

Assessment panel's report on World Maritime University's application for degree-awarding powers to issue a doctoral 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 doctoral 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 doctoral 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)	Third-cycle subject area Maritima studier - doktorsexamen	ID no. A-2020-05-5005
<p>Assessment area: Preconditions</p> <p>Area</p> <p>Assessment: <i>Satisfactory</i></p> <p>Justification: <i>The specified degree is regulated and is part of the System of Qualifications.</i></p> <p>The World Maritime University (WMU) has applied for entitlement to award a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree (<i>Filosofie doktor</i>) of 240 ECTS in the main field of study of Maritime Affairs. WMU has not been formally included in the educational system of any country. Today, 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) This document states that WMU, as part of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), is an education provider that is independent of any individual national education system.</p> <p>WMU has offered a PhD degree programme since 2003. During the first three years, this was done in collaboration with Swansea University. The first WMU-based PhD student was admitted in 2006. The PhD programme is designed to offer doctoral education to people active in the maritime and ocean science area. The PhD students are already established professionals with a master's degree. The present application is also for awarding a Swedish PhD degree for this exam. The procedure and study plan have been adapted to follow the Swedish requirements.</p> <p>The education 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 scope and delimitation of the subject area are reasonable and appropriate.</i></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 IMO, a specialized 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 the IMO's premier centre of excellence for maritime postgraduate education, research and capacity building. It offers postgraduate educational programmes, undertakes research in maritime and ocean-related studies, and works with building maritime capacity in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The maritime related research is the traditional focus area of WMU, having awarded PhD degrees for more than 10 years. The ocean-related research was added more recently with the start of WMU-Sasakawa Global Ocean Institute (GOI) in 2018. The vision of this institute is to act as an independent focal point for the ocean science–policy–law–industry–society interface where policy makers, the scientific community, regulators, industry actors, academics, and representatives of civil society meet to discuss how best to manage and use ocean spaces and their resources in accordance with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for</p>		

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Sustainable Development. The funding of the GOI is provided by the Nippon Foundation, the governments of Sweden, Canada, and Germany, and the City of Malmö.

The programme has a multidisciplinary content, and the PhD studies may be conducted within the framework of eight prioritised research areas: Environmental Impacts of Maritime Activities; Maritime and Marine Technology and Innovation; Maritime Economics and Business; Maritime Energy Management; Maritime Law, Policy and Governance; Maritime Safety; Maritime Social and Labour Governance; and Oceans Research, all leading to a PhD in Maritime Affairs. Taking into account WMU's maritime and ocean related profile, the assessment panel finds that this is a reasonable and appropriate scope and delimitation.

The area relates to the HEI's programmes in a credible and reasonable way.

The master's programme in Maritime Affairs has been well established since 1983. The assessment panel finds that this programme provides a relevant basis for continued studies at the postgraduate level. The prioritised areas seem to be related to the need/demand from the governing bodies, which is also the case for the master's programme, and the university is required to have expertise in these areas. The areas appear to be relevant to the mandate of WMU. The assessment panel concludes that the area is extremely relevant.

The area constitutes a credible scientific whole, in which the parts support the whole and each other.

The programme is interdisciplinary and covers a number of traditional disciplines, such as law, economy and technology. When looking at the programme as a whole, it provides a context that is very relevant when it comes to the maritime applications. The close cooperation between researchers/supervisors with different backgrounds also ensures a focus on the whole.

The research within the subject area is of such quality and scale that third-cycle programmes can be offered at a high level of scientific excellence.

The faculty and staff at WMU and the GOI undertake evidence-based research, capacity building programmes and outreach on a broad range of topics in the maritime sector and in contemporary ocean affairs. Both areas are driven by the needs of international shipping. The research area focus has also changed and developed over time, driven by technological and societal changes. Environmental and other sustainability issues have been increasing in significance. A special addition has come with the start of GOI, where the focus is more on the ocean than shipping. The number of scientific publications from WMU has increased in recent years, although the number of publications per faculty member varies. It is somewhat difficult to get a picture of publications, since many members of the faculty have a background in other universities before joining WMU. The assessment panel has focused on the assessment of WMU's internal production.

