



**SEP evaluation 2016-2021**  
**Institute of Security and Global Affairs**  
**Leiden University**

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# 1. Foreword by the committee chair

It is with great pleasure that I submit this evaluation report of the Institute of Security and Global Affairs (ISGA) at Leiden University. This report has been composed on the basis of the deliberations of a review committee of external peers following the committee's examination of documentation provided to it by ISGA and a site visit by the committee on 6 and 7 December 2022, when the committee had the opportunity to meet with senior administrators, academic staff and PhD students. The report conforms to the criteria for assessment set out in the national Strategy Evaluation Protocol (SEP) used to assess the quality of research at Dutch universities.

Since its inception in 2016, ISGA has established itself as a leading centre of research and teaching in the fields of security and global affairs. It has undergone rapid growth in that time, tripling its research staff, quadrupling its peer-reviewed journal articles and increasing markedly the magnitude, scope and diversity of its research funding. In this same period ISGA has made significant contributions to scientific knowledge, national and international policy and public debate.

ISGA's aims are clear and sound, in its own words: 'to advance multidisciplinary (and eventually interdisciplinary) research, education and societal impact in the broad fields of security and global affairs'. However, ISGA stands at a strategic crossroads. As it continues to develop it will need to determine its research focus, and formulate a concrete strategy based on this choice that allows it to maintain its coherence. As it broadens its scope, it will need to balance its 'Hague mission' of engagement with national stakeholders with a more global orientation. And as it continues to attract high-calibre researchers, it will need to manage work-load pressures to be able to compete effectively in a global marketplace. It is our hope that the observations and recommendations contained in this report will provide useful input to ISGA as it reflects on these and other challenges and charts its path forward.

On behalf of the review committee, I would like to thank the many faculty and staff for their efforts to facilitate the work of the committee. I would also like to thank Fiona Schouten for her expert stewardship of this process.

Richard Caplan  
Chair

## 2. Procedure

### 2.1 Scope of the review

Leiden University asked a review committee of external peers to perform a review of the research conducted at the Institute of Security and Global Affairs (ISGA) over the period 2016-2021.

In accordance with the Strategy Evaluation Protocol 2021-2027 (SEP) for research reviews in the Netherlands, the committee was requested to carry out the assessment according to a number of guidelines. The assessment was to include a backward-looking and a forward-looking component. The committee was asked to judge the performance of the unit on the main assessment criteria specified in the SEP and to offer its written conclusions as well as recommendations based on considerations and arguments. The main assessment criteria are:

- Research Quality;
- Societal Relevance;
- Viability of the Unit.

During the evaluation of these criteria, the committee was asked to incorporate four specific aspects relating to how the unit organises and actually performs its research, its composition in terms of leadership and personnel, and how the unit is run on a daily basis. These aspects are:

- Open Science;
- PhD Policy and Training;
- Academic Culture;
- Human Resources Policy.

For more information on the criteria and categories of the Strategy Evaluation Protocol 2021-2027, see Appendix 1.

### 2.2 Composition of the committee

The composition of the committee was as follows:

- Prof Richard Caplan, Professor of International Relations, University of Oxford (chair)
- Prof Nina Graeger, Professor in International Relations, University of Copenhagen
- Dr Mariëlle Wijermars, CORE Fellow, Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies, University of Helsinki
- Elke Boers, PhD candidate at the University of Groningen / Dutch Institute of Military History (PhD member)

The committee was supported by dr Fiona Schouten, who acted as secretary on behalf of Academion.

## 2.3 Independence

The members of the committee signed a statement of independence to guarantee an unbiased and independent assessment of the quality of the research performed by Leiden University. Personal or professional relationships between committee members and the research unit under review were reported and discussed at the start of the site visit amongst the committee members. The committee concluded that no specific risk in terms of bias or undue influence existed and that all members were sufficiently independent.

## 2.4 Data provided to the committee

The committee received the self-evaluation report from the units under review, including all the information required by the SEP.

The committee also received the following documents:

- The Terms of Reference;
- The SEP 2021-2027;
- Draft Background Report: Towards an ISGA Multidisciplinary Doctoral Training Programme.

## 2.5 Procedures followed by the committee

The committee proceeded according to the SEP 2021-2027. Prior to the first meeting, all committee members independently formulated a preliminary evaluation of the unit under review based on the written information that was provided before the site visit.

In its first meeting, on 6 December, the committee was briefed by Academion about research reviews according to the SEP 2021-2027. It discussed the preliminary evaluations and identified questions to be raised during the site visit. It agreed upon procedural matters and aspects of the review. The site visit took place on 6-7 December 2022 (see the schedule in Appendix 2). After the interviews the committee discussed its findings and comments in order to allow the chair to present the preliminary findings and to provide the secretary with argumentation to draft a first version of the review report. The final version is based on both the documentation provided by ISGA and the information gathered during the interviews with management and representatives of the research unit during the site visit.

