

Practical Approach to International Business Studies in English at Polish Universities

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SUMMARY

The subject of this paper is the presentation of BA and MA International Business (IB) studies in English as a new practice on the Polish educational market. The main objective of this paper is to examine the IB studies programmes in English at the University of Gdansk - (UG) and to present the practical approach of their functioning combined with some recommendations. The results show that the UG has established competitive and attractive programmes, although at lower cost levels compared to universities in other countries where the IB studies have longer tradition and good reputation. It is considered that IB studies cement the international position of UG. This article presents both quantitative and qualitative data.

Keywords: Competition, Business Economics, Undergraduate Teaching, Graduate Teaching

Journal of Economic Literature (JEL) codes: M20, M210, A220, A230

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INTRODUCTION

The University of Gdansk is the largest higher education institutions (HEI) in Northern Poland, in the Pomerania region. With almost 33,000 students in its eleven faculties and 1,700 academic staff members, UG is well known in Poland, which is reflected by its positions in the rankings. The reason why the University of Gdansk is doing so well is that it offers very high quality programmes (Zoladkiewicz, et.al, 2000), which often are less costly than similar programmes in other European Union countries, especially old EU members, and it provides students with good professional preparation for meeting the market demands and needs. Among its offerings there are full-time IB studies and part-time doctoral studies in economics delivered entirely in English. Moreover, BA and MA International Business diplomas are recognised worldwide.

The Faculty of Economics of the University of Gdansk, within the track called - International Economic Relations, has developed Bachelor and Master's Degree Programmes in International Business. These unique degree programmes in International Business commenced on 1 October 2008. The academic year 2014/15 is the seventh consecutive year of IB functioning. These study

programmes were an answer to the development of the market economy and the necessity of globalisation on the one hand, and on internationalisation of the educational offerings at the Faculty of Economics on the other hand. Internationalisation of the academic programme designs and activities were found to be a priority in the modernisation of study programmes and a method for enhancement of students and academic staff exchanges, expansion of double and joint degree granting, and research projects.

The subject of this paper is the presentation of BA and MA IB studies in English provided by the University of Gdansk as a new practice on Polish educational market. The main objective of this paper is to discuss the international business studies in English at the University of Gdansk and to present practical approach of their functioning combined with some recommendations. We will argue in this paper that this new and a special type of studies is an opportunity for Polish universities to integrate into international educational system. This paper examines two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: IB studies in English increased the attractiveness and improved the reputation of the University of Gdansk.

Hypothesis 2: Introduction of the IB studies in English was an essential step for further development of the Faculty of Economics.

Among the methods used in this paper there are quantitative and qualitative studies. To describe the features of utilized data in this article we used descriptive statistics and graphics analysis. Calculations are based on data provided by the Dean's Office at the Faculty of Economics (FE) at UG. We believe that research based on experiences gained from our international business studies will contribute to general debates on management practice of this field of study (IB). It can be also regarded as a case study to better understand and learn from the Faculty of Economics practices elsewhere, by IB scholar communities at other universities.

RATIONALE BEHIND IB STUDIES

Universities in Poland still require changes in a new business environment. On the one hand there are a number of unemployed university graduates, and on the other hand business is still looking for well qualified and skilled graduates. Employers need graduates who are creative and self-motivated and able to think critically. They expect logical and analytical skills and abilities to properly react to market needs (Ostrószka, 2012). This results in ever new challenges. It also means that transformation of the teaching model is a must. Polish universities are trying to tackle and solve this problem by introducing new types of studies and new courses. The University of Gdansk belongs to one of the most innovative HEIs starting these changes in 2008.

Establishment of IB studies in English at the UG was understood to be an important factor in changes in the HEIs system in Poland. There are two important dimensions to explain this phenomenon. It should be considered from the perspective of university and from the perspective of students, our potential "clients" (Jarosinski&Robinson, 2012). So, what were the main objectives and reasons that the FE decided to build IB studies?

From the Faculty of Economics' perspective IB studies were a response to the new economic environment that the FE was to address. This was connected with an attempt to raise the Faculty's position on the educational market not only in Northern Poland but also on wider markets, including international ones. IB studies had a prominent role in contributing to the Faculty's new profile and prestige. It performed as one of major factors in deepening its high quality and brand. It was seen as an indispensable new step to maintain a good reputation and a good selection of students, and was considered as a method to keep a comparative advantage in the fierce competition on the educational market. Newly offered types of studies were also a response to enrolment problems due to the declining number of potential students resulted from the demographic situation. These demographic problems are rather overwhelming, relate to any HEIs in Poland, and any responsible institution needs to tackle this issue. All in all, the IB offer at the FE was intended to attract new, and in our opinion a rising segment

of the educational market. It was considered an additional offering to our already existing study programmes (Orłowska&Zoladkiewicz, 2013). IB is a brand that enhances positioning of the FE as an educational centre of excellence.

And last, but not least, IB studies were also regarded as an important new source of income for the FE, especially in the context of lowering profits received from part-time studies. Their aim was to improve FE finances as tuition fees for this educational programme are fully paid both by Polish and international students. Besides the additional income, these studies were to further internationalise study programmes and bring students from other countries, even remote ones such as in the Asian region (China, India, Azerbaijan, Mongolia, etc.). This is an important factor in the context of the increased cross-cultural dimension of the student community at the FE, multilateralism, equity and diversity.

From the student's perspective IB studies were a new opportunity to gain the international experience and knowledge so much expected in a demanding labour market. The IB programme was considered as a sort of novelty, allowing students to think critically and creatively, to communicate effectively, to understand local and global connections, and to gain awareness of the responsibilities of international community membership. Among other features, students anticipated achieving the necessary skills in the context of globalization and integration, to develop problem-solving competences in an interdisciplinary context, and to better understand different cultures and develop successfully intercultural communication skills.

To conclude, almost from the start of their existence the IB studies programmes responded both to academic needs of internationalisation, the financial needs at the FE and the expectations of enrolled students. The programme was regarded as preparing the students for challenging positions in various areas of international management or research.

PROBLEMATIC ISSUES

Establishment of IB studies brought up a number of potential or actually existing problematic issues. Again, this can be perceived from different perspectives.

