



# 2024 Annual Report



**CIDS**

Geneva Center  
for International  
Dispute Settlement

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## I. WHO WE ARE

### 1. The Center

The Center for International Dispute Settlement (CIDS) was established in late 2016 as a collaborative effort between the Faculty of Law at the University of Geneva and the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva. Its primary objectives include providing in-depth and executive education, promoting research, and contributing to public debates and activities in the field of international dispute settlement.

Leading the CIDS was Professor Laurence Boisson de Chazournes (University of Geneva) until July 2024 and then Prof. Zachary Douglas KC (Geneva Graduate Institute) from August 2024, who served as its Director, while Mariona Cusi held the position of MIDS Executive Director.

The CIDS Council was presided over by Professor Emerita Gabrielle Kaufmann-Kohler (University of Geneva, Partner at Lévy Kaufmann-Kohler) until June 2024 when she was replaced by Professor Boisson de Chazournes. The CIDS Council oversees the Center's operations and was composed of several distinguished members, including as of October 2024, Professor Felix Dasser (ASA President, Partner Homburger), Professor Zachary Douglas KC (Graduate Institute), Professor Joost Pauwelyn (Graduate Institute), Lukas Siegenthaler (Sector Head for International Investments and Multinational Companies, Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)), Professor Thomas Schulz (University of Geneva), Professor Julia Xoudis (Faculty of Law, University of Geneva), Professor Jacques de Werra (Faculty of Law, University of Geneva, Director of the Digital Law Center), and Professor Fuad Zarbiyev (Graduate Institute).

The CIDS is ultimately accountable to the Directorate, comprising representatives from the University of Geneva and the Graduate Institute, including Professors Yves Flückiger until April 2024 and Audrey Leuba from April 2024 (Rector of the University of Geneva), Marie-Laure Salles (Director of the Graduate Institute), Nicolas Levrat until April 2024 and Luc Thevenoz from April 2024 (Faculty of Law, University of Geneva), and Mohamed Mahmoud Mohamedou until September 2024 and Professor Andrea Bianchi from April 2024 (Graduate Institute).

### 2. The MIDS programme

The MIDS programme was established in September 2008. The programme is jointly organised by the Faculty of Law of the University of Geneva and the Geneva Graduate Institute, covering a wide range of international dispute settlement mechanisms, including international commercial and investment arbitration, WTO dispute settlement, mediation, proceedings before various international courts and tribunals, and legal advocacy skills. Its comprehensive coverage makes it one of the few programmes worldwide that encompasses all relevant aspects of the field, recognizing the connections and similarities that exist between most methods and mechanisms of international dispute settlement.

The MIDS aims to be one of the top programmes worldwide for postgraduate education in international arbitration or dispute resolution, offering full-time legal education to about 40 students annually. The programme, which requires 90 ECTS credits, is designed for students who have already earned a complete law degree and are proficient in English, with most students possessing professional law experience.

The programme structure is primarily elective, allowing students to pursue their specific interests in dispute settlement while ensuring that they acquire the essential knowledge of the field. The programme is taught in English, with optional French courses also available.

Since its inception, the MIDS programme has educated nearly 600 students of almost 100 countries across all continents. Graduates of the programme pursue careers in law firms, foreign affairs, trade or justice ministries, as legal officers in international dispute settlement institutions, international organisations, and non-governmental organisations. Some graduates also teach at various universities globally or pursue PhD studies following the MIDS. The MIDS faculty consists of carefully selected experts from among the most respected academics and practitioners in the field of dispute settlement worldwide.

#### *a. The governance*

Programme Director:

- Prof. Laurence Boisson de Chazournes (until July 2024)
- Prof. Zachary Douglas KC (from August 2024)

MIDS Committee:

- Prof. Laurence Boisson de Chazournes (until July 2024)
- Prof. Zachary Douglas KC (from August 2024)
- Prof. Thomas Schultz (from September 2024)

- Prof. Jacques de Werra
- Prof. Joost Pauwelyn

#### *b. The team*

- Executive Director: Ms. Mariona Cusí (until November 2024)
- Academic Programme Manager: Ms. Callie Cunningham
- Administrative Assistant: Ms. Nolwenn Marchaland
- Junior Administrative Assistant: Ms. Pylyka Bun Sodany
- Lecturers:
  - Dr. Rukmini Das
  - Dr. Lorenzo Palestini (until August 2024)
  - Dr. Mohamed Mahayni (from September 2024)

## **II. EDUCATION – THE MIDS PROGRAMME**

### **1. Curriculum**

The MIDS LL.M. Programme in International Dispute Settlement offered a rigorous and immersive curriculum designed to equip students with both theoretical foundations and practical skills essential for careers in international dispute resolution. The curriculum evolved over the academic year 2023–2024 and into 2024–2025, reflecting a shift in structure and terminology to better align with the programme’s pedagogical goals and the evolving landscape of international dispute settlement. These changes will be described in detail in the next Annual Report.

