

## Assessment panel's report on World Maritime University's application for degree-awarding powers to issue a master's degree in the field of Maritime Affairs

### Assessment panel's task

The Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ) has been asked by the government on 8 May 2020 to review the World Maritime University's (WMU) application for degree-awarding powers to issue a master's degree in the field of Maritime Affairs. UKÄ tasked us with assessing the application.

### Assessment panel's composition

The assessment panel included the following members:

- Professor Karin Andersson, Chalmers University of Technology in Gothenburg (chairperson and subject expert)
- Professor Bjørn Egil Asbjørnslett, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Norway (subject expert)
- Assistant Professor Alyne E. Delaney, Aalborg University, Denmark (subject expert)
- Professor Johan Schelin, Stockholm university (subject expert)
- Senior lecturer Cecilia Österman, Linnaeus University (subject expert and employer and working life representative)
- Lecturer Magnus Boström, Linnaeus University (doctoral student representative)

### Assessment panel's work

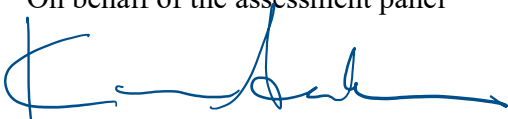
The assessment is based on the requirements laid out in the Higher Education Act (1992:1434) and the Higher Education Ordinance (1993:100) and on the basis of the requirements compiled in *Guidelines for applications for degree-awarding powers. Third-cycle qualifications*. Assessment material consists of WMU's application for degree-awarding powers, requested additions and interviews with representatives of the World Maritime University and doctoral students. Our assessment is presented in annex 1. The assessment is summarized in an overall assessment with justification.

The assessment panel's preliminary report was sent to WMU for review, so the higher education institution was able to point out any factual errors. The responses from the higher education institutions are presented in annex 2. We have reviewed the WMUs' responses, and in cases in which we assessed them to be relevant, changes were made in the report.

**The assessment panel's recommendation**

We propose that UKÄ proposes to the government that the World Maritime University be given permission to issue a master's degree in the field of Maritime Affairs.

On behalf of the assessment panel



Karin Andersson  
Chairperson

## Annex 1

### Assessment panel's assessments and justifications

Higher education institution Världssjöfartsuniversitetet (World Maritime University)	First-cycle subject area Maritima studier - magisterexamen	ID no. A-2020-05-5006
<p><b>Assessment area: Preconditions</b>  <b>Main field of study</b>  <b>Assessment: Satisfactory</b>  <b>Justification: <i>The specified degree is regulated and is part of the System of Qualifications.</i></b></p> <p>The World Maritime University (WMU) has applied for entitlement to award a short Master of Science degree (Filosofie magister) of 20+60 ECTS in its main field of study, Maritime Affairs. The programme is given in English and the corresponding Swedish title of the main field of study is <i>maritima studier</i>. The assessment panel concludes that the specified degree is regulated and is part of the Swedish System of Qualifications.</p> <p><i>The main field of study is defined in relation to the scientific bases. The programmes contents, including any specialisations, have reasonable scope and demarcation in relation to the main field of study.</i></p> <p>The field of Maritime Affairs is defined and also used in other universities. The number of disciplines involved at WMU is large but is motivated by the cross-disciplinary and application-focused degree.</p> <p>WMU was founded in 1983 and is located in Malmö. The establishment was based on an agreement between the Swedish government and the International Maritime Organization (IMO), a specialised agency of the United Nations with responsibility for the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine and atmospheric pollution by ships. WMU is IMO's premier centre of excellence for maritime postgraduate education, research and capacity building and offers postgraduate educational programmes, undertakes research in maritime and ocean-related studies and works with maritime capacity building in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.</p> <p>WMU has not been formally included in the educational system of any country. WMU has the right to confer degrees in Sweden under a decision by the Ministry of Education and Research from 2014 (U2013/5306/ UH, U2013/7921/UH). The document states that WMU, as part of the IMO, is an education provider that is independent of any individual national education system.</p> <p>The students of the WMU master's programmes are well-established professionals in the maritime and ocean-related sector already when admitted, and after graduation a majority returns to their home countries to contribute to capacity building and the support of sustainable development. Around 90% are employed by their governments or public authorities. Since 1985, over 5000 students from 170 countries have graduated and many of these now hold high ranking positions. They serve as senior maritime officials in ministries, as directors of shipping companies and ports, and as heads of maritime academies and naval organizations, and many represent their home countries at IMO and other international forums and organizations. The alumni are found on all continents, with a majority in Asia and Africa.</p>		

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The present application is for a short master's degree (*magister*) in Maritime Affairs with seven different fields of specialisation: Maritime Education and Training; Maritime Energy Management; Maritime Law and Policy; Maritime Safety and Environmental Administration; Ocean Sustainability, Governance and Management; Port Management; and Shipping Management and Logistics.