The draft report by the committee and secretary was presented to ISGA for factual corrections and comments. In close consultation with the chair and other committee members, the comments received were reviewed to draft the final report. The final report was presented to the Board of Leiden University and to the management of the research unit.

## 3. Research review of ISGA

### 3.1 Introduction

The Institute of Security and Global Affairs (ISGA) of Leiden University was created in 2016 in order to advance multidisciplinary research, education and policy impact in the fields of security and global affairs. The institute conceives of security and global affairs in broad terms, drawing on the interdisciplinary fields of criminology, economics, history, law, philosophy, political science & international relations, psychology, public administration, as well as sociology and safety science. ISGA is part of the Faculty of Governance and Global Affairs (FGGA) and situated in The Hague, facilitating the university's strategic cooperation and research-policy nexus with ministries, major international organisations, think tanks, and NGOs.

Over the past years, ISGA has undergone rapid growth, tripling its research staff during the past six years from 10.24 FTE in 2016 to 31.08 FTE in 2021. This growth is connected to the popularity of ISGA's successful bachelor's and master's programmes, as well as to an increase of research grant income. ISGA currently hosts seven research groups: Diplomacy & Global Affairs; Cybersecurity Governance; Governance of Crises; Intelligence & Security; Physical Violence & Public Order; Terrorism & Political Violence; and War, Peace & Justice.

### 3.2 Mission and Strategy

#### *Mission and strategy*

ISGA strives to advance multidisciplinary (and eventually interdisciplinary) research, education and societal impact in the broad fields of security and global affairs. ISGA's ambition is to continue on the path of becoming one of the leading institutes in this field. ISGA seeks to impact scholarly and policy-oriented debates at the national and European levels and to become an internationally recognised go-to place for studying and researching the most pressing transboundary issues of security and global affairs.

Over the past six years (2016-2021), ISGA's strategic mission has been first to broaden and deepen academic understanding of modern-day security challenges through excellent international, interdisciplinary research; second, to translate this research into high-level teaching that pushes beyond the boundaries of existing programmes in the field of security and safety; and third, to provide evidence-based input for policy makers in the Netherlands and outside.

For 2022-2027, on the basis of recommendations formulated by a midterm review committee in 2019, ISGA developed a new strategy. This strategy aims at the institute's further development in the realms of research, education, and valorisation as well as in PhD policies and WIDE (well-being, inclusion, diversity and equal access to opportunity). ISGA has formulated specific focus points and targets for each of these realms, such as strengthening and reinforcing grant applications, acquiring funding opportunities for full-time PhD students and early career staff, and promoting diversity in hiring practices.

The committee studied ISGA's profile, strategy and aims and discussed them with the management and staff of the institute. It finds the shorter and longer term aims to be clear and coherent in themselves, matching the institute's profile and mission. At the same time, the committee points out that the new strategy consists of a large number of aims and areas that are broadly defined and not linked to measurable goals. While the

committee considers ‘metrification’ as an end in itself undesirable, the formulation of more concrete objectives may facilitate keeping track of the progress made for all aims.

The committee considers this broad strategy a result of the institute’s current expansion, both in staff numbers and in research themes and projects. ISGA’s rapid growth demands development and formalisation in many areas, from HR and hiring policies to the organisation of research and research groups (these matters will be further discussed under ‘Viability’). Hence, the strategy covers many areas and seems to be directed at consolidating what ISGA has achieved, and ensuring that growth takes place in a controlled manner.

The committee learnt during the site visit that ISGA management is considering what the end point of the institute’s growth should be. The institute wants to include a broad range of research topics on security and global affairs. The committee notes that although current ISGA research spans much of this spectrum, certain areas are not present in ISGA, such as nuclear or climate security studies. According to the committee, the question now is whether to fill such ‘gaps’ and become more comprehensive, either by expanding further or by looking for collaborations with other institutions; or to create a more focused and less broad profile in line with ISGA’s current strengths.

ISGA management is considering developing a joint research programme that overarches its seven research groups. Such a research programme could then be used as a starting point from which to determine which research areas to prioritise. The committee appreciates this as an option to be considered, but also notes that the seven research groups, while collaborating closely and frequently, seem to be doing well in the current setup, where they operate independently and in relative autonomy. Creating more coherence might mean giving up some of this autonomy. At the same time, ISGA should be careful not to become too divergent and fragmented, retaining its clearly defined profile.