From the academic perspective, the development of an entirely new model of studies was accepted by academic staff with enthusiasm. Among the reasons for this were also financial aspects, according to what was promised and actually it was fulfilled. Lecturers and seminars of IB studies are paid using multiplier of 3 as far as payment per teaching hour (45 minutes) is concerned. However, this resulted in the situation that the number of Faculty members that wished to teach was rather high but not necessary always connected with their competences in English and sometimes also with their knowledge of subjects, especially newly introduced ones. So the

introduction of IB studies required the selection of IB teachers, which led to some tensions within the Faculty.

A special concern was the Diploma thesis, which needs the application of a high level of theoretical insight and also empirical practical testing. To this end, supervisors of Diploma theses should be well prepared to make appropriate corrections and assessment and require theoretical and scientific knowledge, practical expertise and a good idiomatic English background.

Thus, the task of the appointed Director of studies was to tackle all those “indirect” aspects of IB studies’ functioning in practice. On the other hand, some teachers were afraid to teach in the IB programme as they were anxious about their English language competences, sometimes with a loss of IB courses with good professors.

Nevertheless, what is beyond any doubt is that IB studies require much more work load from teachers as well as higher qualifications as far as methods of teaching are concerned. Professors are expected to use more active teaching methods, such as case studies, role playing, simulations, buzz groups, etc. or in other words more teaching in the form of “learning by doing” (Schon, 1992).

Teaching IB students may be also discussed in another context, which we termed as the “indirect and psychological” one. This concerns the appearance of internal-faculty competition between teachers from the same faculty. This concept can be drawn from fears of creation of a snobbish and an extravagant group of professors teaching IB students, which could have negative consequences for team work and the integration of the whole Faculty members’ community. It may also be connected with some sociological inferiority feelings as a result of “additional” advantages due to the much higher income level of this group. It may also lead to reservations related to the decreasing number of Polish language studies resulting from some potential students choosing IB studies, which can create problems, especially in the current demographic context. Ultimately, its consequences can take the form of lower incomes due to decreasing teaching hours for some professors.

There is a problematic factor that may also relate to IB education. Sometimes, determined and committed lecturers start to become less involved and take advantage of their good position and success, without regard for what will happen later. This is one of the fears that director of IB studies faces, and it is needed is to fight this approach immediately (as the constantly rising quality of studies is a goal). Yet, this is not only a problem at UG, because Harvard Business School had similar problems while implementing entrepreneurship studies. “Over the years, many Harvard Business School faculty members have proven to be opportunistic teachers” (Cruikshank, 2005).

Another important issue is connected with enhancement of the attractiveness of IB studies for students. There is an incredible engagement of Deans to

bring visiting professors from foreign universities and institutions for sake of good programme and good language skills. It is also an important opportunity to bridge national and international contexts. On the other hand, this creates some disadvantages, especially resulting from a lack of stabilisation. It might be an effect of the fact that visiting professors cannot often make a firm long-standing commitments that their teaching process would be continued in years to come. This does not relate to all external experts but this is what may accompany these types of contractual relations. It is one of major drawbacks that the Director of IB studies tries to overcome, while continuing to invite foreign visiting scholars.

Fears related to IB studies can be also assumed from a student behavioural perspective. IB students may be characterised as a special, more privileged group of students. Sometimes they can behave a bit too arrogantly and are too much demanding as compared to the “regular” Polish language group of students. Certainly, this sort of behaviour is to be eliminated but such a trial can be performed, especially in the context not often well understood “I pay and I demand”² as an argument of a few spoiled students from richer families, etc. This sort of demand may not be compensated by their engagement and diligence in proper studying and activities at the faculty. This is unacceptable in accordance with Polish educational standards and must be excluded but there is always a fear that it may happen. Luckily, it is not a universal situation, and it generally happens rather seldom.

By and large, there is a number of different obstacles that may influence and limit the proper operation of IB studies’. All of these issues profoundly moderate IB studies management practices. Moreover, it is important to be able to make explicit all of the above mentioned assumptions regarding IB studies.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF BA AND MA DEGREES IN IB AT FE

FE offers two international programs designed for Polish and foreign students; the Bachelor and Master degree studies in IB were planned and implemented at the same time, beginning on 1 October 2008.

The Bachelor Degree in IB is a 3-years (6-semester) full-time undergraduate programme taught entirely in English. Applicants should have a secondary education (secondary-school certificate). Students obtain full recognition of studies by receiving 180 ECTS points. The graduates achieve the final degree of BA in International Business after positive review of their Bachelor Thesis and positive assessment of the Bachelor Colloquium (Exam).

The BA degree’s programme structure consists of strong core and major subjects and an interesting range of

²According to Constitution of the Republic of Poland from April 2, 1997, article 70, para. 2: Education in public schools is free. The law may allow for payments of some services provided by

public institutions of higher education. Authors’ comment: this may consider educational offer in English such as IB studies.

electives (Appendix 1). Core modules include macroeconomics, microeconomics, business mathematics and statistics, finance, international economics, and fundamentals of law. Major and specialisation modules include international business transactions, international finance, civil and business law, European integration, international marketing, international business management, competition policy, Reuters academy, negotiations in business, consumer behaviour, global economy sustainable growth, as well as a number of optional courses. It is essential that the BA programme offers students a comprehensive understanding of the complexities in the field of international business and gives its participants access to exceptional knowledge and expertise about strategic and global business management.

A value added feature is that students may participate in a Double Diploma programme with Upper Austria University of Applied Sciences in Steyr and be awarded with two internationally recognised diplomas. This was possible only on due to introducing IB studies in English at the FE as we were able to offer an equivalent programme for Austrian partners. This programme of obtaining two diplomas increases the attractiveness and reputation of the University of Gdansk for potential students. This fact confirms the hypothesis No. 1.

The Master Degree in IB is a 2-years (4-semester) full-time graduate programme taught entirely in English. Applicants should have a Bachelor Degree (or equivalent) preferably in Economics, Management, Finance, Public Policy or Business. Students obtain full recognition of studies by receiving 120 ECTS points. The graduates achieve the final degree of MA in International Business after positive review of their Master Thesis and positive assessment of their performance on the Master Exam (Defence).

