

2° EDLab Webinar

Accreditation of Joint Programmes:
current practices and future perspectives

The webinar is starting in a few minutes



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Introduction & Agenda

Agenda

- **Introduction**

Laura Howard, General Director of the SEA-EU Alliance

- **Presentation of the current context in France, Italy, Portugal, Spain**

Representatives of national authorities and/or agencies

- **Showcase of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes**

Mark Frederiks (NVAO)

- **Q&A**

Our panellists

EDLab Team

- **Dorothy Kelly** (*Chair*)
Arqus European University Alliance Coordinator
- **Laura Howard**
General Director of SEA-EU

Belgium

- Mark Frederiks, Coordinator International Policy at NVAO

France

- Sara Thornton (Université Paris Cité), Conseillère scientifique, Ministère de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche
- Benjamin DAGOT, Head of European Affairs, Europe and International Department, HCERES

Italy

- Marilena Maniaci, Member of the General Council, ANVUR - Agenzia Nazionale di Valutazione del Sistema Universitario e della Ricerca

Portugal

- Artur Santoalha, Deputy to the Secretary of State for Higher Education, Ministry of Science Technology and Higher Education
- Patricia Pereira, Portuguese Quality Assurance Agency

Spain

- Markus González Beilfuss, Undersecretary of Universities, Ministry of Universities

How to join the conversation

- **Q&A:**
Use the Q&A box to direct questions to our panellists
- **Chat:**
Use the chat box to present yourselves and/or discuss the topics amongst yourselves

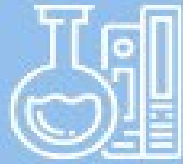
Evolving context - intensification of transnational cooperation



UNIVERSITIES FACE OBSTACLES FOR ENGAGING MORE EFFECTIVELY IN TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION

92%

of universities identified the **elimination of legal and administrative obstacles** as a **key issue**



- ❑ **Legal and administrative obstacles** to setup joint programmes and activities, including the award of joint degree, are **multiplied by the number of partners in an alliance** of HEIs in view of diverse national legislations
- ❑ **Uneven implementation of Bologna tools at national level** – quality assurance, ECTS
- ❑ **Difficulties to mutualise strengths and share joint resources** - financial, human, digital and physical resources, and services.

Challenges for Joint degrees

Obstacles exist at all levels: European, national, regional and institutional.

- Significant differences in quality assurance procedures in different national contexts, often meaning that a single joint programme has to undergo several accreditation procedures.
- The time scale for the validity of accreditation can vary.
- The need for re-accreditation following changes in the programme or the addition of new partners differs greatly.
- ex ante versus ex post accreditation.
- Institutional accreditation versus programme accreditation.
- Limitations on possibility to use quality assurance agencies from other countries.
- Limitations on use of European Approach.

The European Degree Label Institutional Laboratory: EDLab



Explore common criteria leading to a potential **European label for joint programmes**, to be piloted as of 2022 under Erasmus+. Later on, the possible design and delivery, on a voluntary basis, at national, regional or institutional level, of joint degrees at all levels, based on these co-created European criteria, could be envisaged



European policy experimentation in higher education.

Erasmus + pilot call topic 1:

Pilot a joint European degree label

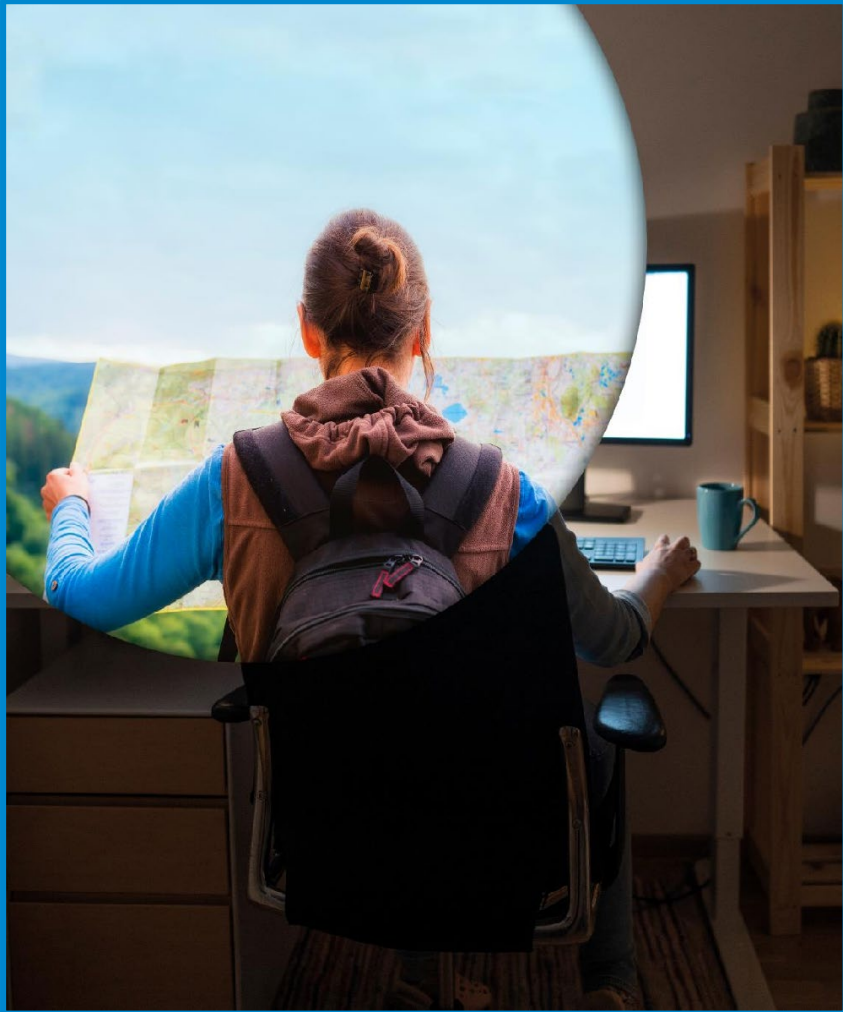
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Key information

- **Duration:** 12 months (starting on 1 March 2023)
- **Budget:** 200.000,00 EUR (EU contribution)
- **4 Alliances represented:** Arqus, ENLIGHT, EUTOPIA, SEA-EU
- **13 Full partners** from 5 countries
- **Diverse associate partners:** national ministries and quality assurance agencies, European and global university networks, student and alumni associations, along with other partner universities from our four alliances.
- **Main objective:** Further the implementation of European and international joint programmes and the European Degree Label
- **Four target countries:**
France, Italy, Portugal and Spain



Specific objectives of the call



Exploring and testing the relevance of the criteria

Exploring and recommending possible optimisation of the set of criteria

Elaborating proposals aiming to facilitate the development and implementation of joint degrees in Europe. This would include **proposing an approach for the delivery of joint degrees based on co-created European criteria.**

Co-created set of criteria (Call Annex)

Higher education institutions involved

Transnational joint degree delivery

Transparency of the learning outcomes

Quality assurance arrangements

Joint policies for the joint programme

Transnational campus – access to services

Co-created set of criteria (Call Annex)

Flexible and embedded student mobility arrangements

Multilingualism

Innovative learning approaches

Graduate outcomes

Inclusiveness and sustainability

Proposed European criteria
on
**Quality assurance
arrangements**

- Internal and external Quality Assurance is conducted in accordance with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG).
- The programme, the study field or the institutions are accredited/evaluated by an EQAR registered agency.
- If external quality assurance is required at programme level in the countries involved, the transnational programme should be accredited/evaluated preferably using the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes (EA).

Proposed European
criteria on

Joint policies for the joint programme

- The HEIs involved have joint policies for admission, selection, supervision, monitoring, assessment and recognition procedures for the joint study programme.

Presentation of the
current context in France,
Italy, Portugal, Spain



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2ND WEBINAIRE ON « CERTIFICATION » EDU LAB PROJECT

French Ministry of Higher Education and Research (MESR)

Professor Sara THORNTON
Scientific and pedagogical Advisor

Contents

1. The recognition of diplomas by the French authorities
2. A French particularity: two types of recognition for the Undergraduate Degree or “Licence” and Master level
3. Main criteria for awarding a national diploma
4. A common set of criteria in line with the European approach but 2 additional French criteria
5. Procedures for accreditation to award a national Master’s degree and for the attribution of the “grade” or equivalent Master degree level
6. Rules that apply for setting-up a degree (joint or not)

1. The recognition of diplomas by the French authorities is based on two principles

- LMD (Bologna process) Licence 3 years, Masters 2 years and Doctorate 3 years

- Licence (first undergraduate Degree) = National licence diploma or equivalent level licence “grade de Master” (180 ECTS)
- Master = national master's degree or equivalent Masters level “grade de Master” (120 ECTS)
- Doctorate = national doctorate diploma (3 years)

- HCERES

- State recognition of these levels takes into account the evaluations carried out by the HCERES (High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education/ Haut Conseil de l'évaluation de la recherche et de l'enseignement supérieur (Hcéres). This is an independent public authority responsible for evaluating all higher education and research structures, and for validating evaluation procedures carried out by other bodies.

