snapshot of its quality following the review principles for quality assurance for programme assessments in Flanders. As chair of the VLUHR Quality Assurance Board, I hope that the panel's findings, judgements, recommendations, and commendations will advance these programmes. Additionally, this report intends to provide information regarding the quality of the programmes to a wider audience. For this reason, this report is published on the website of VLUHR QA.

I would like to thank all members of the panel for the time they invested and the dedication they showed carrying out this programme review. At the very same time, this review was only possible because of the commitment of all those involved at the programmes. I hope this report does justice to their efforts.

Mia Sas
Chair VLUHR Quality Assurance Board

Programme review

Introduction

This assessment report presents the findings, judgements, commendations and recommendations regarding the Master of Science in European Economic Studies, Master of Arts in European Interdisciplinary Studies, Master of Arts in EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies, Master of European Law (LLM), and Master of Arts in European Political and Governance Studies at the College of Europe.¹

This programme review was carried out in accordance with the '[Manual for Programme Review](#)' of VLUHR QA. Nina Geenen, Policy Advisor at VLUHR QA, was project manager of this review.

Panel composition

The proposal of candidate panel members was approved by the VLUHR Quality Assurance Board on March 10, 2025. The composition of the panel was ratified by the VLUHR Quality Assurance Board on June 5, 2025.

The panel has the following composition²:

- **Peter Bursens**, Professor of Political Science at the University of Antwerp (Chair)
- **Edward Best**, Associate Research Fellow at the UN University Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies and former Senior Expert at the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA)
- **Claire Kilpatrick**, British Academy Global Professor of Law at Queen's University Belfast
- **Christine Reh**, Professor of European Politics at the Hertie School Berlin
- **François-Charles Wolff**, Professor of Economics at the University of Nantes
- **Ruben De La Cruz**, Graduate from the Master of EU Studies at Ghent University (2025) and Doctoral Researcher at the Ghent Institute for International and European Studies (GIES) at Ghent University

Review principles

The programme review was conducted in accordance with the eight quality features. These features are the characteristics of a high-quality higher education programme, defined by NVAO and tied in with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG, 2015). For each programme whose quality is satisfactory, the presence of the following quality features is guaranteed:

1. The programme's learning outcomes constitute a transparent and programme-specific interpretation of the international requirements regarding level, content, and orientation;
2. The programme's curriculum ties in with the most recent developments in the discipline, takes account of the developments in the professional field, and is relevant to society;
3. The staff allocated to the programme provide the students with optimum opportunities for achieving the learning outcomes;
4. The programme offers the students adequate and easily accessible services, facilities, and counselling;
5. The teaching and learning environment encourages the students to play an active role in the learning process and fosters smooth study progress;
6. The assessment of students reflects the learning process and concretises the intended learning outcomes;
7. The programme provides comprehensive and readable information on all stages of study;
8. Information regarding the quality of the programme is publicly accessible.

¹ The administrative details of the institution and the programme(s) involved are included in [Annex 1](#).

² A short cv of the panel members is included as [Annex 2](#).

In addition, a programme ensures the involvement of internal and external stakeholders on the one hand and external and independent peers and experts on the other hand, in a continuous pursuit of quality development. If applicable, the programme must also comply with relevant regulations with respect to the admission of graduates to corresponding posts or professions.

Preparation

In preparation for the site visit, the five master's programmes of the College of Europe submitted a comprehensive self-evaluation report (SER), developed in accordance with the VLUHR QA Manual for Programme Review. The clustered SER presented institution-wide information alongside detailed programme-specific documentation, demonstrating how each programme addresses the quality criteria set out in the assessment framework. In addition, the SER includes a chapter on the Inter-Departmental European Advanced Studies Programme (IDEAs), a non-degree initiative that offers interdisciplinary courses to all programmes at the College of Europe's Bruges campus, while being primarily integrated within the POL, LAW and ECO programmes.

The panel received the SER, including all supporting materials, three months prior to the site visit and examined the documentation thoroughly in preparation for its work. The SER was found to be clear and well-structured, and it was supported by extensive evidence such as relevant data, policy documents, course materials, and outputs from internal quality assurance processes. The panel also noted the open and reflective manner in which the programmes described their strengths and areas for improvement, drawing on student and alumni surveys, stakeholder consultations, and internal reflections. This constructive and transparent approach, visible both in the SER and during the discussions during the site visit, provided the panel with a solid foundation for carrying out the review.

Prior to the visit, the panel members attended a training session on December 15, 2025. During the training, the panel members received more detailed information on the review and the practical details of how the review process takes place. Special attention was given to the status of the programmes, quality assurance in Flanders and Europe, and interview techniques. The panel got acquainted with the review principles and was informed about how this framework relates to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). The visit schedule was also discussed and is attached in [Annex 3](#). Finally, the self-evaluation report was discussed in depth to prepare the site visit.

During the preparatory phase of the review, the panel requested additional information regarding the European Union Diplomatic Academy, a training initiative hosted at the Bruges campus, in light of recent media coverage of a fraud investigation related to this externally funded EEAS project. The panel sought to clarify whether any developments surrounding the Academy might have implications for the five master's programmes under review. Based on public information, the documentation provided and explanations given during the site visit, the panel established that the Diplomatic Academy operates separately from the academic programmes: it has no shared funding streams, nor does it play any role in the design, delivery or governance of the programmes' curricula. The panel therefore concluded that the developments concerning the Academy do not affect the programmes included in this review, and the matter is considered adequately clarified for the purposes of this procedure.

Visit

The panel carried out the programme review on January 26-28, 2026 at College of Europe in Bruges. During the site visit, the panel conducted interviews with all those involved in the programmes in order to gain insight into the quality of all five programmes, including management, students, teaching and supporting staff, alumni, and employers. In order to give all stakeholders the opportunity to talk confidentially to the panel, there was an open consultation. At the end of the site visit, the panel discussed its findings, judgements, recommendations, and commendations with the programme management in a co-creative session. After a final panel meeting, the panel shared its main conclusions with the programme management in an oral report. The interviews took place in an open and constructive atmosphere and provided the panel, in addition to the documents studied (see [Annex 4](#) for an overview), relevant insights regarding the quality of the programmes.

Part of the site visit was dedicated to the review of the programme-specific infrastructure of the four programmes offered in Bruges, namely the Masters in European Economic Studies, EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies, European Law, and European Political and Governance Studies. An additional site visit to the Natolin Campus was carried out on January 14-15, 2026, by the panel chair and the project manager, to inspect the programme-specific infrastructure of the Master of Arts in European Interdisciplinary Studies.

Report

This report covers the evaluation of the following master's programmes of the College of Europe:

- Master of Science in European Economic Studies (Bruges)
- Master of Arts in European Interdisciplinary Studies (Natolin)
- Master of Arts in EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies (Bruges)
- Master of European Law (Bruges)
- Master of Arts in European Political and Governance Studies (Bruges)

Since the institution and the five programmes in question share core institutional characteristics and operate within an integrated governance and support system, several topics are analysed at the institutional level rather than being repeated for each programme individually. These institution-wide analyses address aspects such as management, facilities, student support services, and quality assurance, which are organised centrally and applied uniformly across the Bruges and Natolin campuses. Presenting these elements at the College level avoids unnecessary duplication and reflects the structural reality that many academic and operational processes are shared between programmes.

Within each thematic section, the report provides programme-specific analyses where meaningful differences exist or where individual programmes display distinctive strengths, challenges, or developmental needs. This applies in particular to mission and vision, learning outcomes, curriculum design, learning and teaching, and the master's thesis, where disciplinary profiles and pedagogical approaches vary more substantially. By combining institutional-level discussion with programme-specific findings, the panel has aimed to offer a holistic yet differentiated account of quality across the College of Europe. This structure ensures that the panel's judgements are both coherent - reflecting the common framework within which the programmes operate - and appropriately sensitive to the unique academic identities of each programme.

In the subsequent assessment report the panel provides the findings, judgements, recommendations, and commendations regarding the quality of the programmes as a whole. The panel also formulates a conclusion at the end of the report, readable for a broad audience and including an advice for accreditation, as well as a list of commendations, suggestions and recommendations. The programme management was given the opportunity to respond to the draft of this report before finalisation.

Programme report

Management of the programmes

The College of Europe manages its programmes within a distinctive institutional model characterised by a combination of departmental autonomy, central governance, and a flying-faculty structure.

The five master's programmes are managed primarily by their like-named **Departments**. Each department has a Director of Studies (DoS) and a Resident Professor (RP)³, who exercise the core permanent academic leadership of their programme. They are supported in this role by a small team of Academic Assistants (AAs). During their preparation for the site visit - and confirmed during the discussions with all stakeholders - the panel observed that the latter play a critical organisational, pedagogical, and liaison role within the day-to-day operations of the programmes. Their involvement includes coordination of Visiting Professors (VPs), supporting students academically and pastorally, and ensuring coherence across courses and assessment practices.

The educational governance of the programmes is overseen by the centralised **Academic Council**, which convenes six times per academic year. The Council is chaired by the College's Rector and is composed of academic representatives from all its academic programmes. These academic representatives are the Director of Studies, the Resident Professor, a representative of the Visiting Professors, and a representative of the Academic Assistants of each programme at the College. Other stakeholder groups such as students, supporting staff, and alumni are represented in the Council as well. While its size of nearly 60 members makes meetings lengthy, the stakeholders met during the visit confirm that the Council succeeds in ensuring participatory decision-making and in overseeing appointments of academic personnel, programme changes, the determination of study results, and academic regulations.

The **flying faculty model**, a key feature of the College educational system, brings academics and practitioners to the programmes for short-term educational assignments. This creates a rich, practice oriented and up-to-date learning environment for students. At the same time, the model requires significant coordination to manage heterogeneity in teaching methods, expectations, and assessment standards. The panel recognised this structural challenge in ensuring consistent alignment with learning outcomes, but commends the multiple mechanisms that the programmes have in place - such as the support of the AAs, annual faculty meetings, guidelines for Visiting Professors, second reader systems for master's theses, and recurring student evaluations - to navigate this.

The panel considers that the five master's programmes operate within a clear and effective organisational structure. The programme-specific departments enable the College to appoint appropriate academic and professional experts and maintain close ties with the respective professional fields. Although the programmes are offered across two campuses, the overall academic authority for programme design, approval, and quality assurance resides within the centralised body of the Academic Council. The governance mechanisms in place - supported by the two campuses' Academic Administration Offices - allow for consistency across programmes while accommodating the specific academic profiles and pedagogical approaches of each department.

The panel also finds it noteworthy that the programmes' management structure is strongly supported by the College's residential formula and close integration between academic and support services. Informal interactions, cooperative culture, and the general availability of DoS, RP, and AAs contribute to a coherent and student-centred organisation. Students themselves also play a meaningful role in this responsiveness through well-structured channels of representation.

³ With exception of the Department of European Economic Studies, which has no Resident Professor.

Quality Assurance

Since the previous review in 2017, the College and its programmes have taken steps to further formalise and strengthen their **quality assurance processes**. The introduction of annual programme evaluations, alongside the course-level student surveys, has contributed to a more structured approach to monitoring programme quality. The panel also noted the coherence between the mission and vision statements of the programmes and their implementation in practice, as well as a clearer role for the intended learning outcomes. This increased emphasis has supported more systematic efforts toward constructive alignment between programme objectives, curriculum content, and assessment methods. Although many internal exchanges remain informal - reflecting the College's educational model and the small scale of its programmes - these developments point to a gradually more deliberate and organised approach to quality assurance. Taken together, the developments indicate a system that is increasingly transparent and evidence-informed, and that is fit for purpose, even if it is not yet fully embedded in a mature PDCA cycle.