The programme was composed of the following core components:

#### General Courses

The academic year included compulsory, semester-long General Courses that formed the backbone of the MIDS curriculum. These courses provided a comprehensive and comparative overview of international dispute settlement mechanisms, institutions, and legal principles.

##### Spring Semester 2023–2024

##### *General Course II: International Legal Proceedings*

Delivered by Prof. Zachary Douglas KC and Prof. Mamadou Hébié, this course explored procedural issues common across dispute resolution systems, including jurisdiction, provisional measures, remedies, and decision-making processes.

Supported by MIDS lecturers Dr Rukmini Das and Dr Lorenzo Palestini

##### Fall Semester 2024–2025

##### *International Commercial Arbitration*

Taught by Prof. Thomas Schultz, with support from MIDS Lecturer Dr. Mohamed Mahayni, this course focused on the legal framework and procedural dynamics of commercial arbitration, preparing students to advise on arbitration practice.

##### *Investment Treaty Arbitration*

Led by Prof. Zachary Douglas KC with support from MIDS Lecturer Dr. Rukmini Das, this course examined the procedural and substantive dimensions of investment arbitration, with emphasis on jurisprudential controversies and evolving doctrines.

The remaining general courses—covering state-to-state dispute resolution, transnational and comparative contract law, and national arbitration laws (England, France, Switzerland)—were scheduled for the Spring Semester 2024–2025.

#### Tutorials

Tutorials ran parallel to the Core Courses and provided small-group engagement with MIDS Lecturers. In 2023–2024, tutorials were led by Dr. Lorenzo Palestini (Public International Law) and Dr. Rukmini Das (International Arbitration). In 2024–2025, they were led by Dr. Rukmini Das and Dr. Mohamed Mahayni.

Students wrote and presented three research papers<sup>1</sup>—one per semester—on topics related to public international law and international arbitration. Tutorials also included written exercises to strengthen analytical and legal writing skills.

#### Intensive Courses

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<sup>1</sup> They wrote one Research paper (RP) in spring semester 2024 and as the rules changed, they wrote 2 RPs in autumn semester 2024 - one paper on ICA and one on ITA

Students were required to complete eight intensive courses for credit. Each course typically consisted of nine hours of instruction over two to three days, with the exception of the ICC Arbitration course, which included a mandatory study trip to Paris and totaled approximately 18 hours. Students could take more than eight courses, with only the top eight grades counting toward the GPA.

#### Optional Courses

Students were required to complete at least two semester-long optional courses from the curricula of the University of Geneva (UNIGE) Law Faculty and/or the Graduate Institute (IHEID), each worth a minimum of six ECTS credits. Even if a course was rated above six credits, only six counted toward MIDS requirements. Students were encouraged to complete at least one optional in the Fall Semester to balance the Spring workload. Additional optionals were permitted, with only two grades counting toward the GPA and others listed as “Extracurricular Courses.”

#### Workshops

The MIDS programme included four mandatory workshops designed to develop practical skills essential for dispute settlement professionals. Each workshop was graded and appeared on the final transcript.

#### Academic Retreat

A two-day commercial arbitration moot exercise allows students to simulate hearings before a tribunal of practitioners. This retreat enhances skills in legal strategy, oral advocacy, and teamwork under pressure.

#### Lectures and Seminars

Students attend at least three MIDS lectures or seminars, featuring leading academics and practitioners. These events explore current developments and institutional practices in international dispute settlement.

#### Institutional Visits

Students are required to attend at least two site visits to key dispute settlement institutions.

#### Conferences

Students participate in one or two external conferences, with travel and logistics organised by the MIDS.

#### Master’s Thesis

Students complete a thesis presenting an original, well-substantiated argument. Due in August, the thesis is supported by MIDS faculty and supervisors selected by the students.

#### Community and Networking

MIDS fosters a vibrant academic and professional community. Social events such as welcome and farewell cocktails provide opportunities to connect with peers and leading figures in the Geneva dispute settlement community.

## **2. Academic years in 2024**

### *a. Academic year 2023-2024 – Spring semester*

The Spring Semester of the MIDS LL.M. Programme in International Dispute Settlement ran from February to September 2024, with general course classes commencing on Monday, 5 February and concluding on Friday, 17 May. Unlike other academic programmes, the MIDS did not observe an Easter break, ensuring uninterrupted instruction throughout the semester. Exams and paper deadlines for intensive courses were scheduled by faculty and occurred throughout the semester, extending into late June and, in some cases, early July. The General Course II exam was held in June, with a re-sit scheduled for July. The LL.M. thesis submission deadline was set for August 2024.

#### **• General Courses**

At the heart of the MIDS curriculum were two General Courses, each offering a semester-long, in-depth exploration of international dispute settlement. These courses were designed to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of both institutional frameworks and procedural dynamics.