An observation by the panel is that a large number of the articles have been published in WMU's internal (although peer reviewed) *WMU Journal of Maritime Affairs* (almost 50 articles out of 180 found in the journal database Scopus in September 2020). More varied publication in scientific journals with different target groups is recommended. The wide interdisciplinary programme dedicated to shipping is unique for WMU. Such an approach requires that there are demands for high research competence since the faculty members must have the capacity to supervise in a broad range of

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disciplines and in cross-disciplinary projects. The broad research areas are decided by the governing bodies (IMO) and not by the faculty. This ensures relevance of the topics, but at the same time it poses a challenge for the faculty with regard to academic competence.

The assessment panel finds that the faculty is very clear on only supervising in fields where they have competence, which may cause problems when new areas develop in broader interdisciplinary research. An example of this is gender studies, which have a high relevance from a sustainability goal perspective, but where there was no research competence when the area was introduced. External expertise was invited to solve this, indicating there is a willingness to solve this kind of challenge.

Although WMU has awarded PhD degrees without connection to any national system for many years, there is now a strong ambition to start PhD programmes according to Swedish regulations. In some research areas, the earlier PhD theses already hold a standard that is comparable to Swedish requirements, in others there seems to be a level more of the "three year PhD" common in other countries. To develop interdisciplinary research to a common minimum level in all areas, a deeper collaboration with well-established Swedish universities is recommended. However, the faculty is well aware of this need, and the assessment panel finds no reason to question that WMU can provide a relevant research environment within the multidisciplinary main field of Maritime Affairs.

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

From a national perspective, the programme is of interest for providing competence to Swedish authorities, companies and the public sector, although the national need is for a very limited number of students per year. For the global shipping community and for the shipping sector of developing countries, which are the primary target groups for the education, the programme is of crucial importance. The fact that this global programme is located in 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 is that awarding the qualification is, from a national perspective, in the public interest.

Assessment area: Preconditions**Staff**

Assessment: *Satisfactory*

Justification: *The number of supervisors and 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.*

The number of involved disciplines is large, and each research area, in turn, has several disciplines involved. This is reflected in the list provided by the faculty of involvement and potential supervision in different research areas, where most of the faculty state an involvement in 3–5 areas and some even in all areas. WMU currently has 31 faculty employees, including 14 professors, who make up the teaching staff and six people with postdoctoral research positions. All but two people in the teacher staff (who are not involved in the doctoral programme) have a doctorate in relevant subjects. The goal is to have a ratio of teaching/research/administration that is 60-30-10, although with individual variations. It is not obvious that there is a strong research environment in each of the priority areas in terms of possible disciplines in a PhD project today. It has been stressed by the faculty that they only supervise in areas where they have a high degree of disciplinary competence. These areas are

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Maritime Economics and Business, Maritime Energy Management, Maritime Law, Policy and Governance, and Maritime Safety. This means that in some disciplines there is a very small number of available supervisors and even a lack of academic competence when starting a new area, and thus a risk of discontinuity and no obvious existing research group for the PhD student in the beginning. WMU seems aware of this situation and is using external expertise to build up competence when needed. Knowledge about the Swedish education system and pedagogic knowledge and skills are discussed and passed on through faculty meetings and other forums. Being a small institution helps as it makes sharing knowledge easy. New faculty members are assigned a mentor (senior colleague) for support. As mentioned above, developing collaboration with a Swedish university in less developed disciplines, such as Environmental Impacts of Maritime Activities, Maritime and Marine Technology and Innovation, Maritime Social and Labour Governance, and Oceans Research, is recommended.

Assessment area: Preconditions**Education environment****Assessment:** *Satisfactory***Justification:** *Research at the HEI has sufficient quality and scale for third-cycle education to be carried out at a high scholarly level and within a good educational framework.*

The large scope of the programme with eight different multi-disciplinary areas of research means the available scientific competence varies between the areas. In some areas, the research is under rapid development and the quality of research and competences is large, while others are being developed. There are also examples of recruiting research competence after or in connection with building up the research. Today there are four research groups with PhD candidates: empowerment of women; land to ocean issues; maritime governance; and energy management. They are based in existing research groups. In the research groups, doctoral students are encouraged to present papers at conferences. The doctoral students continuously present their work at special progression seminars while enrolled. Other doctoral students are expected to be present at these seminars.