2. A French particularity: two types of recognition for the licence and master levels

- **Capped low fees:** guarantees to citizens that public universities offer an education that is almost free of charge for students (170€ per annum in “Licence”). The French Constitution provides for “free” secondary state education and very low fees for state university education (Licence and Masters) and certain “Grandes Ecoles”.
- **Unregulated tuition fees possible:** Higher Education institutions can set up “Licence” and Masters degrees with higher unregulated tuition fees (in addition to their “low fee” education offer). Apart from the amount of tuition fees, national diplomas and degrees are equivalent and are verified/evaluated by HCERES and undergo Ministry scrutiny.

3. Main criteria for awarding a National Licence diploma or an equivalent level (or “grade” in French)

(I)

Criteria	National first degree/”Licence” diploma	Equivalent level Licence (“grade”)
ECTS	180	180
Research-based training	yes	yes
Possibility of continuing to a Master's degree	yes	yes
Periodic evaluation	yes	yes
Fixed tuition fees	yes (170€ EU or 2770€ non-EU)	no
Obligation to print the diploma on parchment from the national printing house	yes (but adaptation can be made in case of joint diploma)	no

3. Main criteria for awarding a National Masters diploma or an equivalent level (“grade”) (II)

Criteria	National diploma Master	Equivalent level Master (or “grade”)
ECTS	120	120
Research-based training	yes	yes
Possibility of continuing to a Doctoral degree	yes	yes
Periodic evaluation	yes	yes
Fixed tuition fees	yes (243€ EU or 3770€ non-EU)	no
Obligation to print the diploma on parchment from the national printing house	yes but adaptations can be found in case of joint diploma. Although logos and special mentions must be done by hand. The current French grading platform Apogée cannot be calibrated to produce Joint Masters parchment with all mentions.	no

4. A common set of criteria in line with the European approach but with two additional criteria

The French government takes into account two additional evaluation criteria:

- **Link to Research:** the extent to which a taught course or training is linked to research (sufficient lecturers-researchers on teaching staff, links with research laboratories, scholarly publications, etc.) and the initiation of students to research practices
- **Professional future of students:** professional integration and links with the world of work

The European approach is therefore not yet sufficient to accredit an institution to deliver a National degree or to award an equivalent status (in French “le grade”).

5. Procedures for accreditation to award a National Licence or Master degree or for the attribution of an equivalent Master or Licence level (“grade”):

	National diploma	Equivalent level or « grade »
Assessment prior to the 1st application for recognition by the State	no	no
Timetable	yes (a predefined timetable for organisational reasons, but it is also possible to apply for accreditation on a rolling basis for the creation of a degree)	No, on a rolling basis only, as the flow of applications is less significant.
Duration of the process (evaluation + recognition of the degree by the French State)	1 year (ad hoc request) 2.5 years (within the official process timeline)	3 to 6 months (creation of diploma) 2 years (renewal)

6. French rules that apply for setting-up a degree (joint or not): but we can adjust!

The main points that could be subject to adjustment when creating a joint degree are the following (none of them are blocking) :

- **The number of ECTS** may differ from one country to another. It is possible to provide for a common base of ECTS on the one hand and additional ECTS for students from countries whose legislation would require a higher number of ECTS to obtain the degree. This option has been implemented by the CHARM-EU alliance.
- **Higher Joint degree tuition fees than those stipulated** for the French National master or licence degrees, the French institution should opt for a “personal-to-institution” degree and not a National degree since the degree does not impose any tuition fees.
- **Printing the diploma:** If the joint degree is a national degree, the French institution will have to print the degree on paper from the national printing house. Either the other members of the alliance agree that the French institution should print the joint degree for all of them, in which case there will be only one parchment. If the other members of the alliance do not agree (or if their legislation imposes other constraints), the alliance will print a joint diploma on a paper of its choice and the French institution will, in parallel, have to print the diploma on paper from the French national printing house. Indeed, all official national documents (driving licence, identity card, etc.) must be printed on paper from the national printing house, which holds this monopoly. This decision is not within the control of the Ministry of Higher Education, which cannot change it.

Thank you for your attention!