The committee advises ISGA to move from organic growth towards a more purposeful and formalised shaping of the institute. This requires conscious strategic decisions. In order to determine what focus or breadth to aim for ISGA should clarify its position through mapping comparable or competing institutes on a national and international level and determining its relation towards them. In this way, it could establish its own strengths and specialties. ISGA can then make an informed and well-substantiated decision on its mission and aims, and formulate a more focused, concrete strategy.

### 3.3 Research Quality

ISGA’s research strategy is to build a supportive and inspiring research environment where researchers can flourish and develop into leading scholars within a number of core areas in the fields of security and global affairs. In order to do so, the Institute has agreed on a publication strategy that combines ISGA’s strength in producing policy-oriented publications with an enhanced focus on international peer-reviewed publications and core journals. In line with the general research strategy, ISGA seeks to build a strong academic culture and facilitate exchanges within and across research groups and with external colleagues, taking advantage of its multidisciplinary and joint academic culture. A particular emphasis – also in response to the midterm review – has been placed upon encouraging colleagues to publish more of their research in international peer-reviewed journals, striking a balance between these and more policy-oriented publications.

In line with its recent growth, ISGA output has increased, with a total of 139 publications in 2021 versus 76 in 2016. This output includes peer-reviewed articles, books, book chapters, PhD theses, policy reports, and



other publications. The shifting balance from policy-oriented third-stream research that is part of ISGA's research strategy is reflected in a larger number of peer-reviewed articles: 2021 saw a clear increase with 84 peer-reviewed articles (60,4% of its total publications, as opposed to 39,3% in 2020). An independent bibliometric analysis of ISGA publications was performed by Leiden University's Centre for Science and Technology Studies (CWTS) in order to determine their scientific impact. It finds that ISGA output has clear impact: its articles tend to be cited more than average.

The midterm review committee advised to balance contract research funding (e.g. from ministries) better with academic research body funding, both at national and EU levels, matching the institute's aim to become one of the leading institutes in the field. Over 2020 and 2021, ISGA managed to increase its grant and project funding success, with NWO, Dutch National Research Agenda (NWA), ERC and various EU grants. Over the period under evaluation, ISGA researchers succeeded in gaining a total of 75 grants and projects, varying from contract research to individual national and international grants. Following the midterm review, ISGA adjusted its strategy to improve the scope and diversity of grants. The institute established a Research Support Team to help researchers in grant and project applications, and made the planning for grant applications part of the HR cycle of performance review.

The committee is impressed with the development ISGA has shown with regard to research quality, achieving high impact and quality, as well as external funding. ISGA staff is becoming more international (see Societal Relevance and Viability), which has led to a move away from local and national contract funding and from policy-oriented research. The stronger focus on grant acquisition and the addition of the Research Support Team appear already to be paying off. The committee was pleased to learn that this team's members proactively approach researchers whom they think could be interested in particular opportunities, and are in the process of building a database with ISGA members' expertise and preferences in order to be even more successful here.

In order to continue this upward trend, and in line with the funding ambitions of ISGA, the committee advises the institute to aim for even greater impact in its output and grant success. It can do so by formulating a grant strategy which distinguishes between the profiles of its researchers and their career tracks, recognising (and rewarding) different strengths. Given that ISGA research is closely connected to its educational programmes, this could also take the form of small-scale, but prestigious teaching-related grants such as Jean Monnet grants. Furthermore, a grant strategy should pay attention to diversification and specify if some grants would be more attractive (regarding overhead income, career building etc.), than others.

Researchers whose research is likely to be accepted for publication in highly-ranked academic outlets should be encouraged to submit to these outlets, rather than seeking to publish large numbers of book chapters or similar publications. Academic high-impact publications help such individual researchers as well as their research groups to position themselves for obtaining large grants and enhancing their standing nationally and internationally. Researchers with a different profile, whose work does not lend itself to publication in highly-ranked outputs (for instance due to interdisciplinarity, specialist orientation, or a stronger policy focus), should be actively steered towards the journals or publications that generate the maximum exposure for them.

The Research Support Team should continue to play an active role in finding the best outlets and opportunities for each type of researcher. By strategically boosting the careers, success, and visibility of its individual researchers through a focused and more bespoke approach, ISGA as a whole is likely to do better in obtaining national and international grants and projects.

### 3.4 Societal Relevance

#### *Societal impact*

The societal relevance of ISGA is evident in its engagement with civil society and the general public. Due to the topical nature of many of ISGA's research themes, its researchers appear in the media frequently, are invited to hold public lectures, participate in events geared towards a general public, and publish blogs, podcasts, MOOCs, and knowledge videos online. A clear example of such societal outreach has been the organisation of guest lectures surrounding the 2017 public debate on the new Netherlands Intelligence and Security Services Act (WIV or 'sleepwet') as well as a public forum. Through its activities, the Intelligence and Security group of ISGA promoted public debate on this law.