Building on these developments, the panel recognises the College's efforts to streamline quality assurance processes **across campuses**. Structures such as the joint governance through the Academic Council, regular cross-campus exchanges among support staff, and the taskforce established to jointly prepare this review indicate a growing shared approach to internal procedures. Looking ahead, the panel suggests maintaining this focus on consistency and effectiveness. This includes further strengthening cross-campus coordination where structures and policies are shared, enhancing coherence in assessment practices by expanding common guidelines and calibrated rubrics for Visiting Professors, and formalising quality-assurance procedures linked to the flying-faculty model to ensure systematic pedagogical alignment.

During the site visit, the panel gathered a wide range of **stakeholder feedback**, which confirmed both the effectiveness and the embedded nature of the College's quality culture. Students consistently referred to examples where their feedback led to adjustments, such as the scheduling of the POL simulation game, the modification of assessment timing in ECO and improvements to the introductory interdisciplinary sessions in EIS. Teaching staff, including Visiting Professors, highlighted the constructive and timely feedback they receive from Academic Assistants and programme leadership, which helps them adjust their teaching to student needs and maintain coherent expectations across courses. Alumni noted that the College frequently reaches out for input, for example through participation in career panels, programme advisory exchanges, or informal consultations during study trips, allowing them to contribute insights on labour market developments and skills needed.

The panel also observed that the College has a strong and **extensive network**. Close and often informal connections between programme staff, Visiting Professors, alumni, and practitioners allow the programmes to remain attuned to professional and academic developments. These networks organically feed into the quality assurance cycle, as stakeholders provide feedback on curriculum relevance, evolving policy debates, skills required in EU institutions, and emerging trends in their respective fields. Although much of this exchange operates through informal channels, the panel notes that the frequent contacts with external stakeholders are highly effective in ensuring that programme teams receive timely and practice-relevant insights that meaningfully support ongoing improvement.

While students indicated that they generally feel heard and that their suggestions often lead to visible adjustments, the panel encourages the College to further strengthen the **communication of follow-up actions**. Some students expressed that, although they trusted their feedback was taken seriously, due to the one-year nature of the programmes, the concrete steps taken afterwards were not always visible to them. More explicit communication and expectation management - for example via short follow-up notes, structured summaries of implemented changes, or regular updates through student representatives - would help reinforce transparency and strengthen student confidence in the QA cycle.

Mission and vision of the programmes

The College of Europe articulates a **clear institutional mission**, described in its Self-Evaluation Report as *“providing an advanced European education that combines academic excellence with professional relevance, empowering its graduates to contribute to the European integration process.”* The panel's analysis confirms that

this mission is not only well defined, but also effectively translated into the design and delivery of the five master's programmes. Each programme is shaped by a shared institutional commitment to **practice-oriented and policy-relevant European studies**, offered within a residential, multilingual, and distinctly multicultural learning environment. Despite their differing academic profiles and disciplinary orientations, all programmes work towards the common goal of preparing graduates for roles in European and international institutions, national administrations, diplomacy, civil society, academia, and the private sector. Throughout the site visit, the panel observed that the College's mission is well understood and consistently reflected in the attitudes and practices of staff, students, alumni and other stakeholders, all of whom showed a strong sense of commitment to the College's overarching purpose and to the aims of their respective programmes.

Master of Science in European Economic Studies (ECO)

The ECO programme's mission is to offer advanced training in **European economic integration**, combining strong analytical and quantitative skills with applied policy expertise. Its vision is to prepare graduates for analytical roles in EU institutions, central banks, think tanks, and consultancies by providing both disciplinary depth and understanding of the EU policy context. This mission is reflected in the programme's clear commitment to aligning economic theory with real-world policy challenges, supported by contributions from both academics and practitioners. In 2025, the programme underwent an intensive reform that further sharpened this focus by discontinuing the specialisation in *European Economic Integration and Business* and the sub-tracks *European Law and Economic Analysis* and *European Public Policy Analysis*. The panel commends this strategic choice, which has resulted in a coherent and clearly profiled programme centred on econometrics, policy evaluation and quantitative analysis, thereby strengthening its identity and enhancing its alignment with the programme's professional orientation.

Master of Arts in European Interdisciplinary Studies (EIS)

The EIS programme has a broad, interdisciplinary mission: studying Europe from multiple disciplinary angles (political science, law, economics, history, geopolitics). Its vision builds on the Natolin campus's unique historical and geopolitical identity, initially serving the needs of EU enlargement and now increasingly focused on **the EU's neighbourhood, security, and strategic challenges**. The programme aims to cultivate graduates with the capacity to analyse Europe in its wider regional and global context. The introduction of a new study track on *European Security and Strategy*, starting in the 2026-2027 academic year, further sharpens this evolving profile. The panel commends the programme's distinctive approach to European studies and emphasis on European history and civilization as common threads, which is clearly appreciated by students. However, the panel also notes the challenge of maintaining focus with such a broad scope.

Master of Arts in EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies (IRD)

The IRD programme's mission is to provide advanced training in **EU external action, diplomacy, and international relations**, uniting disciplinary rigour with hands-on diplomatic skills. IRD positions itself as a specialised programme focusing on the EU's role as a global actor, combining academic perspectives with simulations, negotiations training, language development, and practitioner engagement. This vision also highlights responsiveness to evolving geopolitical dynamics, which the panel sees reflected in the programme's ongoing curriculum adjustments, as well as the programme's continuous benchmarking against similar international relations and diplomacy programmes in Europe.

Master of European Law (LAW)

The LAW programme strives to deliver **high-level, bilingual legal training** in EU law, anchored in analytical work with primary legal sources, case law, and problem-solving. Its mission is to prepare graduates to work at the highest professional level in EU institutions, national administrations, private practice, and academia. The programme envisions lawyers who can not only interpret but also shape EU legal developments. The panel commends the programme's strong emphasis on bilingualism (French and English), legal methodology, and an interactive teaching culture that mirrors the real-world practice of EU law. Its mission has been strengthened through reforms focusing on legal skills, bilingual teaching, and enhanced student-practitioner interaction.

Master of Arts in European Political and Governance Studies (POL)

The POL programme's mission is to train specialists in **European political processes, governance structures, and policy-making**. POL's vision combines academic foundations in political science with a strong professional focus, emphasising analytical, methodological, and practical skills relevant for EU and national institutions. The panel notes that the programme's recent reforms - such as the introduction of compulsory courses on integrity, ethics, populism, and the future of Europe, including multi-level governance - demonstrate the programme's commitment to engaging with contemporary political developments and equipping students to navigate an evolving governance landscape. The programme aspires to provide a coherent, practice-oriented curriculum that prepares students for roles in public governance while fostering critical reflection on European democracy.

Learning outcomes

Based on the documentation provided, the panel finds that the intended learning outcomes (ILOs) across the College's programmes are clearly formulated, aligned with Level 7 of the **Flemish Qualifications Framework (FQF)**, and appropriately tailored to each programme's disciplinary and professional focus. The outcomes also correspond closely with the mission and identity of the individual programmes, translating their legal, economic, political, diplomatic or interdisciplinary orientations into coherent expectations regarding the knowledge, skills and attitudes students are expected to develop.

During the site visit, the panel discussed the ILOs with stakeholders from the five programmes. These exchanges showed that the outcomes are well understood by both students and staff, who recognise how learning outcomes shape programme design, teaching and assessment. The panel also noted that the ILOs are **clearly documented** on the College's website and consistently presented at the programmes' orientation sessions, ensuring that students are aware from the start how each course contributes to their overall development.

Master of Science in European Economic Studies (ECO)

The panel finds that the ECO programme (66 ECTS) presents well-described and coherent learning outcomes aligned with the programme's quantitative and policy-oriented mission. The ILOs explicitly match the requirements of FQF Level 7, including advanced analytical capacities, quantitative methods, and policy-relevant economic reasoning. The programme articulates a strong professional orientation, with outcomes linked to skills demanded in EU and global labour markets.

Master of Arts in European Interdisciplinary Studies (EIS)

The EIS programme (66 ECTS) defines an ambitious set of interdisciplinary learning outcomes, covering multi-, inter-, cross-, and transdisciplinary analysis of Europe. The panel commends that the learning outcomes reflect the programme's broad ambitions, but highlights concerns about whether the breadth of learning outcomes can be fully achieved. The range and depth of the ILOs is high, and some outcomes may exceed what is feasible within one academic year. This challenge also relates to the constructive alignment, especially in linking interdisciplinary outcomes to the structure and assessment of the master's thesis. The panel therefore recommends clarifying and possibly streamlining the ILO set to ensure focus, coherence, and measurability.

Master of Arts in EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies (IRD)

The IRD programme (66 ECTS) offers clearly defined and well-structured learning outcomes that reflect the programme's specialised niche in EU external relations and diplomacy. The panel commends the explicit benchmarking against similar programmes, as well as the integration of language competences and diplomatic skills. The outcomes correspond strongly with the applied diplomatic training provided via simulations, negotiation exercises, and practitioner-led workshops. The panel praises the openness and self-critical nature of the programme's articulation of learning outcomes.

Master of European Law (LAW)

The LAW programme (66 ECTS) provides exceptionally clear and well-formulated learning outcomes, strongly grounded in the programme's educational vision and aligned with EU legal practice. The outcomes reflect high expectations in terms of analytical legal reasoning, bilingual proficiency, and the ability to work with primary sources. The panel confirms the alignment with the FQF and praises the transparency and thoroughness with which learning outcomes are communicated.

Master of Arts in European Political and Governance Studies (POL)

The POL programme (66 ECTS) presents well-described and coherent learning outcomes that clearly match its mission. The panel praises the integration of general and specific competencies, bilingualism, research and analytical skills, and self-management capacities. The programme also revised its outcomes to respond to recent political developments. While the outcomes overall align well with the FQF, the panel does note a slight gap concerning explicit methodological and methods training. Strengthening the methodological component is therefore recommended to ensure full attainment of research-oriented outcomes.

Curriculum

Across the five master's programmes, the curricula align well with the intended learning outcomes and **balance academic, policy-oriented, and skills-focused components**. The programmes draw extensively on the expertise of Visiting Professors (incl. practitioners), whose contributions enrich the curricula with up-to-date professional perspectives. The panel considers this responsiveness and capacity for rapid adaptation to changing European and global contexts a notable strength. Programmes regularly introduce new courses, update course content, and recruit selected Visiting Professors to respond to emerging developments (e.g., security issues, geopolitical shifts, digital transformation, artificial intelligence).

Given the programmes' distinctly practice-oriented character, the panel emphasises that the academic dimension continues to receive adequate attention. The panel observes that the programmes do include the **research competences** required at FQF Level 7, that students are generally able to demonstrate these in their master's thesis and other academic assignments. At the same time, the panel observes that - within the constraints of the intensive one-year structure - research competences would benefit from further reinforcement. Strengthening ongoing initiatives aimed at supporting students' methodological skills will help ensure that the academic dimension remains sufficiently robust and that the programmes remain well positioned within an increasingly competitive academic and professional landscape.

The College's programmes are all designed to connect foundational knowledge with specialised tracks or electives, enabling students to shape their academic trajectories in accordance with their interests and professional aspirations. The panel commends the programmes for this **student-centred approach**, which is further enhanced by the College's rich offering of extracurricular activities, allowing students to explore specialised or topical themes, engage with real-world challenges and complement their academic learning in meaningful ways. During the site visit, students consistently praised the access they have to such initiatives and described them as an integral part of their overall learning experience.

