



schweizerische agentur  
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## **Academic Programme Accreditation**

### **MAS in Humanitarian Action University of Geneva**

External review report | 15.07.2015



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## 1 Accreditation procedure

The accreditation procedure for academic programmes in Switzerland comprises an internal evaluation performed by the study programme followed by an external evaluation by a team of independent experts. The group leader of this team is responsible for the report which, after approval by the team as a whole, is sent to the accreditation agency AAQ. The AAQ sends the report to the evaluated unit, which may express an opinion on the report's contents. Based on these documents and the self-evaluation report, the AAQ sends its recommendation to the decision-making authority, the Swiss Accreditation Council.

The accreditation demand was made on 17 June 2014. The accreditation procedure was formally opened on 8 September 2014. In January 2015, the new framework law on higher education in Switzerland entered into force (Federal Act on Funding and Coordination of the Swiss Higher Education Sector). Since then, the accreditation bodies have been reorganised and the Swiss center of accreditation and quality assurance in higher education (OAQ) has been replaced by the Swiss Agency for Accreditation and Quality Assurance (AAQ).

The present procedure being carried out during the transition phase between the old and new legal framework in Switzerland, this report has been compiled according to the procedures of the OAQ. It records the outcomes of a process conducted using the standards of March 2013 for the accreditation of continuing education programmes in Switzerland. The procedure is based on the Accreditation Guidelines of 28 June 2007 of the Swiss University Conference. Additional standards specifically conceived for continuing education have been included in 2013.

### 1.1 Presentation of the unit under accreditation

The strategic aims of University of Geneva in continuing education<sup>1</sup> are to improve the competitiveness of the institution, to serve the public and to monitor developments at the outskirts of the fields under interest. The Continuing Education Committee (COFO) and the Continuing Education Centre (SFC) are in place to support the development of continuing education at University of Geneva.

The unit seeking for accreditation is the continuing education programme Master of Advanced Studies (MAS) in Humanitarian Action run by the Centre for Education and Research in Humanitarian Action (CERAH). CERAH is a joint centre of the University of Geneva and the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID). It was created in its present form in 2008.

Since 2012 the MAS in Humanitarian Action is offered (in its current form) to international managers in the humanitarian and development sector (with at least 2 years of working experience and holding a higher education institution degree), wishing to deepen their competencies in specific areas and add an academic and analytical dimension to their professional skills. It is delivered in English. It comprises 60 ECTS which can be completed in 1 up to 3 years, according to individualised training paths, well adapted to professionals.

The multidisciplinary programme comprises 3 parts:

- a core curriculum of four months focussing on the theory and fundamental questions of humanitarian action (30 ECTS);

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<sup>1</sup> National Qualifications Framework for further education in Switzerland: <http://www.swissuniversities.ch/en/higher-education-area/qualifications-framework-nqfch-hs/weiterbildung/>

- two elective specializing courses of 7 weeks each (20 ECTS in total) to be chosen by the participants among the following CAS: Designing strategies and projects for the humanitarian action; Communication, advocacy, and negotiation for humanitarian action; Disaster risk management; People management in humanitarian settings; Health in humanitarian emergencies; Legal environment in humanitarian action;
- an academic dissertation (10 ECTS), introduced by a 3 weeks course on research and methodology.

Since 2012, 34 students graduated from the MAS in Humanitarian Action. Currently, 23 students are participating in the 2014-15 MAS edition. The maximum intake capacity is 35 students, the ideal number of participants for each cohort being around 25 students, under an educational and organizational perspective.

## 1.2 Self-evaluation report

The self-evaluation report was produced by the unit under accreditation and supplied in advance of the on-site visit, within the deadlines agreed. The report consists of two parts:

1. The Main Text – a document of 60 pages addressing each of the Areas and Standards of the AAQ procedure in turn. This main text is introduced by a general chapter describing the specific context of the University of Geneva and its continuing education policies and bodies (first 20 pages).
2. Appendices – the main text is cross-referenced to a range of Appendices provided initially in electronic form. During the on-site visit, material previously only available electronically was also produced for the group in hard copy and other materials, such as past assessments, were made available for consultation.

The self-evaluation report is highly descriptive and covers the list of necessary standards. It represents an excellent basis as preparatory document for the experts, to be complemented with the information gathered during the on-site visit. To some extent, it lacks of analytical considerations which should always be integral part of a self-evaluation. This deficiency was partially compensated by the provision of concrete implementation examples, in order to translate declarations and principles into coherent actions and practices.

The members of the expert panel were satisfied that the self-evaluation report provided enough information to prepare the site visit. The report is in general clear and comprehensive. The appendices are extensive and contain additional and relevant information that allow a better understanding of some areas, like the programme structure and CERAH strategy and aims. Nevertheless it is not a truly self-evaluative document assessing strengths and weaknesses of the MAS programme in relation to the *Quality standards for programmes* (Art.10 of Accreditation Guidelines of 28 June 2007).

## 1.3 Group of experts

The group of experts assembled for this accreditation procedure has been approved by the OAQ Scientific advisory board in December 2014. Its membership is constituted as follows:

Peer leader:

- Dr. Cristina Churruza Muguruza, University of Deusto, Spain

Experts:

- Prof. Dr. Laurent Goetschel, University of Basel, Switzerland
- Mr. Jan Weuts, Caritas International, Belgium

– Prof. em. Karl Weber, University of Bern, Switzerland

As Prof. Weber had been the director of the continuing education Department of the University of Bern, he was invested with the specific role of assuring the adequate consideration and respect of the Swiss continuing education sector, with its specificities and characteristics.

#### **1.4 On-site visit**

The on-site visit was undertaken on 21-22 May 2015, with a briefing session for the group of experts on the evening of 20 May 2015, followed by a preparatory meeting. The various sessions comprising the visit may be summarised as follows:

- Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May. Preparatory meeting of the panel of experts. Meetings and interviews: with the management of the Centre for Education and Research in Humanitarian Action (CERAH); with the programme's Steering Committee; with the teaching staff; with students and alumni; with technical and administrative staff; and with external stakeholders. Short visit of the premises.

- Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May. Meetings and interviews: with the management of the University of Geneva; and with those responsible for Quality Assurance from the Continuous Education Department of the University of Geneva, including central services and equal opportunities. Preparation by the group of its conclusions and debriefing session for the University staff.

The experts felt that the range of individuals with whom it was able to meet, the nature of the discussions and the variety of supplementary material produced in response to requests during the course of the visit enabled it to make a full and well-informed appraisal of the programme being considered for accreditation and of the infrastructural and other resources of the institution necessary to underpin it. The group would like to commend the programme on the high degree of participation and involvement in the interviews by the different groups.