The MA degree programme structure also consists of strong core and major subjects and an interesting range of electives (Appendix 2). Core modules include mathematical statistics, econometrics, controlling, advanced international economics, international public law, and ethics. Major and specialisation modules include globalisation and regionalisation in world economics, international finance, transportation and forwarding, intercultural communication in business, sustainable development, corporate finance, human resources management, mergers and acquisitions, portfolio management, market simulation, multilateral trade system and the WTO, and a number of optional courses.

Among the main sources of benefits to BA and MA students are tutorial methods including traditional lectures through academically rigorous courses both by

outstanding Polish and foreign professors and company practitioners, and various interactive teaching methods, such as case study analysis, team work, buzz groups and individual supervision for students' thesis. Consequently, the wide range of teaching methods focuses on providing students not only with knowledge, but - importantly - with competences that enable students to create their own expertise and skills. Students are also encouraged to prepare their Diploma Thesis in accordance with their particular interests.

Furthermore it should be acknowledged that both the BA and MA curricula have undergone substantial evolution from their initial creation and are regularly evaluated. This indicates that international business education needs to be thought out carefully, following the nature and requirements of an international economic environment. Thus, these programmes were updated according to new insights into the reality of business activity. This gives also students the latest theoretical knowledge of the contemporary business environment.

For example, in October 2008 the BA curriculum included in total 48 different courses divided into four groups (and additionally electives): general educational, core, major, major and minor courses for the specialisation. Nowadays the BA programme includes 41 different courses as shorter 15-hour courses were either combined or eliminated (also true forelectives). Changes as regarded the MA curricula were less visible, and concerned mainly replacement of some courses to provide graduates with knowledge that helps build comprehensive managerial competences.

PRACTICE OF IB AT THE FE

Number of students admitted to Bachelor and Master IB studies

International Business studies have been developing since their commencement in 2008 as regards the number of students. As shown in Table 1, in the six years since 2008 the number of students admitted to the Master programme increased from 24 Polish and 3 foreign students (total: 27) to 28 and 19 (total: 47) students respectively, for an increase of 70 per cent. However, this was not stable growth, especially due to a fall in 2009. On the other hand, it can be considered as a generally rising trend.

*Table 1
Number of students admitted to IB MA studies*

Years	2008/2009		2009/2010		2010/2011		2011/2012		2012/2013		2013/2014	
	Polish	Foreign	Polish	Foreign	Polish	Foreign	Polish	Foreign	Polish	Foreign		

											Polish	Foreign
number of students	24	3	16	4	25	6	29	6	25	13	28	19

Source: Own calculation based on data provided by the Dean's Office, Faculty of Economics, University of Gdansk

This growing tendency is even more clearly visible in Figure 1. These rising numbers are evidence of the

success of MA IB studies with special regard to Polish students and the rapidly growing number of foreign students, which confirms Hypothesis No. 1.

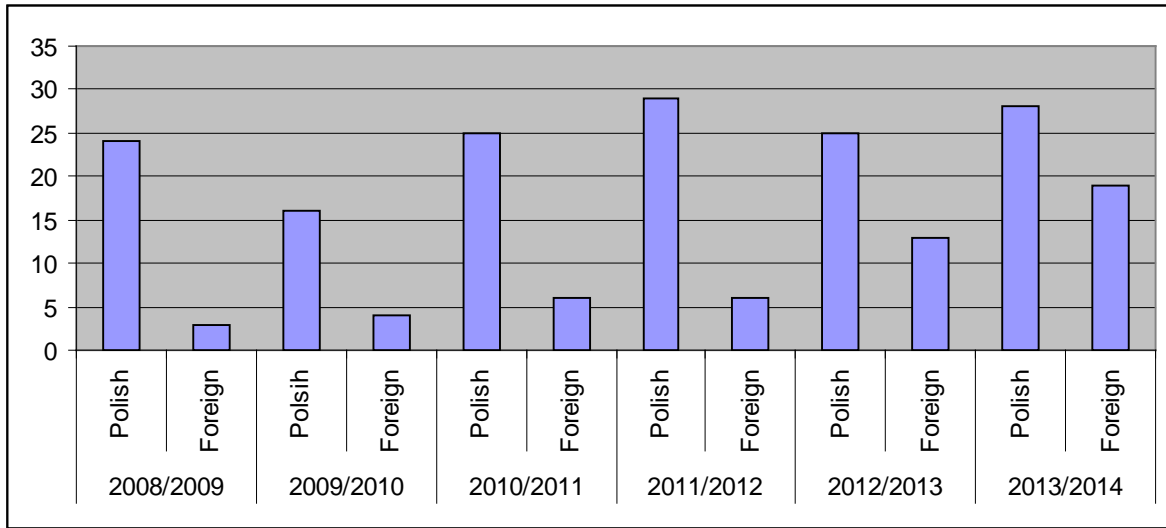


Figure 1. Number of students admitted to MA studies

Source: as Table 1.

The situation with students' admittance to BA studies is presented in Table 2. Enrolment increased from 32 Polish student and 1 foreign student in 2008 (total: 33) to 109 Polish and 7 foreign students in 2013 (total: 116). However, in this respect we can observe some major fluctuations. This relates to an enormous increase in the number of Polish students to 57 students in 2009 and then to 109 students in 2012, although there was a decrease in 2013 to 74 Polish students. Among the major reasons

behind this temporary fall in the number of students was fierce competition, especially from Gdansk University of Technology where the Faculty of Management and Economics commenced full-time Master, and Bachelor programmes in the field of Management in English, with no tuition fee. It also relates to a large increase in the number of foreign students to 18 students in 2009 and to 34 in 2010, but a big fall to 14 students in 2011 and 7 in 2012, but again an increase to 14 in 2013.

Table 2

Number of students admitted to BA studies

Years	2008/2009		2009/2010		2010/2011		2011/2012		2012/2013		2013/2014	
	Polish	Foreign	Polish	Foreign	Polish	Foreign	Polish	Foreign	Polish	Foreign	Polish	Foreign
Number of students	32	1	57	18	61	34	90	14	109	7	74	14

Source: as Table 1.

These fluctuations can be explained by the rising popularity of IB studies among Polish students on the one

hand, and by some mistakes in the recruitment process on the University level leading to an unfortunate decrease in the arrivals of Chinese students on the other hand.