The panel recognises the **strong integration of languages** within the curricula as a distinctive asset of the College. All master's programmes are taught in English and French. The availability of compulsory and elective language courses, the multilingual learning environment and the explicit emphasis on working in more than one language significantly contribute to students' academic and professional development. This linguistic dimension not only reflects the multilingual reality of European institutions but also enhances students' intercultural communication skills and is therefore regarded by the panel as an important commendation.

Finally, the panel notes that the programmes collectively offer very rich and densely structured curricula, which makes it essential to monitor the overall feasibility of the workload. During the site visit, students frequently referred to the **high workload** they experience, not only in terms of academic demands but also in relation to the competitive environment that can arise from the strong drive among students to participate actively in the

College's many extracurricular initiatives. This includes the student societies and other student-led activities, which are highly valued but can also add to the overall pressure students feel. In this context, the panel encourages the programmes to continue reviewing and adjusting workload distribution - particularly when implementing curricular reform - and to remain attentive to the pressures associated with competitiveness over extracurricular involvement. Clear communication about expectations and guidance on balancing academic and extracurricular commitments can help ensure that students benefit fully from these opportunities without compromising their academic or wellbeing progress.

Master of Science in European Economic Studies (ECO)

Across interviews and documents, the panel observed that the curriculum of this one-year programme demonstrates a clear progression from foundational training in micro- and macroeconomics, econometrics and EU economic integration towards more applied and specialised learning in the second semester. The integration of research design, applied econometrics, simulations and policy-oriented assignments creates a coherent bridge between theory and practice, offering students a curriculum that remains directly relevant to current economic and regulatory debates. The panel particularly commends the two-track approach in the econometrics course, which effectively accommodates the diverse levels of prior knowledge and skills among students and ensures that all participants can engage meaningfully with the programme's quantitative components. At the same time, the panel notes that the intensive nature of compact teaching blocks and the variability introduced by the flying-faculty model occasionally challenges overall coherence and student workload. Continued attention to aligning teaching approaches and managing workload peaks will therefore further strengthen an already ambitious and well-structured curriculum.

Master of Arts in European Interdisciplinary Studies (EIS)

The EIS curriculum is characterised by its breadth and interdisciplinary ambition, bringing together history, politics, law, economics and regional studies in a manner that closely aligns with the broader mission of the Natolin campus. After carefully examining the curriculum, the panel finds that the first semester provides a solid multidisciplinary grounding that prepares students for one of several more specialised course packages in the second semester. This structure is designed to enable students to develop thematic and methodological depth while maintaining substantial flexibility in shaping their individual learning trajectories. Students met during the site visit expressed particular appreciation for the introduction of the *European Security and Strategy* track, noting that it resonates strongly with their academic and professional interests - an enthusiasm that is also echoed in feedback from the professional field. The curriculum is further enriched by a diverse range of experiential components, including study trips, the 'Natolin Nests', and other forms of non-assessed project-based learning, all of which students indicated reinforce the programme's interdisciplinary ethos and contribute meaningfully to their overall educational experience.

However, the panel notes that the extensive course offering and wide conceptual scope make it challenging to maintain cohesion and ensure full constructive alignment, particularly in relation to the master's thesis. Partly in response to earlier recommendations to expand coverage of Western Europe, the programme has further increased its breadth and diversity. While students value this freedom of choice, the panel is mindful that such breadth may complicate efforts to guarantee sufficient depth within individual learning trajectories and may lead to variation in thesis comparability. At the same time, the programme's gradual move towards greater specificity - through an area-studies-like focus on Central and Eastern Europe and an emerging thematic emphasis on security - appears appropriate in light of the campus's geographical and historical context, though it may gradually affect the profile of the EIS as a general interdisciplinary master programme of pan-European relevance. For these reasons, the panel recommends that the programme streamlines its learning outcomes and clarifies how these outcomes are translated into the curriculum and into assessment practices, to ensure that the overall curriculum remains both focused and feasible for students.

Master of Arts in EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies (IRD)

The panel observes that the IRD programme offers a well-structured curriculum - consisting of four clusters - that strikes a thoughtful balance between academic grounding in EU external action and international relations,

and strong professional preparation in diplomacy and negotiation. Core courses in the first semester provide all students with a shared analytical foundation, after which the second semester offers a range of specialised electives that enable them to tailor their learning trajectory in line with their interests and professional aspirations. The programme's intended learning outcomes are well aligned with the curriculum and its assessment practices, which contributes to a coherent and professionally relevant learning experience. While the curriculum is generally well coordinated, some students reported feeling pressure in the second semester, when thesis work, compact practitioner-taught seminars and extracurricular activities converge. Continued attention to scheduling and to the coordination of Visiting Professors should help ensure that the curriculum remains balanced and that peaks in workload are manageable.

Master of European Law (LAW)

Overall, the panel finds that the LAW programme demonstrates exemplary constructive alignment between its intended learning outcomes and its curriculum, based on both the documentation reviewed and the discussions held during the site visit. The programme presents a highly structured and coherent curriculum that combines rigorous academic training in EU law with the development of applied legal skills. The first semester offers a core of compulsory courses that provide students with a solid grounding in the foundations of EU law, while the second semester expands into specialised electives and skills-focused workshops, enabling students to pursue both breadth and depth. The panel specifically commends the programme's bilingual design and its sustained emphasis on working with primary sources, which ensure that students engage with EU law in an analytically robust and professionally relevant manner.

Although the diversity of Visiting Professors enriches the curriculum by bringing a wide range of perspectives from academia, legal practice and European institutions, it also requires careful coordination to maintain coherence. Different stakeholder groups met during the site visit confirmed that the programme manages this effectively through clear communication, collaborative course design, and the continuous refinement of interactive teaching components.

Master of Arts in European Political and Governance Studies (POL)

The one-year curriculum of the POL programme integrates academic training in European politics and governance with a strong emphasis on applied learning and professional development. Recent reforms introduced compulsory courses on ethics, integrity, populism and the future of Europe, including multi-level governance, and confirm the programme's responsiveness to contemporary political developments. The panel finds that the programme's structure - combining a broad menu of elective courses with interdisciplinary components - offers students substantial opportunities to engage with real-world governance scenarios and to develop practical skills relevant to the EU as well as supranational and national institutions.

During the site visit, the panel also observed the clear and explicit ambition of the relatively new Director of Studies to engage in continuous curricular reform. His responsiveness to evolving student needs and broader developments in EU and global governance is reflected in reforms related to research design, digital and AI literacy, and the programme's pre-course preparation, namely the POL/IRD online introductory material, which the panel considers particularly commendable. The panel recommends strengthening methodological teaching and ensuring clearer sequencing throughout the academic year, which will further support students in managing workload peaks and in approaching the master's thesis with stronger and more consistent methodological foundations. Collectively, these efforts reinforce the POL curriculum's overall coherence and its close alignment with the programme's intended learning outcomes.

Learning and teaching

Based on the documents provided by the programmes and the discussions with all stakeholders, the panel states that the College of Europe offers a dynamic and immersive learning environment grounded in **interactive teaching and applied learning formats**. Institution-wide, the panel praises the programmes' commitment to

activating and innovative teaching methods, including simulations, case-based learning, applied workshops and interdisciplinary activities.

A central element of the programmes' learning environment is the distinct "**College formula**", characterised by a residential set-up, multilingual community and continuous interaction within and beyond the classroom. The College has deliberately chosen an educational approach that prioritises **personal, on-campus interaction**, fostering daily engagement between students and staff and creating a learning community in which academic, social and professional development are closely intertwined. Students consistently described this formula as academically stimulating, intensive and supportive. They emphasised not only the value of hands-on teaching and the proximity of both academic staff and Academic Assistants, but also the wide range of extracurricular activities and student-led initiatives that shape their daily learning experience. Activities such as student societies, conferences, cultural events and practitioner exchanges form an essential part of the educational model and provide additional opportunities for students to deepen their engagement with European affairs.

The panel also draws attention to the rapidly evolving role of **artificial intelligence** in higher education. It commends the College for the AI policy introduced in 2025-2026, which demonstrates institutional responsiveness to sector-wide developments and provides a regulatory framework for responsible AI use. Students and staff expressed appreciation for this policy, while also indicating that further development is both necessary and expected. In this regard, the panel highlights the initiatives taken by the IRD programme to inform and guide students in the appropriate use of AI tools, which the panel considers a good practice that could be adopted across the College. In particular, the panel suggests complementing regulation with more hands-on, programme-specific training that equips students with practical AI-related skills - such as prompt engineering, technical competencies and the ethical and responsible application of AI - aligned with the expectations of the professional field. Programme management confirmed that additional trainings are already being developed for the upcoming academic year, which the panel considers a positive and timely step.

Master of Science in European Economic Studies (ECO)

Teaching in the ECO programme is characterised by interactive teaching and learning methods, including case-based learning, problem sets, data analysis exercises, applied policy projects, and simulation activities. The programmes incorporate a commendable range of applied and policy-specific methods, which play a central role in fostering active engagement with economic concepts. Students also appreciate the structured progression from theory to application and value the high level of expertise brought by both academic and practitioner staff. The panel notes the strong guidance provided by Academic Assistants, especially in supporting incoming students with weaker quantitative methods backgrounds.

Master of Arts in European Interdisciplinary Studies (EIS)

The EIS programme offers a highly interactive, interdisciplinary learning environment, shaped by small class sizes, diverse pedagogical styles, and strong student-staff engagement. The panel notes that teaching and learning methods such as the programme's 'Nests', study trips, and interdisciplinary teamwork are very effective in fostering active participation and cross-disciplinary collaboration. Students and teaching staff are both very appreciative of the variety of formats used within the programme.

Master of Arts in EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies (IRD)

The panel observes that the IRD programme offers a highly interactive and practice-oriented learning environment that integrates hands-on diplomatic training with academic teaching. Simulations, negotiation exercises, Model UN, practitioner-led seminars and language courses encourage active learning and support the development of professional skills relevant to EU external action and international diplomacy. Students met during the site visit confirmed that these components, together with the compulsory research design course, enable them to engage with real-world diplomatic challenges and to apply theoretical insights in practical settings.

Stakeholders highlighted the strong engagement between instructors and students, noting in particular the important role played by Academic Assistants in facilitating communication, supporting course delivery and helping students navigate academic expectations. The panel also notes that teaching is well structured across clusters, contributing to a coherent and professionally relevant learning experience. Minor challenges relate mainly to workload peaks and scheduling pressures in the second semester, when thesis work, compact practitioner-taught seminars and extracurricular activities happen at the same time. Continued attention to managing these intensities will help maintain a balanced and sustainable learning environment.

Master of European Law (LAW)

The LAW programme offers an interactive, practice-oriented learning environment, with strong emphasis on case-law analysis, bilingual instruction, legal drafting, moot courts, and skills workshops. Students value the coherence across courses and the well-coordinated teaching team supported by AAs. The panel praises the programme's clear expectations, strong communication culture, and excellent structuring of interactive methods. Overall, the teaching quality in LAW is consistently high and deeply appreciated by students.

Master of Arts in European Political and Governance Studies (POL)

The panel observes that the POL programme offers a highly active and professionally oriented learning environment that combines seminars, simulations and practitioner-led workshops. The four-week simulation game is widely recognised as a flagship component of the programme, providing students with a rich and immersive experience of EU governance processes. In addition to these curricular elements, the panel notes that the programme is complemented by a particularly vibrant range of extracurricular activities, many of which respond directly to current developments - such as the growing focus on audio-visual communication and problem-solving with practitioners. These activities, largely student-initiated and supported by the College, form an important extension of the learning environment and contribute meaningfully to the development of practical skills relevant for careers in European politics and governance.

