



International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law
Viadrina European University Frankfurt (Oder)

— Outline, Admissions, Fees, Enrolment —

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I Background

The Viadrina **International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law** programme (IHL) offers advanced study of the international legal and institutional mechanisms for the protection of fundamental human rights. Its curriculum integrates general human rights protection (that applicable in times of peace) with the special protection of fundamental rights in situations of armed conflict (under international humanitarian law). This combination has been seen as especially pressing because the boundaries between war and peace have become increasingly elusive, blurred, and shifting.

The need for such an integrated academic and pedagogical approach reflects the evolution of public international law (and/or its perceived inadequacies) in the face of the frequently fuzzy distinctions between civil war, external aggression, guerrilla movements, various forms of national and international terrorism, recourse to mercenary forces or other military outsourcing in diverse situations, and even national responses to domestic unrest. Added to this, there are increased reliance upon, and increasing calls for, peace-keeping activity, both legitimate and legal (in particular that sanctioned by the UN Security Council) and unofficial (sometimes invited), in a broad range of conflict situations.

Confusion in drawing a clear line between categories of human rights protection has emerged also from humanitarian military intervention itself conducted in the name of such protection itself. Responses to various forms of civil unrest (often itself provoked by alleged breaches of human rights), or to states of emergency (whether of internal political or external belligerent origin, or perhaps triggered by natural catastrophes), for example, the introduction of martial law, or the reliance upon domestic or foreign military forces for (re-)asserting control and/or providing humanitarian assistance has significantly expanded the range of situations calling for attention. One can add to these operations conducted by national intelligence services (whether at home or abroad), with (quasi-)military character or effect, even though they may not strictly invoke the regulatory framework of humanitarian law. All the matters noted have economic, demographic, environmental and social spillover-effects, often in the form of refugee movements or other migration, themselves often the outcome of natural disasters (increasingly, and quite predictably, related to global heating, which may itself generate resource conflicts in many of the forms mentioned above).

The IHL teaching faculty has been selected to reflect the international, multi-dimensional, and interdisciplinary nature of the subject matter of the curriculum, and the international legal and policy concerns on which it is based. Like participant students themselves, the academic teachers come from numerous countries and academic institutions, each with his or her own area of specialization and expertise. The internationally qualified composition and experience of the teaching staff, and their contacts in many international institutions, offer a secure base for diverse human rights career opportunities and activities.

The courses of study offered, and the academic qualifications available, within the IHL programme, in particular the full LLM-degree, provide a strong and comprehensive basis for a wide-range of careers in the human rights field, whether in international organizations on the global and regional level, in national governmental bodies, or in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) both internationally and nationally.

Students following the LLM path will, by undertaking an internship, have the particular benefit of a significant practical component which offers a bridge between academic and theoretical work on the one hand, and practical achievement in the field of human rights on the other. This in itself provides a valuable additional basis for a career in the field, and enables graduates to make a significant contribution to a field of crucial and urgent importance on a global, regional and local level.

II Programme structure

A Academic qualifications available

The Viadrina IHL programme offers three different academic awards, each with specific ECTS point values¹ and curriculum requirements:

- **Master of International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law** (Master of Laws) (LLM IHL)
90 ECTS total: 60 ECTS coursework, 15 ECTS masters thesis, 15 ECTS internship
- **Diploma of International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law** (Dipl IHL)
60 ECTS coursework
- **Certificate of International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law** (Cert IHL)
30 ECTS coursework

This range of available academic awards affords flexibility to IHL students facing diverse professional and personal circumstances, particularly for those who may have only limited time for postgraduate study, or who need exposure to course subject matter more limited than that of a full masters degree. Flexibility is further increased by a choice of full- and part-time attendance.

B Mode of study (full- and part-time)

Each of the available academic qualifications can be awarded on the basis of *full-time* or *part-time* study.

The **regular period of study** (for each available qualification) is:

- **LLM IHL** 3 semesters full-time; 6 semesters part-time
- **Diploma IHL** 2 semester full-time; 4 semesters part-time
- **Certificate IHL** 1 semester full-time; 2 semesters part-time

A regular period of study may, on written application in advance, be extended for sufficient reasons.

Coursework studied part-time generally takes twice as long as full-time study. Full-time and part-time students attend classes together. A part-time student may take only 2 coursework modules (4 courses) per semester. There is no distinction in the available coursework curriculum or timetable in respect of the two modes of study.