#### General Course II: International Legal Proceedings

Prof. Zachary Douglas KC (Graduate Institute; MIDS Programme Committee)

Prof. Mamadou Hébié (Graduate Institute and Leiden University)

Building on the first semester, GC2 focused on procedural aspects common to international legal proceedings. Topics include jurisdiction, provisional measures, decision-making processes, and remedies. The course encourages comparative analysis across different dispute resolution systems.

### • Tutorials

Tutorials served as a key pedagogical component of the MIDS programme, offering students the opportunity to deepen their understanding of core concepts through discussion, research, and writing. Each student completed two research papers—one on public international law and one on international arbitration—which were presented and critiqued during tutorial sessions. Additional written exercises supported the development of analytical and writing skills.

Tutorial Lecturers:

Dr. Lorenzo Palestini – Public International Law

Dr. Rukmini Das – International Arbitration

### • Intensive Courses

The MIDS LL.M. Programme offered a series of intensive courses designed to complement and deepen the foundational knowledge acquired in the General Courses. These short-format courses allowed students to explore specialized dispute settlement mechanisms, examine specific legal issues, and engage with theoretical and philosophical dimensions of international dispute resolution.

Organised directly by the MIDS, each intensive course typically consisted of nine hours of instruction delivered over two to three days. A notable exception was the ICC Arbitration course, which included approximately 18 hours of instruction and a mandatory study visit to the International Chamber of Commerce in Paris.

#### Intensive Courses offered (Spring Semester 2024)

Course Title	Instructor(s)	Dates
The PCA and its Contribution to the Evolution of International Dispute Settlement	Dr. Hab. Marcin Czepelak	22–23 February 2024
WTO Dispute Settlement	Prof. Gabrielle Marceau	28 February–1 March 2024
International Courts and Tribunals and Provisional Measures	Prof. Marcelo Kohen	20–22 March 2024
Contract Law in International Commercial Arbitration	Prof. Patricia Saiz	11–12 April 2024
Investment Arbitration in Action	Dr. Michele Potestà, Catherine Kettlewell	24–26 April 2024
Arbitration of Intellectual Property & Technology Disputes	Prof. Jacques de Werra	14–17 May 2024
Commercial Arbitration in China	Prof. Jane Willems	26–28 March 2024
Investment Arbitration in Africa	Prof. Makane M. Mbengue	16–18 April 2024

### • Optional Courses

MIDS students also had access to a range of optional courses offered by the University of Geneva Law Faculty and the Graduate Institute (IHEID). As part of the MIDS LL.M. Programme, students were required to complete two optional courses drawn from the regular curricula of the University of Geneva (UNIGE) Law Faculty and/or the Graduate Institute, Geneva (IHEID). These semester-long courses were designed to complement the MIDS curriculum by offering deeper engagement with topics in international dispute settlement and related fields. Each course must be worth at least six ECTS credits and was held weekly on the respective institution's campus.

### • Workshops, Lectures, and Institutional Visits

The MIDS LL.M. Programme integrated a series of workshops, lectures, and institutional visits designed to equip students with practical skills and experiential insights essential for careers in international dispute settlement.

#### Primary MIDS Workshops

Students were required to complete four primary MIDS workshops in the course of the academic year, each focused on a critical skill area. Two of them were scheduled in the Spring semester-

Workshop Title	Instructor(s)	Description
Mediation	Birgit Sambeth (Altenburger LTD Legal + Tax, Geneva)	Explored mediation techniques and strategies for effective settlement, led by a seasoned mediator.
Witness Examination in International Arbitration (FIAA)	Foundation for International Arbitration Advocacy	Offered clinical training in witness examination through lectures and practical exercises led by top arbitration practitioners.

#### Lectures and Seminars



Students were required to attend at least three MIDS lectures or seminars, with attendance tracked by the MIDS Secretariat and potentially reflected on the final transcript. These events featured distinguished speakers and covered a range of topics relevant to international dispute settlement.

Events included:

- Q&A with a Star Arbitrator: Michael Schneider, Founding Partner, LALIVE, on 26 February 2024
- Lecture on "Arbitrator powers in matters of corruption" - Dr. Yas Banifatemi, Founding Partner of GBS Disputes, 12 June 2024
- LALIVE Training Seminar, 12 March 2024: The LALIVE MIDS Training Seminar was a practical training seminar on international arbitration, with a particular focus on commercial arbitration. Through this half-day seminar, two LALIVE partners provided the students with not only practical training on various procedural issues that typically arise in commercial arbitrations, but also their views and advice, based on their first-hand experience. The seminar was followed by a career Q&A, during which the students will have the opportunity to ask LALIVE lawyers for career advice.

#### Institutional Visits

To enhance understanding of dispute settlement institutions, students were required to attend at least two site visits, with strong encouragement to participate in all available opportunities.