At the same time, students reported that the simulation game component, together with the varied scheduling of Visiting Professor-led seminars, can generate significant workload peaks - particularly when these coincide with deadlines for the master's thesis. The students met also expressed a desire for more systematic training in qualitative and quantitative research methods to better prepare them for the thesis and for the analytical demands of the professional field, noting that this is particularly important for those who had not written a master's thesis prior to entering the programme.

The panel commends the programme for its openness, strong culture of collecting and integrating student feedback, and its consistent efforts to adjust course formats in response to previous recommendations. Stakeholders confirmed that the programme has already taken concrete steps to address workload pressures by extending the simulation game from three to four weeks, introducing a daily "disconnection time" between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m., and implementing a *semaine blanche* to create breathing space during the most intensive simulation game periods. Going forward, the panel recommends the programme to remain mindful of the timing and length of the simulation game - particularly in relation to other courses and deadlines - to ensure that the learning environment remains healthy and sustainable for students. Strengthening methodological teaching and ensuring clearer sequencing throughout the year would further support students in managing these demanding periods and in developing the skills required for successful thesis preparation.

Assessment

Across the programmes, assessment methods are generally well aligned with the intended learning outcomes. This is evident from the documentation provided but was also confirmed in the interviews with students and teaching staff. All programmes use a **rich and varied mix of assessment methods**, such as written examinations, research papers, policy briefs, oral presentations, moot courts, and simulations. The formats used complement one another and enable students to demonstrate knowledge acquisition, analytical capacity and professional skills in a different way. Many assessments closely mirror real-world professional tasks. Thereby assignments

reinforce the programmes' applied orientation and enable programmes to assess students' achievement of learning outcomes related to problem-solving, applied analysis, and professional readiness.

The panel acknowledges some of the programmes' **good practices concerning assessment**, such as the expanding use of anonymous marking, which supports transparency and fairness, as well as the institution-wide implementation of a digital exam platform, clear rules on academic integrity, and the recently updated AI policy (2025). Together, these elements contribute to more reliable assessment practices. The AI policy, in particular, is relevant in an increasingly digitalised learning environment, as students must learn to use generative AI effectively and responsibly, and understand the boundaries of such use. Students met during the site visit expressed appreciation for the institution's policy framework, as well as for the feedback sessions facilitated by Academic Assistants, which help clarify the rationale behind grades.

As part of the improvements implemented since the 2017 review, the College has also strengthened the assessment of the **master's thesis**. Measures such as mandatory oral defences, the introduction of a second-reader system - where external second readers are appointed by the Academic Council on the basis of proposals from the Directors of Studies - and the revision of assessment forms in most programmes to enhance alignment with intended learning outcomes have contributed to greater transparency and uniformity in grading. At the same time, the panel observes that differences in practice remain between programmes, indicating that full consistency across the institution has not yet been achieved.

The panel also considers how assessment practices are coordinated among the teaching staff, particularly Visiting Professors. Panel members note positively how the programmes brief and support VPs, an appreciation echoed by the teaching staff during the site visit. Staff described ongoing dialogue to ensure alignment between assessment formats and course-level learning objectives, as well as clear communication of programme-specific assessment policies at the start of each teaching assignment. Nevertheless, the panel identifies **uniformity in grading** as an important area for continued attention. Based on discussions with students and staff, the panel considers that more explicit use of rubrics could strengthen transparency and support equal treatment across the cohort. It also encourages programmes to maintain a structured approach to calibration and expectation management, especially with regard to thesis supervision by the visiting professors. In addition, the panel suggests that cultivating a stronger sense of community among Visiting Professors may enhance shared ownership and promote greater consistency in assessment practices.

Master's thesis

The master's thesis (15 ECTS) is a standard component of the programmes at the College of Europe. Prior to the site visit, the panel reviewed a selection of theses from each programme. Overall, the consulted theses reflect the disciplinary profiles of the respective programmes well and demonstrate a sufficient level of academic achievement in line with **FQF Level 7**. At the same time, the panel observes variation across programmes. For instance, theses in quantitatively oriented programmes like ECO tend to incorporate more robust empirical analysis, whereas in interdisciplinary or more practice-oriented programmes the degree of methodological depth or conceptual focus differs more noticeably. During the site visit, the alumni and representatives of the professional field confirmed that the College's programmes adequately prepare students for their professional careers, indicating that the skills and networks developed through the thesis process are relevant.

The panel commends the College's **strong supervision culture**. The thesis process is clearly structured with defined guidelines, milestones, and support mechanisms in place. The second-reader system - where a second evaluator reviews the thesis independently - and the recently reintroduced oral thesis defences contribute to fairness and transparency and help triangulate the academic judgement. Students met by the panel consistently highlighted the vital role played by Academic Assistants in providing day-to-day methodological and organisational support. They cited examples such as feedback sessions on draft outlines, guidance on data management, and help in interpreting thesis guidelines as particularly valuable. Recognising the valuable role of the AAs, the panel recommends that the AAs are offered further methods and research training themselves.

Despite these strengths, the panel notes that **feasibility and methodological preparedness** vary across programmes. These differences are often related to the heterogeneity of incoming students and differences in

curricular structure. Some students - particularly those who had not previously written a thesis - reported challenges in formulating a research question or selecting appropriate methods within the compressed one-year timeline. Although the panel saw good examples of early methodological training, such as introductory econometrics support in ECO and the research-design courses in POL and IRD, this support is not yet embedded consistently across all programmes. The panel therefore suggests further strengthening training in research skills, supported by adequate methodological facilities and guidance throughout the thesis process. In addition, in cases where a thesis supervisor does not have an academic profile, the panel considers it important that the second reader is an academic in order to safeguard the academic quality of the thesis.

Master of Science in European Economic Studies (ECO)

ECO theses typically involve applied economic analysis, econometric modelling or policy evaluation, and they reflect the programme's quantitative and policy-oriented profile. Students met during the site visit confirmed that they receive sufficient research-design training, particularly through the methodological sessions offered in the first semester which help them formulate feasible and well-scoped research questions. They also expressed appreciation for the guidance provided by thesis supervisors, who ensure methodological soundness and support students in selecting appropriate empirical strategies, datasets and analytical frameworks. The programme provides clear timelines and written guidelines for each stage of the thesis process, and students noted that regular check-ins with supervisors and Academic Assistants help them stay on track during the intensive one-year cycle.

The panel commends the strong alignment between the master's thesis and the programme's intended learning outcomes, particularly regarding quantitative competencies. The thesis process offers students opportunities to apply the econometric tools and policy-analysis techniques developed throughout the curriculum, often using real-world datasets or evaluating EU policy measures. In several cases reviewed, the panel observed that theses demonstrated a high level of technical proficiency, including sophisticated modelling approaches or rigorous empirical testing. At the same time, the panel notes that the ECO programme continues to refine its guidance on the responsible and transparent use of AI tools within empirical research, which students indicated is increasingly relevant when handling data or drafting analytical components. Overall, the thesis trajectory in ECO is well structured and effectively supports students in demonstrating the research and analytical capabilities expected at Level 7 of the Flemish Qualifications Framework.

Master of Arts in European Interdisciplinary Studies (EIS)

The interdisciplinary character of the EIS programme encourages students to explore thesis topics across politics, law, economics, history and regional studies. Discussions with students during the site visit provided further insight into how the thesis process is experienced in practice. Students reported that proposing a thesis topic and initial design by the end of October can be challenging, particularly because relevant methodological components and some thematic content - and therefore possible thesis topics - have not yet been fully covered by that point in the academic year. The list of potential supervisors and their areas of expertise was described as highly valuable and the programme's system of tentative deadlines within a clear timeline is appreciated. Students also expressed strong appreciation for the role of the Academic Assistants, who provide workshops on citation practices and research-question formulation as well as personalised guidance throughout the thesis trajectory. Overall, students felt well supported by the programme and they highlighted the strength of the student community, which actively shares resources and methodological advice. At the same time, some students suggested that additional guidance may be beneficial for those entering the programme without previous research or thesis experience.

The theses reviewed showed evidence of core research competences - such as critical argumentation, structured use of sources, and a recognisable methodological approach - though often at a modest level of complexity. While broadly aligned with the academic competences at FQF Level 7, the panel found that more consistent methodological depth and more tightly defined research designs would help ensure a stronger and more robust academic standard.

In line with this finding, the panel gives two points of attention for further development. First, the panel observed some variation across the programme, particularly in cases with ambitious themes or broad thematic scopes. While the breadth of possible topics is an important strength of the programme, the panel notes that in a limited number of cases this may lead to theses that are somewhat wider in focus or methodology than is feasible in the available ten-month time. The panel therefore suggests reinforcing methodological support earlier in the academic year, encouraging more precise topic refinement, and providing clearer guidance on how to achieve interdisciplinarity without overextension. The panel also encourages the programme to strengthen its constructive alignment by simplifying and clarifying the ILOs, so that they can be more easily translated into curriculum design and assessment practices, particularly in relation to the thesis. Greater clarity in this regard would also help students make feasible and well-scoped choices, while safeguarding the academic integrity and distinctive interdisciplinary focus of the EIS programme.

Second, the panel observes that interdisciplinary competencies are not systematically incorporated into, or assessed through, the thesis, despite it being a defining characteristic of the programme. The discussions with programme management and the documentation provided have made it clear to the panel that interdisciplinary competencies are inherently developed in many components of the programme - through both content and teaching methods - and assessed in several mandatory courses, while also being present in non-assessed activities. However, the panel maintains that the thesis itself should explicitly reflect the programme's interdisciplinary profile, as this would enhance coherence and more clearly reinforce the distinctiveness of the degree.

Master of Arts in EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies (IRD)

In IRD, theses typically address topics linked to EU external action, diplomacy, multilateralism or security issues, reflecting the programme's analytical and practice-oriented profile. Students follow a mandatory research design course, which the panel praises as good practice because it offers a structured introduction to formulating research questions, choosing appropriate methods, and developing coherent research designs before drafting their thesis proposals. Students met during the site visit confirmed that this course provides valuable early guidance, particularly for those with limited prior experience in academic research.

Reported challenges relate mainly to workload peaks in the second semester, when thesis writing coincides with compact practitioner-taught seminars, extracurricular commitments, and the approaching submission deadline. Students noted that these periods can be demanding, although they also recognised the programme's increasing attention to scheduling and sequencing. Academic Assistants play a vital role throughout the process by offering methodological and organisational support. Students highlighted the usefulness of AA-led sessions on referencing, research ethics and structuring literature reviews, as well as the accessibility of AAs for individual follow-up when needed.

Overall, the panel considers IRD theses to be coherent, well supervised and appropriately aligned with the programme's intended learning outcomes. The theses reviewed demonstrate the conceptual understanding, analytical competence, and level of autonomy expected in a one-year programme at FQF Level 7, while also reflecting the applied orientation that characterises the IRD degree.

Master of European Law (LAW)

In the LAW programme, theses typically focus on legal analysis of EU case law, legislative developments, institutional dynamics, or specific policy domains. The programme's longstanding emphasis on primary sources - including case law, legal texts, and preparatory documents - is clearly reflected in the theses reviewed. Based on the sample examined, the panel finds that LAW theses demonstrate the analytical precision, source-based reasoning, and autonomy expected at FQF Level 7, while also reflecting the programme's bilingual and practice-oriented profile.