The time allowed for writing the *masters thesis* (5 months) is the same for both part-time and full-time LLM students. For a part-time LLM student, the masters thesis is typically completed in the 5th semester, and the internship in the 6th (or vice-versa). The length of the *internship* for LLM candidates is specified as a minimum number of hours (450), so that there is no strict or specific period or semester set aside for its completion.

C IHL academic calendar

The academic calendar of the IHL programme offers flexibility to people who, because of professional commitments, may have difficulty in attending coursework sessions in Frankfurt (Oder) regularly over a full academic semester. IHL coursework is conducted during only part (typically 7-8 weeks) of each of the normal university semesters:

- **mid-October to mid-December** (Winter Semester) (4 coursework modules)
- **mid-April to mid-June** (Summer Semester) (4 coursework modules)

IHL students (whether LLM, Diploma, or Certificate) may begin their studies in either the Winter or the Summer Semester, at their own choice (see III A below concerning application deadlines).

¹ ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) refers to the standardized university study credit framework of the European Union. 60 ECTS corresponds with 8 IHL modules (16 courses).

D On-campus attendance and timetable

The IHL programme includes mandatory attendance on campus for coursework sessions. Coursework teaching in Frankfurt (Oder) usually begins in the **second or third week of October** and **second or third week of April** in each year. The total **minimum presence time on campus** in each semester is approximately 7-8 weeks (full-time) and 3-4 weeks (part-time) (including periods for examinations).

Part-time students attend coursework classes either in the **first or second half of any given semester** (October/November or November/December in the Winter Semester; April/May or May/June in the Summer Semester).

Between the semester presence-periods, IHL students are not required to be on campus in Frankfurt (Oder).

Teaching sessions are usually conducted on **two to five days per week**, normally from **9:00-16:00** (with occasional additional sessions in the late afternoon or evening).

Mandatory presence attendance requirements may be subject to modification in light of **pandemic conditions** (see section V below).

E Overview of curriculum and study components

All aspects of the IHL programme are conducted in English.

1 COURSEWORK

IHL Coursework comprises the following modules and elements:

Winter Semester

- Introduction to the international human rights law (Module I A)
- Introduction to the international humanitarian law (Module I B)
- Civil and political rights (Module II A&B)
- Economic, social and cultural rights (Module III A)
- Prohibition of discrimination (Module III B)
- Conflict prevention/management (Module V A)
- Current issues of the law of armed conflict (Module V B)
- Mass violence and genocide (Module VI A)
- Responsibility to protect (Module VI A)

Summer Semester

- Women's and children's rights (Module I A)
- Rights of minorities and peoples (Module I B)
- Refugees, internally displaced persons (Module II A)
- Migration law (Module II B)
- Individual (criminal) responsibility (Module III A)
- State responsibility (Module III B)
- Justice and (criminal) penalties and enforcement (Module IV A)
- Democracy, the rule of law and administration (Module IV B)

Workshops and additional (optional) courses

- Introduction to public international law (bridging course)
- Research methods and training (thesis preparation)
- Legal writing and legal analysis
- Inter-American human rights system
- African human rights system (and others)

2 TEACHING FORMAT

Coursework teaching and learning occurs both **face-to-face**, and in **distance-learning** formats. Face-to-face teaching and learning includes lectures, seminars, special workshops, guest presentations, and supervised examinations, all of which require personal attendance on the university campus in Frankfurt (Oder). **Active participation** in lectures and seminars is a regular and standard part of serious postgraduate study.

Students are expected to **prepare in advance** for all sessions, and to engage intensively in **follow-up work** through distance learning or library activity, so as consolidate their learning experience. The distance-learning elements (documentary materials, some recorded sessions, online Q&A sessions links to further sources) are presented via an internet platform providing for interactive engagement.

3 INTERNSHIP

Students enrolled for the masters programme (LLM) must complete **450 hours of practical training** and experience (internship) at an organization related to the overall field of the IHL programme. This may be an international, regional, national or local organization with relevant activity and mission. The individual internship focus at such an organization must itself be in the field covered by the IHL programme, or have a clear relation to it. Students are expected to find and organize their own internships, but the Masters Office can provide some advice and assistance, including letters of support.

Past or current practical experience and activity in human rights and humanitarian work can be accredited to satisfy the internship requirement.

The suitability of a planned internship, or the accreditability of past activity, is determined on application to the Masters Office in conjunction with the Chair of the Academic Board.