The candidates to the programme must hold a Bachelor of Science degree in an area relevant to the specialisation, e. g. law, economy, naval architecture, ocean science, international relations, social science, or a highest grade certificate as master mariner or chief engineer or equivalent. Previous relevant professional experience is also required. Competence in English and computer competence are also necessary. The programme stretches over 14 months. However, candidates with a relevant background at master's level can apply for a transfer of credits from earlier studies and complete the MSc in ten months.

The assessment panel concludes that the main field of study is defined in relation to the scientific basis. The programme's contents, including any specialisations, have reasonable scope and demarcation in relation to the main field of study.

*The award of the qualification is, from a national perspective, in the public interest.*

From a national perspective, the education is of interest for providing competence to Swedish authorities, companies and the public sector, even though there are a limited number of students per year. For the global shipping community and for developing countries shipping sector, which are the primary target groups for the education, the programme is of crucial importance. The fact that this global education is located to Sweden provides a source of contacts and networks globally, and alumni of the programme will have a lifelong connection to each other and to Sweden. Thus, the conclusion of the assessment panel is that the award of the qualification is, from a national perspective, in the public interest.

**Assessment area: Preconditions****Staff (Teaching competence and capacity)**

**Assessment:** *Satisfactory*

**Justification:** *The number of teachers and their combined expertise (scientific/professional and pedagogical) are sufficient and proportional to the volume, content and implementation of the programme in the short term and long term.*

WMU has at present 31 employees involved in teaching and six with post-doctoral positions. Of these, 14 are professors. All but two of the teachers hold a PhD degree in relevant areas. One of the non-PhDs has a relevant master's degree for English language teaching, the other is on commission from the US coast guard with the purpose of providing professional connection to the academic studies. Overall, staff density is high, which means that the teaching staff can engage in research in addition to their teaching and supervision tasks.

For the master's degree, the combined expertise of the teachers and guest teachers is high. The number of resident teachers may be somewhat low in some areas, and this is compensated by visiting teachers that are selected on proposal by the faculty and highly competent. The goal is to have at least four staff members for each specialization and staff professional development is continuous.

Being a small institution with close relations between faculty and students is appreciated by students. Knowledge about the Swedish education system and pedagogic knowledge and skills are discussed and passed on through faculty meetings and other forums, such as the more informal and continuously reoccurring "Knowledge fika". WMU works actively with the concept of constructive alignment and engages the teachers in this process. Being a small institution helps, as it makes sharing knowledge easy. New faculty members are assigned a mentor (senior colleague) for support.

The assessment panel finds that the number of teachers and their combined expertise are sufficient and proportional to the volume, content and implementation of the programme in the short term and long term.

**Assessment area: Preconditions**

**Education environment**

**Assessment:** *Satisfactory*

**Justification:** *The programme has a scientific and professionally oriented environment and is run in such a way that includes a close connection between research and education.*

The research connection and the contact with authorities and industry are maintained by faculty that meet regularly during the programme. WMU has at present 31 faculty employees, including 14 professors, and six with post-doctoral positions involved in the programme. All but two of the teachers hold a PhD degree in relevant areas. All master's students at WMU must produce an extensive degree project. They have a member of WMU's regular teaching staff as a main supervisor. The teachers are competent, and the goal is to have a ratio of teaching/research/administration that is 60-30-10, although with individual variations. The programme has a scientific and professionally oriented environment and is run in such a way that includes a close connection between research and education. Students who do not select dissertation topics that support their professional activities in their home countries are suggested research topics directly related to research projects at WMU. The assessment panel finds that the research connection is sufficient at this level.