Discussions with students during the site visit provided further insight into how the thesis process is experienced in practice. The thesis trajectory is supported by a well-organised process, beginning with early topic selection and supervisor allocation, followed by a series of defined milestones. Students confirmed that they receive

extensive guidance from supervisors and Academic Assistants, particularly in refining research questions, interpreting legal sources and structuring doctrinal analysis. AAs were described as highly accessible for questions concerning referencing, argument structure and thesis guidelines. While the required thesis length is considered appropriate, some students noted that the intensity of the programme limits the extent to which they can explore topics in depth, occasionally requiring them to scale back ambitious initial ideas. Overall, the panel finds that the thesis component remains one of the programme's strengths, supported by clear expectations, a coherent supervision model, and a rigorous assessment framework that helps students reach the required academic level within the one-year structure.

Master of Arts in European Political and Governance Studies (POL)

In POL, thesis topics examine aspects of European governance, institutional functioning, political behaviour, policy analysis, or multi-level decision-making. The thesis process is supported by the newly introduced *Research Design in Governance, Politics and Policy-Making of the EU* course, which students described as helpful in familiarising them with the basic tools of academic research.

Students met during the site visit expressed appreciation for the support provided by supervisors and Academic Assistants, particularly in narrowing broad initial ideas, structuring arguments and identifying feasible methodological approaches within the ten-month timeframe. At the same time, several students noted that the experience of writing a thesis varies considerably depending on their prior academic background. Those who have already completed a master's thesis elsewhere generally consider the POL thesis comparatively light, while students without previous research experience find the process demanding. Recent alumni also mentioned that the combination of seminars, the simulation game and other activities left limited time for in-depth research, resulting in work they considered "good enough" but not always at the level they had initially hoped to achieve. Several students indicated that additional training in and availability of research software for both qualitative and quantitative methods would further strengthen their preparation for thesis work, especially for those entering the programme without prior experience in empirical research.

Building on this feedback, the panel recommends expanding the existing research-design training to ensure that all students - particularly those with limited research backgrounds - have sufficient methodological tools to undertake independent thesis work. This could include offering complementary instruction in research design, general methodology and specific methods, or providing curated resources for students to consult independently. Given the tight curriculum, the panel considers that offering certain components on a voluntary basis, potentially supported by short video modules prepared by methodological experts, could be a flexible way of meeting diverse student needs and allowing those interested in academic or other research-oriented careers to specialise further.

Overall, the panel finds that the POL thesis trajectory is underpinned by a clear timeline, structured guidelines, intermediate checkpoints, and accessible methodological and organisational support from Academic Assistants. Based on the sample reviewed, the panel considers that most theses meet the expectations associated with FQF Level 7, demonstrating adequate conceptual understanding, analytical competence, and a degree of autonomy aligned with the programme's intended learning outcomes. Looking ahead, further strengthening of methodological training and careful sequencing of workload - particularly in relation to the simulation game and key thesis milestones - will help ensure that all students are able to meet these academic expectations within the programme's intensive one-year structure.

Staff

The staff composition at the College of Europe - across the campuses in Bruges and Natolin - brings together Directors of Studies (DoS), Resident Professors (RPs), Visiting Professors (VPs), and Academic Assistants (AAs). This structure lies at the heart of the **College's distinctive formula** and contributes to a rich and diverse academic environment. At the same time, the panel notes that this intensive model brings certain challenges, particularly relating to workload management and the need to ensure that teaching remains cohesive across courses and departments.

Directors of Studies and Resident Professors provide the academic leadership of the programmes. During the site visit, students and staff consistently highlighted their accessibility, dedication, and strong engagement in both academic and supportive roles. DoS and RPs act as anchors within programmes, ensuring that the curriculum evolves coherently and that the programme's identity is preserved across years. Given their central role in safeguarding academic quality and the intensity of the one-year programmes, the panel considers it important that they continue to receive sufficient structural support, particularly during periods of programme reform or staff turnover.

Visiting Professors bring specialised expertise and up-to-date professional insights, which students highly value. Their diverse backgrounds - including EU institutions, national administrations, international organisations, NGOs, and academia - ensure that the programmes remain practice-oriented and responsive to emerging developments. Although the flying-faculty model presents inherent logistical and educational challenges, the panel finds the integration of VPs at the College particularly successful. Stakeholders consistently praise the clear communication and collaborative approach between resident and flying staff, and the panel was impressed by the extent to which VPs are embedded in the programmes and contribute meaningfully to the programmes' applied orientation.

Throughout the review process, **Academic Assistants** emerged as an indispensable part of programme delivery. AAs serve as organisational and pedagogical bridges between permanent staff, VPs and students, carrying responsibilities that include course coordination, methodological support, thesis assistance, communication, and daily student guidance. The panel commends the College for its ability to attract AAs with strong academic profiles and the right mix of skills to perform these varied tasks effectively. At the same time, the central role of AAs brings challenges: their workload is considerable, and their responsibilities are wide-ranging. The panel therefore recommends that continued attention be paid to the selection and professionalisation of AAs, including access to on-the-job training and sufficient time for their own academic development - such as doctoral research. Given their crucial position in safeguarding daily operations and the quality of teaching and assessment, the panel also encourages the College to ensure an adequate number of AAs relative to programme size and complexity.

Programmes also benefit from strong **administrative and support staff**, particularly in areas such as student affairs, libraries, IT, accommodation, and campus life. Students expressed high appreciation for the commitment and approachability of the staff members, underscoring their contribution to the residential model and the sense of community that characterises the College.

In its analysis of staff composition, the panel acknowledges the programmes' awareness of **gender balance** and the measures already taken to address it. While progress is visible, the panel advises adopting an even more proactive and sustained approach to fostering diversity among teaching staff, particularly within the pool of Visiting Professors.

Across the board, the panel is highly impressed with the **quality and strong commitment** of all staff. Their collective professionalism and dedication are central to the successful delivery of the five master's programmes. Throughout the review procedure - including the preparation of the SER and the discussions during the site visit - the panel encountered a very open and reflective attitude from the staff, which panel members consider indicative of a mature and embedded quality culture. From an educational perspective, the panel notes that formal professionalisation activities for teaching staff are relatively limited. However, based on discussions with both students and teaching staff, this does not appear to hinder the quality of teaching or the effectiveness of the learning experience.

Finally, the panel notes that the College of Europe offers a **demanding and ambitious professional environment**. While staff expressed strong intrinsic motivation and a strong identification with the College's mission, the panel encourages the institution to remain attentive to staff wellbeing. A more proactive wellbeing policy - recognising the cumulative demands placed on academic, administrative and support staff - would help maintain the positive and sustainable working environment consistently described by stakeholders.

Master of Science in European Economic Studies (ECO)

The ECO Department is supported by 30 Visiting Professors from 17 countries, ensuring strong international and disciplinary diversity. Teaching is nearly evenly split between practitioners and academics, reflecting the programme's dual academic-professional orientation. The Department's permanent staff includes a half-time Director of Studies, and 4 Academic Assistants, forming a compact but highly functional academic team.

Master of Arts in European Interdisciplinary Studies (EIS)

The EIS Department has expanded significantly since the previous accreditation, now supported by over 100 Visiting Professors, reflecting its broad interdisciplinary remit and strong international profile. The Department's permanent academic team includes approximately 17 core staff members, alongside 6 Academic Assistants, enabling strong individualised support. The sustained growth in faculty ensures the programme can deliver its wide range of courses (134 in 2025) while maintaining manageable staff-student ratios.

Master of Arts in EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies (IRD)

The IRD programme works with 45 Visiting Professors, of whom 28 are academics and 19 practitioners, ensuring a balanced blend of theoretical and applied instruction. The panel commends the substantial improvement in gender balance, rising from 22.5% female faculty in 2017 to 47.3% in 2025. The IRD Department is further supported by a Resident Professor, a Director of Studies, and 6 Academic Assistants.

Master of European Law (LAW)

The LAW Department draws on approximately 45-50 Visiting Professors, combining senior EU legal scholars with high-level practitioners from the Court of Justice, national administrations, and law firms. The permanent academic staff includes a Director of Studies, Resident Professor, and 7 Academic Assistants. The Department has also made progress towards gender balance, increasing female faculty representation compared to previous cycles.

Master of Arts in European Political and Governance Studies (POL)

The POL programme engages 56 Visiting Professors from 18 nationalities, reflecting its broad disciplinary and professional orientation. The core academic leadership consists of a half-time Director of Studies and a Resident Professor, supported by 7 Academic Assistants. The diversity and size of the faculty allow for a wide range of optional courses and strong practitioner involvement across clusters.

Admission and progression

The College of Europe applies a similar **selective and multi-layered admissions process** for all its programmes. Candidates can apply for up to two programmes (with ranked or equal preference) and undergo two levels of evaluation for each: a pre-selection by the Department, followed by an interview conducted by the College and/or National Selection Committees. The final decision of admission - based on the admissibility status - is taken by the Admissions Office in Bruges and by the Recruitment Office in Natolin. This structure ensures that admitted students meet the requirements for the programmes, while contributing to the College's multicultural and international learning environment. During the site visit, students and staff repeatedly emphasised the transparency of the process and the consistency with which admission criteria are applied across countries and programmes. Several students noted that interviews with national selection committees were academically demanding but fair, and that they appreciated the emphasis on motivation, prior academic preparation, and linguistic ability.

Across the institution, the panel is impressed by the **level of ambition, drive and quality** of the students at the College. Overall, the student body is both highly qualified and heterogeneous: the majority already hold a master's degree or equivalent, which contributes to a strong academic base. At the same time, diversity in

disciplinary background and prior research experience necessitates targeted support measures. Staff and students pointed to the value of preparatory tools such as introductory courses, e-learning modules, and writing or methods tutorials, which help level the playing field at the start of the year. Academic Assistants play a key role in this process, offering guidance on academic expectations, research skills, and programme-specific requirements. Students emphasised that these supports are particularly helpful for those who arrive with limited prior exposure to EU studies or without experience in writing a thesis.

The panel considers **socio-economic and geographic diversity** an important dimension of the College's admissions landscape. While the College succeeds in attracting a wide range of nationalities, students and staff indicated that socio-economic diversity remains uneven across countries due to differing national scholarship schemes. The total study fee - € 29.000 for the academic year 2025-2026, covering both tuition, board and lodging - represent a significant financial commitment, which further underscores the importance of accessible funding opportunities. The College's own initiatives, such as InklusivEU and various fee-waiver schemes, provide meaningful support, yet financial accessibility continues to depend heavily on external national funding structures over which the College has limited influence. The panel therefore recommends that the College continue to expand and prioritise targeted measures to promote socio-economic and geographic diversity, recognising the importance of a broadly representative student body for the institution's mission, classroom dynamics and long-term societal impact.

Progression through the programmes is shaped by the **intensive ten-month structure**, which requires continuous attention to workload distribution, academic performance, and wellbeing. Students generally feel that relevant information on deadlines, exam regulations, progression, etc. is clearly communicated within the programmes, and many confirmed that they receive timely advice on academic planning. However, workload peaks - often linked to compact course delivery, extracurricular commitments, or programme-specific elements such as the POL simulation game - require careful planning and occasional adjustments to safeguard feasibility and student wellbeing.

From the discussions with students and staff, the panel also learned of helpful programme-specific practices that may be usefully adopted across the College. In particular, the IRD programme integrates early instruction on **Anglo-Saxon and Francophone evaluation styles** - including expectations for academic essays and analytical writing - which students described as invaluable in navigating the diverse assessment methods used at the College. The panel suggests that this practice be incorporated into the preparatory courses across all programmes, as it would equip incoming students with a clearer understanding of formal writing conventions and reduce the adjustment period at the start of the academic year.