The application has outlined a research agenda for the future that allows for the research activities at WMU to develop over time and to find its specific niche. It is reasonable to assume that major research activities will not be initiated in all of the prioritised research areas simultaneously, but that research efforts will expand gradually. With that in mind, the assessment panel finds that the research in the study topics is of sufficient quality within a good educational framework.

Relevant collaboration occurs with the surrounding society, both nationally and internationally.

The mission of WMU is to provide higher education for individuals with previous experience in shipping or related areas. Their network is of large importance. WMU has a unique position within and access to the UN system and its member states' representatives. WMU has signed formal memorandums of understanding (MoU) with a number of universities, research institutes, organizations and companies in Sweden and internationally. MoU are a good start, but it is not clear to the assessment panel that these have led to tangible cooperation with WMU.

The assessment panel finds that with faculty members coming in to WMU from other universities, there are several less formal and informal collaborations at an individual level between faculty members and former colleagues. A broad avenue for collaboration with the surrounding society is

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enabled by the strong alumni network and the fact that WMU alumni often proceed to work in leading roles in the industry in their home country. This allows for the formation of global collaborative partnerships. The doctoral students come from countries around the world and have their own networks, which they let the other doctoral students take part in. The relation to the IMO, which represents the shipping sector worldwide, and the opportunity for students to attend meetings at the IMO also add to the network. Nationally, MoU with some universities and RISE (Research Institutes of Sweden AB) exist, but the use of these has been quite limited until now. There is also collaboration with Lund University to provide courses for the PhD students. National and regional (Öresund) collaboration with universities should be encouraged to increase in the future.

Assessment area: Preconditions**Resources****Assessment:** *Satisfactory***Justification:** *Access to stable and appropriate infrastructure.*

When it comes to library, databases and other sources of information, the university's infrastructure is impressive. Data collection in terms of measurements and practical experiments, however, is limited and requires collaborations with other universities, research institutes and industry. It is often possible to solve PhD projects funded by external sources and/or in collaborations through collaborations. PhD research seems to rely largely on external data, i.e. IMO documentation and data collected by other researchers, or in collaboration with other institutions. The infrastructure for the present projects seems sufficient.

Available resources are used effectively to sustain a high standard of operations.

Library and other resources are very good and heavily used. Currently, there are no PhD students whose research require labs. If necessary, collaborations with other institutions are established. It can be argued that extensive labs are not crucial for the success of a PhD programme. The PhD topics at WMU have a more "theoretical" approach. However, even though WMU has eight focus areas, there are no demands that they do "everything" possible within each area. From a financial and quality point of view, it may be a wise strategy to collaborate with other institutions having laboratory resources rather than building up internal labs for limited use.

The financial resources needed to carry out the doctoral programme are in place.

Research funding has increased in recent years. A source of funding that has increased in recent years is EU projects, which also means increased networks in Europe. Traditionally, there are a number of funding sources, from international organisations to nations and companies.

Overall assessment of the evaluation area preconditions**Assessment:** *Satisfactory*

Justification: The specified degree is regulated and is part of the Swedish System of Qualifications. The programme has a multidisciplinary content, and the PhD studies may be conducted within the framework of eight prioritised research areas, all leading to a PhD in Maritime Affairs. Taking into account WMU's maritime and ocean-related profile, this is a reasonable and appropriate scope and delimitation. The master's programme in Maritime Affairs has been well established since 1983. This programme provides a relevant basis for continued studies at doctoral level.

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The area constitutes a credible scientific whole, in which the parts support the whole and each other. To develop interdisciplinary research to a common minimum level in all areas, a deeper collaboration with well-established Swedish universities is recommended. However, the faculty are well aware of this need, and there is no reason to question that WMU can provide a relevant research environment within the multidisciplinary main field of Maritime Affairs. The award of the qualification is, from a national perspective, in the public interest, both in providing competence to the international maritime sector and to maritime actors in Sweden.

The number of supervisors and 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. WMU is actively building up competence in new areas. Research at WMU has sufficient quality and scale for third-cycle education to be carried out at a high scholarly level and within a good educational framework.

The infrastructure for the present projects is sufficient. Available resources are used effectively to sustain a high standard of operations. The financial resources needed to carry out the doctoral programme are in place.