**Assessment area: Preconditions**

**Resources**

**Assessment:** *Satisfactory*

**Justification:** *Access to stable and appropriate infrastructure. Available resources are used effectively to sustain a high standard of operation.*

When it comes to library, databases and other sources of information, the university's infrastructure is impressive. The students and the teaching staff also have access to other libraries in southern Sweden, in particular the university libraries in Lund and Malmö. For the programme, this is mostly sufficient. For data collection like measurements and practical experiments, the infrastructure is limited and requires collaborations with other universities, research institutes and industry. This applies mainly to some master's theses. One student mentioned the limited amount of lab equipment. However, that was not considered a large concern. The assessment panel concludes that the students have access to the resources that their studies require and that available resources are used effectively.

**Overall assessment of the evaluation area preconditions**

**Assessment:** *Satisfactory*

**Justification:** The field of Maritime Affairs or Studies is defined and also used in other universities. The number of disciplines involved at WMU is large but motivated by the cross-disciplinary and application-focused degree. The students of the WMU master's programmes are already well-established professionals in the maritime and ocean-related sector when admitted, and after graduation a majority returns to their home countries to contribute to building up capacity and to support sustainable development. Around 90% are employed by their governments or public authorities. The assessment panel concludes that the main field of study is defined in relation to the scientific basis. The programme's contents, including any specialisations, have reasonable scope and demarcation in relation to the main field of study. For the master's degree, the combined expertise of the teachers and guest teachers is high. The number of resident teachers may be somewhat low in some areas, but this is compensated for by visiting teachers that are selected on proposal by the faculty and are highly competent. Being a small institution with a close relation between faculty and students is appreciated by students. The research connection and the contact with authorities and industry are maintained by a faculty that meets regularly during the programme. The infrastructure of the library, databases and other sources of information is impressive. For the programme, this is adequate.

**Assessment area: Design, implementation and outcomes****Policy documents (programme syllabus and course syllabuses)**

**Assessment:** *Satisfactory*

**Justification:** *There are a programme syllabus and course syllabuses for the entire programme.*

The short MSc programme in Maritime Affairs given by World Maritime University has a programme syllabus and course syllabuses for the entire programme. The assessment panel was provided the following documents to evaluate this: "Application master (*magister*).pdf" with the reference guide to assessment and examinations and the reference guide to dissertations; the document "MSc - General Programme Outline", and the appendices "Bil.5 Academic Handbook- MSc and PhD in Maritime Affairs taught in Malmö" and "Bil.10 Subject Assessment and Delivery Plans Whole MSc (*kursplaner*).pdf". These documents were further supplemented through the interviews.

The subject assessment and delivery plans as well as the student application contain a study plan describing common foundational studies for establishing a common platform within Maritime Affairs for all students. After that, one of seven specialisation studies is chosen, and finally the student completes an individual thesis. A course on research methodology and study skills is also required. The topics and structure are focused on the role and area of interests of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and its member states. This role of knowledge development and sharing has at present a key role of the World Maritime University. The assessment panel sees that WMU fulfills this role and meets the requirements of the Swedish *magister* degree.

The course syllabuses are clearly structured and provide a good description of general information, a subject description including intended learning outcomes, further reading, required pre-course preparations and student workload, assessment and feedback. The role of the Curriculum and Assessment Committee (CAC) and the Quality Assurance Committee in the processes for maintaining standards and development of the programme and course was also described and further explained in the interviews.

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The entrance requirements address both the post-graduate level of the study and the maritime orientation of the IMO, as well as the diverse education and experience offered by the global maritime community for this type of post-graduate study. English language skills and computer literacy is also required for entrance.

**Assessment area: Design, implementation and outcomes****Goal attainment****Assessment:** *Satisfactory***Justification:** *Ensure that students have achieved the targets in the degree ordinance when the qualification is awarded through the design, implementation and examination in the programme.*

For admission to the short Master's Programme in Maritime Affairs, students must have a bachelor's degree from a recognised university in an IMO Member State or a ship master or marine engineer certificate. Students must also have work experience from the maritime field. In practise, the existing programme forms a mid-career education for many students. This means that they are well motivated, something which the interviews with the student representatives also indicated.