Drawing on the SER and information gathered during the site visit, the panel concludes that the College's admissions process effectively identifies candidates with the academic preparation and personal resilience required to succeed in an intensive one-year format. **Progression patterns** across the five programmes confirm the robustness of the support structures in place, including introductory courses, language courses, tutorials, e-learning modules and close staff-student interaction. Taken together, these elements ensure that students are well positioned to progress through the curriculum and achieve their programmes' intended learning outcomes.

Student support services

Student support at the College of Europe is deeply shaped by its residential model, which integrates academic, social and personal wellbeing within a close-knit campus environment. Institution-wide, the panel commends the strong culture of **accessibility and informal support networks** that this model enables. Students consistently emphasised their appreciation for administrative staff, Academic Assistants, and the sense of community fostered by living and learning together. At the same time, the panel observed that the two campuses sometimes differ in their available facilities and access to professional support services, making continued attention to inter-campus coordination important.

The students met were very clear about the ambitious and demanding nature of the programmes. While the panel recognises that the College has a broad spectrum of support services in place, discussions during the site visit highlighted two areas where further strengthening would be beneficial. First, although students generally described the support they receive as responsive and effective, several noted that the **visibility and accessibility**

of professional counselling structures could be improved. The panel therefore encourages the College to enhance the clarity of information regarding wellbeing pathways and to ensure that students know where to turn for specialised support when needed.

Second, the panel observed that many support mechanisms are currently request-driven, requiring students to actively seek out assistance. Given the intensity of the one-year academic cycle, the panel suggests adopting a more **proactive approach** to student wellbeing. This includes monitoring workload pressures, communicating follow-up actions to student feedback consistently across campuses, and remaining attentive to the cumulative demands placed on students. Sustained attention to these aspects will help maintain the positive and supportive learning environment that students regard as a distinctive strength of the College.

Campus Bruges

Student support services in Bruges are characterised by a combination of **administrative guidance, academic support, language assistance and practical, residence-based support**. During the site visit, students repeatedly emphasised the responsiveness and approachability of administrative staff, noting examples such as the rapid help they received in resolving residence-related issues, assistance with visa and registration procedures, and the practical guidance offered during peak periods like exam weeks or thesis submission. The panel observed that this hands-on administrative support significantly contributes to students' sense of stability and wellbeing on a daily basis.

Students also benefit from **structured academic support** provided by Academic Assistants, who play a key role in guiding coursework, thesis preparation, and methodological skills. Several students shared concrete examples of AAs offering targeted support - such as individual thesis-outline discussions, workshops on citation practices, and guidance on structuring policy briefs or legal arguments. Students indicated that these sessions are especially valuable during the transition into the intensive one-year programme and in periods when compact teaching blocks increase academic pressure.

The panel notes that, while adequate support mechanisms exist on the Bruges campus, students expressed some uncertainty about how to access professional psychological services, particularly in urgent situations. A number of students mentioned that, while they were aware of the presence of a Wellbeing Officer, they were unsure about how to schedule appointments or what types of issues could be addressed confidentially through this service. Others reported that information on external psychological support - while available - is not always clearly signposted or easy to find. The panel therefore recommends **strengthening awareness** of wellbeing pathways by making information about psychological support more visible on digital platforms and during orientation activities. Ensuring that students from diverse backgrounds feel comfortable accessing these services without stigma or confusion will further improve the inclusiveness of the wellbeing offer.

In terms of **community life**, Bruges offers a vibrant extracurricular environment supported by student associations, cultural activities and events that contribute meaningfully to wellbeing and integration. Students highlighted the positive impact of initiatives such as the student-run societies, thematic conferences, language tandems, and informal study groups. At the same time, several students noted that the intensity of the academic schedule occasionally limits their ability to participate fully in these opportunities, particularly during peak workload periods. Nonetheless, the panel finds that the wide array of student-led activities enriches the overall learning environment and further strengthens the sense of community that is central to the College's residential model.

Campus Natolin

Student support services at the Natolin campus strongly benefit from its residential setting, which fosters close interaction among students, staff and faculty and creates an environment in which academic, social and personal wellbeing are closely intertwined. During the site visit, students consistently highlighted the **strong sense of community** and the **high level of personalised support** provided by administrative and support staff. They appreciate the general accessibility of staff and the efforts made by the administrative teams to create an inclusive, multicultural environment where students feel supported academically and personally. Students also

highly valued the range of wellbeing and support structures available, including access to a part-time psychologist, wellbeing officers and student life coordinators.

Academic Assistants also play a central role in supporting students at Natolin. Students gave concrete examples of AAs providing guidance on coursework expectations, workshop-style sessions on academic writing, and research techniques, as well as personalised assistance during thesis preparation. The small-scale campus structure means that AAs are present and approachable throughout the week, which students described as particularly helpful during compact teaching blocks and in the lead-up to major assignments. In discussions with the panel, students emphasised that this proximity enhances both **academic support** and general wellbeing, as AAs often function as first points of contact when students face difficulties.

Community life at Natolin emerged as one of the campus's defining strengths. Students spoke enthusiastically about the wide range of community-building activities embedded into the academic year, including cultural evenings, guest lectures, informal discussion groups, and the signature study trips, which they described as academically enriching and socially bonding experiences. The panel observed that these activities contribute significantly to integration and peer support. At the same time, several students noted that the intensity of the academic schedule, combined with the immersive residential environment, can sometimes make it challenging to maintain a balanced rhythm, particularly during periods when coursework and thesis milestones converge. Overall, however, the panel finds that Natolin's strong sense of community, together with its structured academic and administrative support, offers students a highly engaging and supportive living-learning environment.

Facilities

The College of Europe operates two distinct campuses. Each offers facilities that support academic work, residential life, and extracurricular activities. Institution-wide, the panel commends the **high quality and accessibility of facilities**, noting that both campuses provide well-equipped study environments, strong IT support, and spaces conducive to community building. The residential formula is reinforced by the availability of dedicated social, cultural, and academic spaces. While overall satisfaction with facilities is high, the panel notes that pressures on certain spaces and infrastructure - particularly libraries and study rooms - require continued strategic planning.

Campus Bruges

Bruges provides a compact but well-organised set of facilities distributed across several historic buildings in the city centre. Students appreciate the **central locations** and the atmosphere created by the historic architecture. Academic facilities include well-equipped classrooms, seminar rooms, computer rooms, and group-study areas.

The **library** is valued for its specialised collection in European studies, which is further strengthened through close collaboration with partner libraries and documentation centres, allowing access to additional resources when needed. The panel also noted the responsiveness of the library staff, with the extension of opening hours as a concrete example of how the library adapts to student needs. While the library functions as an important academic hub, some students mentioned limitations in seating capacity during busy times, suggesting that further expansion or space optimisation could be beneficial.

IT infrastructure is reliable and well supported, and students report positive experiences with the digital learning environment and exam platform. **Residential facilities**, divided across several residences, are generally well maintained, though some students mentioned variability in room quality. Social spaces - including common rooms, the student bar, study rooms, and outdoor areas - are appreciated and contribute to the community atmosphere.

Campus Natolin

Natolin benefits from a **distinctive, self-contained campus environment**, set within a protected historical park. The panel highlights the exceptional quality of the campus grounds and the integrated nature of academic, residential, and social spaces. Facilities include modern classrooms, a well-resourced library with strong support services, computer rooms, and multiple dedicated spaces for group work and events. Students emphasise the value of the 24/7 library access, which supports the intensive academic workload.

Residential facilities in Natolin are generally high quality, with all students living on campus. The integrated logistics - dining hall, gym, sports facilities, study rooms, and common areas - support a cohesive community dynamic. Students also appreciate the cultural and historical setting, though the campus's location outside central Warsaw requires reliance on public transport.

Information

The panel examined whether the College provides comprehensive and readable information about the full study trajectory. Across all programmes, the College offers a **wide range of information** to prospective and current students through multiple channels, including programme websites, brochures, orientation materials and direct communication from academic and administrative staff. Students interviewed during the site visit confirmed that the programme websites offer clear and accessible information on programme structure, course components and practical arrangements, and that the published intended learning outcomes help them form realistic expectations prior to enrolment. Once admitted, students have access to all relevant learning materials through the College's digital platforms, and teaching staff actively communicate course updates and requirements via these channels. Students also indicated that they are well informed about academic regulations and examination procedures, which contributes to a clear understanding of expectations throughout the academic year. They additionally highlighted the responsiveness of administrative staff, whose support they regard as a key strength of their overall experience.

At the same time, students noted some **variability** in how information is sequenced, prioritised or repeated across programmes and campuses. The panel therefore encourages the College to continue harmonising communication practices and to ensure that essential information is delivered in a timely, structured and clearly signposted manner.

The panel also explored to what extent **information regarding programme quality** is publicly accessible. Panel members found that the College provides a dedicated webpage with information on its internal quality assurance policy, including the core principles of its QA processes, an explanation of how these processes are embedded in the governance structure, the tools used for continuous improvement and links to relevant frameworks such as the ESG, FQF and Flemish quality characteristics. The page also provides access to published external review reports of the programmes, offering stakeholders insight into previous evaluations.

Overall, the panel finds that the **availability, quality and clarity** of information offered by the College is strong and contributes meaningfully to student preparedness and the smooth functioning of academic life.

Conclusion

Across the five advanced master's programmes reviewed, the panel concludes that the College of Europe delivers education that meets the required quality standards and is firmly grounded in the institution's distinctive "**College formula**" - which combines academic depth, professional relevance, and an intensive residential learning environment. The programmes share a clear mission and identity, yet differ in disciplinary emphasis and educational approach, allowing each to serve its intended purpose. At the same time, the panel identifies several areas where continued attention will be important to ensure sustained quality within the intensive one-year framework.

Quality assurance processes have become more structured since the previous review in 2017, with annual programme evaluations, clearer use of intended learning outcomes, and increasing cross-campus alignment. These developments have strengthened constructive alignment and contributed to a more transparent, evidence-informed QA culture. The panel recommends continued harmonisation of practices across campuses and programmes and further formalisation of procedures, to strengthen consistency and transparency.

The **curricula** across the programmes are coherent, up to date, and closely aligned with the respective missions. The integration of practitioners - through simulations, skills workshops, case-based exercises, study trips and language training - remains a distinctive strength that supports the applied and policy-oriented profile of the College. Nevertheless, the panel finds that research competence, while present, would benefit from further deepening, particularly given the compressed nature of the one-year format. Strengthening methodological preparation earlier in the academic year and monitoring workload distribution will be important to safeguard the academic dimension and ensure feasibility for all students.

The panel recognises the College's dynamic **learning and teaching** environment, characterised by intensive interaction and multilingualism within a closeknit community. Innovative teaching methods are used effectively, and students appreciate the responsiveness of staff. However, the rapid evolution of artificial intelligence and digital tools calls for more programme-specific training and practical guidance. The IRD programme's initiatives in this area constitute a promising example that could be adopted more widely.

The panel acknowledges the rich variety of **assessment** methods and the improvements to the master's thesis process, including the introduction of oral defences and the second-reader system. These measures have enhanced transparency and robustness. At the same time, variation between programmes persists - particularly in grading practices, use of rubrics, and expectations communicated to Visiting Professors. More systematic calibration would support greater consistency across the institution.