ISGA's research also has strong connections with policy-makers. Its location in The Hague along with its focus on security and governance have traditionally made ISGA a natural partner for the Dutch ministries and related institutions, such as NGOs and think tanks. ISGA was the co-creator of the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT) think tank in The Hague, collaborating with the Netherlands Institute for International Relations Clingendael and Amsterdam University's Asser Institute. The institute also provides training to security and global affairs professionals, including the Executive MA programme in Cyber Security. ISGA members frequently serve as committee members on key government advisory boards, such as the Advisory Council on International Affairs and the Adviesraad Internationale Vraagstukken (AIV). In addition, ISGA collaborates with stakeholders such as the Netherlands Defence Academy, the Dutch National Police, the NATO Center of Excellence on Military Cooperation, and the Netherlands Institute for Public Safety. Internationally, ISGA researchers provide advice to the European Parliament, European Commission, the OECD, Europol, and various UN bodies.

The committee concludes that ISGA research is highly societally relevant. ISGA's origins and location have made it a natural partner to policymakers and local or national government bodies. However, the growth of ISGA as an institute is changing its identity: ISGA currently employs a larger number of international scholars. Naturally, their link to the local and national contexts is weaker, and this has caused a shift from a policy towards a more academic orientation. The committee appreciates this shift but recognises that it causes some tension with the 'Hague mission' of Leiden University Campus The Hague.

The committee appreciates that this tension is inherent in ISGA's orientation and recommends reflecting on the impact that ISGA's internationalisation has on its societal output. An imbalance could occur whereby the Dutch researchers are responsible for most of the societal outreach and media performances nationally, while internationals focus on academic research and have fewer opportunities to achieve such impact, in spite of actively seizing opportunities to achieve impact internationally. ISGA management should formulate what it expects of its staff in terms of societal outreach and valorisation and how prominence in this field is compensated for or rewarded. The institute should also consider to what extent it would like to complement its strong local reputation in terms of societal relevance with the pursuit of a more international reputation.

#### *Open science*

ISGA is committed to the principles of open science, which are part of its strategy and include adherence to the FAIR principles surrounding data and data management. ISGA aims at open access publishing; the percentage of articles published this way is on the rise, leading to a total of 87% open access publications in 2021. An increasingly high proportion of its publications follows the 'Gold standard' open-access route. ISGA researchers are encouraged to make datasets, surveys, and code books openly available. An example is the data made available on ongoing projects, papers and published research from the Diplomacy and Global Affairs research group.

ISGA research often deals with restricted or sensitive data, which requires its researchers to carefully balance the desire to be open and transparent with the limitations in place. Scientific ethics and integrity receive ample attention in the institute. ISGA scholars are guided by the relevant codes on research integrity, such as the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity ALLEA, the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research, and the Code of Ethics for Research in the Social and Behavioural Sciences involving Human Participants. The FGGA hosts an Ethics Committee that performs ethical review of all research proposals involving data gathering from human subjects and provides guidelines and trainings in such matters. This committee is chaired by an ISGA staff member. Key aspects of research ethics include informed consent, safety of researchers, confidentiality or anonymity and independence of scientific inquiry, particularly when working on projects funded by ministries or government agencies. Since 2020, all ISGA PhD students are required to take a module on research integrity. ISGA is currently drafting a research integrity strategy. According to the committee, ISGA is doing a good and thorough job in promoting research integrity, data handling and open science.

### 3.5 Viability

#### *Viability and management structure*

Since ISGA as well as its research fields of security and global affairs are growing rapidly, the committee has no doubts as to the viability of the institute. The committee is convinced that the interest in ISGA research will remain. However, ISGA's rapid development also creates the need to make clear strategic choices on where the limits to this expansion should be. As mentioned before, ISGA management should decide on the breadth of the field it wants to cover and see whether new themes and approaches need to be added.

The management and organisational structure of the institute has evolved to include a new research group (War, Peace and Justice created in 2021) and a Steering Committee consisting of all Research Group Heads and programme heads for consultation and coordination. The seven research groups are ISGA's core organisational units, coordinating research, grant acquisitions and valorisation. Each group is led by a 'head of research group' responsible for leadership and liaising with the Institute management, external partners and relevant stakeholders. The Institute is governed by the Institute Board (IB), consisting of the Scientific Director, the Vice-Director, the Director of Education, and the Institute Manager. The IB discusses key developments with the Institute Council (IC), which is comprised of all ISGA staff who are not serving members of the IB. The IC is chaired by an elected member of the academic staff and plays a key role in promoting the interest of all the Institute's staff members.