Visits included:

Institution	Location	Dates
ICJ, PCA, Iran-US Claims Tribunal	The Hague, Netherlands	5-7 March 2024
WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center	Geneva, Switzerland	24 April 2024
WTO	Geneva, Switzerland	15 May 2024

#### • **Conferences**

MIDS students also had access to a select number of high-profile conferences, offering further exposure to current debates and networking opportunities such as:

- ASA Annual Conference 2024 – 2 February 2024, Geneva
- 41st ITF Public Conference at BIICL – 19 April 2024, London
- XVIII Congreso Internacional del CEIA – 9–11 June 2024, Madrid

### *b. Academic year 2024-2025 – Fall semester*

#### • **Core Courses**

Beginning in September 2024, the MIDS LL.M. Programme introduced a revised curriculum structure, renaming its foundational “General Courses” as **Core Courses**. This change reflected a broader pedagogical shift toward a more integrated and practice-oriented approach to international dispute settlement education as well as the inclusion of a significant element of substantive law into the curriculum.

The core curriculum consisted of five compulsory courses spread across the academic year 2024-2025. The Fall Semester focused on two key pillars of international arbitration: commercial arbitration and investment treaty arbitration. These courses provided students with a robust theoretical foundation and practical insights into the mechanisms and controversies that define modern arbitral practice.

#### International Commercial Arbitration

*Professor Thomas Schultz (University of Geneva Law Faculty and Graduate Institute)*

*MIDS Lecturer: Dr. Mohamed Mahayni*

This course introduced students to the legal framework and procedural dynamics of international commercial arbitration. It emphasized the development of legal instincts necessary for advising on complex procedural issues and equipped students with the analytical tools to navigate arbitration as a dispute resolution method.

#### Investment Treaty Arbitration

*Professor Zachary Douglas KC (Graduate Institute; MIDS Programme Director)*

*MIDS Lecturer: Dr. Rukmini Das*

This course explored the procedural and substantive dimensions of investment treaty arbitration. Students examined the unique features of this mechanism in contrast to commercial and state-to-state arbitration, and engaged critically with the jurisprudential debates surrounding investment protection obligations.

- **Tutorials**

Tutorials remained a cornerstone of the MIDS pedagogical model, offering small-group engagement and personalized academic support. Led by Dr. Rukmini Das and Dr. Mohamed Mahayni, tutorials provide a platform for students to deepen their understanding of core course material through discussion, written exercises, and the development of research papers. Each student was required to write and present two research papers during the Fall Semester, one for each Core Course subject, fostering critical thinking, legal writing proficiency, and scholarly dialogue.

- **Intensive Courses**

MIDS intensive courses offered students the opportunity to explore specialized topics in international dispute settlement beyond the scope of the core curriculum. These short-format courses were designed to deepen understanding of specific mechanisms, legal theories, or procedural issues, and were taught by leading practitioners and academics in the field.

Each intensive course typically consisted of nine hours of instruction delivered over two to three days. The exception was the ICC Arbitration course, which included approximately 18 hours of instruction and a mandatory study visit to the ICC in Paris.

#### Intensive Courses Offered – Fall Semester 2024

Course Title	Instructor(s)	Dates
ICC Arbitration	Alexander Fessas; Prof. Pierre Tercier (Paris trip)	14 November & 20–22 November 2024
The New York Convention of 1958	Niuscha Bassiri	8–10 October 2024
WTO Dispute Settlement	Prof. Gabrielle Marceau	15–17 October 2024
The Arbitration Agreement in International Commercial Arbitration	Prof. Sébastien Besson	4–7 November 2024
Fundamentals of Investment Treaty Arbitration	Prof. Georgios Petrochilos	26–28 November 2024
Sports Law and Arbitration	Kendra Magraw	10–12 December 2024

- **Elective Courses**

As of 16 September 2024, “Optional Courses” have been renamed **Elective Courses** to better reflect their role in the curriculum. Students were required to complete two semester-long elective courses from the regular offerings of the University of Geneva (UNIGE) Law Faculty and/or the Graduate Institute, Geneva (IHEID). These courses must be relevant to international dispute settlement and carry a minimum of six ECTS credits. Even if a course is officially rated above six credits, it would only count as six credits toward MIDS requirements. Elective courses were held weekly on the campuses of the respective institutions.

- **Workshops**

The MIDS curriculum included a series of mandatory workshops designed to cultivate essential skills for international dispute settlement practice. These workshops focused on legal writing, oral advocacy, mediation techniques, and financial analysis—core competencies for any practitioner in the field. Each workshop was recorded on the student’s transcript with a letter grade, and successful participation was required to fulfill the MIDS degree requirements.

#### Fall Semester Workshops

##### *Legal Writing*

*David Roney & Tanya Landon, Partners, Sidley Austin LLP, Geneva*

This workshop trained students to express legal arguments with clarity, precision, and persuasive structure. Through practical exercises and personalized feedback, students learned to craft compelling narratives and sharpen their writing instincts.