The panel drew up the comments and recommendations relating to compliance with quality standards, which appear in Section 2 on the basis of the self-evaluation report, on-site visit, analysis of evidences and its findings.

#### **1.5 Position statement of the unit under accreditation**

On 15 June 2015 the unit under accreditation received the preliminary version of the report, on which they could take position within two weeks.

On July, 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 the unit under accreditation submitted its comments concerning the recommendations and areas for improvement put forward by the group of experts.

Further clarifications were required concerning the recommendation under standard 1.03 about roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders. These clarifications, agreed upon by the group of experts, appear in this final version of the report introduced by "Additional clarifications, as required by CERAH:".

As regards to standards 1.04, 2.01, 3.01, 3.02, 3.04, and 6.01, the unit agrees with the recommendations and experts' conclusions. Wherever possible, some measures for improvement have already been planned or partially implemented.

In one case, the unit representatives disagree with the experts' recommendation. This is the case of standard 2.02, concerning student participation in decision-making. According to the programme representatives, students are already sufficiently involved. However, a more formal and structured student representation in the decision-making organs is advisable. According to the group of experts the establishment of a Programme Committee including student representatives is a sign of good practice that can be found in many postgraduate programmes.

It might be introduced in this programme too, although is not mandated by the University regulations and not required by the accreditation standard.

Finally, in one case the unit under accreditation claims to satisfy already the proposed measure for improvement. This concerns standard 2.03, and more particularly the formal documentation of the outcomes of the internal quality assurance system. Experts have therefore slightly reformulated their recommendation. The old and new wording is to be found in chapter 2 – area 2, under the relevant standard.

Globally, CERAH showed satisfaction with the review and its outcomes.

## 2 Evaluation of the quality standards

### 2.1 Area 1: Implementation and teaching objectives

#### Standard 1.01

The range of programs is regularly carried out.
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##### *Background information*

The MAS in Humanitarian Action is regularly carried out since 2012 in its current form. The programme was initiated more than 15 years ago and benefits from lessons learnt with students, varied internal evaluations, strengthened partnerships with humanitarian organizations and the expertise of the Geneva University and the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies.

Over the last 3 editions of the programme the set-up of the MAS remained stable, as well as student intake and graduates numbers.

##### *Analysis*

According to the information received the panel has no doubt that the study programme is delivered on a regular basis since 2012. The current academic year 2014-2015 represents the third edition of the MAS in Humanitarian Action. The interviews carried out with the institutional management show the strategic will to maintain and strengthen this study offer in the coming years.

*Conclusion:* standard fulfilled.

#### Standard 1.02

The objectives of the program correspond to the institution's mission and strategic plan.
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##### *Background information*

The MAS in Humanitarian Action meets the institution's mission at different levels: with the University of Geneva and its Continuing Education policies and principles; with the CERAH Strategy 2014-16; and with the IHEID mission statement as explained in pp. 21-22 of the report main text and CERAH programme 2014-2015 in Appendix 34.

According the CERAH programme, the MAS provides participants with a strong understanding of the central conceptual and operational aspects of humanitarian action and capacity to define and implement strategic humanitarian interventions.

According to assessments done during and at the end of the courses, the MAS content allows reaching the objectives.

#### *Analysis*

The analysis of the different documents show that the purpose of the programme corresponds to the University of Geneva mission and objectives and its Continuing Education policies and principles and with the CERAH Strategy 2014-16. There is also a clear link between the programme goal and the IHEID mission. It would be useful to differentiate between the MAS overall goal and its learning objectives or between objectives and competencies.

The experts would find useful to improve the external communication under this perspective, and suggest to include a reference to the University, IHEID and CERAH mission and strategy in the MAS website and leaflets.

*Conclusion:* standard fulfilled.

### **Standard 1.03**

The stakeholders concerned (for example: responsible departments, participants, alumni, professional organisations, employers and research centres) are identified and according to the need involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of the programme.

#### *Background information*

Different stakeholders are involved in the process of design, implementation and evaluation of the program in order to achieve a virtuous cycle of offering, running, assessing, correcting/improving the program. This process includes 5 main steps:

1. Context analysis to define professional educational and training needs: academics and professionals are involved;
2. Programme design: managed by the head of training, under the supervision of CERAH director and in collaboration with DAS coordinators and scientific committees;
3. Implementation: actors involved are week responsables for core courses MAS/DAS, CAS coordinators, guest lecturers, administration, students; each with defined roles;
4. Evaluation: teaching staff and participants are consulted, including alumni;
5. Lessons learnt: the coordinator of the core course MAS/DAS and the coordinators of the CAS draw main lessons and make recommendations for the Board of Directors, which takes these inputs in revising strategies and planning next year's programme.

#### *Analysis*

The experts group finds that different and relevant stakeholders (students, academics and professionals, board of directors, scientific committees, one for the MAS and one per CAS, and representatives of organizations) are involved in the process of design, implementation and evaluation of the program. The different steps in the process are identified and coordinated. It is a comprehensive though complex process where the various stakeholders concerned demonstrate their willingness to improve the programme continuously.

All stakeholders are involved to a certain degree in the curriculum development process. The Head of training has an overall responsibility and coordination role in particular in the programme design in collaboration with the coordinator of the MAS, the co-coordinators of the

DAS, the persons responsible for each week of the DAS and the scientific committees of the CAS. The coordinator of the core course MAS/DAS and the coordinators of the CAS are responsible of analysing the different evaluations and its conclusions which are presented by the Head of training to the Board of Directors for next edition of the programme.

*Recommendation for quality improvement*

The roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders with regard to the MAS should be further clarified in order to present a more simple and readable process.

*Conclusion:* standard fulfilled.

→ Additional clarifications, as required by CERAH: The roles and responsibilities are clear to its staff and to the stakeholder concerned. This is unquestionable and the standard is fulfilled. However, it would be advisable, as a common standard of good practice, to clarify the involvement of the different stakeholders for outsiders too, that is for anyone interested in the programme. The recommendation is therefore reformulated as such:

The roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders with regard to the MAS could be clarified in order to present a more simple and readable process for anyone interested in the programme.

**Standard 1.04**

Target audience and learning objectives have been defined. The objectives are formulated in terms of professional competences, associated with a particular function, or personal aptitudes.