Assessment area: Design, implementation and outcomes**Policy documents (General and individual curricula)****Assessment:** *Satisfactory***Justification:** *There is a general syllabus for the entire programme. There is a template for individual syllabuses.*

The documents presented to us for evaluating the policy documents were the *Programme Reference Guide for the PhD in Maritime Affairs*, the *PhD Programme ILOs and syllabus* and the *template for the individual study programme*; *PhD General Programme Outline*; *Publications by Faculty who Supervise within the PhD Programme*; and *Table of Faculty Research Areas and Teaching*. The information from these documents was further supplemented through interviews. The policy documents are revised and quality assured by WMU's internal committees with corrective assessment from external examiners, based on an annual assessment and quality assurance process.

The entry requirements are set to be a master's degree or equivalent, required English language skills and computer literacy. Fees and payments related to the study are documented. The general curriculum is structured and described in eight parts, consisting of programme composition and length, required taught subject, elective subjects, individual study plan, progression, doctoral dissertation, internal final review, and public examination. The template for individual study plan (ISP) is divided into: taught courses; conferences and seminars; supervision schedule; dissertation title and publications; and observations. Planned and actual dates are documented. The ISP is updated annually and is signed by the PhD student, supervisors and the director of the PhD programme.

The supervision structure of a PhD candidate is organized by the Curriculum and Assessment Committee (CAC) and consists of a main supervisor, with an additional co-supervisor as an option. The supervisors must meet academic qualifications for being a supervisor. Further, a PhD Advisory Committee (PAC) is set up for each PhD student, consisting of two to three members, where the

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PAC's role is to support the supervisor in monitoring progress and adherence to the individual study plan. This role was well described during the interviews. Four progression seminars are used to assess the student's progression throughout their studies.

PhD studies comprise 60 ECTS in taught courses. There is a required research methods course of 20 ECTS and 40 ECTS of elective courses selected by the candidate in consultation with the supervisor. In the material provided, it is hard to find an overview of the elective courses supporting the PhD research areas.

The scope of two examination levels are described: a Master of Philosophy of research with a reduced scope of time and number of course and dissertation credits, and their full Doctor of Philosophy. The doctoral dissertation is the main subject of the examination, given that the other formal requirements are met. The dissertation can either be of monograph format or a compilation-type format dissertation. Both of these are well-known doctoral dissertation formats. An examination board is established for the oral examination of a PhD student's thesis. Two of three members of the board must come from other universities than WMU, and the members must hold a doctoral degree and at least be an associate professor in academia. It is unclear whether the examination board assesses and accepts the doctoral thesis before the oral defence in such a way that the board can accept or not accept a public defence of the thesis, or whether changes/more work is required before the thesis is deemed worthy of a public defence. The examination board can recommend one of three options: accept for a PhD degree, accept for a MPhil degree, or not recommend award of a degree. The student has an option to appeal. It is important to clarify the procedure in terms of the role of the examination board for the acceptance of the thesis before defense as well as the degree recommended.

The assessment panel has been provided information about the latest version of the general programme for PhD studies, but this does not provide insight into the historical development of the PhD programme. However, the PhD programme is adapted from the role of WMU as stated in WMU's charter from 1983. The doctoral programme reference guide is revised annually in September by the Curriculum and Assessment Committee and finalised by the Academic Council. The latest edition of the doctoral programme reference guide was approved by WMU's Curriculum & Assessment Committee on 9 September 2020.

The quality assurance process of the PhD programme and the PhD student's progress is supported by the following WMU internal committees: the Doctoral Studies Committee; the Quality Assurance Committee; the Curriculum and Assessment Committee; and the Academic Council. External examiners assess the PhD studies annually and report formally as part of the quality assurance process. As described and understood from the interviews, the external examination is used for WMU's internal processes, and as currently stands, no assessment in comparison with the Swedish requirements for a PhD degree is documented. Hence, the assessment panel sees this as an area for development. In summary, there is a general syllabus for the entire programme and there is a template for individual syllabuses. The contents of these documents meet existing requirements.