The programme consists of the following parts:

Basic studies (20 ECTS) (not obligatory for all students)

Specialisation (40 ECTS)

Paper (20 ECTS)

Non-required tasks, such as study visits and extra seminars (10 ECTS)

The assessment panel has found that there is a pedagogical progression in the programme and that students at the later parts of the programme are able to build on the knowledge and skills they have acquired in the beginning of their programme studies. The interviews with the teachers confirm this, and they confirm the links between the individual courses are discussed among the teachers, including guest teachers, responsible for the different parts of the programme.

To ensure that each student attains the intended learning outcomes for the different courses, students are assessed and graded by various groups of teachers. A number of assessment and grading guides have been issued to ensure that students are assessed and graded according to the same standards. However, some of the individual course syllabuses contain a large number of intended learning outcomes, and it may be questioned whether all of these can actually be fully examined during a short course. Although an ambitious approach, it would be advisable to reduce the number of intended learning outcomes in some of the individual courses to a number that realistically can be examined during a short course.

The overall conclusion of the assessment panel is, however, that the formulation and implementation of the programme and the examination ensure that the students attain the prescribed intended learning outcomes for the short master's degree by the time it is awarded.

**Assessment area: Design, implementation and outcomes****Gender equality****Assessment:** *Satisfactory*

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**Justification:** *A gender equality perspective will be taken into account in the programme's content and design.*

Diversity is one of WMU's core values and over the years, there have been considerable efforts to increase the number of female students. The application refers to Agenda 2030 sustainable development goal (SDG) 5 for gender equality, and the importance of gender equality and empowering women in the maritime community was further emphasised during the interviews. Although the documents do not specifically refer to national legal and policy frameworks for gender mainstreaming in higher education, it is stated in the application that the gender aspect is integrated in the education in all areas, rather than given as an isolated course. From the interviews, it was further clear that students perceive that the teachers use gender-neutral language. There is also a gender awareness in recruitment. Gender equality seems to be taken into account in terms of making the students aware of the need for this perspective and also by the role model of having a female president. The students are aware of the "hidden curriculum": how the teachers act and behave. Gender is also a theme for some of the master's theses.

**Overall assessment of the assessment area design, implementation and outcomes**

**Assessment:** *Satisfactory*

**Justification:** The assessment panel concludes that there is a programme syllabus and course syllabuses for the entire programme. The plan for each course is clearly structured and well described. This includes everything from general information, subject description including intended learning outcomes, syllabus and further reading, required pre-course preparations and student workload to assessment and feedback. The formulation and implementation of the programme as well as the examination ensure that the students attain the prescribed intended learning outcomes for the short master's degree by the time it is awarded to them. However, according to the assessment panel, WMU may consider reducing the number of intended learning outcomes in some of the individual shorter courses. Gender equality seems to be taken into account in terms of making the students aware of the need for this perspective and by the role model of having a president who is involved in the work with gender equality. The students are aware of the "hidden curriculum": how the teachers act and behave. Gender is also a theme for some of the master's theses and there is also a gender awareness in recruitment.

**Assessment area: Working life and collaboration**

**Assessment:** *Satisfactory*

**Justification:** *The programme is designed and implemented in such a way that it is useful and develops students' preparedness to meet changes in working life.*

The programme is designed to include a high degree of collaboration with public authorities and industry. In addition to the close cooperation with IMO and its member states and the large number of guest lecturers, the students also bring their own professional and academic partnerships and networks. In all, this ensures that the short master's programme is well grounded with the maritime industry and allows the students to prepare for working life.

*Relevant collaboration occurs with the surrounding society.*

Collaboration with the surrounding society is developed and maintained during and after the education. WMU has signed a large number of memorandums of understanding (MoU) with other



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universities, organizations and companies to ensure development of expertise and engagement with the maritime community.

With its alumni engagement strategy, WMU aims to stay in touch with its alumni after graduation. According to WMU, almost 100 per cent of graduates are promoted at home within 12 months after graduating. In addition, there is a large network present within the IMO.

**Assessment area: Student perspective****Assessment:** *Satisfactory***Justification:** *The programme works to allow students to take an active role in improving the content and implementation of the programme.*

The assessment panel recognises that the student council organizes activities on and off campus. It collects feedback from students and acts as a link between the students and WMU. WMU meets with the student council twice a year and has additional meetings when needed. In addition, students are represented in several councils. However, student representation is mostly used as a way to provide WMU with the students' views.