The panel also highlights the dedication and professionalism of **staff**, whose combined academic and practitioner expertise greatly enriches the programmes. The diversity of profiles - ranging from senior EU officials to researchers and legal experts - supports the applied nature of the curricula. Academic Assistants, in particular, play an essential coordinating, pedagogical, and pastoral role. Given their broad responsibilities, the panel recommends continued attention to their training and workload, as well as sustained efforts to safeguard staff wellbeing more broadly.

Student support services and facilities on both campuses are regarded very positively by students, who value the accessibility of administrative staff, the community atmosphere, and the quality of educational infrastructure and residential spaces. Nonetheless, the visibility of support could be strengthened and made available more proactively, particularly during peak workload periods. The panel also notes that the College provides comprehensive **information** on its programmes, regulations, and quality assurance processes.

Taken together, the panel finds that the programmes are fit for purpose and aligned with FQF Level 7 expectations. Continued investment in methodological support, QA consistency, assessment coordination, and student and staff wellbeing will help ensure that the College of Europe sustains its distinctive strengths and remains well positioned in a rapidly evolving academic and professional landscape:

- The panel finds that the Master of Science in European Economic Studies meets the review principles. The panel therefore gives a positive final judgement.

- The panel finds that the Master of Arts in European Interdisciplinary Studies meets the review principles. The panel therefore gives a positive final judgement.
- The panel finds that the Master of Arts in EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies meets the review principles. The panel therefore gives a positive final judgement.
- The panel finds that the Master of European Law (LLM) meets the review principles. The panel therefore gives a positive final judgement.
- The panel finds that the Master of Arts in European Political and Governance Studies meets the review principles. The panel therefore gives a positive final judgement.

Summary of the commendations

Common

- The distinctive “College formula” creates a unique and effective learning environment for the policy-oriented curricula.
- The College offers a genuinely multicultural learning environment, fostering international exchange, intercultural understanding, and a strong sense of community.
- The integration of Visiting Professors into programme delivery is highly effective, ensuring that students benefit from up-to-date professional insights alongside academic expertise.
- The overall quality, professionalism, and dedication of teaching and support staff is outstanding, with Academic Assistants in particular forming an integral and indispensable part of programme delivery through their wide range of responsibilities and expertise.
- The College provides an exceptionally rich ecosystem of extracurricular activities, supported by an extensive external network that enables students to engage with practitioners, institutions, and societal debates beyond the classroom.
- The College offers excellent facilities, infrastructure and student support services, contributing to an environment that enables effective study, community life, and personal wellbeing.
- The panel praises the high level of ambition, motivation, and overall quality of the student body, which significantly enriches the academic and social dynamics of the College. The panel is impressed with the successful career trajectories of College alumni.
- The system of student representation is well structured and meaningfully supported, enabling students to contribute actively and constructively to programme enhancement.
- The programmes are highly responsive to feedback from stakeholders, students specifically.
- The programmes demonstrate strong adaptability to emerging societal and technological developments, including responsiveness to changes in the global context and the evolving role of artificial intelligence.
- The College’s sustained attention to language learning - through compulsory and optional courses - significantly enhances students’ academic and professional competences.
- The programmes are effective in supporting and accommodating the heterogeneous academic backgrounds of their student cohorts, ensuring that all students can participate meaningfully in the curriculum.

ECO

- The two-track approach in the econometrics course copes effectively with the diverging knowledge of and skills in econometrics among students.

EIS

- The programme’s broad approach to European studies, and emphasis on European history and civilization as common threads, is distinctive and is clearly appreciated by students.

IRD

- The programme’s preparatory efforts that introduce incoming students to the Anglo-Saxon and Francophone teaching and evaluation styles ensures a shared understanding of assessment expectations for all students.
- The IRD initiatives to (in)form their students in AI use are a good practice for the whole College.

LAW

- The programme offers a distinctive and valuable curriculum built on primary sources, bilingual requirements and strong skills training.
- The programme benefits from a highly supportive and responsive team culture, including the Visiting Professors, which facilitates timely improvements to the curriculum.

POL

- The programme management demonstrates a clear and forward-looking ambition for continuous programme reform and implementation - particularly in areas such as research design and AI literacy. Ongoing revisions are well aligned with recent EU and global developments and attentive to Europe's multilevel governance.

Summary of the recommendations

Common

- Safeguard the pivotal role of Academic Assistants by ensuring they receive targeted professionalisation and on-the-job training, while also providing them with sufficient time and resources to carry out their wide range of responsibilities and pursue their own research activities.
- Move beyond regulatory guidance on the use of AI and introduce hands-on, programme specific training in effective and responsible AI use, covering technical aspects (such as prompt engineering) and ethical application in academic work, aligned with the needs of the professional field.
- Strengthen and expand measures to improve socio-economic and geographic diversity within the student body.
- Adopt a more proactive and sustained approach to improving gender balance within the teaching staff, including among Visiting Professors.
- Ensure the academic nature of the programmes, for instance by strengthening research design and research methodology courses, while safeguarding the unique and effective professional orientation of the programmes.
- When a thesis supervisor does not have an academic profile, always assign a second reader who is an academic so that the academic quality and methodological rigour of master's theses are safeguarded.

ECO

- The recommendation concerning gender balance is particularly relevant for the ECO programme, where further improvement is essential.

EIS

- Ensure that interdisciplinary competencies, which are central to the programme's profile, are explicitly incorporated into, and assessed through, the master's thesis, so that the thesis component fully reflects the interdisciplinary orientation and learning outcomes of the curriculum.
- Strengthen constructive alignment by streamlining the learning outcomes, ensuring they can be clearly operationalised within the curriculum and assessed consistently.

IRD

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LAW

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POL

- Expand the research design course to ensure that students without prior research experience are adequately prepared for the master's thesis. This should include coverage of research design, general methodology and specific methods, supported - where necessary - by self-study resources and research software. Given the tight curriculum, offering parts of this training on a voluntary basis, complemented by short expert led video modules, would allow students to strengthen essential skills and enable those aiming for academic careers to specialise further.
- Continue monitoring and adjusting the timing of (communication on) deadlines and the overall workload of students - particularly in the context of ongoing and future programme reforms - to safeguard feasibility within the intensive one-year structure.

Summary of the suggestions

Common

- Ensure that Directors of Studies and Resident Professors are sufficiently resourced to sustain day-to-day operations, academic leadership and programme quality.
- Maintain structural oversight of the flying faculty model to ensure consistent teaching and assessment practices - especially with regard to the master's thesis - and consider establishing a more formal VP community to further strengthen their shared ownership of the programmes.
- Communicate more clearly to students how their feedback on academic and governance matters is followed up, and ensure consistent expectation-management across student cohorts.
- Adopt a more proactive approach to monitoring and supporting student and staff wellbeing within the demanding one-year academic environment. Remain attentive to the pressures created for students - particularly those linked to competitiveness - and communicate clear expectations regarding extracurricular involvement to help safeguard their balance and wellbeing.

ECO

- Implement a preparatory introduction to Anglo-Saxon and Francophone academic and evaluation styles for incoming students, drawing on IRD's good practices.

EIS

- Review the scope and focus of the curriculum to strengthen constructive alignment between learning outcomes and assessment.
- Implement a preparatory introduction to Anglo-Saxon and Francophone academic and evaluation styles for incoming students, drawing on IRD's good practices.

IRD

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LAW

- Implement a preparatory introduction to Anglo-Saxon and Francophone academic and evaluation styles for incoming students, drawing on IRD's good practices.

POL

- Implement a preparatory introduction to Anglo-Saxon and Francophone academic and evaluation styles for incoming students, drawing on IRD's good practices.

Annexes

Annex 1: Administrative details of the programmes

Name of the institution	College of Europe / Collège d'Europe
Address and website	Dijver 11, 8000 Brugge (https://www.coleurope.eu/)
Contact person	Frederik Mesdag, Director of the Academic Administration
Names of the programmes (degree, qualification, eventually title that holders of the degree conferred by this programme may use)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Master of Arts in European Political and Governance Studies (Bruges) - Master of Science in European Economic Studies (Bruges) - Master of European Law (LLM) (Bruges) - Master of Arts in EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies (Bruges) - Master of Arts in European Interdisciplinary Studies (Natolin)
Potential programme routes for working students, full-time/part-time education, day/evening trajectories, different formats of certification	Full-time post-graduate education
Tracks	<p>Specialisation track, to be introduced from the academic year 2026-2027 onwards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Master of Arts in European Interdisciplinary Studies: European Security and Strategy
Level and orientation	Advanced Master's programmes ("Master na master"), level 7 FQF
(Parts of) field(s) of study	<p>Master of Science in European Economic Studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Economische en toegepaste economische wetenschappen;</i> <p>Master of Arts in European Political and Governance Studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Politieke en sociale wetenschappen;</i> <p>Master of European Law (LLM)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Rechten, notariaat en criminologische wetenschappen;</i> <p>Master of Arts in EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Politieke en sociale wetenschappen;</i> <p>Master of Arts in European Interdisciplinary Studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Politieke en sociale wetenschappen;</i> - <i>Rechten, notariaat en criminologische wetenschappen;</i> - <i>Economische en toegepaste economische wetenschappen;</i> - <i>Geschiedenis.</i>
Languages of instruction	English and French
The locations at which the programmes are taught	Bruges (Belgium) and Natolin (Warsaw, Poland)
Workload (in ECTS)	66 ECTS
Possible, relevant collaborations with other	N.A.

(higher education) institutions and/or organizations	
Additional national and/or international regulations applicable to the programme(s)	N.A.

Annex 2: Short CV panel members

Peter Bursens (chair)

Peter Bursens is Full Professor of Political Science at the Department of Political Science of the University of Antwerp. He is senior member of the Politics and Public Governance research group, co-promoter of the GOVTRUST Centre of Excellence, and Director of the STRATEGO Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence. He teaches on the topics of European integration, multilevel governance, and negotiations in Bachelor, Master, and Executive Master programmes at the University of Antwerp and the Antwerp Management School. He has served several terms as Vice Dean for Education and as Programme Director. Peter has also participated in various external programme reviews in Flanders and the Netherlands over the course of the last ten years. His research interests focus on coordination, implementation, and interest representation in EU policymaking, as well as trust and legitimacy in complex multilevel systems.

Edward Best

Edward Best is an Associate Research Fellow at the United Nations University Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies (UNU-CRIS) in Bruges. Until May 2023, he was a Senior Expert at the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA) in Maastricht and a Senior Fellow of the University of Maastricht. Edward holds a DPhil in international relations from the University of Oxford, and began his career in the regional security programme of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) in London. He moved to EIPA in 1988 to coordinate multiannual programmes for the European Commission with Latin America in support of regional integration. From 2003 to 2023, he was responsible for successive multiannual contracts for training in EU governance issues with the institutions and agencies of the EU. He was also work package leader in EU-funded research networks led by the University of Cologne. In this context he delivered courses and published on EU policy-making processes as well as on broader dimensions of EU governance.

Claire Kilpatrick

Claire Kilpatrick is British Academy Global Professor at Queen's University of Belfast in the Law Faculty. Prior to taking up this position in September 2025, she was a Professor of Law at the European University Institute from 2011 and also served as its Dean of Studies and Co-Director of the Academy of European Law. Claire also held academic positions in Bristol, Cambridge and London. Her work focuses on Social Europe, especially on how it is shaped by EU law and policy. Her current British Academy project explores labour rights as human rights in EU Sustainable Supply Chain regulation.