Assessment area: Design, implementation and outcomes

Goal attainment

Assessment: *Satisfactory*

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Justification: *Through the design, implementation and examination in the programme, ensure that third-cycle students achieve the targets defined in the degree ordinance when the qualification is awarded.*

For admission to the Doctor of Philosophy in Maritime Affairs Programme, applicants must normally hold a master's degree. In exceptional circumstances an applicant may hold a bachelor's degree if there is evidence of the candidate's abilities. The programme consists of the following parts:

Research Methods (20 ECTS)
Elective Courses (40 ECTS)
Doctoral Dissertation (180 ECTS)

During the programme all students are supervised on a regular and continuing basis. In addition, the doctoral candidate has to have three progression seminars where the candidate is supposed to make an oral presentation and answer questions from the Progression Board. These seminars serve as checkpoints during the studies. Before a candidate is allowed to defend their thesis, the dissertation undergoes a final internal review. The Examination Board consists of two external members and one internal member from World Maritime University. There are also supporting policy and guidance documents for attaining the goals of courses; progression seminars; other seminars; conferences; planned publications; participation in senior researchers' projects; supervision time; and dissertation work.

The assessment panel wants to highlight that since requirements for doctoral dissertations in Sweden may differ from requirements for foreign dissertations, it is important that external supervisors and members of the examination board also are made aware of the Swedish system in this respect.

Knowledge about the Swedish education system (e.g. regarding examination) is passed on to faculty during faculty meetings. There is also a thorough mentoring system for new faculty members. If WMU is granted degree awarding powers, they should make sure that visiting lecturers and, most importantly, members of the examination board are also made aware of their roles in the Swedish context.

The conclusion of the assessment panel is that the formation and implementation of the programme and the examination procedure ensure that the students will attain the prescribed intended learning outcomes for the doctor of philosophy degree by the time it is awarded.

Assessment area: Design, implementation and outcomes

Gender equality

Assessment: *Satisfactory*

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

Diversity is stated as one of WMU's core values. The application makes several references to the IMO's global standards for maritime education and training and Agenda 2030 sustainable development goal (SDG) 5 for gender equality. Gender and diversity issues are also listed among the 14 drivers for a maritime research agenda at WMU.

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The importance of gender equality and empowering women in the maritime community was further emphasized during all interviews. From the interviews, it was 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 through the role model of having a president who is committed to working for gender equality. The documents do not refer to national legal and policy frameworks for gender mainstreaming in higher education. And, although the respondents all made a good case for the importance of a gender equality perspective in parts of the programme's content and design, there were no clear strategies for how this will be taken into account within the programme as a whole. The assessment panel sees this as an area in need of development for WMU.

Overall assessment of the assessment area design, implementation and outcomes**Assessment:** *Satisfactory*

Justification: WMU has a general syllabus for the entire programme and a template for individual course syllabuses. The content of these documents meets the requirements for such documents. The formation and implementation of the programme and the examination procedure ensure that the students will attain the prescribed intended learning outcomes for the doctor of philosophy degree by the time it is awarded. External examiners assess the PhD studies annually and report formally as part of the quality assurance process. A gender equality perspective is an area in need of development for WMU but is currently satisfactorily taken into account in the programme's content and design.

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 doctoral students' preparedness to meet changes in working life, both within and beyond academia.*

There is a pronounced relation between the PhD programme and the maritime community, allowing the doctoral students to prepare for working life. Since many of the doctoral students have worked in the maritime industry before joining WMU, they also bring their own personal and professional network to the programme. The interviewed doctoral students also expressed how they are being prepared to do applied work – applying theory to the real world – which implies, to some extent, an ability to reflect and be able to adjust to changes in working life. This close collaboration with the industry further provides robust opportunities for research cooperation and to apply and evaluate research findings in practice.

Education of supervisors on criteria of a doctoral education, are in several aspects aiming at developing the student's skills as independent researchers. However, it was not completely clear from the application and interviews if this is fully in place. An example is that the course on academic writing was developed on demand from the students and not from the supervisors. Sending students to courses at Lund University is positive in this respect, but it is not clear to what degree this is for developing general skills as researcher or if it is "in-disciplinary" courses.

There is a close relation between supervisors and students when it works as they are intended. A weekly or every second week follow-up is common. It is possible to change supervisor if this does not work. The meetings with the committee and progress seminars are arranged along the work. Students

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also mentioned that they believe they are being prepared to do applied work – applying theory to the real world – which implies, to some extent, an ability to reflect and be able to adjust to changes conditions.

The assessment panel concludes that the students are well prepared for applied work, including to meet changes in working life.