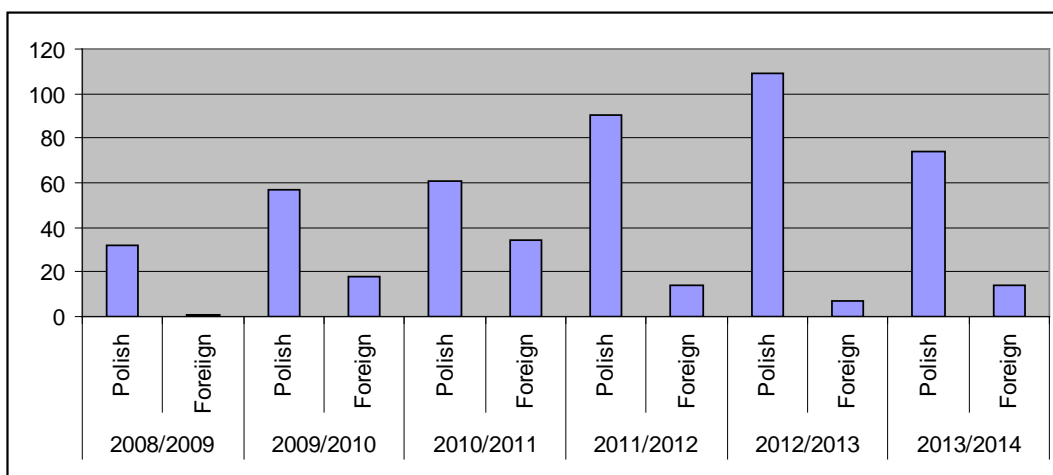


Figure 2. Number of students admitted to BA studies

Source: as Table 1.

Nationality of foreign students admitted to IB studies in years 2008-2013

The total number of MA IB students admitted in the years 2009-2013 was 198, of which foreigners constituted

51 students, or 25.8 per cent (Figure 3). Among foreign MA students dominated Chinese (20), with students also from, Turkey (4) and Azerbaijan (3), Germany (3), Ukraine (3), India (3) and Russia (3).

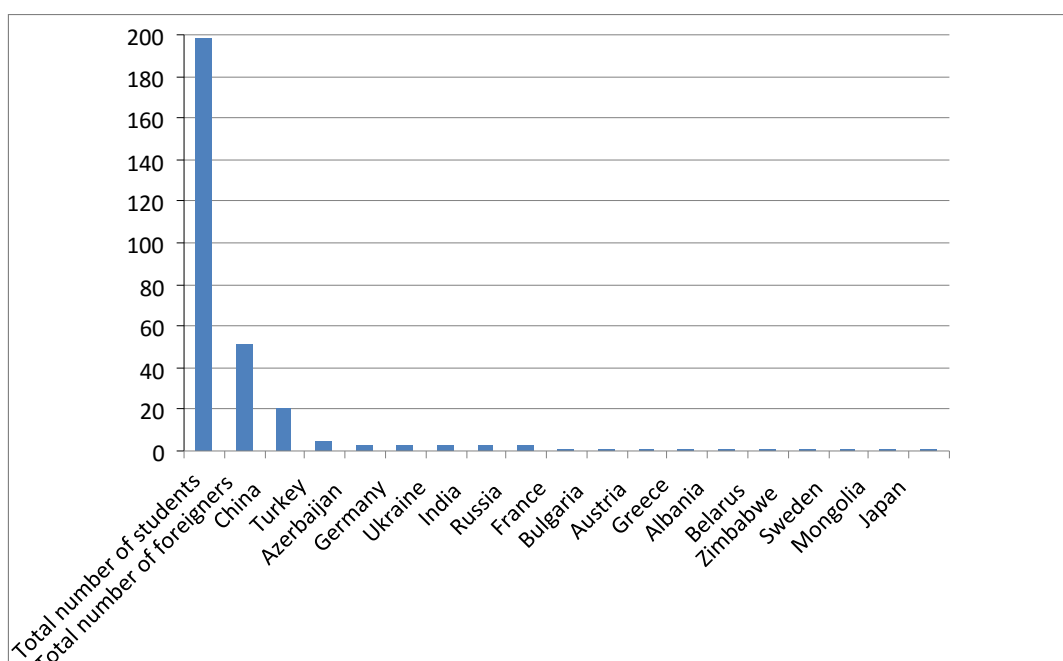


Figure 3. Nationality of foreign students admitted to MA studies in years 2008-2013

Source: as Table 1.

The total number of IB BA students admitted in the years 2008-2013 was 511, of which 88 were foreign, accounting for 17.2 per cent (Figure 4). Chinese students were the largest group among foreign BA students, and

consisted of 64 students (representing nearly 12.5 per cent of the total admitted), there were also 7 Russian students, and 3 students from the USA.