4 MASTERS THESIS

A thesis on an approved topic, supervised by a teacher appointed by the Examinations Board, must be submitted for the award of the LLM degree. (No oral defence is presently required).

5 OPTIONAL ELEMENTS OF THE IHL PROGRAMME

a. Study trips

In each semester there is usually a 2-3-day study trip, which all IHL students are welcome to join. This provides the opportunity for guided visits to some key international, intergovernmental, and European institutions concerned with human rights protection, international law, and related matters. The trips are variously to The Hague, Strasbourg, and Geneva. The bodies typically visited include the International Court of Justice (ICJ), International Criminal Court (ICC), European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), European Parliament (EP), and United Nations bodies, such as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (Study trips have been suspended until further notice due to the covid pandemic; see section V below.)

b. Optional research project

Students enrolled in the IHL masters programme (LLM) who have completed all prescribed coursework (with a minimum average grade of B), may, in addition to writing the masters thesis, also undertake an optional research project. This does not substitute for any mandatory component of the LLM degree. It provides the student with the opportunity to explore a further area of interest, writing a major paper under qualified supervision. Successful completion is recorded on the academic transcript, and may be valuable in supporting certain career paths.

c. Guest lectures

Beyond the formal elements of the IHL curriculum, in each semester there is usually a guest lecture by a specially invited and distinguished expert, often from a field which may not otherwise have received attention in the normal coursework programme.

F Assessment

Assessment of academic performance in the IHL programme occurs through coursework-examinations and term essays, masters thesis examination, and internship reports. Coursework is assessed either through supervised on-campus or online examinations (closed- or open-book exams, typically 2 hours long) and through written assignments (essays, typically 2500 — exceptionally up to 5000 — words in length).

All internships (including those based on past experience) are assessed by two reports, one of the student concerned, and one of the internship-supervisor at the organization concerned.

III Admission

A Application process and deadlines

Applications for admission to the IHL programme can be made for commencing in either the Winter Semester or the Summer Semester. Generally, it is recommended to begin the programme in the Winter Semester, where possible.

Application deadlines (for any of the available IHL academic qualifications) are:

- for Winter Semester entry: **1 September.**
- for Summer Semester entry: **1 March.**

All applications are made online at www.rewi.europa-uni.de/master-ihl and are **not accepted in any other form.**

B Admission requirements

1 UNIVERSITY DEGREE IN LAW OR EQUIVALENT

A university degree in **law or an equivalent qualification** is required for admission to any of the available IHL awards programmes. Equivalent is a university degree in any field with legal reference or relevance (e.g., international relations, political science, social sciences, European studies, etc.).

For admission as a masters (LLM) student, the prior qualification must equal a **minimum of 210 ECTS** points. If not, an applicant for admission may take an oral exam within the IHL application process in order to satisfy this threshold, but only up to a supplementary maximum of 30 ECTS points.

Applicants uncertain as to whether their prior academic study meets the requirement of equivalence, or in doubt concerning its ECTS value, may send a copy of their transcript to app-master-ihl@europa-uni.de requesting confirmation of status, prior to making a formal application for admission.

2 ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

As already noted, the IHL programme is conducted exclusively in English. Applicants must, therefore, have **adequate aptitude in the English language**, both spoken and written, sufficient to follow and participate actively in English-language lecture and tutorials, read academic literature, write academic papers, sit for written exams, participate in oral exams, and engage competently in academic discourse.



This **binding requirement** can be satisfied by any of:

- one of the following **test results** -
 - 93 in TOEFL IBT
 - 180 Cambridge Advanced Certificate (C1)
 - 7 average IELTS (no less than 6.5 for each component).
- sufficiently long **school education in English**
- **equivalent evidence**, e.g., **university studies** or professional **career activity** (for a sufficient period) in English,² or **residence** in an English-speaking country for a sufficient (*significantly longer*) period³
- clear and demonstrable evidence of being a **native English speaker**.⁴

Proficiency in the **German language is not required** for undertaking the IHL programme. Foreign students are encouraged to take tuition in German during their stay at the Viadrina.

3 PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

At the time they apply, applicants should have had **professional experience of at least 12 months**, preferably having some close relation to the focus of the IHL programme. Such experience can have been paid or unpaid, so that voluntary work or internships may also be accepted. This must be substantiated by appropriate documentary proof. In the light of individual circumstances, especially taking into account the CV as a whole, an exemption from this requirement may be approved by the Admissions Board.

