

# The European Approach for QA of JP

QFORTE workshop

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european consortium for accreditation

# Content

1. *What* are joint programmes?
2. How are joint programmes *assessed*?
3. The standards in the European Approach
4. The procedure of the European Approach

# Terminology

## Diverse definitions in use:

- **European Consortium for Accreditation** in higher education: “A joint programme is a programme offered jointly by different higher education institutions irrespective of the degree awarded.”
- **European University Association’s Guidelines** for quality enhancement in European joint master programmes: “Programmes which are developed and implemented jointly by several institutions in different countries.”

# Terminology

- **Clear separation between PROGRAMME and DEGREE**
- **Joint Degree:** „A single document awarded by higher education institutions offering the joint programme and nationally acknowledged as the recognized award of the joint programme”
- **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“)

# Terminology

A wide range of „**fake**“ Joint Programmes in use:

(well) integrated Mobility to increase internationalization does not make a Joint Programme

Semesters abroad supported by Double Degree agreements to not make a Joint Programme

# How to assess Joint Programmes

- National
- Cooperation
- **European Approach**

# National assessments

- Challenge: several national accreditation procedures
- Fragmented assessments, neglecting crucial characteristic of programme, namely that it is offered jointly
- Programme needs to follow different / contradicting national regulations
- Sometimes only parts of the programme is assessed
- Often heavy accreditation burden for HEIs involved in joint programmes

# joint assessments – agency cooperation

- Challenge: joint accreditation procedure
- Procedure conducted by 2 agencies. Totality of the offered programme *might* be assessed by 1 panel *but*:
  - Quite an investment: comparing frameworks and methodologies; agreeing on criteria and specifics of procedure
  - Limited costs/burden reduction if multiple sites are visited and reports written
  - Problematic if cooperating agencies attach different conclusions to results of joint procedure (different decisions possible)



# Solution: European Approach

- single accreditation procedure
- 1 coordinating agency responsible for the procedure
- Agencies of other consortium countries are informed:
  - Being informed on procedure and outcomes
- The totality of the joint programme is assessed
- 1 international panel; 1 site visit; 1 report
- Decision of the coordinating agency accepted by all other relevant (national /regional) decision making bodies
  
- As soon as ONE consortium member requires programme accreditation, the EA is helpful

# Single accreditation procedure

## Single procedure

- Procedure by:
  - One agency
- Focus of procedure
  - Whole joint programme
- Result:
  - One accreditation decision that is accepted in all countries of JP consortium

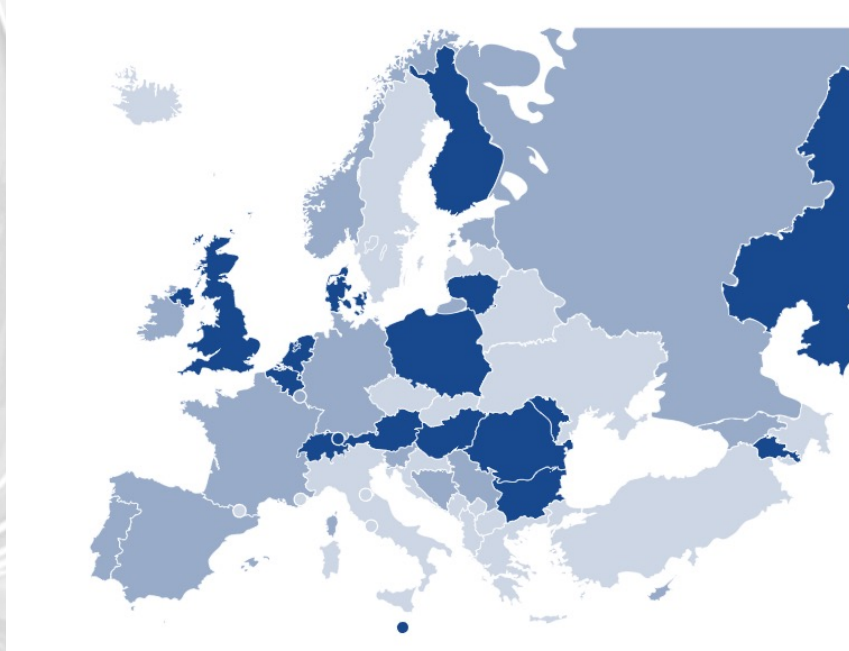


# Structure of the European Approach I

- Background report (context, current QA practices, lessons learnt from ECA's JOQAR project)
- European Approach:
  - Introduction and definitions
  - A. Application in Different Systems of External QA
  - B. Standards for QA of Joint Programmes
  - C. Procedure for External QA of Joint Programmes

*Note: B and C are in line with European Standards and Guidelines for QA in EHEA (ESG)*
- Adopted by EHEA Ministers in Yerevan, 14-15 May 2015

# National implementation of the EA



## European Approach available to all higher education institutions

Armenia	Hungary	Netherlands
Austria	Kazakhstan	Poland
Belgium	Liechtenstein	Romania
Bulgaria	Lithuania	Switzerland
Denmark	Malta	United Kingdom
Finland	Moldova	