Thus far, ISGA's informal and organic structure has allowed it to absorb increasing numbers of researchers as well as research groups. The committee points out that in its current, larger size, ISGA is in need of more formalised structures to avoid further 'growing pains'. The research group heads have gained their positions through natural developments at the creation or incorporation of the groups, but the duration of their term as head, the number of co-heads per group, their succession, or their precise working portfolio have not been laid down formally. The committee recommends creating more clarity around these important positions and simultaneously looking into the workload of these key staff members who run their research groups, deal with hiring and HR issues, teach, perform administrative tasks and do research all at the same time.

In response to suggestions in the midterm review in 2019, additional core management portfolios were created, including a PhD Coordinator overseeing the implementation of the PhD Strategy and a Well-being,

Inclusion, Diversity and Equal Access Opportunity Representative (WIDER) – the first such dedicated position in the entire university in charge of implementing the WIDE strategy. In addition, a Grants Coordinator and a Publications Coordinator were appointed for two years to kick-start processes given the reinforced strategic emphasis on grants and publications. The committee applauds the changes that have been made since the midterm review.

#### *HR Policy*

ISGA recruits its faculty internationally, looking for academic talent in research as well as education: the institute is closely involved with the FGGA's successful educational programmes, which are kept thematically close to the research themes present in ISGA to ensure that research and education benefit mutually from the connection. Hiring committees include members of the relevant research groups and select with diversity in mind: ISGA management are trained on unconscious bias in recruitment, retention and talent management.

In order to retain its staff, ISGA has introduced a policy of offering permanent contracts to new staff members after a probationary period of one year. It has also developed a policy on promotions and career pathways. ISGA has committed to a diversity of possible promotion pathways, including excellence in education or exceptional service to the institute alongside excellent research output. In order to ensure that these criteria and policies are executed throughout the institute and its research groups, ISGA holds an annual 'fleet review': the institute board, research group heads and senior managers identify talents for promotion or managerial tasks, and allocate funding for staff development, training and support measures. Early-career researchers who are still settling into research and education activities are given fewer administrative duties in order to allow them to develop and find their bearings quickly. Furthermore, a teaching-free block is granted to all researchers each year for doing research or preparing grant proposals. As a consequence of these policies and in line with advice from the midterm review committee, ISGA has managed to increase the number of senior staff members.

The committee discussed these policies with early and mid-career staff as well as with senior staff and management. It learned that ISGA staff are pleased with the transparent promotion criteria, which have been clearly communicated with them. They feel they know what to expect and feel supported in their careers. All staff members are offered training opportunities. The committee applauds this and especially appreciates the fleet review as an overarching means of ensuring that staff retention, promotion and distribution is done fairly and strategically. It also welcomes the offering of permanent contracts to new staff members after a probationary period of only one year, which in a European context is rather unique and reflects a progressive approach to hiring. Another positive aspect is the fact that ISGA seeks to fill new PhD positions created through national or EU funding with talent from junior teaching and tutoring staff in the affiliated educational programmes, rather than recruiting elsewhere.

The committee finds that even more precision could be achieved in career management by explicitly distinguishing between the various profiles of ISGA staff. In line with the national discussions on Recognition and Rewards in academia, ISGA could differentiate more between staff members with a strong research, education, impact, or leadership profile by formulating specific targets and promotion criteria for each profile. ISGA has implemented several initiatives to support their staff, which has resulted in a strong institute-wide support system. The PhD coordinator, the Research Support team and the additional teaching and teaching-support staff are proof of the effort ISGA puts in to reduce the workload. What could be added is more general support staff (general secretary) who could help organise meetings and events, for example.

### *Academic culture*

As a new institute, ISGA offers its researchers and staff a dynamic environment that is in full development and characterised by an innovative spirit as well as informal and non-hierarchical structures. As mentioned above, the different talents and career trajectories of ISGA staff members are taken into consideration in career guidance and performance assessment, which is appreciated by staff members. ISGA staff also praises the open communication culture within ISGA. The institute seeks diversity in terms of geography, gender, and (international) backgrounds. In terms of community-building, ISGA management is well aware of the challenges posed by an expanding institute with increasing internationalisation of staff members, and aims at offering them a welcoming atmosphere. Researchers primarily find their 'homes' in their research groups, and the amount of connection and interaction varies per research group. There are also ISGA-wide events and meetings, such as the weekly Monday morning sessions open to all, which allow participants to seek out topics for cross-group collaboration and to discuss challenges and concerns. It is easy for ISGA group members to interact and collaborate with other groups, particularly since collaboration in the educational programmes facilitates this.