##### *Mediation*

*Birgit Sambeth, Partner, Altenburger LTD Legal + Tax, Geneva*

Led by a globally accredited mediator and ICSID Conciliator, this workshop explored the strategic and procedural dimensions of mediation, including hybrid processes like Arb-Med-Arb and Investor-State mediation. Students gained hands-on experience in facilitated negotiation and dispute resolution design.

##### *Academic Research and Writing*

*Dr. Rukmini Das & Dr. Mohamed Mahayni, MIDS Lecturers*

This workshop provided guidance on research methodology, citation practices, and writing strategies for exams, papers, and the LL.M. thesis. It included sample analysis and in-class exercises to reinforce best practices.



- **Lectures and Seminars**

- ASA Seminar: "MIDS meets the Centre" - Monday, 18 November 2024
- M.I.L. Seminar - Wednesday, 30 October 2024
- Schellenberg Wittmer Seminar - Monday, 9 December 2024

- **Conferences:**

- ASA Town Hall Bern
- ASA Below 40 Fall Seminar Zurich
- GAR Live Vienna
- 42nd ITF Public Conference by BIICL London
- ICC Conference Paris

- **Academic Retreat**

The Fall Semester culminated in the MIDS Academic Retreat, held on 16–17 December 2024 at the historic Château de Bossey, nestled between Versoix and Nyon. This two-day event combined social engagement with a high-pressure moot-style arbitration exercise. This event was organised by Dr Dolores Bentolila.

Students were divided into teams of claimants and respondents, each coached by the Lecturers & Dr Dolores Bentolila. After receiving case materials on the first morning, teams prepared arguments and strategies for oral pleadings. On the second afternoon, students presented before a tribunal composed of distinguished international arbitrators.

- **Visits to Dispute Settlement Institutions**

Institutional site visits were a vital experiential component of the MIDS LL.M. Programme, offering students direct exposure to the work and environment of leading international dispute settlement bodies. These visits complemented classroom learning by contextualizing legal theory within real-world practice and fostering engagement with professionals in the field.

ICC (International Chamber of Commerce) – Paris (21–22 November 2024)

This visit served as the second part of the ICC Arbitration intensive course and was mandatory for students enrolled in that course. Hosted at the ICC headquarters, the visit included interactive sessions with ICC professionals and offers students a behind-the-scenes look at the administration of international commercial arbitration.

- **Gabrielle Kaufmann-Kohler Award**

The Gabrielle Kaufmann-Kohler Award was established in 2024 by the MIDS Committee to honor Professor Kaufmann-Kohler's leadership in founding the MIDS and her longstanding commitment to the programme. This award annually recognizes the best MIDS LL.M. thesis, evaluating understanding of the subject, research quality, and innovative research aspects. After submitting the thesis grades to the MIDS, faculty supervisors had the option to nominate one or two of the top theses that they supervised, with a grade of either 5.75 or 6, for final selection by an expert in international dispute settlement. The MIDS Committee selected three master theses and sent them to an expert in the area of international dispute settlement – Prof. Pierre Tercier who decided upon the Award. The Award was granted to Jan Baldyga during the MIDS Graduation Ceremony 2023-2024.

### 3. **Career Services and Institutional Partnerships**

#### *a. Career Services*

Throughout the 2023–2024 and 2024-2025 academic years, MIDS provided robust career services and individualized coaching to support students in preparing for and entering the international dispute settlement job market. These services were available from the start of the programme and continued throughout the academic year.

Students were introduced to the career services during the programme's presentation day and participated in an individual meeting with the MIDS Executive Director and Career Advisor, Mariona Cusí, during their first week. These meetings helped identify each student's professional goals and allowed the Career Advisor to tailor guidance accordingly.

The MIDS also organised a dedicated Career Services Workshop, co-led by Mariona Cusí and Ankita Godbole, Senior Associate at Lévy Kaufmann-Kohler, Geneva. The session covered essential career-building topics, including CV and cover letter drafting, professional networking strategies, online presence management, and interview preparation. Students were encouraged to apply these skills throughout the year in individual coaching sessions and networking events.

Career events were organised in collaboration with law firms specializing in international arbitration and law, arbitral institutions, international organisations, and private companies. Students had access to one-on-one coaching sessions throughout the year, which could be scheduled upon request. These sessions focused on CV and cover letter refinement, strategic career planning, networking techniques, and enhancing professional visibility.

Students invited to job interviews could request mock interview sessions with the Career Advisor. These sessions were tailored to the specific interview context and included video recordings to facilitate feedback and improve communication skills. Students were asked to submit requests for individual meetings or mock interviews at least three business days in advance.

The Career Advisor remained available throughout the academic year to support students at every stage of the application process, including post-interview debriefings and follow-up guidance. The MIDS also regularly shared job and internship opportunities and liaised with partner organisations and law firms to promote student profiles and facilitate recruitment, especially when international organisations or firms sought candidates with specific profiles or MIDS backgrounds.