Christine Reh

Christine Reh is Professor of European Politics at the Hertie School in Berlin where she also served as Dean of Graduate Programmes. Before joining the Hertie School in 2018, Christine held academic positions at the College of Europe in Bruges (Belgium) and at University College London (UCL). Christine's work focuses on the European Union's institutions, politics, and legitimacy, with a particular interest in law-making, informal governance, and politicisation. Her research is widely published and has been funded by the British Academy and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). Christine is a member of the Jacques Delors Centre at the Hertie School, sits on the editorial board of the Journal of European Public Policy, and co-edits the European Union Series at Bloomsbury.

François-Charles Wolff

François-Charles Wolff is Professor of Economics at the Nantes Université, where he is affiliated with the Laboratoire d'Économie et de Management Nantes Atlantique (LEMNA). He currently serves as Director of the

Doctoral School in Economics and Management for the Pays de la Loire region and as Deputy Director for Research within the Pôle Sociétés at Nantes Université. His teaching covers econometrics, quantitative methods, and applied microeconomics across undergraduate, master's, and doctoral programmes. His research lies at the intersection of labour economics, family economics, health economics, and public policy evaluation, and he has published extensively in international peer-reviewed journals. Beyond his institutional responsibilities, François-Charles Wolff is actively involved in the national and international academic community through research evaluation, scientific committees, and expert activities for organizations such as the Haut Conseil de l'Évaluation de la Recherche et de l'Enseignement Supérieur (HCERES) and the French Agence Nationale de la Recherche (ANR).

Ruben De La Cruz (student)

Ruben De La Cruz is a PhD fellow at the Ghent Institute for International and European Studies (GIES), Ghent University. Funded by the Research Foundation - Flanders (FWO), his research focuses on the political economy of European green industrial policy, examining how the European Union seeks to reinforce its industrial base in clean technologies. His broader research interests include EU trade and industrial policies. He holds a Master's degree in EU Studies from Ghent University (2024) and is a graduate of the university's Quetelet Lectures honors program. Since 2025, he has been representing early career researchers in the Faculty and Department Councils at Ghent University. He builds on prior experience as a student representative in the Faculty Student Council and as a member of the general assembly of the Ghent Student Council (GSR).

Annex 3: Visit schedule

Site visit to Campus Natolin with the panel chair

14 January 2026

Time	Activity
17:15	Arrival at Warsaw-Chopin Airport
19:00	Informal meeting with Vice-Rector Ewa Ośniecka-Tamecka

15 January 2026

Time	Activity
09:30	Tour around the campus facilities (IES)
12:30	Lunch
13:45	Presentation of the electronic infrastructure (IES)
16:00	Drive to Warsaw-Chopin Airport
18:05	Departure

Site visit to Campus Bruges with the full panel

26 January 2026

Start	End	Activity
09:00	11:30	Internal consultation panel
11:30	13:00	Interview with the programme management (all programmes)
13:00	14:00	Internal consultation panel + lunch
14:00	14:45	Interview with students (LAW)
14:45	15:15	Internal consultation panel
15:15	16:00	Interview with teaching staff (LAW)
16:00	16:30	Internal consultation panel
16:30	17:15	Interview with students (POL)
17:15	17:30	Internal consultation panel
17:30	18:15	Interview with teaching staff (POL)

27 January 2026

Start	End	Activity
09:00	9:15	Internal consultation panel
9:15	10:00	Interview with students (ECO)
10:00	10:15	Internal consultation panel
10:15	11:00	Interview with teaching staff (ECO)
11:00	11:30	Internal consultation panel
11:30	12:15	Interview with students (IRD)
12:15	13:15	Internal consultation panel + lunch
13:15	14:00	Interview with teaching staff (IRD)
14:00	14:30	Internal consultation panel
14:30	15:15	Interview with students (IES)
15:15	15:30	Internal consultation panel
15:30	16:15	Interview with teaching staff (IES)
16:15	17:00	Internal consultation panel
17:00	18:00	Interview with alumni and professional field (all programmes)

28 January 2026

Start	End	Activity
09:00	10:00	Tour of the programme-specific infrastructure (LAW, POL, ECO & IRD)
10:00	10:45	Interview with supporting staff (all programmes)
10:45	11:15	Open consultation
11:15	11:45	Additional discussion with programme management (IES)
11:45	13:30	Internal consultation panel + lunch
13:30	15:00	Co-creative discussion with programme management (all programmes)
15:00	16:00	Final considerations panel
16:00	16:30	Oral report

Annex 4: Overview of consulted documents

Common Section

- Organisation chart of the Bruges campus (incl. Tirana branch)
- Organisation chart of the Natolin campus
- Composition of the Academic Council
- Study Regulations 2025-2026
- Dispositions particulières (Bruges/Tirana)
- Dispositions particulières (Natolin)
- Indicative marking grid
- Admission Procedure Manual 2025-2026

Master of Science in European Economic Studies (ECO)

- Number of ECO applicants (1st vs. 2nd choice) & student intake by cohort, age and gender (2017-2025)
- Nationality of ECO students by cohort (2017-2025)
- Example of an ECTS card
- Schematic overview of the curriculum with number of credits (2017-2025)
- Programme of introductory courses (AY 2025/26)
- Summary of teaching & assessment methods in the ECO program
- List of companies' visits
- List of speeches organised by the ECO Department (2017-2025)
- List of academic conferences organised by the ECO Department (2017-2025)
- Participation of ECO students to external competitions and Capstone projects
- List of student visits to EU institutions
- List of speakers for the Annual European lecture (2017-2025)
- Number of students per track & by cohort (2017-2025)
- List and nationality of Visiting Professors in the academic year 2025/26
- Number of Visiting Professors in the ECO Department (2017-2025)
- Number of staff deployed in the ECO Department deployed, by appointment category
- Number of Academic Assistants (AAs) over the period 2017-2025
- Overview of passes and distinctions per track & cohort, 2017-2025
- List of 30 sample Master's theses
- Indicative Marking Grid
- Employment data for 7 cohorts (2017-2024) with occupation title, name of employer & place of work
- Career path of ECO alumni
- List of follow-up of improvements suggested by the previous accreditation panel

Master of Arts in European Interdisciplinary Studies (EIS)

- Policy in Relation to Internationalization
- Application Procedure, Scholarship Support and Student Enrolments
- List of Contributors to the Report
- List of Events Organized by the European Civilization Chair
- List of Events Organized by the European Neighbourhood Chair

- List of High-level Events
- EIS Academic Programme Innovation and List of Recently Introduced Courses
- Comparison with other Degrees
- Target Group for the Whole EIS Programme and Target Groups Specific to Each Major and Study Track
- EIS Programme-specific Learning Outcomes
- Comparative Summary of the Programme-specific Learning Outcomes Related to the Flemish Qualification Structure
- Schematic Overview of the Curriculum (2025-2026; 2026-2027)
- Comparative Overview of Course Units in Relation to Programme-specific Learning Outcomes
- Links with Access to ECTS Cards
- Detailed Description of the Majors, ERS and Study Track
- Study Trips
- Research Strategies and Tools
- Guidelines for MA thesis Supervision and Master Thesis Guide
- Scheduling Policy, Student Workload, Course Activation
- Expansion of Professional Education Formats since the 2017 Accreditation
- Number of Staff Employed, Analysed by Appointment Category
- Staffing Levels and Quality of Recruitment
- Missions of the Chairs
- Profile of Academic Assistants
- Composition of Faculty and Student-to-Faculty Ratio
- Overview of Group Tutorials
- Language Courses, Examination and Intercultural Workshops
- Natolin Nests Activities
- Capacity Building Programme
- Programme-specific Physical Facilities
- Master's Thesis Assessment Form and Assessment Forms for Coursework
- List of 30 MA Theses over the Last Three Years
- Employability of Graduates
- Questions Asked in the Course Evaluation Survey, Study Trip Surveys
- Anonymized Samples of Reports of Student Evaluations
- List of Improvement Measures Carried out as a Follow-up to the 2017 Reaccreditation Report

Master of Arts in EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies (IRD)

- Benchmarking of Master programmes in EU External Action Studies
- Students' academic background (2017-18 to 2025-26)
- Student intake per year, gender and nationality (2017-18 to 2025-26)
- Development of student applications and intakes in the IRD Programme (2017-18 to 2025-26)
- Organisation chart of the IRD Programme and the administrative bodies
- Programme-specific learning outcomes
- Comparative overview of courses in relation to programme-specific learning outcomes
- Comparative summary of programme-specific learning outcomes related to the Flemish Qualification Framework
- Programme structure and ECTS (incl. weblinks to ECTS cards)
- Assessment of the IRD Programme by its Visiting Professors

- Comparative overview of the programme-specific learning outcomes in relation to the relevant domain-specific learning outcomes
- Recent IRD alumni survey (2017-18 to 2024-25)
- Schematic overview of the IRD Programme
- Study trip programme
- Pass rates (2017-18 to 2024-25)
- Number and competencies of Professors teaching in the IRD Programme (2025-26)
- Number and competencies of staff deployed by category of appointment
- Development of gender balance among IRD Visiting Professors since 2017-18
- List of titles of 30 Master's theses of the last three years
- Thesis evaluation form
- Analysis of online biographical profiles of IRD alumni (2008-09 to 2023-24)
- Feedback on the introduction of a second reader and thesis defence
- Development of the averages of students' course evaluations (2017-18 to 2024-25)
- Follow-up on the suggestions for improvement from the previous review
- List of recent improvement actions taken
- SWOT analysis of the IRD Programme

Master of European Law (LAW)

- LAW Department staff and faculty
- Example ECTS card
- Comparative summary of the programme-specific learning outcomes related to the validated discipline-specific learning outcomes and/or in relation to the Flemish Qualifications Structure
- Law Academic Programme 2025-2026
- Overview of the programme in relation to ECTS credits and workload for the Law Programme
- Overview of the curriculum structured along the specialisations
- Language rule
- Programme Introductory Course for LAW 2025
- Comparative overview of course units in relation to programme-specific learning outcomes
- Study Trip programme
- Global Competition Law Centre (GCLC) Annual Report 2024
- List of LAW publications
- MA Thesis feedback form
- Course evaluation form
- List of titles of 30 Master's theses

Master of Arts in European Political and Governance Studies (POL)

- Academic Programme
- Overview of the diversity of the intake of POL students (2017-18 to 2025-26)
- Overview of the curriculum of the online introductory course modules offered before the start of the academic year to all (conditionally) admitted POL students
- Overview of all 2017 VLUHR recommendations and their respective implementation
- Domain-specific learning outcomes accredited by the NVAO
- POL learning outcomes

- Flowchart of the academic year
- Students' thesis guidelines
- Professors' thesis guidelines
- Visiting Professors' manual
- Study load and ECTS credits per POL programme component
- Number of course failures each academic year
- Additional guidelines and rules for students
- Academic staff and gender (2017-2026)
- Overview of average grades across different POL courses for the last academic years
- List of titles of 30 theses from the past three years with their marks

Inter-Departmental European Advanced Studies (IDEA)

- Course Catalogue and ECTS Descriptions
- Student Data and Participation
- Student Feedback and Course Evaluations
- Self-evaluation academic programme EG for the AC of 14 May 2025
- Programme guidelines to professors
- Organisation chart of the programme and the administrative bodies
- General overview of visiting professors
- Learning outcomes of the courses of the IDEAs programme
- Review of the EG Reform and Outlook for the CA of 16 May 2024
- Sample of test and evaluation assignments
- Marking grids and evaluation forms

Additionally, the panel received access to the programmes' online learning platforms, where they could consult all relevant study and teaching materials:

- <https://www2.coleurope.eu/> (Bruges campus)
- <https://natolintranet.eu/> and <https://coe.edu.pl/> (Natolin campus)