4 CURRICULUM VITAE (CV)

Each applicant must submit a **detailed tabular CV** showing key data: personal details, contact information, educational background and qualifications with dates, employment history with dates, language abilities, extra-curricular activities, publications if any, and any sundry relevant factors.

5 REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

All online applications must be accompanied by **all the following uploaded documents** (corresponding to the admission requirements noted in detail above):

- i) scanned copies of the applicant's **academic diplomas and official transcripts** — all (including any necessary translations) consolidated into a single PDF-file, uploaded at the 'Diploma' stage of the online application
- ii) certified documentation of English language proficiency
- iii) certified **confirmation of 12 months professional experience** issued by employer(s) or organization(s)
- iv) applicant's detailed **curriculum vitae (CV)**
- v) scanned copy of the *data page* of applicant's **passport** (the page containing photo, issue data, and machine-readable code)
- vi) **passport-style photo** (for the applicant's file and for their student-ID upon admission).

Any document submitted in a language other than English must be accompanied by an **officially certified translation**.

² Official confirmation is needed, e.g., from an academic institution concerning the language of instruction & examination, or from an employer concerning the language of the workplace and the period of employment.

³ A certified official record of long-term residence is needed.

⁴ E.g., evidence of applicant's citizenship, and that of their mother and/or father, together with evidence of long-term residence.

IV Acceptance, fees, and enrolment

A Acceptance letter, official invitation and visa

The decision on an application is made by the IHL Admissions Board. The applicant will be informed of the decision (admission or rejection). Where an applicant is admitted to the programme, they will receive

- the admissions letter and
- detailed current information on the tuition fee and method of payment.

The applicant must confirm the receipt of the admissions letter and within a specified deadline indicate whether they **accept the offer of admission**. They must also **pay the indicated fee** within a specified deadline in order to secure their place.

The admissions letter does not serve as a basis for applying for and obtaining a German visa. A visa application can be processed by a German embassy/consulate only once the applicant presents it with both a **confirmation of tuition fee payment** from the University Finance Department, together with an **official letter of invitation from the IHL Masters Office**.⁵

B Fees and scholarships

All tuition in the IHL programme is subject to a fee. The current fee for each available qualification is:

- **Master (LLM)** € 6,100
- **Diploma** € 5,580
- **Certificate** € 2,790

Each of the specified fees applies to both full-time and part-time study, and covers the cost of **tuition** during the entire regular study period of each of the available academic qualifications. Any extension of the period of study beyond the regular period may be subject to an additional charge per semester.

The **full amount** of the respective fee **must be paid before enrolment and beginning study**.

In addition to tuition fees, each student must pay an additional administration charge (**enrolment fee and semester ticket fee**).⁶ These charges are paid separately at least one month before the beginning of each semester (Summer Semester starts on 1 April, Winter Semester begins on 1 October).

FEE REFUND POLICY Where an admitted IHL applicant's German visa request is formally rejected by a German embassy/consulate, any tuition or enrolment fee already paid can be refunded on application. The final decision on such refund is taken exclusively by the University Finance Department.⁷

FINANCIAL SUPPORT Scholarships, stipends, or other forms of financial assistance cannot be provided by the IHL programme or the Viadrina European University. They may, however, be available from external sources. Applicants in financial need are advised to make their own enquiries (especially

⁵ NOTE: the embassy/consulate may impose other requirements (e.g., a financial deposit) or it may, e.g., inform the IHL Masters Office where it observes that the applicant appears to have insufficient command of English, and thus leading to a reconsideration of admission to the IHL programme and eventual withdrawal of the invitation to attend. The IHL administration has no control over the issue of German visas.

⁶ See <https://www.europa-uni.de/de/studium/informationen/semesterbeitrag.html> for current enrolment and semester ticket fees. The 'semester ticket' entitles a student enrolled at the Viadrina to use public transport in the Berlin-Brandenburg area free of charge.

⁷ The student concerned must send a formal refund request to the IHL Masters Office, together with a copy of the official visa-rejection letter and full details of the bank account to which the refund should be transferred.

with relevant public institutions, NGOs, foundations, and certain other private institutions, both in their own country and in Germany).⁸

C Accommodation

A student admitted to the IHL programme will need **accommodation which allows presence attendance at coursework** teaching on campus in Frankfurt (Oder) (as noted at II D above). This will require some kind of housing in Frankfurt (Oder) or nearby (for example in Berlin, noting, however, that travel between Berlin and Frankfurt (Oder) normally requires 90-120 minutes in each direction, depending on one's location in Berlin).