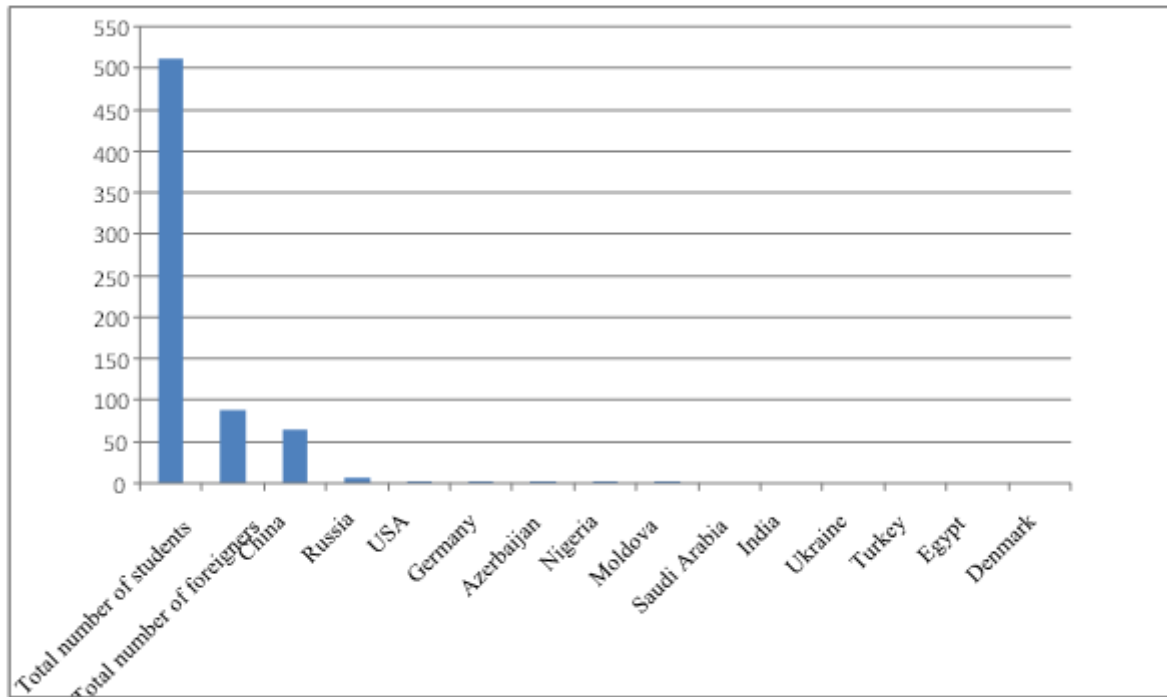


Figure 4. Nationality of foreign students admitted to BA studies in years 2008-2013

Source: as Table 1.

Percentage of BA and MA theses topics written by students

In the five years since 2010, the total number of Master's Theses defended and students who completed their International Business studies consists of 111 graduates³. They represented 56.1 per cent of total admitted students. Unfortunately, this result can be considered as unsatisfactory. Students' involvement in full-time job activities can be an explanation as an important reason of those poor results. This result will

achieve a higher percentage at the end of academic year on September 30, 2014⁴.

Students are encouraged to prepare their Diploma Thesis in accordance with their particular interests. Among the fields of economics that students find most interesting and covered most often in MA thesis are: international economic relations (IER) - 33.7 per cent, marketing – 21.7 per cent, finance – 16.3 per cent and management 7.7 per cent of the total. A more detailed breakdown of themes of thesis is presented in Figure 5.

³In 2014, data covered only students graduated till 30.06.2014.

⁴In accordance with Polish university regulations, students have rights to defend their Master and Bachelor Thesis within a period

of three months after the end of the academic year on September 30, 2014 (until December 31).

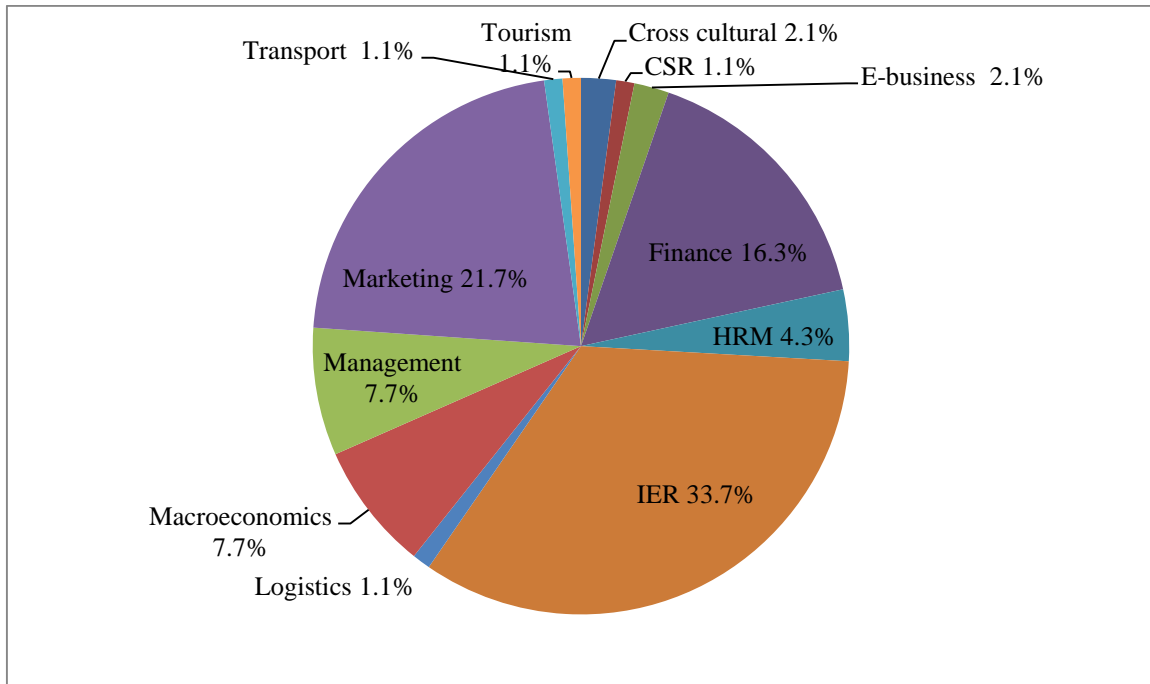


Figure 5. MA thesis topics, 2010-2014*
*till 30.06.2014

Source: as Table 1.

As regards BA studies, in the four years since 2011, the total number of Bachelor Theses defended and students who completed their International Business BA studies consisted of 201 graduates⁵. They represent only 39.3 per cent of total admitted students. This result can be considered as highly unsatisfactory, and can be explained by the number of drop outs among admitted students and difficulties experienced with studying core subjects, such as macroeconomics, microeconomics, statistics, etc. However, there are a number of students who repeat some

semesters and continue their studies. Again, this result will be improved by December 31, 2014.

Among the most popular fields of economics to be chosen by BA students are, similarly to the MA theses: international economic relations (IER) - 31 per cent, marketing - 23.5 per cent, finance - 14.6 per cent and management - 10.6 per cent. A more detailed breakdown of themes of BA theses is presented in Figure 6.

⁵In 2014, data covered only students graduated till 30.06.2014.