*Background information*

The humanitarian sector is still under development. It encompasses a wide range of professionals from medical staff to logisticians, administrators or project managers working in a specific context in a specific position. The MAS programme focuses on mid-level managers. The objectives of the programme are formulated in line with the EUPRHA<sup>2</sup> qualifications framework in order to achieve level 6-7 of the framework in terms of knowledge and skills. The so called “behavioural competencies” are transversal within the programme. CERAH emphasizes on analytical competencies in order, as an academic centre, to develop the critical thinking of the managers.

The large majority of the students hold a Bachelor or a Master degree at admission in the MAS, and have on average more than 5 year of working experience in the humanitarian, social or development sector.

MAS learning objectives are clearly defined and made public:

- Reflect on humanitarian action from a multidisciplinary perspective;
- Acquire methodological, conceptual, and practical tools in order to improve humanitarian intervention strategies;
- Build upon existing analytical skills through the critical analysis of contemporary humanitarian crisis, using case studies from armed conflict, “natural” catastrophes, and situation of social exclusion;
- Develop specific competencies in areas such as health, law, programme management, human resource management, communication and advocacy, and disaster management.

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<sup>2</sup> European Universities on Professionalization on Humanitarian Action.



A. Core course MAS/DAS objectives are defined as follow:

At the end of the course, students have the ability to:

- Analyse the historical, geopolitical and social origins of humanitarian crises
- Use methodological and conceptual tools in order to contribute to research and reflection on contemporary humanitarian action
- Reflect on own practice
- Identify the trends and dilemmas for future humanitarian action

The core course is divided in 3 modules that have specific objectives:

Module 1: Analyse the past and present historical, geopolitical and legal context of humanitarian crises and humanitarian responses.

Module 2: Analyse contemporary humanitarian responses and specific humanitarian issues in order to reflect on lessons learned.

Module 3: Analyse the current and future challenges and dilemmas by examining cross cutting issues in order to adapt humanitarian responses.

Each module is composed of 4 weeks, each week having its overall objectives and specific objectives. For example, in the 2014-2015 MAS programme, the objectives of the course “Geopolitics of HA in conflict” have been: to better understand the links between humanitarian action and the geopolitical environment globally and in specific contexts.

B. The CAS learning objectives are defined in terms of professional competences. At the end of the course, students have the ability to:

- Develop capacity to define operational strategies
- Develop specialized problem solving skills in specific areas
- Develop situational intelligence via practical experience illustrated by theory: contextualization, adaptability, creativity, autonomy and accountability in decision-making.
- Capitalize, reflect on and critically review your experience
- Design a specific plan of action
- Increase the professional and academic network

The objectives for each CAS reflect the general objectives and are adapted to the specific thematic. For example the objectives of the CAS “Designing strategies and projects for Humanitarian Action” are the following:

At the end of the CAS, participants have developed the relevant competencies to design and adapt humanitarian strategies and projects in line with the specificities of each context. They provide coherent, flexible and creative humanitarian responses taking into account ethical issues, the context prerogatives, as well as the humanitarian principles and organization’s mandate.

C. The overall objective of the MAS dissertation is to stimulate a rigorous, critical and original reflection, and enable the student to analyse, debate and synthesise the relevant literature, to use relevant methodological tools, and to write a scientifically sound paper.

As described in the report the combination and the complementarity of the different components of the MAS programme allow participants to become humanitarian experts as defined in level 6 and 7 of the EUPRHA qualification framework.

### *Analysis*

With this executive education programme, participants having acquired diplomas in other disciplines during their graduate studies are given the possibility to work on Management duties in the field of humanitarian action in a professional way. They acquire then a knowledge enabling backing up various social sciences and legal disciplines. In this perspective, thanks to this programme the field of the humanitarian action can be strongly professionalized.

The learning objectives of the programme are formulated in terms of professional competences for mid-career managers in the humanitarian sector. Accordingly learners will develop the particular mix of competences considered useful and necessary for the humanitarian professional sector. This target audience is identified in the different documents and in the program website.

However the learning objectives could be expressed in a more consistent manner through the programme. It is mentioned that the learning objectives are in line with level 6-7<sup>th</sup> of the EUPRHA qualifications framework which, based on the European Qualifications Framework, for level 7 refers to a “highly” specialised understanding and knowledge and to a level of responsibility and autonomy which corresponds to the latter. This level is not reflected in the different learning objectives.

The four learning objectives of the MAS defined in terms of competencies are not that clearly built in the core course MAS/DAS, the CAS component and the MAS dissertation. Ideally the main objective of the programme should be to develop a number of key competences in a progressive way. In other words, competences have to be built in different programme components to show which competences are developed in which course units and to what level. In fact looking at the objectives of the different components, the conclusion is that the programme has a larger number of key competencies than the four initially expressed.

On the other hand in p.30 of the self-evaluation report eight learning objectives are listed in terms of knowledge, skills and competencies (see under standard 7.01). These correspond to a certain extent to some of the objectives of the different components but others are missing, like the ones linked to the Master dissertation. The learning objectives should be more clearly defined, as it is an essential element of a degree profile. They should be visible in the master documents and in the website. It could be useful to explore ways to map the competencies which are developed in the different programme components and see to which extent they match these learning objectives and update the MAS learning objectives accordingly.

### *Recommendation for quality improvement*

The experts recommend that the MAS learning objectives are expressed in a more consistent way throughout the programme.

*Conclusion:* standard fulfilled.

## **2.2 Area 2: Internal organization and quality assurance measures**

### **Standard 2.01**

The decision-making processes, competencies and responsibilities have been defined and communicated to all those involved.
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### *Background information*

Decision-making processes are defined within an annual timeframe in accordance with the organizational structure, and reassessed on an annual basis:

- a. Governance: Directorate (Rector UniGE and Director IHEID); Board of Directors (representatives of UniGE, IHEID and professionals from humanitarian organizations), which meets 4 times per year.
- b. CERAH management: CERAH Director (management and supervision); Head of Training (quality assurance and development of new courses).
- c. Implementation teams: MAS coordinator; core course MAS/DAS team; CAS teams; research methodology team; Dissertation process supervision team.

Roles are defined in conventions, agreements and legal acts.

### *Analysis*

The decision-making processes are defined in accordance to CERAH organizational structure. It differentiates between 3 levels: governance, management (in charge of the MAS quality and teaching content) and implementation of the MAS. How the 3 levels interact to assure coherence and quality of the programme is not always clear. The self-evaluation report does not discuss the pros and cons of the system and its efficiency. During the on-site visit the panel found a lack of critical self-reflection and questioning of the different processes.