The students are provided with opportunities to evaluate individual courses at the completion of delivery. The evaluation are handled by the registrar, thus guaranteeing anonymity, and the results are presented to the president and the Quality Assurance Committee, which propose suitable changes. Changes or responses are reported back to the candidates in written form. According to WMU, in 2019 the response rates were between 60 and 100 per cent, numbers that indicate a high degree of participation by the students.

A department at WMU is responsible for supporting students with practical assistance, a function that is of great importance since the vast majority of students are not familiar with the Swedish welfare system. In addition to providing rudimentary health care and other things, it also focuses on "fostering positive effects", i.e. making students feel at home. The students also receive support from the city of Malmö, which arranges meet-and-greet sessions with newly arrived students. Some students stated that they studied Swedish For Immigrants (SFI) on their own initiative. Swedish language courses are not arranged by WMU. However, that was not considered a problem by the students; being abroad for a limited time and spending much time with non-Swedes in an international environment does not require Swedish language training. Something that was appreciated, though, was the chance to receive a host family through WMU.

The switch to distance learning, in the wake of COVID-19, has overall been a positive experience for the students. Zoom lectures have proven to provide more of a discussion, being more interactive compared to a traditional lecture. Generally, the students feel that the teachers have an open-door policy, something that they appreciate. The relatively small classes further build close relations between the students and the faculty.

In conclusion, the assessment panel finds that satisfactory measures have been taken by WMU to provide the students with the opportunity to take an active role in the work of improving the content and implementation of the programme.

**Overall assessment:** *Satisfactory*

**Justification:** The assessment panel concludes that the field of Maritime Studies is defined and also used in other universities. The students of the WMU short master's programme are already well-established professionals in the maritime and ocean-related sector when admitted, and after graduation a majority returns to their home countries to contribute to building up capacity and supporting sustainable development. The assessment panel also concludes that the main field of study is defined in relation to the scientific basis. The programme's contents, including any specialisations, have reasonable scope and demarcation in relation to the main field of study. For the short master's degree, the combined expertise of the teachers and guest teachers is high. The research connection and the contact with authorities and industry are maintained by a faculty that meets regularly during the programme. Infrastructure in terms of library, databases and other sources of information is impressive.

The assessment panel further concludes that there is a programme syllabus and course syllabuses for the entire programme. The plan for each course is clearly structured and well described. This includes everything from general information, subject description including intended learning outcomes, syllabus and further reading, required pre-course preparations and student workload to assessment and feedback. The formation and implementation of the programme and the examination ensure that the students attain the prescribed intended learning outcomes for the short master's degree by the time it is awarded to them. Gender equality seems to be taken into account in terms of making the students aware of the need for this perspective and also through the role model of having a president who is involved in the work with gender equality. Gender is also a theme for some of the master's theses, and there is also a gender awareness in recruitment. The programme is designed to include a high degree of collaboration with public authorities and industry. In addition to the close cooperation with IMO and its member states and the large number of guest lecturers, the students also bring their own professional and academic partnerships and networks. In all, this ensures that the short master's programme is well grounded with the maritime industry and allows the students to prepare for working life. Satisfactory measures have been taken by WMU to provide the students with the opportunity to take an active role in the work of improving the content and implementation of the programme.

We propose that UKÄ proposes to the government that the World Maritime University be given permission to issue a Master's Degree in Maritime Studies.

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## Annex 2

### World Maritime University's response on the preliminary report



ons 2020-12-02 15:52

JACKSON, Sue <sj@wmu.se>

Re: UKÄ application: Referral regarding preliminary report

Till Nils Ottoson

Kopia Kristina Sundberg



Dear Nils and Kristina,

Thank you again for the assessment panel's preliminary reports. We are very grateful indeed for the comments made by the panel, and their recommendations have been summarised and submitted to the Doctoral Studies Committee and the Curriculum & Assessment Committee for action.

We would be grateful for a small number of corrections to the reports, mainly that the name of the degrees be given as Maritime Affairs, while of course we fully understand that the Swedish title of the fields of the degrees is "maritima studier".

In a couple of places the date of WMU's founding is given as 1985 - we have suggested this be changed to 1983, which was the year of the first students' admission to the University, although they graduated in 1985.

We now very much look forward to the next stage in the process, and I would like to wish you both a very happy Christmas and an excellent New Year.

With very best wishes,

Susan Jackson  
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World Maritime University  
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