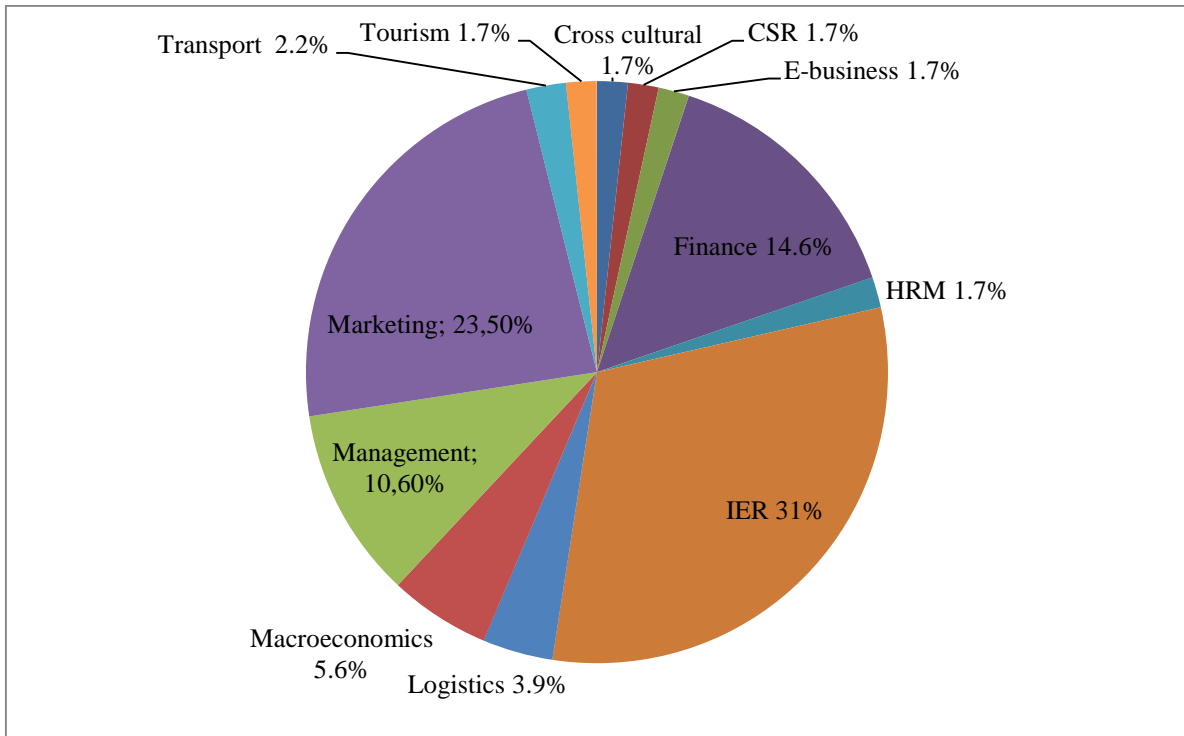


Figure 6. BA thesis topics, 2011-2014*
*till 30.06.2014
Source: as Table 1.

Average grades during the study period of MA and BA students graduated in years 2010-2014

MA students can be considered as rather diligent and good students, although it varies dramatically in different grade levels, as shown in Table 3 and Figure 7.

UG uses a numeric system of grades from 2 to 5. Most grades include also 0.5 point increments. The grades are as follow: 2.0 is failing grade (unsatisfactory), 3.0 is the lowest passing grade (satisfactory), 3.5 (satisfactory plus), 4.0 (good), 4.5 (good plus) and 5.0 is the highest grade (very good).

Table 3.
Average grades of Master students graduating in years 2010-2014

Average of study period	Total	3.0-3.99	4.0-5.0	3.0-3.5	3.51-3.99	4.0-4.5	4.51-5.0
Number graduated	92	25	67	3	22	45	22
Percentage	100	27.2	72.8	3.3	23.9	48.9	23.9

Source: as Table 1.

Analysing the data provided in Table 3 we can notice that over 70 per cent of MA students achieved an average grade during their study period above 4, with almost 24 per cent above 4.5. This can be assessed as a good result,

especially in the context that these studies are not easy and, what makes it even more difficult, students study and pass exams in a foreign language.

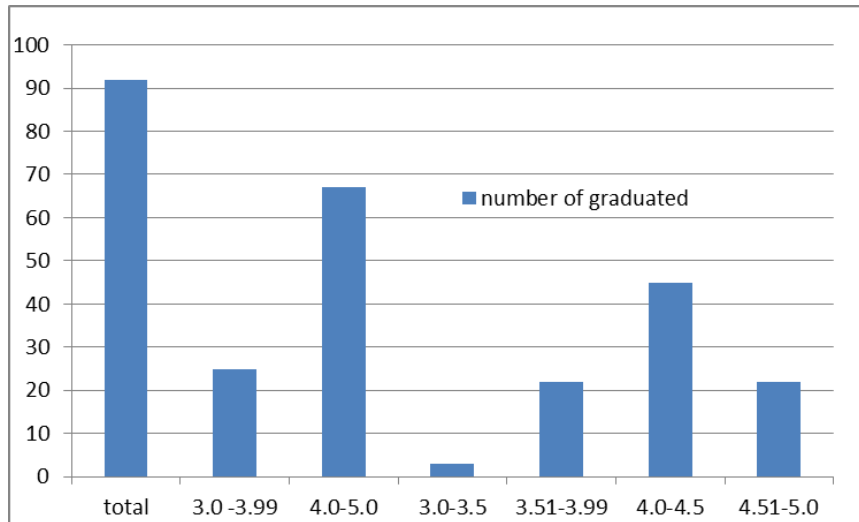


Figure 7. Average grades of MA students graduating in 2010-2014*
*till 30.06.2014

Source: as Table 1.

From the perspective of BA studies average grades of students during whole period of their studies were less favourable. As the data presented in Table 4 and Figure 8

show, a substantial proportion of these grades are below 4, representing 55.6 per cent of BA students.

Table 4.
Average grades of BA students graduating in 2011-2014

Average grades of study period	total	3.0 -3,99	4.0-5.0	3.0-3,5	3.51-3.99	4.0-4.5	4.51-4.91
Number graduated	178	99	79	31	68	63	16
Percentage	100	55.6	44.4	17.4	38.2	35.4	9

Source: as Table 1.

BA students who achieved an average grade during study period above 4 were less than 45 per cent, which can be regarded as rather good result. However, students with

the best grades rising above 4.5, consisted of only 9 per cent.