With regard to the governance the role of the two entities responsible of the programme UNIGE and the Graduate Institute (IHEID) should be explained in a more transparent way. The involvement of the University of Geneva and its support to the programme was evidenced during the on-site visit. It was noticed by the panel that only few contacts exist to the social scientists of the University. The level of involvement of the IHEID was more difficult to assess. While it shows a thematic interest, its institutional commitment remains vague.

CERAH's governance and management structure and the MAS governance and management structure are joint. The Head of training seems to be the only link between the different parts of the organizational chart: the governance (up) and the implementation (bottom). The Head of Training concentrates all the responsibility in guaranteeing the teaching quality under the supervision of the director.

According to the self-evaluation report the "MAS programme Team" is structured according to the different parts of the programme (p.32), its role remaining partially unclear even after the on-site visit. In fact most of the roles such as the ones of the Director, Head of Training, MAS /DAS/ CAS coordinators and week responsables are defined in their job descriptions. The role of the 6 scientific committees (1 per CAS) requires a more formal and explicit definition.

The draft of a single document where the role of the different bodies and the decision-making processes are explained could provide for all actors involved a guiding tool showing how decisions are made and how follow-up of decisions are carried out.

Although it was explained during the interviews that the students and faculty are actively involved in the decision-making processes (see under standard 2.02) the establishment of a Programme Committee composed by representatives of both groups (for the faculty the CAS coordinators for example) and including the administrative staff might be helpful to assure a more structured evaluation of the programme and to support the Head of training.

In addition, a Quality Assurance Committee composed by teaching staff, students, academic managers, support staff and external stakeholders, which reports to the Board of Directors and

the director could facilitate the coherence of the programme and help the implementation of quality enhancement and curriculum development measures throughout the programme and, again, support the role of the Head of training.

There is an impressive amount of people with small responsibilities, tasks and dedications to the programme which provides a sense of fragmentation.

A particular characteristic of the MAS structure, which seems to be shared by other MAS, is that decision-making processes are defined within an annual timeframe in accordance with the organizational structure, and reassessed on an annual basis. This has implications on the human resources (see under standard 6.01).

#### *Recommendation for quality improvement*

The experts group recommends differentiating more clearly between the CERAH and the MAS governance and management structure.

*Conclusion:* standard fulfilled.

## **Standard 2.02**

Measures are taken to ensure the active participation of the academic staff and students in decision-making processes concerning education and teaching.

#### *Background information*

Academic staff actively contributes to the design, development and quality assurance of the programme, including both professors of different faculties (medicine, law, sciences) and practitioners of main humanitarian organisations (e.g. MSF, ICRC, UNHCR, WHO, UNDP) and SDC<sup>3</sup>. This group is involved at all the levels of the decision-making process from top to bottom. Academic staff are members of the Board of Directors, the direction, the scientific committees, the teaching department, the coordinators team, and the teaching teams.

Academic staff is able to provide input at all the stages of the programme, being in direct contact with students and experiencing the pertinence of the course content and methodologies; it is regularly solicited to give feedback on the educational programme and teaching methods.

Students are actively participating in the design, development and quality assurance of next edition's programme. Students' feedback is systematically monitored and analysed to adjust design, content and teaching quality of the coming programmes. This activity is done during and at the end of each module of the core course, or at the end of a CAS.

#### *Analysis*

The panel finds that student and academic staff are not only actively involved in decision-making processes but also that they show a strong commitment to the programme quality enhancement. The high number of guest lecturers involved in the teaching requires continuous coordination and team building effort for which weekly meetings are organised. It is clear that the coherence of the programme relies in the Head of Training and the different coordinators of the modules. Students have also the opportunity to nominate a delegate and be represented in the students organs of the University of Geneva. This possibility is so far not made use of.

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<sup>3</sup> Médecins sans frontières (MSF), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

According to the students and alumni interviewed, this representation format does not necessarily fit with the continuing education programme and its needs. They feel they can have a very effective influence and impact on the MAS by the continuous feed-back and exchange assured by the programme organization and the internal quality assurance system.

*Recommendation for quality improvement*

The panel of experts recommends the establishment of a Programme Committee composed by representatives of all groups to assure a more structured involvement of students and lecturers in the decision-making processes.

*Conclusion:* standard fulfilled.

**Standard 2.03**

There are quality assurance measures for the programmes. The institution makes use of the results to periodically revise the range of programmes.
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*Background information*

CERAH has developed an integrated evaluation system in order to guarantee the quality of its training programmes: Satisfaction of participants is systematically monitored; Participants' knowledge acquisition is assessed on a regular basis; Feedback and satisfaction of trainers are collected; Debriefing and discussion between CERAH direction and partners are taking place at the end of the Programme; a log book is provided to participants to reflect on their individual learning process; Knowledge transfer to the working environment is evaluated.

The results of the quality assurance measures are used to annually revise the programmes.

*Analysis*

The programme has adopted internal quality measures to gather and analyse information on the quality of the education and teaching (objectives, competences, planning, etc.), student satisfaction and the graduate employment and degree satisfaction.

The information provided to the panel proves that there is a system working effectively. Nevertheless, the panel noted that the formal documentation of quality assurance strategies, measures and results could still be elaborated in a systematic way resulting in regular public reports. This further step might shift current practices from good to excellent.

*Recommendation for quality improvement*

The panel of experts recommends the development of a systematic system of formal documentation that specifies and integrates all the processes of quality assurance, periodic review and continuous enhancement of the programme.

*Reformulation of the recommendation based on the unit's position statement*

The panel of experts recommends the development of a systematic system of formal (public) reporting that specifies and integrates the processes of quality assurance, periodic review and continuous enhancement of the programme.

*Conclusion:* standard fulfilled.

## 2.3 Area 3: Curriculum and teaching methods

### Standard 3.01

The program has a structured curriculum corresponding to the coordinated implementation of the Bologna Declaration in Swiss higher education.

#### *Background information*

The MAS in Humanitarian Action provides 60 ECTS credits composed of 30 ECTS for the core course MAS/DAS, twice 10 ECTS for a CAS and 10 ECTS for the dissertation. The MAS programme represents a total of 1800 working hours divided between 900 hours for the core course MAS/DAS including the 3 research weeks, twice 300 hours for the CAS and 300 hours for the dissertation. ECTS and the diploma supplement are an integral part of the MAS.

Access to the MAS is possible for holders of a Bachelor's or Master's degree, in line with the vertical mobility scheme foreseen by Bologna.