#### *b. Internships as part of the MIDS Curriculum*

MIDS offered students the opportunity to substitute one elective course with an internship experience at a law firm or institution engaged in international dispute settlement. These internships could be undertaken during the year following the completion of the MIDS coursework.

Students who pursued this option received administrative and advisory support from the MIDS staff. This included assistance with renewing student status and residency permits, as well as guidance on drafting and processing internship agreements (*conventions de stage*), visa applications, and OCPM procedures for those completing internships abroad.

#### *c. Student Support*

The MIDS Programme offered tailored support to students from the moment of admission through to graduation. Upon admission, students received guidance from the MIDS staff throughout the admissions and scholarship allocation process. A comprehensive welcome guide was provided alongside the admission letter, containing essential information on programme structure, arrival preparation, visa and residency requirements, accommodation options (including priority access to selected student residences), health insurance, and a checklist for a smooth transition to Geneva. The guide also included a list of recommended summer readings for students wishing to refresh their knowledge of public or private international law before the start of the academic year.

At the beginning of the programme in September, students received a tailored course guide for the academic year. This guide included:

- Curriculum requirements
- Academic calendar and course schedules
- Detailed descriptions of courses and activities
- MIDS procedures and policies
- Overview of job and internship opportunities
- Student services and IT support
- Practical advice for settling in Geneva
- Key contacts for academic and administrative support

To further ease the transition, the MIDS staff prepared welcome kits for each student, including items such as an umbrella, water bottle, lanyard, and cloth bag. Students also received personalized business cards, name tags for classroom use, and student cards for UNIGE and IHEID.

Students were granted access to the digital platforms and IT services of both IHEID and UNIGE, as well as the MIDS Moodle platform. The MIDS staff managed the programme calendar, which included all relevant information on course times, venues, deadlines, and reading materials.

Academic support was provided throughout the year. MIDS Lecturers offered individual follow-up on thesis development, tutorial research papers, and general academic guidance. They also organised mock exams and review sessions for the General Course to help students prepare for final assessments.

#### *d. Professional Partnerships*

Over the years, the MIDS Programme has cultivated strong relationships with a wide network of partners, including law firms, international institutions, charitable foundations, and academic organisations. These collaborations have

enriched the academic experience, expanded professional opportunities, and provided financial support to MIDS students.

In 2024, MIDS continued to strengthen its partnerships with leading institutions in the field of international dispute settlement. In addition to the PCA Fellowship, MIDS maintained active collaborations with arbitral institutions, law firms, and international organisations to support student development and promote graduate recruitment. These partnerships enabled MIDS to share job opportunities with current students and alumni, liaise with selection committees, and advocate for candidates who matched the professional profiles sought by partner organisations.

In 2024, the following organisations supported the programme:

- **Lévy Kaufmann-Kohler**

Lévy Kaufmann-Kohler remained one of MIDS's most longstanding and committed partners, having supported the programme since its inception in 2008. The firm contributed to the academic curriculum through intensive courses taught by key members, including:

- *The Arbitration Agreement in International Commercial Arbitration* – Prof. Sébastien Besson
- *Investment Arbitration in Action* – Dr. Michele Potestà and Ms. Ann Catherine Kettlewell (ICSID)

In addition to academic contributions, the firm recruited two MIDS students annually for six-month internships following completion of their coursework. Lévy Kaufmann-Kohler also generously provided a full scholarship each year, covering both tuition fees and living expenses in Geneva.

- **LALIVE**

LALIVE continued its longstanding partnership with MIDS, offering practical training and financial support. The firm hosted an annual seminar on commercial arbitration and committed to offering internships to approximately four or five MIDS students each year. LALIVE also awarded a full scholarship to one student annually, covering tuition and living expenses. Lawyers from the firm regularly participated as arbitrators during the Academic Retreat.

- **Schellenberg Wittmer**

During the academic year, Schellenberg Wittmer organised a seminar for MIDS students focused on the practical aspects of working with experts and witnesses in international arbitration. Led by the firm's senior arbitration lawyers, the seminar provided real-life insights and actionable guidance for students preparing to enter the field. Topics included expert report analysis, witness preparation, and strategic considerations in arbitral proceedings.

This partnership exemplified MIDS's commitment to bridging academic training with professional practice, ensuring students were equipped with the skills and knowledge needed for life after the programme.

Schellenberg Wittmer maintained its collaboration agreement with MIDS, selecting two interns annually from the student cohort:

- 22-23 batch: Quentin CHADANIAN (from 01.09.2023 to 29.02.2024) and Ana PARRA (from 01.03.2024 to 31.08.2024)
- 23-24 batch: Jan BALDYGA (from 01.07.2024 to 31.12.2024).