The committee is impressed with ISGA's academic culture. It especially appreciates the emphasis placed on wellbeing. The appointment of the WIDER, who organises trainings and is involved with decisions on ISGA policy, is an example worth following by other research institutes. According to the committee, the community spirit, openness to diversity, shared and explicit values, transparency about HR and promotion policy, and informality of ISGA are strong points that contribute to the staff's wellbeing and thus the retention of good researchers.

### *PhD policy and training*

Over the past years, ISGA has seen an increase of PhD student influx with 14 PhD students starting in 2020 and 19 in 2021. This is partly due to the larger number of nationally and EU-funded projects. Based on recommendations of the midterm review panel, ISGA has designed a PhD policy which sets out guidelines concerning their training, supervision, and guidance. The institute also appointed a dedicated PhD coordinator entrusted with developing PhD strategy and implementation of the new guidelines. These efforts have resulted in a more closely monitored approach to the training and supervision of PhD students, including a supervision plan and a go/no go moment at the end of their first year.

ISGA also invested in creating a PhD community by establishing the PhD Assembly. This is a forum for bringing together all PhD candidates in order to self-organize, convene and consult with ISGA's PhD coordinator, concerning all aspects related to PhD students at the Institute. The PhD Assembly is led by a PhD Coordination Committee (PCC) consisting of five elected members, including a Chair. The PCC represents the PhD community's interests within ISGA and organises social events, writing sessions, etc. Among its initiatives is a buddy system for new PhD students.

The committee applauds these measures to support PhD students, make them feel at home in ISGA and provide them with clear structures and support guidelines. The committee discussed these measures with PhD candidates, who highly appreciate the additional support and structure. PhD students noticed a clear improvement in supervision trajectories and felt supported by their research groups and the PhD coordinator. In order to continue this upward tendency, the committee advises ISGA to communicate even more clearly what it expects of its PhD students in terms of milestones along their trajectory. Supervisors as well as PhD students should have a clear idea of what is expected of them when and from whom. They should also be told clearly where to go with questions or issues that may arise during their PhD trajectory.

Previously, PhD training mainly took place outside of ISGA. Following the midterm review recommendations, ISGA began systematically offering its PhD students a training programme by introducing courses such as the ISGA Nuts and Bolts of your PhD half-day training, an Epistemology of the PhD short course, and an Introduction to Quantitative Methods. Also, PhD students were offered methodological and career courses at Leiden University and elsewhere. However, ISGA still considers it important to offer all its PhD students foundational training with a suitable focus on methodology and content related to security and global affairs. At the time of the site visit, ISGA had just compiled a first proposal for such foundational training.

The committee appreciates ISGA's work in improving PhD training and compliments the institute with what it has achieved so far. In order to ensure that the training programme does not add too much to the workload of ISGA staff, the committee recommends investigating carefully which elements should be taught internally (and what their size should be) and which ones externally. Also, ISGA should look into the option of welcoming non-ISGA PhD students in its foundational training. This could bring in some extra resources to set up and teach the training.

The committee also suggests looking into the extent to which all PhD students are in need of following the new training schedule in full. Particularly for the external PhD students, the combination of PhD writing, their work, and a sizeable training schedule might prove too ambitious. ISGA should allow PhD training to be tailored to the specific needs of these PhD students.

## 4. Executive summary

### 4.1 Conclusion

As a fast-growing research institute, ISGA is viable and well-positioned for the future. The committee sees a clear upward trend in terms of research quality, output and funding opportunities, and finds that ISGA research is clearly societally relevant. The committee notes that ISGA manages to create and uphold a positive, inclusive and open research culture focused on wellbeing, and forms a welcoming environment for new national and international staff members (including PhD students) with transparent and diverse career options. The work done since the 2019 midterm review can be considered impressive.

The committee recommends that ISGA define how a successful future institute would look, determining how and where ISGA would like to end up, including which aspects of governance and security it wishes to include in its research remit. A national and international comparison with similar bodies and institutes would be helpful to determine this. Such an exercise should lead to a more focused and concrete strategy. The committee advises strengthening ISGA by differentiating between researchers' profiles and encouraging each researcher to aim high in order to achieve maximum impact. ISGA should choose wisely and go for quality instead of quantity. In terms of societal relevance, it should evaluate the impact of the internationalisation of its staff against the type of outreach it wants to aim for, and keep an eye out for imbalance between Dutch and international staff when it comes to societal impact. Finally, PhD training is currently under development, which has already shown its first positive effects. Here, ISGA has to be careful not to overburden staff and (external) PhD students, and look for cooperation in offering training where possible.