Incoming mobility is foreseen through the highly international students population, coming from 4 continents in this proportion (2014-15): Africa 39%, America 17%, Asia 22%, Europe 22%. In the frame of a formalized agreement, 2 students come from the University of Copenhagen. As for the outgoing mobility, this is not reflecting the objective and format of this MAS for the time being, it is therefore not actively promoted.

#### *Analysis*

The panel finds that the programme has a structured curriculum which corresponds to the coordinated implementation of the Bologna Declaration in Swiss higher education.

As the MAS is the result of the evolution of the core course DAS and the CAS programmes it is not easy to grasp at first glance the structure of the programme. The programme organisation of the DAS has been modularised.

The composition of the DAS has been adapted in order to be coherent to a MAS structure. It seems that this adaptation is still in process. According to the self-evaluation report and to the information received in the on-site visit each module is composed by 4 weeks (12 weeks for the 3 modules) and 3 weeks are focussed on research methods. The Master leaflet mentions a core curriculum of 3 months Intensive work and the DAS leaflets mention 13 weeks of intensive courses and research work, whereas in the document "CERAH Teaching at glance" the Research Methods are included under Module 1.

In other words, the structure of the MAS is not very clear in terms of modules. The research weeks seem to be part of different modules. Based on the material provided for each week, and on the current structure, a possible distribution of modules/credits could be: 3 modules of 8 ECTS and 1 module on Research methodology of 6 ECTS. If the learning objectives of a week correspond to a unit of a module, according to the ECTS system it will be more coherent to consider the student workload per unit. It seems also more coherent, regardless of the chronological delivery of the weeks (units) to group themes sharing the same learning objectives and learning outcomes under the same Module heading. Furthermore, the number of objectives to be achieved in each week looks excessive and these are not necessarily clearly related to the overall DAS and MAS learning objectives. The general objective of each week and its learning outcomes could be more consistent with the latter.

A more consistent description of key competences, learning outcomes and the module structure could have an impact on the promotion of the mobility of students and the recognition of study

periods between different programmes in humanitarian action, would it become an objective in the near future.

*Recommendation for quality improvement*

The panel of experts recommends better explaining the structure of the MAS core curriculum, and provide consistent, uniform, readable information in the documentation available to the public.

*Conclusion:* standard fulfilled.

**Standard 3.02**

The range of programmes covers the major aspects of the subject area in question. It allows students to acquire scientific working methods and ensures that scientific findings are integrated into their studies. The teaching and evaluation methods used are in line with the defined teaching goals.

*Background information*

The range of programmes covers the major aspects of humanitarian action. Future challenges and dilemmas are updated on an annual basis. The organization of the different CAS with a scientific committee including professors and thematic experts guarantee that major aspects are covered. The programme provides students with scientific methodology that are specifically assessed with the dissertation paper introduced by three weeks of research methodologies.

The teaching and evaluation methods used are in line with defined teaching goals. Teaching methods are conceived depending on what the student is supposed to have acquired at the end of each session. It will determine the course structure and modalities (lecturer, group work, brainstorming, case study, etc.). Students' assessments confirm that learning objectives have been reached. They take different forms according to the type of module. Learning outcomes define assessment modalities, evaluation criteria and the marking system. This information is given to students at the beginning of each programme.

*Analysis*

The experts group finds the standard is met as the MAS: covers the major aspects of the field in question; allows students to acquire scientific working methods and ensures that scientific findings are integrated, and; the teaching and evaluation methods used are in line with the stated teaching goals and objectives.

In the CAS, teaching and evaluation methods have been adopted to achieve the learning outcomes defined for this part of the programme.

In the case of the DAS/MAS the teaching and evaluation methods have been designed to achieve the specific objectives of each week. These are rather defined in terms of content and are not always directly related to the competences which should be reached at the end of the DAS/MAS. DAS/MAS objectives should then be better expressed in terms of learning outcomes to state the extent and the level or standard of competence that the student will develop in this programme component and in the specific unit (week) concerned. The teaching and evaluation methods should be adapted in accordance.

*Recommendation for quality improvement*

The panel of experts recommends that the DAS/MAS teaching and evaluation methods are adapted to be more directly in line with the MAS key competences to be achieved.



*Conclusion:* standard fulfilled.

### **Standard 3.03**

The conditions for acquiring certificates of achievement and academic degrees are regulated and made public.

#### *Background information*

The conditions for acquiring the MAS diploma are defined in the study regulations. Students receive information on conditions to acquire the MAS Diploma during the introductory week, and in addition detailed information for each module of the core course MAS/DAS, the different CAS and the research weeks. Conditions are repeated at the beginning of each course (weekly for the core course MAS/DAS, beginning of the CAS, at the beginning of the methodology/research weeks).

Information covers aspects such as the Swiss marking system, the assessment criteria, examination modalities.

#### *Analysis*

The panel confirms that the conditions for acquiring certificates of achievement and academic degrees are regulated and made public.

A suggestion for the improvement of the assessment criteria might be to relate the activities to the competences that have to be evaluated according to the description of the level of mastery required and including a set of progress indicators for that level.

*Conclusion:* standard fulfilled.

### **Standard 3.04**

The programme meets academic standards and is geared towards professional practice. It is based on current academic research and up to date professional practices.

#### *Background information*

Teaching staff of the MAS programme is composed of academics and practitioners, this combination guaranteeing that the programme is in line with latest academic research and professional practices. In addition, most of the academics teaching in the MAS programme are involved with the humanitarian sector.

For this MAS, CERAH refers to the standards defined by EUPRHA and aims to be in line with level 7 of the EUPRHA qualification framework.

The final dissertation requires extensive research and analytical skills, in line with commonly recognized academic standards and with the National Qualifications Framework.

#### *Analysis*

The panel finds that the programme meets academic standards. The teaching staff of the MAS is composed by relevant academics who are experts in areas of research in the humanitarian field and their expertise is transferred to the MAS. In parallel the involvement of practitioners both from headquarters and the field guarantees the link with the professional world. The explicit support of MSF and the ICRC to the programme is a guarantee that it is up to date to professional practices in humanitarian action. Efforts are made to open up to multi-mandated,



faith-based and UN organisations, by involving specialised staff of these organisations with a broader mandate. This means that the students are exposed to all the dimensions of current humanitarian action, by diverse actors.

CERAH itself is not yet involved in research but has already worked in this direction setting up a research project in collaboration with important humanitarian stakeholders.

