

Course manual
Joint Master's Programme in
International Humanitarian Action

All universities

Version August 2016

Intensive Programme

Semester 1

Credits awarded: 5 ECTS, equivalent to 125 work hours (1 ECTS = 25 hours)

Period: First semester, block 1.

1. Introduction

The module is **the 1st part of the Semester 1.**

It is a **6-days** initial inter-university joint course that:

- Brings together approximately 150 students, over 40 lecturers and researchers as well as a significant number of consultants, international experts, policy makers, aid managers, and other guest speakers from NGOs and IGOs;
- Presents a wide range of humanitarian action issues by different specialists both from the field and academia;
- Combines activities that are vital for the multicultural and interdisciplinary training of the future humanitarian action professional;
- Successfully combines theory (through lectures) and practice (through workshops and case studies) based on the Network's teaching-learning policy; and
- Serves as a unique forum where participants from different parts of the world and with different backgrounds, perspectives and expectations share knowledge and experiences on current issues and problems in the area of humanitarian action.

The intensive programme introduces students to:

- The academic and professional profile expected of the Joint European Master's in International Humanitarian Action; Key principles and concepts underlying humanitarian action;
- Main actors in the field of humanitarian relief, their policies and strategies; and
- Challenges facing humanitarian actors in coordinating their activities.

Language of instruction: English

2. Learning outcomes

In conformity with the learning outcomes set out by the NOHA network, students should achieve the following learning outcomes by the end of this module:

- Has demonstrated a basic understanding of the concept of humanitarian action and its relation to some adjacent concepts.
- Has shown familiarity with some of the key contemporary humanitarian issues and challenges.
- Has demonstrated a basic knowledge of the main actors working in the field of humanitarian action.
- Understands the NOHA network, its main educational and policy advocacy activities, its key partners, in particular the European Commission's DG for Humanitarian Aid (ECHO), and the NOHA Alumni Association and its activities.
- Has developed a basic ability to work in a multicultural setting.
- Has shown appreciation for differences in culture and background.

3. Course material

- Intensive Programme Readings: selected documents and articles
- Presentations of lecturers and guest speakers
- Simulation exercise material

Make sure that you check the IP-module on NOHA Blackboard for posted resources at:

- <https://noha.rug.nl/>

4. Teaching and learning methodology

- Presentations on the NOHA network and the NOHA programme
- Sessions that offer comprehensive overviews on humanitarian related issues and lectures from Practitioners in the field
- Simulation Exercise
- Studying background articles
- Writing an essay on a topic of relevance to the IP and the humanitarian field

5. Programme and training activities

The programme is divided in five intertwined pillars:

- I. Introduction to NOHA educational activities: the NOHA Joint Master's
- II. International Law, Principles and Standards of Humanitarian Action
- III. Introduction to the Humanitarian System
- IV. Key humanitarian disciplines
- V. Simulation exercise

I. Introduction to NOHA educational activities: The NOHA Joint Master's

The Network on Humanitarian Action (NOHA) is an international association of Universities to enhance professionalism in the humanitarian sector, by promoting humanitarian values and providing certificated high level courses (Joint Master's in International Humanitarian Action), as well as refreshment courses (seasonal NOHA Schools) and promoting research and policy papers on key humanitarian issues.

The NOHA Joint Master's in International Humanitarian Action is an interuniversity, multidisciplinary postgraduate programme that provides high quality academic education and professional competencies for personnel working or intending to work in the area of humanitarian action. In addition to collaboration and support from the European Union, the NOHA Programme enjoys the backing of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), inter-governmental organisations (IGOs), and other actors of the humanitarian action community with whom the Network has strong collaborative links.

II. International Law, Principles and Standards of Humanitarian Action

Legal obligations relating to humanitarian action exist in different branches of law and their application to specific situations needs to be assessed. During armed conflict situation, International Humanitarian Law is the field of law that regulates the delivery of relief items, access to victims and relations to the conflict parties. For times of natural disasters, however, one has to turn to disaster response law as legal basis for aid operations.

Parallel to the legal framework regulating humanitarian action, the humanitarian sector has established self-regulatory mechanisms to ensure quality standards and enhance the accountability of humanitarian actors to the affected population and their donors.

This part of the Intensive Programme will discuss the different frameworks in which humanitarian aid is delivered, may these be of a legal nature or universal minimum standards guiding the work of humanitarian professionals and their missions.

III. Introduction to the Humanitarian System

Humanitarian aid has become a highly professionalized arena of various kinds of humanitarian stakeholders. The increase in armed conflicts, emerging global challenges such as environmental disasters, water scarcity, food-, financial-, and refugee crises or extreme poverty require comprehensive responses. The individual as well as combined efforts of humanitarian organization of different nature in cooperation with governmental agencies shape the sector and should therefore be discussed.

This part of the Intensive Programme will provide different answers to the question: Who are the different actors in humanitarian action? How does cooperation between the different stakeholders work? What is the working situation for humanitarian action professionals? What different approaches to humanitarian action are implemented by the organizations?

IV. Key humanitarian disciplines

International humanitarian action is in its nature multi- and interdisciplinary, and thus requires humanitarian professionals to critically analyse and be fully aware of the social, political, legal, cultural and security environment, provide quality services in the broad field of humanitarian relief and be informed on their theoretical insights and humanitarian principles.

This part of the Intensive Programme will introduce students to theories, approaches and practices of humanitarian action, rooted in political science, international law, management, anthropology and public health.

V. Simulation Exercise

The simulation exercise is an important learning tool to introduce students to a humanitarian operation in a conflict zone and give them an idea of what they may expect in the field. The situation reproduced in this exercise is fictional, but it reflects truthfully what might be a real situation. It includes basic security and first aid training, as well as terrain orientation. Students should learn to deal with procedures, changing scenarios and problem solving before and during the situation.

6. Workload

125 hours (1 ECTS = 25 hours).

The workload is calculated considering the hours of preparation, attendance and participation in the Intensive Programme at the University at Warsaw from the 5th to the 10th September and individual work with regard to reading compulsory literature, drafting and writing the IP evaluation essay due on the 1st of October 2016.

7. Assessment methods

All universities apply a common assessment procedure for the IP - a written academic essay:

The international humanitarian system needs a fundamental reorientation from supplying aid to supporting and facilitating communities' own relief and recovery priorities. With the help of a case study and suitable examples, discuss how the international humanitarian community can engage with the local actors so as to reinforce and not replace local capacities.

You may choose the context you have been familiarized with during the Intensive Programme. Moreover, you should make use of other information received at the Intensive Programme, such as the compulsory literature, other relevant literature.

The essay should amount to 2000 words, and should be written in the language of instruction of the students' home university. The essay must be written in accordance with normal academic requirements: this means for instance that proper references whenever sources are used should be provided and that plagiarism is out of the question.

The essay has to be handed in electronically via NOHA Blackboard before **1 October 2016**.

Attendance to the jointly organized Intensive Programme at the University of Warsaw is a mandatory component of the module. When a student is unable to attend the whole or part of the IP, the NOHA Director and the NOHA Coordinator concerned should be informed prior to the beginning of the programme. Depending on the situation they will decide whether the student should write an assignment of 2.000 words or 5.000 words and/or allow students to defer the assessment to a later date.

8. Assessment criteria

Assessment Criteria: The module is assessed according the home university requirements (national grading system or pass/fail).

Content: 70%

- Relevance to the statement of discussion
- Quality of argumentation lines
- Analytical quality
- Structure.

Format: 30%

- Quality and quantity of sources used
- Presentation and illustrations
- Language
- Length.