- **Three Crowns**

Three Crowns LLP supported the MIDS through the **Jan Paulsson Scholarship**, established in 2021 in honor of one of the firm's founding partners. The scholarship provided substantial financial assistance to exceptional candidates from developing economies with demonstrated financial need. In addition to financial support, the firm maintained close contact with the selected students throughout their time at MIDS. Founding Partner Georgios Petrochilos also taught the intensive course *Fundamentals of Investment Treaty Arbitration*, offered every two years.

- **Lambadarios**

Lambadarios Law Firm continued its collaboration with MIDS by awarding a partial scholarship each year to a student from a Greek university. Established in memory of Epaminondas Lambadarios, the scholarship supported students pursuing an LL.M. in international dispute settlement and was awarded based on both academic merit and social criteria.

- **Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA)**

The PCA continued its long-standing partnership with MIDS by selecting one graduate annually to join its International Bureau in The Hague as Assistant Legal Counsel for a 12-month fellowship. For the 2024–2025 academic year, the PCA requested a revised selection procedure. The new process included an assessment of all available course grades by mid-March 2025. The CVs of students with the highest academic performance were submitted to the PCA for consideration, with interviews potentially conducted as part of the final selection. The MIDS provided a CHF 23,000

scholarship to support the selected graduate during their tenure. For the 2023–2024 cohort, Saniya Mirani was selected as the PCA Fellow.

*e. Other institutional partnerships*

- **National University of Singapore (NUS)**

Since 2017–2018, MIDS has offered a double degree programme in partnership with NUS. The programme allows students who have completed the LL.M. curriculum at either institution to enroll in the other for an additional semester. Upon completion, students receive both the MIDS and NUS LL.M. degrees. In Spring semester 2024, MIDS welcomed NUS student Parmeet Singh for one semester. For Autumn 2024, Aisvaria Subramanian and Nitya Chowdary Morampudi joined the MIDS as NUS students for a semester.

- **Paris Arbitration Academy**

MIDS continued its collaboration with the Paris Arbitration Academy by sponsoring an annual cocktail reception at the ICC Secretariat. The event was preceded by a presentation of the MIDS programme and organised with the support of the ICC. This partnership has proven to be a valuable recruitment channel, with many MIDS applicants having previously attended the Academy.

*f. Alumni Engagement*

MIDS alumni were central to the programme's reputation and global impact. Since its inception, MIDS has trained nearly 600 students of almost 100 nationalities, with over 60% originating from emerging and developing countries. Alumni now work across the globe in law firms, arbitral institutions, international organisations, governments, universities, and corporations.

The MIDS Alumni Association (MAA), founded in 2021 and led by its Executive Committee, worked closely with MIDS staff to strengthen alumni connections, represent alumni interests, and promote the programme's visibility. The Association also encouraged alumni contributions to the Alumni Scholarship, which supports outstanding candidates in financial need.

In 2024, MIDS Alumni Association continued its Mentorship Programme, offering students the opportunity to be paired with mentors from a pool of recent alumni. The programme aimed to provide academic and career guidance and was highly appreciated by both mentors and mentees. The MIDS Career Advisor worked closely with the MIDS Alumni Association to select mentors and match them with interested students based on shared interests and professional goals.

Each year, MIDS sponsors and hosts the Annual Alumni Event, a full-day public conference featuring alumni speakers. On 15 November 2024, the MAA held its 4th Annual Conference at Maison de la Paix in Geneva. The event brought together alumni, students, and practitioners for a day of panels, networking, and discussion.

Conference highlights:

- Keynote Address: Michael E. Schneider, Founding Partner & Senior Counsel, LALIVE
- Session 1: *"We're losing the ISDS fight"? If so, what next?* Moderated by Adetola Adebisin (MIDS 21–22), with panelists from Freshfields, the PCA, GBS Disputes and Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas
- Session 2: *Navigating Corruption-related Claims in Commercial Arbitration* Moderated by Juan Camilo Jiménez-Valencia (MIDS 17–18), with panelists from Saraf & Partners, Luther, Linklaters, and Morgan Lewis
- Session 3: *Battle of the Landmark Decisions* featuring Arthad Kurlekar and Rusudan Gergauli (MIDS 17–18), with a tribunal including Prof. Gabriel Kaufmann-Kohler
- Session 4: *Combating Climate Change through Public International Law – Symbolism or Effective Change?* Moderated by Guillaume Guez Maillard (MIDS 15–16), with panelists from Leiden University, Université de Genève, Sciences Po, and the ICJ

The conference concluded with closing remarks by Prof Zachary Douglas KC, and a cocktail reception, offering students and alumni a valuable opportunity to connect and exchange ideas.

### III. CONFERENCES AND OTHER EVENTS

Throughout 2024, the MIDS and the Geneva Center for International Dispute Settlement (CIDS) organised and co-hosted a series of high-level conferences, panel discussions, and ceremonial events that brought together leading academics, practitioners, and policymakers in the field of international dispute settlement. These events reflected MIDS's commitment to fostering dialogue, advancing research, and connecting students with the broader professional community.