*Recommendation for quality improvement*

The panel recommends that, in the programme design, the learning objectives refer explicitly to levels 6-7 of the EUPRHA qualifications framework, based on the European and National Qualification Frameworks.

*Conclusion:* standard fulfilled.

**Standard 3.05**

Teaching methods are appropriate and take into account the diverse competences of the participants and their professional backgrounds.

*Background information*

Teaching methods are in line with adult training methods, according to teaching principles sourced from adult training guidelines. They take into consideration the individual curriculum of participants and give space for the students to express their own experience through the use of a wide range of participative activities such as role-play, group work, debates etc. The pedagogical approach strikes a balance between academic lectures, participatory work and individual work. According to satisfaction questionnaires, participants globally appreciate the teaching methods applied, still with some room for improvement for the core-courses.

*Analysis*

The panel finds praiseworthy the efforts of the programme to plan and adopt appropriate pedagogical techniques and to adapt the programme to the individual needs, competence and background experience of each student.

*Conclusion:* standard fulfilled.

**2.4 Area 4: Teaching staff**

**Standard 4.01**

Courses are taught by educationally competent and academically qualified teachers.

*Background information*

Teaching staff of the MAS is composed of both academics (professors, PhDs, doctoral students) and practitioners who also have scientific expertise in their field.

Lecturers are selected on the basis of their field of expertise in the relevant disciplines covered by the programme. As the institution is a joint centre of UNIGE and IHEID, professors of both entities are part of the teaching staff. Lecturers have a wide experience in the humanitarian field, and together accumulate many years of work experience with a range of institutions and multidisciplinary environments.

Associated lecturers from other universities and institutions join the MAS team according to specific teaching needs.

#### *Analysis*

CERAH is a joint centre of UniGE and IHEID therefore professors of both entities are part of the teaching staff, however the potential that this situation could bring to the MAS in terms of research and training is not yet fully exploited.

The engagement of lecturers from the different faculties is mainly based on their personal commitment. The teaching they do in continuous education programmes is not recognised by their departments and faculties as part of their teaching obligations. The support of the university to continuing education and to this particular programme is not translated in the integration of the teaching in these programmes as part of the teaching commitments of the faculties. It seems this represents a common, though in the view of the panel regrettable characteristic of continuing education in Switzerland.

CERAH teaching staff and external lectures contracts are renovated on annual basis. This is understandable for those engaged in the different modules as responding to the context and needs the content can change from one year to the next. As expressed in the interviews this could have a positive side from the lecturers' point of view in terms of flexibility. Teaching staff can decide on an annual basis if they want to continue teaching in the MAS and how they want to divide their time between various institutions. However from the point of view of the programme, a bigger continuity of the teaching staff would positively affect the sustainability of the programme in the long-run. This particularly applies to the cases of those lecturers who are as well coordinators of the different components, besides the MAS coordinator and the Head of Training.

*Conclusion:* standard fulfilled.

#### **Standard. 4.02**

The workload assigned to teaching and research activities is defined.
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#### *Background information*

The workload assigned to each teaching activity is precisely defined in the job description of each MAS teaching staff. Most team members carry out research activities in another academic department or centre, or in their organisation. Why so? Because until very recently, none of the MAS staff had any time allocated to research activities within their CERAH job description. This situation is due to the fact that CERAH was initially considered solely a centre for postgraduate education. Although the "R" in CERAH refers to research, no regular research activities had been carried out due to human resource and financial constraints. For the first time the CERAH Strategy 2014-2016 clearly positions research as one of the objectives of CERAH. This would allow assigning specific research activities to some MAS staff.

Nevertheless, research is assured indirectly by the mandates of the professors involved, employed by the University of Geneva or by the IHEID. As a general principle, 30% of the workload of academic staff is devoted to research.

#### *Analysis*

The panel finds that CERAH's privileged position as a joint centre of the Graduate Institute and UniGE might be better exploited for the benefit of the programme in particular in terms of research. The statement that research is assured by the mandate of the involved professors

employed by the University of Geneva or by the IHEID is not necessarily straightforward. This research effort cannot be taken for granted. Nevertheless the experts appreciate the intention of CERAH to improve its research efforts.

Separating more clearly between the governance of CERAH and the MAS should allow for CERAH to design and implement a research action plan with allocation of human and financial resources. This should occur in close cooperation with both IHEID and the University.

The panel suggests, as a way to strengthen the link between CERAH and the Graduate Institute and UniGE, to further involve researchers from these institutions in CERAH's future research plans and activities.

*Conclusion:* although only partially and indirectly applicable, this standard is fulfilled.

#### **Standard 4.03**

The mobility of teaching staff is facilitated.

##### *Background information*

An important percentage of the teaching staff comes from abroad. Provision of logistical and practical support is assured. Individual contracts regulate each mandate.

##### *Analysis*

The mobility of incoming teaching staff is facilitated to suit the needs of the programme. Outgoing mobility is not foreseen among the objectives of the programme and its format.

*Conclusion:* to the extent to which this standard is applicable, it is fulfilled.

#### **Standard 4.04**

Teaching staff are academics or expert practitioners. They are competent in the fields concerned. They use appropriate teaching methodologies, particularly in the field of adult education.

Refer to the considerations provided under standards 4.01 and 3.05.

*Conclusion:* standard fulfilled.

### **2.5 Area 5: Students**

#### **Standard 5.01**

The conditions for admission to the institution and/or programme are public.

##### *Background information*

Conditions for admission to the MAS specified in the Study regulations are open to the public and the information is available on brochures and the website. It specifies clearly what is expected in terms of profile, academic qualifications and professional experiences, as well as English language competence.

Information is provided on how to register for the programme, the application form to fill in, deadlines and procedure for admission. Deadlines are different for students asking for a grant

and/or needing an entry visa and the others. Application forms are made available on the website at least six months prior to the deadline.

#### *Analysis*

The conditions for admission into the programme are clear and made public. The panel confirms that this standard is fulfilled, also supported by the feed-back of the students interviewed in Geneva.

*Conclusion:* standard fulfilled.

### **Standard 5.02**

Gender equality is assured.

#### *Background information*

The Selection Committee examines the quality of the applications and aims to reach a balance between the number of men and women, educational profiles and professional experiences, geographical distribution and financial contribution. This is specified in the procedures of admission.

The MAS edition 2014-2015 shows a rather balanced profile between male and female participants (57% male, 43% female), a positive trend compared to previous years. Indeed, some factors may negatively impact the gender balance, despite internal regulations:

- Average age of participants being rather high, mainly above 30 years, due to conditions for admission and thus frequently involving family responsibilities (young children);
- Country of origin where family responsibility could be more “female” oriented;
- Country of origin where gender equality in education is not taken for granted.