## European Approach available to some higher education institutions or only under specific conditions

Bosnia and Herzegovina	Germany	Russia
Cyprus	Ireland	Serbia
Estonia	Luxembourg	Slovenia
France	Norway	Spain
Georgia	Portugal	

## European Approach not available to higher education institutions

Albania	Greece	North Macedonia
Andorra	Holy See	San Marino
Azerbaijan	Iceland	Slovakia
Belarus	Italy	Sweden
Croatia	Latvia	Turkey
Czech Republic	Montenegro	Ukraine

Source: EQAR

# Deciding on an appropriate approach

## A. Application in Different Systems of External QA

- If some of cooperating HEIs require programme accreditation/evaluation then HEIs should select a QA agency registered in EQAR (<http://www.eqar.eu/>)
- 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 in the European Approach

1. Eligibility
2. Learning Outcomes
3. Study Programme
4. Admission and Recognition
5. Learning, Teaching and Assessment
6. Student Support
7. Resources
8. Transparency and Documentation
9. Quality Assurance

# Standards in the European Approach

- Follow the definition in the European Approach: “Joint programmes” are understood as an integrated curriculum coordinated and offered jointly by different higher education institutions from EHEA countries, and leading to double/multiple degrees or a joint degree.
- Adding rules defeats the purpose of removing obstacles: “without applying additional national criteria”
- Standards already encompass differences in national approaches. E.g. for NVAO Learning Outcomes very important; other agencies/systems may find other standards more important.

# Standards in the European Approach

## 1. Eligibility

### 1.1 Status

The institutions that offer a joint programme should be recognised as higher education institutions by the relevant authorities of their countries. Their respective national legal frameworks should enable them to participate in the joint programme and, if applicable, to award a joint degree. The institutions awarding the degree(s) should ensure that the degree(s) belong to the higher education degree systems of the countries in which they are based.



# Standards in the European Approach

## 1. Eligibility

### 1.2 Joint design and delivery

The joint programme should be offered jointly, involving all cooperating institutions in the design and delivery of the programme.

# Standards in the European Approach

## 1. Eligibility

### 1.3 Cooperation Agreement

The terms and conditions of the joint programme should be laid down in a cooperation agreement. The agreement should in particular cover the following issues:

- Denomination of the degree(s) awarded in the programme
- Coordination and responsibilities of the partners involved regarding management and financial organisation (including funding, sharing of costs and income etc.)
- Admission and selection procedures for students
- Mobility of students and teachers
- Examination regulations, student assessment methods, recognition of credits and degree awarding procedures in the consortium

# Standards in the European Approach

## 2. Learning Outcomes

### 2.1 Level [ESG 1.2]

The intended learning outcomes should align with the corresponding level in the Framework for Qualifications in the European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA), as well as the applicable national qualifications framework(s).

### 2.2 Disciplinary field

The intended learning outcomes should comprise knowledge, skills, and competencies in the respective disciplinary field(s).

# Standards in the European Approach

## 2. Learning Outcomes

### 2.3 Achievement [ESG 1.2]

The programme should be able to demonstrate that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

### 2.4 Regulated Professions

If relevant for the specific joint programme, the minimum agreed training conditions specified in the European Union Directive 2005/36/EC, or relevant common trainings frameworks established under the Directive, should be taken into account.

# Standards in the European Approach

## 3. Study programme (ESG 1.2)

### 3.1 Curriculum

The structure and content of the curriculum should be fit to enable the students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

### 3.2 Credits

The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) should be applied properly and the distribution of credits should be clear.

# Standards in the European Approach

## 3. Study programme (ESG 1.2)

### 3.3 Workload

A joint bachelor programme will typically amount to a total student workload of 180-240 ECTS-credits; a joint master programme will typically amount to 90-120 ECTS-credits and should not be less than 60 ECTS-credits at second cycle level (credit ranges according to the FQ-EHEA); for joint doctorates there is no credit range specified.

The workload and the average time to complete the programme should be monitored.

# Standards in the European Approach

## 4. Admission and Recognition [ESG 1.4]

### 4.1. Admission

The admission requirements and selection procedures should be appropriate in light of the programme's level and discipline.

### 4.2. Recognition

Recognition of qualifications and of periods of studies (including recognition of prior learning) should be applied in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention and subsidiary documents.

# Standards in the European Approach

## 5. Learning, Teaching and Assessment [ESG 1.3]

### 5.1 Learning and teaching

The programme should be designed to correspond with the intended learning outcomes, and the learning and teaching approaches applied should be adequate to achieve those. The diversity of students and their needs should be respected and attended to, especially in view of potential different cultural backgrounds of the students.



# Standards in the European Approach

## 5. Learning, Teaching and Assessment [ESG 1.3]

### 5.2 Assessment of students

The examination regulations and the assessment of the achieved learning outcomes should correspond with the intended learning outcomes. They should be applied consistently among partner institutions.

# Standards in the European Approach

## 6. Student Support [ESG 1.6]

The student support services should contribute to the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. They should take into account specific challenges of mobile students.