**ACCREDITATION OF JOINT
PROGRAMMES: CURRENT PRACTICES
AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES:
THE CASE OF SPAIN**

26 May 2023



LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- Distribution of Powers: National legislation; National and regional QA agencies (EQAR)
- Organic Law 2/2023 University System:
 - Art. 25: duty to foster and facilitate the creation and participation of university alliances
 - Art. 26: duty to foster and facilitate the creation of joint degrees and programmes
 - Art. 5: European quality assurance standards & recognition of QAA registered in EQAR



LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- Royal Decree 822/2021 on quality assurance proceedings

Special provisions regarding (DA 6, 7 and 8)

International joint degrees: 2 HEI

International joint degrees in the framework of EUI:3HEI

Erasmus Mundus joint degrees (DA 8)

INTERNATIONAL JOINT DEGREES

Special provisions for

Texto explicativo...



- A. quality assurance
- B. number of ECTS
- C. content of university agreements

A. Quality assurance

- Recognitions of evaluations of QAA registered in EQAR
- Possibility of European Approach

INTERNATIONAL JOINT DEGREES

Texto explicativo...

B. number of ECTS

C. content of university agreements

- academic fees
- management of academic records
- academic rules
- degrees and European Supplement





IMPLEMENTATION

- EUROPEAN STUDIES DEGREE; UNA EUROPA; UCM; NVAO (NL)
- MASTER IN MARINE BIOTECHNOLOGY; EU-CONEXUS; UCV; HCERES (RO)
- MASTER OF ARTS IN EUROPEAN STUDIES; ARQUS; UGR; ZEVA (D)



GOBIERNO
DE ESPAÑA

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Ministerio de Universidades

Showcase of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes



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NVAO

European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes

EDLab Webinar, 26th May 2023

Mark Frederiks, NVAO (Flanders)



European Approach for QA of JPs (EA)

- European Approach to tackle long-lasting problem of multiple national accreditations with sometimes contradictory criteria and not suitable for JPs
- EA based on several European projects (e.g. JOQAR)
- EA developed within Bologna Process and adopted by EHEA Ministers in Yerevan, May 2015

<http://www.eqar.eu/topics/joint-programmes>

Essence of European Approach

European standards and procedure

- Standards and procedure according to ESG, taking “jointness” into account

Decision/result

- By EQAR-listed agency
- Accepted in other EHEA countries by other agencies

No additional national criteria!

- “Setting standards...based on the agreed tools of the EHEA, without applying additional national criteria”

Definitions in EA

- **Joint programme:** An integrated curriculum coordinated and offered jointly by different HEIs from EHEA countries and leading to a double/multiple degrees or a joint degree
- **Double/Multiple degrees:** Separate degrees awarded by HEIs offering the joint programme attesting the successful completion of this programme
(If 2 degrees are awarded by 2 institutions, this is a „double degree“)

Definitions in EA

- **Joint degree:** A single document awarded by HEIs offering the joint programme and nationally acknowledged as the recognised award of the joint programme

Application in Different Systems of External QA

- If some of cooperating HEIs require programme accreditation/evaluation then HEIs should select a QA agency registered on EQAR
 - 55 agencies registered:
<https://www.eqar.eu/register/agencies/>
- Agency will use Standards and Procedure to carry out a single procedure of the entire joint programme; the decision to be recognised in all countries where the programme is offered
- European Approach may be used by self-accrediting HEIs and countries outside of EHEA

Standards for QA of Joint Programmes

1. Eligibility

- status; joint design/delivery; cooperation agreement

2. Learning Outcomes

- level; disciplinary field; achievement; (regulated professions)

3. Study Programme

- curriculum; credits; workload

4. Admission and Recognition

5. Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Standards for QA of Joint Programmes

6. Student Support

7. Resources

- staff; facilities

8. Transparency and Documentation

9. Quality Assurance

Procedure for external QA of joint programmes

- The cooperating institutions should jointly select a suitable EQAR-registered quality assurance agency.
- The agency should communicate appropriately with the competent national authorities of the countries in which the cooperating higher education institutions are based.

Procedure for external QA of joint programmes

1. Self-Evaluation Report
2. Review Panel
3. Site Visit
4. Review Report
5. Formal Outcomes and Decision
6. Appeals
7. Reporting
8. Follow-Up
9. Periodicity

National implementation of EA

- EA available to all HEIs: 17 countries
- EA available to some HEIs or only under specific conditions: 11 countries
- EA not available to HEIs: 19 countries

<https://www.eqar.eu/kb/joint-programmes/national-implementation/>

EA procedures

- 20 EA procedures listed on DEQAR:
<https://www.eqar.eu/kb/joint-programmes/european-approach-cases>
- But real number probably >30:
 - Not all accreditation procedures carried out with EA are listed as EA
 - Not all agencies/countries are included in DEQAR
- European Universities Initiative and European Degrees will increase the numbers
- European Approach Online Toolkit:
 - Guide for those wanting to use the EA
 - <http://impea.eu/>

Thank you!



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