#### *Analysis*

The panel finds that the standard is met. More pro-active initiatives may be put in place, in collaboration with the Equal opportunities department of the University of Geneva, in order to keep this balance stable throughout the years.

*Conclusion:* standard fulfilled.

### **Standard 5.03**

Student mobility is possible and is promoted by the mutual recognition of credits between universities and between disciplines.

This standard is not applicable.

Refer to considerations under standard 3.01.

### **Standard 5.04**

Measures are taken to ensure that students have access to adequate counselling.

### *Background information*

Individual academic counselling is provided to participants at all stages of their studies: prior to the registration, during the core course, during the CAS programmes, during the dissertation (closely supervised by a teacher). Each participant has a personal supervisor that can be addressed on regular meetings at any time, on-site or far-distance, concerning all sorts of questions, including practical or theoretical ones.

In satisfaction questionnaires, students appreciate the academic supervision with on average high scores.

### *Analysis*

The panel appreciates and congratulates the programme for the continuing efforts in mentoring, supervising and integrating students in and along the study plan. These efforts are highly appreciated by the students.

*Conclusion:* standard fulfilled.

## **2.6 Area 6: Facilities and premises**

### **Standard 6.01**

The programme has adequate resources to attain its objectives. These resources are available on a long-term basis.

### *Background information*

Since September 2013, CERAH moved to new premises, allowing for adequate class-rooms and infrastructure, for a maximum intake of 35 students. All students are given two student cards, one from the University of Geneva giving them access to the various services of the University (library, assistance) and one from the IHEID that gives them access to the library, the cafeteria, access to computers and printers. The IHEID building is located at 10 minutes walking distance from the CERAH.

As for the financial resources, the MAS Budget 2014-15 shows that tuition fees are not able to cover all expenditures, as should be the rule for all continuing education programme of the University of Geneva. Firstly, funds raised through tuition fees have been low in the first years of implementing the training reform due to relatively low numbers of students, but have steadily increased. Secondly, due to the nature of humanitarian work (unstable and relatively low paid jobs), tuition fees have to remain moderate as compared to other postgraduate courses, for example in law or business. This has been recently acknowledged by the board of directors.

MAS expenditures are then covered, in addition to tuition fees, through scholarships offered by the Canton of Geneva and the Foundation Wilsdorf, and subsidies provided by the University of Geneva, the IHEID and the SDC.

A four-year contract ensures scholarships are regularly provided by the Canton of Geneva. SDC provides a core contribution based on a two-year contract which is regularly renewed. The University of Geneva guarantees continued funding of CERAH. On the other side, the IHEID has recently stated that it will decrease its financial contribution in the coming years.

In 2012-2013, the first year of implementation of the teaching reform, overall expenditures were approximately 1.57 million CHF as compared to 1 million for 2011-2012. Expenditures increased to 1.75 million in 2013-14. The provisional budget for 2014-2015 is about 2 million CHF not including recent developments of research activities financial needs.

### *Analysis*

Taking into consideration the period of validity of this accreditation process (7 years), although the commitment of the Canton of Geneva providing scholarships and the SDC and University of Geneva funding of CERAH is guaranteed, the panel finds that the programme governance authorities, in particular the Board of Directors should reflect on the financial sustainability of the programme in particular considering, as mentioned, that IHEID intends to decrease its contributions. Does the self-financing principle of the continuing education at UniGE allows to some flexibility in the context of programmes that, due to their characteristics, fit particularly well with the institution's purpose and mission? The tuition fees policies may be reconsidered, considering more sponsoring by the employers. However, the panel stresses the contextual situation of the humanitarian business, where most field personnel is hired on fixed period contracts, meaning that only a large minority of the fees-paying students would have an open contract allowing to be partially or entirely covered by their employer. Altogether, the compromise found at CERAH between scholarships and lower fees seems reasonable.

The Graduate Institute announced that the decrease of its contribution to the budget could be counterbalanced through offering a full professor from IHEID dedicated 50% to CERAH for teaching and research. This would strengthen the human resources and research at CERAH as well as the cooperation between the institutions involved.

During the discussion the panel held with the University authorities, the Vice Rector and the Responsible of Continuing Education and other representatives, the support of the University to the programme was evident. There were no concerns raised about the financial sustainability of the programme.

In terms of human resources, the annual renewal of contracts of all teaching and administrative staff seem difficult to fit with the aim of carrying out programmes regularly. The Head of Training's contract is renovated in an annual basis, which does not help the stability of the programme.

The result is that a considerable amount of time each year is spent to the discussion of conditions, dedication and financial implications of each and every contract. According to the information received around 26 people are involved in the MAS (excluding external lecturers) which means that 25 contracts, with the exception of the director one, are negotiated each year.

The panel finds that due to the central role of the Head of Training in the selection of new courses and the overall academic coordination of the MAS and therefore in the appointment of the lecturers, she/he should benefit as far as possible from a longer term contract allowing a more secured planning of the teaching and educational activities.

### *Recommendation for quality improvement*

The panel of experts recommends the renewal of teaching and administrative contracts on longer basis in order to assure greater stability. Priority should be given to the contract of the Head of Training.

*Conclusion:* standards fulfilled.

## 2.7 Area 7: Learning outcomes and professional competences

### Standard 7.01

The learning outcomes of the participants are assessed according to the competences to be developed.

#### *Background information*

At the end of the MAS programme, students are able to:

- In terms of knowledge:
  - Analyse and critically review major humanitarian crises past and present, as well as future challenges, from an interdisciplinary perspective.
- In terms of skills:
  - Use specialised problem-solving skills integrating knowledge on humanitarian crises acquired throughout the course;
  - Develop creative and flexible procedures to solve problems.
- In terms of competencies:
  - Formulate and defend a line of reasoning taking into account ethical issues and humanitarian principles;
  - Respond and take responsibility in challenging and moving complex contexts;
  - Take responsibility by formulating and implementing appropriate, coherent, flexible and creative strategies;
  - Demonstrate leadership and innovation in managing programmes, projects and teams;
  - Enhance self-management in a pressured and changing environment, identifying own strengths and limitations.

Assessments monitor the acquisition of learning outcomes and the quality of the acquisition.

The assessment of the core course MAS/DAS seems coherent with the content of the course. Students witness their overall high appreciation of the coherence between the course content (in line with professional competencies to be developed) and the requirements of the examination.