# Standards in the European Approach

## 7. Resources [ESG 1.5 & 1.6]

### 7.1 Staff

The staff should be sufficient and adequate (qualifications, professional and international experience) to implement the study programme.

### 7.2 Facilities

The facilities provided should be sufficient and adequate in view of the intended learning outcomes.

# Standards in the European Approach

## 8. Transparency and Documentation [ESG 1.8]

Relevant information about the programme like admission requirements and procedures, course catalogue, examination and assessment procedures etc. should be well documented and published by taking into account specific needs of mobile students

# Standards in the European Approach

## 9. Quality Assurance [ESG 1.1 & part 1]

The cooperating institutions should apply joint internal quality assurance processes in accordance with part one of the ESG.

# Any questions?



# Procedure in the European Approach

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

## Procedure in the European Approach

- 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.



# The procedure according to the European Approach

## 1. Self-Evaluation Report [ESG 2.3]

- Jointly submitted by the cooperating HEIs.
- Should contain comprehensive information that demonstrates the compliance of the programme with the Standards.
- Necessary information about the respective national frameworks of the cooperating HEIs to understand the context/national positioning of the programme
- Focus explicitly on the distinctive feature of the joint programme as a joint endeavour of HEIs from more than one national higher education system.

# The procedure according to the European Approach

## 2. Review Panel [ESG 2.3 & 2.4]

- At least 4 panel members; expertise in relevant subject(s), including labour market, QA expertise
- International expertise and experience. Collectively, knowledge of the HE systems of the HEIs involved and the language(s) of instruction. At least 2 countries involved in the consortium
- At least one student.
- Impartiality and fairness; HEIs may object against a panel member, but have no veto right
- The agency should brief the experts on review activity, role, specifics of a joint programme.

# Procedure in the European Approach

## 3. Site Visit [ESG 2.3]

- Should enable the review panel to discuss the joint programme based on SER and assess whether the programme complies with the Standards
- The site visit should therefore include discussions with representatives of all HEIs; management HEIs and JP, staff, students, alumni, professional field.
- Although the site visit should normally be restricted to one location, the provision at all locations has to be taken into account.

# Procedure in the European Approach

## 4. Review Report [ESG 2.3 & 2.6]

- Should contain evidence, analysis and conclusions with regard to the Standards.
- Should contain recommendations for developing the programme further.
- Panel should make recommendation for decision.
- The conclusions and recommendations should pay particular attention to the distinctive features of the joint programme.
- The institutions should have the opportunity to comment on a draft version of the review report and request correction of factual errors.

# Procedure in the European Approach

## 5. Formal Outcomes and Decision [ESG 2.5]

- Agency should take a decision on the basis of the review report and the recommendation for the decision, considering the comments by HEIs as appropriate.
- In case the review results in an accreditation decision, it grants or denies the accreditation (with or without conditions), based on the Standards
- The agency may supplement the formal outcome and the accreditation decision by recommendations.
- The agency should give reasons for its accreditation decision.

# Procedure in the European Approach

## 6. Appeals [ESG 2.7]

- The institutions should have the right to appeal against a formal outcome or an accreditation decision. Therefore, the agency should have a formalised appeals procedure in place.

# The procedure according to the European Approach

## 7. Reporting [ESG 2.6]

- The agency should publish the review report and, if applicable, the formal outcome or the accreditation decision on its website.
- At least an English summary of the review report and an English version of the decision, including its reasons, should be published.

# Procedure in the European Approach

## 8. Follow-up [ESG 2.3]

- The agency should agree with the cooperating institutions a follow-up procedure to assess the fulfilment of conditions – if applicable – and/or to evaluate the follow-up actions on recommendations – if applicable.



# Procedure in the European Approach

## 9. Periodicity [ESG 1.10]

- The joint programme should be reviewed periodically every 6 years. If there is a positive accreditation decision it should be granted – if the decision is positive – for a period of 6 years. During the 6-year period, agency should be informed about changes in the consortium offering the joint programme.

# Online resources: IMPEA (ECA & PKA)

ImpEA

Introduction ▾ EA Introductory training EA Procedure Understanding EA ▾ Guide for self-evaluation report Guide for QA procedure 🔍



## European Approach Online Toolkit

The screenshot displays the IMPEA website's main navigation and a central content area. The navigation bar includes links for 'Introduction', 'EA Introductory training', 'EA Procedure', 'Understanding EA', 'Guide for self-evaluation report', and 'Guide for QA procedure', along with a search icon. A blue accessibility icon is positioned on the left. The main content area features the title 'European Approach Online Toolkit' and is surrounded by five circular images: a group of people in a meeting, a woman working on a laptop, a woman gesturing during a discussion, a man sitting on a blue sofa with a laptop, and a woman working at a desk in a bright office.

# What is needed on national level?

- legal framework allowing (national) agency to use the methodology (including flexibility for arrangements of visits in other countries, procedures in other languages)
- legal framework to enable the (national) decision making body to accept decisions of other EQAR registered agencies
- technicalities:
  - Acceptance of EA report format
  - Language / translation
  - Accreditation period (6 years)

# THANK YOU!

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