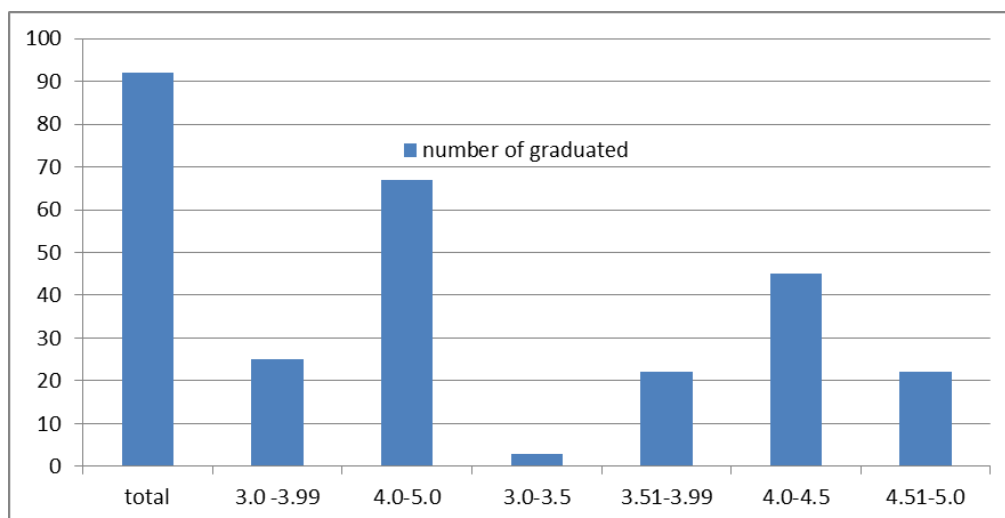


Figure 8. Average grades of BA students graduating in 2011-2014*
*till 30.06.2014

Source: as Table 1.

EVALUATION OF IB STUDIES AT THE UG

According to its mission: “IB programme addresses different issues of globalization, regionalization and intercultural approaches to international business. It provides students for using their competencies in the qualitative and quantitative research methods. Its major objective is to help students supplement or extend their professional and academic knowledge in the field of international business. International Business studies are one of a kind and give their participants access to exceptional knowledge and expertise about strategic and global business management, marketing, financial issues as well as specific insights into business system. Thus, these programmes offer students comprehensive understanding of the complexities in the field of international business” (website of Faculty of Economics, UG).

Advantages of IB studies in English can be formulated as summarized as follows:

- providing students with ‘global skills’ required in the labour market which enhances their competences and possibilities to find a good job (among others IB graduates are often employed by Reuters Thompson, Sony Entertainment, Bayer Centre, Misys, OSTC, Gdynia and Gdansk ports, Deep Container Terminal (DCT), etc.);
- students are offered jobs or internships even during study period (which sometimes collides with normal studying);
- acquiring cross-cultural communication knowledge and sensitivity;
- acceptance of BA graduates as students in any well recognised university all over the world due to recognition of IB diplomas in any country (for some graduates it is a spring-board for further education in other countries or for a better position in professional career);
- developing a strong group of alumni who are ambassadors of these studies;
- a growing number of Polish and foreign students studying IB, which has a significant financial aspect for FE and UG;
- building and/or strengthening collaboration with other HEIs as regards joint or double degree programmes.

These aspects result in a high reputation and development of studies and expansion of their popularity. IB studies improve the international position of the Faculty of Economics at UG. We believe that many talented Polish and international students will choose to complete their degree at our Faculty. And we can agree with a statement in Jarosinski and Robinson’s book that “in today’s environment, no business college or school can afford

NOT to internationalize its programmes, faculty, research and student population” (Jarosinski&Robinson, 2012).

As far as disadvantages are concerned, the number of foreign students that participate in IB study programmes, can be perceived as not completely satisfactory. FE is trying to promote these studies to attract more students from different countries. Possibly the number of drop outs could have also been smaller.

To summarise some of the major themes IB studies are definitely an important new direction in the educational offer of Polish universities and should keep up the high and sustained rates of growth.

One of the important elements of assessing the impact of IB studies on the reputation of UG is its position in the ranking of HEIs in Poland. The role of comparable HEIs ranking is becoming increasingly influential in the context of higher education competitiveness. In Poland, the ranking recognised as the most reliable is the ranking done by Perspektywy.

Perspektywy University Ranking (Poland) is the first national university ranking in the World to pass the rigorous audit and to receive the „IREG Approved” awarded by the IREG Observatory on Academic Ranking and Excellence. In the Perspektywy University Rankings - as many as 33 criteria are used, grouped into six categories: prestige - with the weight of 25%, academic strength (potential) – (15%), academic effectiveness (30%), studying environment (10%), internationalization (15%), and innovation (5%) .

Prestige is covered by three criteria (Perspektywy, 2014):

1. Employer reputation – a number of indications of a certain HEI in a questionnaire survey conducted by the Centre for Marketing Research INDICATOR on the instruction of “Perspektywy” Education Foundation at a representative group of employers. The criterion takes into consideration the survey results obtained within the previous three years. The survey was conducted in 2014 by CATI method at a group of 1800 companies having the headquarters in Poland. The survey had a national outreach. During the previous three years, 3300 entities were examined. The survey included business entities from all the sectors of Polish Enterprise Classification as well as all the voivodeships (11%).
2. Academic reputation (teaching) – a number of indications of a certain HEI in a questionnaire survey conducted among university academic staff (full professors as well as doctors with habilitation, who obtained their current academic title within the previous three years). Altogether, within the previous three years 675 freshly nominated full professors and 1077 freshly nominated doctors with habilitation were examined. The survey does not take into account the votes given in favour of the HEIs being the core place of employment for the respondent. The survey was conducted via the Internet by CAWI

method. The survey was carried out by the “Perspektywy” Education Foundation (11%).

3. International recognition – measured by a HEI’s position in international rankings (2%).

The analyses of changing results of this indicator seems to be most important to examine Hypothesis No. 1. Analysing the UG ranking positions since 2008, we observe a clear improvement in prestige in the last 4 years (Table 5).

Table 5
Ranking position of the UG in years 2008-2014

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Rank	20	17	20	18	15	14	15
Prestige	11.6	17.0	15.9	15.6	32.5	38.1	41.2
		2		2	1	7	8

Source: own elaboration based on www.ranking.perspektywy.org.

We argue that IB studies at the FE were among the criteria that led to the Faculty being awarded with positive assessment by the Polish Accreditation Committee (PKA) in June 2014. Positive assessment confirms that given programme of the FE meets all requirements set by PKA. IB studies were assessed (together with a few other criteria) with a very good grade and were assumed to be an important step in the direction of internationalization and development of the Faculty.