#### *Analysis*

The panel finds that the assessment of students learning experience through the programme is done having in mind the key competences to be developed. However this is not consistently expressed in all components. The students' feedback show a recognition of the coherence of the assessments with the content of the course. However, the learning outcomes should be systematically expressed as statements of concrete and verifiable signs that witness/certify how the planned competences, including the required levels of knowledge, are being developed or acquired. Course content and the achievement of learning outcomes are dealt with and assessed at different levels.

The panel of experts suggest making sure that the key competences to be developed in the programme (intended learning outcomes of the MAS) are well communicated to all parties involved in teaching, learning and assessment. In particular, the assessment of the final dissertation (thesis) needs to take into consideration the key competences that must have been developed. A supportive assessment guideline for the thesis might contribute assuring transparency and further coherence.

*Conclusion:* standard fulfilled.

## **Standard 7.02**

Participants and alumni confirm the positive impact of the competences acquired on their professional practice and/or career.

### *Background information*

Students' feedback at the end of their studies witnesses that the MAS has improved their practice.

Alumni's feedback results have not been processed yet. They were collected in 2014, for the first time over the last three year period, through a questionnaire sent to the alumni of the 2013-2014 MAS programme to monitor knowledge transfer in working situation and more specifically:

- to analyse the added value of the programme in a working environment;
- to analyse if knowledge, knowhow and analytical skills acquired during the MAS are transformed into professional competencies;
- to critically review the programme;
- to identify possible elements of improvement.

Meantime, feedback on the impact of competencies acquired was requested in the ADEVEN surveys for the CAS and shows an overall high satisfaction level of the students concerning the positive impact of the programme on their professional life.

### *Analysis*

The programme in its actual form has been running for three academic years, what could explain why the feedback from the alumni on the impact of the competences acquired on their professional practice and/or career has not been fully analysed yet. However a year has passed since the data from the first student cohort was collected. This shows that a more pro-active and systematic approach needs to be developed by the actors involved.

*Conclusion:* standard fulfilled.

## **3 Strengths and areas of improvement, recommendations for quality enhancement**

### Strengths

The programme is a highly qualitative academic study offer. Among its many strengths, the panel would like to underline the following:

1. It has strong committed staff on academic level as well as on the management level, and committed students. Both academic staff and students actively contribute to the design, development and quality assurance of the programme in an enabling environment.
2. There is an excellent combination of theory and practice, academic staff is composed by individuals with diverse backgrounds including both professors of different faculties (medicine, law, sciences) and practitioners of main humanitarian organisations (e.g. MSF, ICRC, Worldvision, UNHCR, WHO, UNDP) and SDC.
3. The interdisciplinary character of the programme is a very important asset.
4. The support of some of the most relevant organizations in the field of humanitarian action and the institutions in which the programme is breeding assures the training of professionals



committed to the delivery of principled humanitarian action and the spread of the humanitarian philosophy.

5. The ability and capacity of the programme to allow flexibility and to adapt to student individual needs.
6. A rich students cohort coming from different cultures and very different contexts and disciplines.
7. A very good system in place of student supervision and mentoring.

#### Areas of improvement

1. The programme should define more consistently its degree profile in particular its key competences and learning outcomes to be achieved progressively through the programme.
2. Programme profile should be expressed in terms of professional competences, strictly linked to the humanitarian world. Learning outcomes of the DAS might then be better linked to the ones for the CAS, all fitting into the MAS profile.
3. MAS programme to some extent lacks of own identity and visible profile, often presented as the fragmentation or composition of multiple subunits, with a heavy organisational structure.
4. The MAS has a privileged situation as a joint centre of the Graduate Institute and the UniGE, and enjoys a strong proximity and commitment from ICRC and MSF. However, this great academic and research potential has not been fully exploited yet, as an important source for innovation in the MAS, and for the wider humanitarian community.
5. Instability of the contractual situation of administrative and coordinative staff.
6. Structural issues: mostly supported by IHEID and the University (prestigious links), but there could be more encouragement for research and knowledge capacity from the two institutions, making a stronger link between education and research.
7. Potential of involving more stakeholders, such as the UN?
8. Explore the potential of developing mobility/recognition of credits among other continuing education offers within the university of Geneva, other Swiss offers and/or other programmes outside Switzerland (for example one optional CAS being possible elsewhere).

#### Summary of recommendations for the quality improvement, linked with the standards:

Standard 1.03: The roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders with regard to the MAS could be clarified in order to present a more simple and readable process for anyone interested in the programme.

Standard 1.04: The experts recommend that the MAS learning objectives are expressed in a more consistent way throughout the programme.

Standard 2.01: The experts group recommends differentiating more clearly between the CERAH and the MAS governance and management structure.

Standard 2.02: The panel of experts recommends the establishment of a Programme Committee composed by representatives of all groups to assure a more structured involvement of students and lecturers in the decision-making processes.

Standard 2.03: The panel of experts recommends the development of a systematic system of formal (public) reporting that specifies and integrates the processes of quality assurance, periodic review and continuous enhancement of the programme.

Standard 3.01: The panel of experts recommends better explaining the structure of the MAS core curriculum, and provide consistent, uniform, readable information in the documentation available to the public.

Standard 3.02: The panel of experts recommends that the DAS/MAS teaching and evaluation methods are adapted to be more directly in line with the MAS key competences to be achieved.

Standard 3.04: The panel of experts recommends that, in the programme design, the learning objectives refer explicitly to levels 6-7 of the EUPRHA qualifications framework, based on the European and National Qualification Frameworks.

Standard 6.01: The panel of experts recommends the renewal of teaching and administrative contracts on longer basis in order to assure greater stability. Priority should be given to the contract of the Head of Training.

#### **4 Proposal for accreditation**

The MAS programme in Humanitarian Action has its own identity, based on the reference points of the humanitarian action area, but also on specific elements developed by CERAH (a joint center of UniGE and IHEID, the higher education institutions offering the MAS). These specific elements are determined by CERAH's and UNIGE's mission and the objectives of its continuing education, the involvement of MSF and ICRC and the particular location of the programme being placed in Switzerland, the birth place of humanitarianism and in Geneva where many international organisations have their headquarters.

The panel of experts confirm the academic quality of this highly valuable study offer.

**The experts propose that the MAS in Humanitarian Action is accredited**, taking into consideration the recommendations for quality improvement put forward in this report.

AAQ  
Effingerstrasse 15  
Postfach  
CH-3001 Bern

[www.aaq.ch](http://www.aaq.ch)