Assessment area: Doctoral student perspective

Assessment: *Satisfactory*

Justification: *Doctoral students are given the opportunity to take an active role in the work to improve the content and implementation of the programme.*

The PhD candidates are well represented at various forums at WMU, all the way up to the Board of Governors and the Executive Board. Most notably, the Doctoral Studies Committee, which oversees the whole doctoral programme, includes two PhD representatives. It acts as a bridge between PhD candidates and WMU; any problem or concern can be voiced, and the committee brings this to the attention of WMU. One example of a student initiative that resulted in a change was a request for a course in English academic writing, which was met by WMU.

There are several steps which safeguard a satisfactorily progression of each PhD candidate. The candidates are continuously monitored by their supervisor(s). In addition, regular progression seminars with faculty members and student peers serve as “checks” during the education. However, these checks are not only a matter of allowing students to proceed or not. Each seminar provides an opportunity for the candidate to receive feedback on their work, and by including other faculty members and student peers, each candidate is provided with a much wider array of feedback compared to if only the supervisors were to comment on the work of their own candidates. In addition, annual external reviews provide additional feedback on the progression of individual students as well as the education as a whole. All taken together, the system at WMU appears to guarantee ample academic feedback and support.

During the interviews the role of the supervisor as that of a guide with a dual purpose of both overseeing the academic rigor and introducing the candidates into the academic community at WMU was stressed. Both supervisors and PhD candidates mentioned their informal relationship, which stems from WMU having a relatively small group of faculty and PhD candidates. Since the supervisor has a central role for the candidate, it is vital that their relationship is satisfactory. During the interviews, examples of changing supervisors were mentioned, a process that had been easy. Finally, in addition to the individual study plan (ISP) being revised yearly, there is an additional safety net for the PhD candidates. One of the committees under the Academic Council monitors the progression of the candidates and takes action if the candidate does not receive proper supervision.

The PhD candidates are provided with opportunities to evaluate individual courses and the PhD programme at large at the end of the programme. The handling of the evaluation guarantees 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.

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

Overall assessment: *Satisfactory*

Justification: The assessment panel concludes that the programme has a multidisciplinary content, and the PhD studies may be conducted within the framework of eight prioritised research areas all leading to a PhD in Maritime Affairs. Taking into account WMU's maritime and ocean-related profile, this is a reasonable and appropriate scope and delimitation. The area constitutes a credible scientific whole, in which the parts support the whole and each other. To raise the interdisciplinary research to a common minimum level in all areas, a deeper collaboration with well-established Swedish universities is recommended. The award of the qualification is, from a national perspective, in the public interest, both from the perspective of providing competence to the international maritime sector and to maritime actors in Sweden.

The number of supervisors and 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. WMU is actively building up competence in new areas. Research at WMU has sufficient quality and scale for third-cycle education to be carried out at a high scholarly level and within a good educational framework. The infrastructure for the present projects is sufficient. Available resources are used effectively to sustain a high standard of operations. The financial resources needed to carry out the doctoral programme are in place.

WMU has a general syllabus for the entire programme and a template for individual course syllabuses. The content of these documents meets the requirements. The formation and implementation of the programme and the examination procedure ensure that the students will attain the prescribed intended learning outcomes for the doctor of philosophy degree at the time it is awarded. External examiners assess the PhD studies annually and report formally as part of the quality assurance process. A formalised gender equality perspective is an area in need of development for WMU but is today satisfactorily taken into account in the programme's content and design.

There is a pronounced relation between the PhD programme and the maritime community, allowing the doctoral students to prepare for working life. Since many of the doctoral students have worked in the maritime industry before joining WMU, they also bring their own personal and professional network to the programme. The close collaboration with the industry also provides robust opportunities for research cooperation and to apply and evaluate research findings in practice. The assessment panel concludes that the students are well prepared for applied work, including to meet changes in working life. Satisfactory measures have also been taken by WMU to provide PhD candidates with the opportunity to take an active role in the work to improve the content and implementation of the programme, for example through representation in forums and the opportunity to evaluate individual courses and the PhD programme at large at the end of the programme.

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

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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 Olsson

Kopia Kristina Sundberg



Preliminary report WMU Phd with proposed corrections.docx
87 KB



Preliminary report WMU master with proposed corrections.docx
78 KB

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
Registrar
World Maritime University
PO Box 500
S201 24 Malmö
Sweden

www.wmu.se