### 4.2 Recommendations

- Determine the research focus and size ISGA strives for, and formulate a concrete strategy and aims based on this focus.
- Differentiate between staff members and their profiles (research, education, impact or leadership focus) and set clear targets for each staff member, including how promotion criteria can be fulfilled per profile.
- Aim for more high-impact research output where possible, in order to boost the research career trajectory and positioning of the individual researchers and their eligibility for grants.
- Reflect on the tension between the 'Hague mission' of Leiden University Campus The Hague and ISGA's new, more international orientation, and formulate strategy and policies that take the imbalance between international and Dutch staff regarding societal relevance into account.
- Formalise ISGA management structures, in particular the role and position of head of research group.
- Investigate if PhD training can be further developed in cooperation with other parties inside or outside of the university, and whether external students should be offered more tailored options.



## Appendix 1: The SEP 2021-2027 Criteria and Categories

The committee was requested to assess the quality of research conducted by the UHS as well as to offer recommendations in order to improve the quality of research and the strategy of the UHS. The committee was requested to carry out the assessment according to the guidelines specified in the Strategy Evaluation Protocol. The evaluation included a backward-looking and a forward-looking component. Specifically, the committee was asked to judge the performance of the unit on the main assessment criteria and offer its written conclusions as well as recommendations based on considerations and arguments. The main assessment criteria are:

- 1) **Research Quality:** the quality of the unit's research over the past six-year period is assessed in its international, national or – where appropriate – regional context. The assessment committee does so by assessing a research unit in light of its own aims and strategy. Central in this assessment are the contributions to the body of scientific knowledge. The assessment committee reflects on the quality and scientific relevance of the research. Moreover, the academic reputation and leadership within the field is assessed. The committee's assessment is grounded in a narrative argument and supported by evidence of the scientific achievements of the unit in the context of the national or international research field, as appropriate to the specific claims made in the narrative.
- 2) **Societal Relevance:** the societal relevance of the unit's research in terms of impact, public engagement and uptake of the unit's research is assessed in economic, social, cultural, educational or any other terms that may be relevant. Societal impact may often take longer to become apparent. Societal impact that became evident in the past six years may therefore well be due to research done by the unit long before. The assessment committee reflects on societal relevance by assessing a research unit's accomplishments in light of its own aims and strategy. The assessment committee also reflects, where applicable, on the teaching-research nexus. The assessment is grounded in a narrative argument that describes the key research findings and their implications, while it also includes evidence for the societal relevance in terms of impact and engagement of the research unit.
- 3) **Viability of the Unit:** the extent to which the research unit's goals for the coming six-year period remain scientifically and societally relevant is assessed. It is also assessed whether its aims and strategy as well as the foresight of its leadership and its overall management are optimal to attain these goals. Finally, it is assessed whether the plans and resources are adequate to implement this strategy. The assessment committee also reflects on the viability of the research unit in relation to the expected developments in the field and societal developments as well as on the wider institutional context of the research unit

During the evaluation of these criteria, the assessment committee was asked to incorporate four specific aspects. These aspects were included, as they are becoming increasingly important in the current scientific context and help to shape the past as well as future quality of the research unit. These four aspects relate to how the unit organises and actually performs its research, how it is composed in terms of leadership and personnel, and how the unit is being run on a daily basis. These aspects are as follows:

- 4) **Open Science:** availability of research output, reuse of data, involvement of societal stakeholders;
- 5) **PhD Policy and Training:** supervision and instruction of PhD candidates;
- 6) **Academic Culture:** openness, (social) safety and inclusivity; and research integrity;
- 7) **Human Resources Policy:** diversity and talent management.