Accommodation may be in **private housing, apartments, or student dormitories and halls**. The most practical for international students is accommodation in one of the student hostels in either Frankfurt (Oder) or just across the River Oder in the nearby Polish town of Stubice.

For **housing in a student hostel** (dormitory) at the Viadrina itself, a room can be requested from the **Studentenwerk**, the body responsible for all student hostel accommodation at the university. See: <http://www.studentenwerk-frankfurt.de/2011/index.php?lg=en&rt=Alle&ct=Start&sct=Home&city=&style=&city=Frankfurt>

If you intend to make other arrangements (e.g., apartment-sharing in Frankfurt (Oder) or in Berlin), please refer to the international guide issued by the Viadrina International Office. See also:

<http://www.wgberlin.net/>

<https://www.wg-gesucht.de/>

<https://www.wg-suche.de/wg-zimmer/deutschland-berlin>

V Resumption of normal arrangements following the covid pandemic

As noted at some points above, certain aspects of the standard programme delivery had to be modified during the covid pandemic. In particular, face-to-face teaching, on-campus examinations, and study trips were suspended, and replaced with online substitutes. These measures were adopted in order to protect staff and students, in order to conform with national law relating to personal contact and quarantine, and to respond to restrictions on movement, in particular those concerning international travel.

The limits imposed during earlier, very intensive phases of the pandemic have now been lifted, at least in Germany, and most university activity has returned to normal. Therefore, in principle, the IHL programme will itself return to normal pre-pandemic practice in Winter Semester 2022/2023, including face-to-face teaching and on-campus exams and other components, insofar as the international composition of the student-body and of the teaching faculty allows this. All normal (pre-pandemic) arrangements, including those concerning admissions, enrolment, teaching, and administration are, then, from Summer Semester 2022, once again in operation.

Nevertheless, the IHL Academic Board is aware that the dangers of covid have not by any means fully disappeared, and that pandemic conditions could easily and quite suddenly return, especially in the coming European winter. In addition, even under present conditions, for some IHL participants there may still be certain limitations on participation, either due to personal health circumstances (including specific covid vulnerability) or perhaps due to travel restrictions in relation to their country of origin and/or relating to travel to Germany. For these reasons, the IHL Academic Board has decided that, although normal (on-campus) delivery of the programme will in principle resume for Winter Semester 2022/2023, this will be accompanied by complementary online measures (web-casting, video-recording, online examinations) in order to provide flexibility for students who strictly

⁸ A non-exhaustive list of German Foundations offering scholarship includes: DAAD, KAAD, Heinrich Böll Foundation, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Rosa Luxembourg Foundation. See generally for further information: <https://www.europa-uni.de/en/internationales/Students/Incomings/Costs-and-Financing/stip/index.html>



cannot be present in Frankfurt (Oder). Any such student must apply in advance for an express exemption from presence on campus in Frankfurt (Oder), and this application must be accompanied by a doctor's certificate or other appropriate formal documentation. Without this, normal semester presence on campus (as described at II D above) applies and is required.

In the light of the unpredictability associated with the covid virus (possible sudden increases in infection and death rates, the emergence of new variants, renewed national and international restrictions, changes in institutional rules and practices), it is possible that the IHL Academic Board may need to make changes to the mode of delivery of the programme, perhaps at very short notice, even possibly with the complete cancellation of on-campus teaching and a return to fully online presentation as occurred in 2020 and 2021. At present this is not expected, but it is impossible to exclude this. The Academic Board will certainly attempt as far as possible to proceed according to the normal, and pedagogically preferred, methods and, should some change in circumstances occur, attempt to adapt in ways as beneficial and supportive as possible for all IHL students. Should changes be necessary, the Board will inform students at the earliest possible opportunity.

VI Contact information

IHL Admission Office

Email: app-master-ihl@europa-uni.de

Skype: [app-master-ihl@europa-uni.de](https://www.skype.com/people/app-master-ihl@europa-uni.de)

Tel: +49 (0)335 5534-2624

Fax: +49 (0)335 5534-2449

Post

IHL Masters Office Faculty of Law
Europa-Universitaet Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder)
Grosse Scharnstrasse 59
D-15230 FRANFURT (Oder)
Germany