#### 1. ITLOS-Nippon Foundation Visit and Conference

23–24 January 2024

Geneva

In collaboration with the University of Geneva, the CIDS hosted a conference on the occasion of the annual visit of the ITLOS-Nippon Foundation. The event was designed for government officials participating in the capacity-building programme on dispute settlement under UNCLOS. Presentations included:

- The International Judicial Function under Pressure – Guillaume Guez Maillard & Aditya Laddha
- Subject-Matter Jurisdiction and Incidental Issues in UNCLOS Part XV – Guillaume Guez Maillard & Aditya Laddha
- Exploration and Exploitation of the Deep Seabed – Dr. Virginie Tassin-Campanella
- Delimitation of the Continental Shelf: Nicaragua v. Colombia – Dr. Angel Horna
- The Eastern Mediterranean Initiative: A Track II Dialogue – Amb. Didier Pfrter & Ms. Laury Haytayan
- Sea-Level Rise and Maritime Boundaries – Dr. Lorenzo Palestini

Representatives from ITLOS, including Dr. Marco Benatar and Ms. Laura Kreft, expressed interest in future collaboration with the CIDS.

## 2. Conference: The International Judicial Function Under Pressure

8–9 February 2024

University of Geneva

This two-day conference was part of a research project funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation. It featured eight speakers and five discussants across four thematic panels:

- Judicial Function and State Consent
- Judicial Function and Economy
- Judicial Function and Standards of Review
- Judicial Function and Encroachment

Speakers included Aditya Laddha, Dr. Yusra Suedi, Christian Vidal-Leon, Prof. Hsien Wu, Dr. Johannes Fahner, Dr. Marco Dimetto, Dr. Juliana Guerra, and Germain Dabiré. Discussants included Prof. Hélène Ruiz-Fabri, Prof. Gabrielle Marceau, Prof. Mamadou Hébié, Dr. Lorenzo Palestini, and Guillaume Guez Maillard. The event attracted a large and engaged audience and contributed to an ongoing publication project.

## 3. Ceremony Honoring Professor Marcelo G. Kohen

19 February 2024

Graduate Institute, Geneva

MIDS/CIDS, in collaboration with the Department of International Law at the Graduate Institute, organised a ceremony to honor Professor Marcelo G. Kohen. The event featured a *lectio magistralis* titled *International Legality in the 21st Century* and marked the presentation of a volume of *Mélanges* celebrating his distinguished career.

## 4. Paris Arbitration Week (PAW) Panel: Digital Technology in Arbitration

19 March 2024

ICC Headquarters, Paris

During Paris Arbitration Week, MIDS/CIDS hosted a panel discussion titled *Digital Technology in Arbitration: How to Prepare for the AI-Driven Future*. The event featured:

- Ashleigh Broccchieri (ICC International Court of Arbitration)
- Monica Crespo (Jus Mundi)
- Yuri Mantilla (Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer)
- Prof. Jacques de Werra (University of Geneva, MIDS Committee)
- Moderator: Dilara Khamitova (Clyde & Co)

The panel explored the evolving role of artificial intelligence and digital tools in arbitral proceedings.

## 5. Lecture on Arbitrator powers in matters of corruption

12 June 2024

Geneva

MIDS hosted a session on *Arbitrator Powers in Matters of Corruption*, led by Dr. Yas Banifatemi. The event provided students with insights into the challenges and responsibilities arbitrators face when addressing corruption-related claims.

## 6. MIDS Alumni Association Annual Conference

15 November 2024

Maison de la Paix, Geneva

Organised by the MIDS Alumni Association (MAA), the 4th Annual Conference featured a full day of panels, networking, and discussion. Highlights included:

- Keynote by Michael E. Schneider (LALIVE)
- Panels on ISDS reform, corruption in arbitration, landmark decisions, and climate change litigation
- Participation from alumni across sectors and regions
- Closing cocktail reception

## **IV. RESEARCH**

In 2024, the CIDS continued to advance its mission of producing impactful, interdisciplinary research in the field of international dispute settlement. The Center's research projects addressed both theoretical and practical challenges facing international courts, tribunals, and arbitration mechanisms. Highlights included:

### **1. The International Judicial Function Under Pressure**

Led by: Prof. Laurence Boisson de Chazournes & Dr. Lorenzo Palestini

This project examined whether international courts and tribunals are exceeding their mandates or facing undue constraints. It explored tensions between judicial independence and state consent, standards of review, and the broader legitimacy of international adjudication. The project culminated in a major conference in February 2024.

### **2. Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) Reform**

Led by: Prof. Gabrielle Kaufmann-Kohler & Dr. Michele Potestà

This ongoing research focused on reform proposals within UNCITRAL Working Group III and broader debates on the legitimacy, efficiency, and fairness of ISDS mechanisms.