## Appendix 2: Programme of the site visit

### **6 December 2022**

15:00 – 17:00 Preliminary meeting committee

### **7 December 2022**

09:30 – 10:00 Gathering & coffee/tea

10:00 – 10:45 Meeting with the Institute Board and Managers

10:45 – 11:30 Meeting with academic staff: assistant professors

11:30 – 12:15 Meeting with PhD students

12:15 – 13:15 Lunch

13:15 – 14:00 Meeting with Research Group Heads and Senior academic staff

14:00 – 15:30 Preparing the draft report

15:30 – 16:00 Feedback session to the staff, presentation by Chairman

16:00 Refreshments with staff

## Appendix 3: Quantitative data

**Table 1: Staff composition and Evolution (Head count and Research FTE)**

Row Labels	2016		2017		2018	
	#	FTE	#	FTE	#	FTE
Ass. Prof.	6.44	1.80	11.50	3.89	17.36	5.78
Assc. Prof.	1.52	0.61	2.72	1.09	3.84	2.16
PhD	4.19	3.82	4.86	4.63	4.98	4.78
Post-doc	2.80	2.38	1.75	1.54	1.28	0.88
Professor	2.47	0.71	4.55	2.01	4.02	1.93
Researcher	1.00	0.93	1.19	1.02	2.81	1.70
<b>Total Research Staff</b>	<b>18.42</b>	<b>10.24</b>	<b>26.57</b>	<b>14.18</b>	<b>34.29</b>	<b>17.23</b>
Visiting Fellow	0.25	0.25	0.58	0.58	0.50	0.50
Education/Research staff	2.66	1.35	8.46	0.80	13.07	0.57
Research Support Team	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Research Support Staff</b>	<b>2.91</b>	<b>1.60</b>	<b>9.05</b>	<b>1.38</b>	<b>13.57</b>	<b>1.07</b>

  

Row Labels	2019		2020		2021	
	#	FTE	#	FTE	#	FTE
Ass. Prof.	21.42	6.75	22.60	8.16	27.58	8.28
Assc. Prof.	2.99	1.77	2.83	1.58	4.82	2.82
PhD	5.10	3.72	5.83	4.77	9.54	7.31
Post-doc	0.33	0.33	2.87	1.87	7.16	6.76
Professor	5.20	2.29	6.21	2.74	7.62	3.72
Researcher	1.11	0.44	0.73	0.42	2.76	2.19
<b>Total Research Staff</b>	<b>36.15</b>	<b>15.31</b>	<b>41.08</b>	<b>19.55</b>	<b>59.48</b>	<b>31.08</b>
Visiting Fellow	0.49	0.49	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08
Education/Research staff	11.21	1.81	11.90	1.01	7.92	1.12
Research Support Team	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.99	0.40
<b>Research Support Staff</b>	<b>11.70</b>	<b>2.30</b>	<b>11.98</b>	<b>1.09</b>	<b>10.98</b>	<b>1.60</b>

### Overview of Funding Evolution in terms of FTE % of total Institute Budget

Research Unit	Actual 2016	Actual 2017	Actual 2018	Actual 2019	Actual 2020	Actual 2021
<b>Funding:</b>						
Direct Funding in fte (1)	17.9	32.3	49.4	52.6	65.9	83.7
Research Grants in fte (2)	0.8	0.2	0.1	0.4	2.2	2.4
Contract research in fte (3)	8.0	10.7	12.5	7.3	8.2	13.7
<i>(out of which: EU research projects)</i>	2.7	0.4	1.6	0.5	2.2	6.0
Other in fte (4)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Total funding</b>	<b>29.4</b>	<b>43.6</b>	<b>63.6</b>	<b>60.8</b>	<b>78.5</b>	<b>105.7</b>
Direct Funding in %	61.0%	74.0%	77.6%	86.5%	84.0%	79.1%
Research Grants in %	2.7%	0.5%	0.2%	0.6%	2.9%	2.3%
Contract research in %	36.2%	25.5%	22.2%	12.9%	13.2%	18.6%
<i>(out of which: EU research projects)</i>	9.1%	0.9%	2.6%	0.8%	2.8%	5.7%
Other in %	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Total funding</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Personnel costs in € 1.000	1,975	3,075	4,324	5,027	5,753	7,782
Other costs in € 1.000 (*)	2,263	1,508	1,766	2,448	3,736	2,850
<b>Total expenditures</b>	<b>4,238</b>	<b>4,583</b>	<b>6,089</b>	<b>7,475</b>	<b>9,489</b>	<b>10,632</b>
Personnel costs in %	46.6%	67.1%	71.0%	67.3%	60.6%	73.2%
Other costs in %	53.4%	32.9%	29.0%	32.7%	39.4%	26.8%
<b>Total expenditures</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### Appendix A.6.1: PhD Candidates and Success Rates

Enrolment					Completion Rate, Ongoing and Dropouts					
Starting Year	Time-frame	Male	Female	Total	Graduated in 4 Years or Earlier	Graduated in 5 Years or Earlier	Graduated in 6 Years or Earlier	Graduated in 7 Years or Earlier	Not yet finished	Discontinued
2013	T-8	7	3	10	2	1	0	0	5	2
2014	T-7	4	1	5	2	0	1	0	2	0
2015	T-6	2	3	5	0	0	1	1	2	1
2016	T-5	5	4	9	0	4	2	0	2	1
2017	T-4	7	5	12	1	1	0	0	6	4
2018	T-3	5	2	7	2	0	0	0	3	2
2019	T-2	2	4	6	0	0	0	0	6	0
2020	T-1	9	8	17	0	0	0	0	14	3
2021	T-0	14	7	21	0	0	0	0	19	2
<b>2013-2021</b>		<b>55</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Percentage</b>		<b>60%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>16%</b>