Partnership agreements with foreign universities result from the fact that IB studies are on the Faculty educational offer. Such agreements were, recently signed by the FE with the University of Kobe (Japan), Kyungpook National University in Daegu (Republic of Korea), SolBridge International School of Business at Woosong University in Daejeon (Republic of Korea), Caucasus International University in Tbilisi (Georgia) and a number of new partnership agreements are under negotiations with Chinese universities (in Beijing, Canton, Shanghai). Additionally, collaboration with business, both global and local companies, and consulting firms and other institutions, e.g. ACCA, are intensified due to the skills that IB students are expected to acquire.

These facts (the high evaluation level of PKA and new partnerships agreements with universities and business entities) confirm Hypothesis No. 2.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

As IB teachers, scholars and administrators we would like to make a few suggestions:

- Everything can be improved;
- Permanent evaluation of programmes and trends in the world is a must;
- An aggressive advertisement campaign improves enrolment;
- Lower price of studies is not always an incentive for potential students (not even for middle income students);
- Quality and ranking position as well as an international accreditation of studies often play an important role in the assessment of study programmes;
- Co-operation with international partner universities adds value;
- High qualifications of teachers (professors) of international business are indispensable element of IB studies;
- Engagement of Faculty staff members and students is a crucial element;
- Revision and changes in approach to methods of teaching are needed (usage of active methods, “learning by doing” situation).

In this paper we fully confirmed our two hypotheses. The implementation of International Business studies contributes to the improved reputation of the Faculty of Economics and the University of Gdansk (Hypothesis 1) and enables further development of the Faculty, which is confirmed by the high accreditation rating from by PKA (Hypothesis 2).

Additionally, we would argue that IB studies and their participants on both sides are acting as a bridge between theory and practice.

Such BA and MA programmes provide international business knowledge and skills that allows graduates to be better equipped to identify, model and control business processes in today's environment.

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Appendix 1

Bachelor in International Business curricula for academic year of 2013/2014

No.	Course title	Exam or assessment after semester	Total hours	Total ECTS
	GENERAL EDUCATIONAL COURSES			
1	Foreign Language I	2	120	8
2	Foreign Language II	4	120	8
3	Physical Fitness Training (Sports)	assessment	60	2
4	Philosophy	assessment	30	3
5	Human Geography	2	30	3
6	Information Technologies	1	30	2
Total General			390	26
A.	CORE COURSES			
7	Microeconomics	2	60	9
8	Macroeconomics	1	60	9
9	Mathematics Applications in Economics and Management	1	45	8
10	Descriptive Statistics	assessment	30	3
11	Knowledge Management	assessment	30	3
12	Financial Analysis	assessment	30	3
13	Fundamentals of Law	assessment	30	3
14	Finance	2	45	5
15	Accounting	2	45	6
16	International Economic Relations I	3	60	8
Total Group A			435	57
B.	MAJOR COURSES			
17	International Settlements	5	45	4
18	International Business Transactions	4	60	7
19	Civil and Business Law in International Trade	3	30	3
20	Fundamentals of European Integration	4	60	7
21	International Marketing	3	60	8

22	International Business Management	5	30	2
23	Economic policy of the OECD Member Countries	assessment	30	3
24	European competition policy	assessment.	30	2
25	Thomson Reuters Academy	assessment	15	2
Total Group B			360	38
Total General +A+B			1185	121
C.	MAJOR AND MINOR COURSES FOR THE SPECIALIZATION			
26	BA Seminar	assessment	60	10
27	Business Correspondence	assessment	30	2
28	International Competitiveness and Strategic Alliances	5	30	2
29	Marketing Research Methods	4	30	3
30	Market Simulation	assessment	30	2
31	Entrepreneurship	6	30	2
32	Banking	4	30	2
33	Economy of the Central and Eastern European Countries	5	30	2
34	Psychology of Economics	assessment	30	1
35	Consumer Behaviour	assessment	30	2
36	Project Management-in Search of Excellence	assessment	30	2
37	Contemporary Problems of Transport and Logistics	5	30	2
38	Sustainable Development – Theory and Practice	assessment	30	2
39	Tourism and Hospitality Management	assessment	30	2
40	Public Speaking and Business Negotiations	assessment	30	2
41	Diplomatic Protocol	assessment	15	1
42	Electives	assessment	120	20
Total Group C			615	59
Total IB			1800	180
Total of Exams			22	

Source: http://ekonom.ug.edu.pl/web/studenci/index.html?lang=pl&ao=i_stopien_, (20.06.2014).

Appendix 2

Masters in International Business curricula for academic year of 2013/2014

No.	Course title	Exam after semester or assessment	Total hours	Total ECTS
	GENERAL EDUCATIONAL COURSES			
1	Business Foreign Language	2	60	4
2	Ethics	assessment	30	3

TOTAL			90	7
A.	CORE COURSES			
3	Mathematical Statistics	1	30	5
4	Econometrics	2	30	7
5	International Economic Relations II	1	30	5
6	International Public Law	assessment	30	4
TOTAL Group A			120	21
B.	MAJOR COURSES			
7	Globalization and Regionalization in the World Economy	3	30	4
8	International Finance	3	45	7
9	Transportation and International Logistics	1	45	7
10	Intercultural Communication in Business	assessment	30	3
TOTAL Group B			150	20
TOTAL General + A+B			360	48
C.	MAJOR AND MINOR COURSES FOR THE SPECILAIZATION			
11	Portfolio Management	2	30	4
12	Practical Path to Sustainable Development	assessment	15	2
13	The Multilateral Trade System and the WTO	assessment	30	2
14	Marketing in the Financial Sector	1	30	5
15	Mergers and Acquisitions	assessment	15	1
16	Corporate Finance	2	30	4
17	International Human Resources Management	4	30	2
18	Market Simulation II	assessment	15	1
19	Controlling in the international economic processes	assessment	15	1
20	MA Seminar	assessment	120	30
21	Electives	assessment	120	20
TOTAL Group C			450	72
TOTAL IB			810	120
Total of Exams			11	

Source: http://ekonom.ug.edu.pl/web/studenci/index.html?lang=pl&ao=ii_stopien_, (20.06.2014).