# European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes (European Approach/EA)

## EA 2027 for BFUG consultation

### INTRODUCTION

Joint programmes are a hallmark of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

They are set up to enhance the mobility of students and staff, to facilitate mutual learning and cooperation opportunities and to create programmes of excellence. In doing so, they offer a genuine European learning experience to students and facilitate development of intercultural competences highly relevant for an increasingly interconnected world.

The commitment to enable and strengthen joint or integrated study programmes has been present in the Bologna Process since its beginnings: in the Bologna Declaration (1999) and Prague Communique (2001) the ministers responsible for higher education committed themselves to promote "*integrated programmes of study*" and support "*joint degrees",* respectively. This commitment, further expressed in subsequent Bologna Ministerial Communiques, culminated with the ministers adopting the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes (in further text: European Approach) in 2015.

The European Approach has been developed to ease external quality assurance of joint programmes, and, in particular, to:

- dismantle an important obstacle to the development of joint programmes by setting standards for these programmes that are based on the agreed tools of the EHEA
- facilitate integrated approaches to quality assurance of joint programmes that genuinely reflect and mirror their joint character.

In 2024, the ministers requested that the European Approach is revised together with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) in order to ensure alignment with the ESG and up-to-date character of the document. The second version of the European Approach was hence adopted by the Iasi/Chisinau EHEA ministerial conference in 2027.

### Scope, context and applicability

European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes is applicable to joint programmes, regardless of whether they lead to joint degrees or double/multiple degrees (see Glossary in Section *tbd* for definitions of these terms) and regardless of the level of higher education. This approach is applicable primarily to joint programmes offered jointly by higher education institutions from two or more countries and does not aim to address the quality assurance of programmes delivered jointly by different institutions from a single country.

European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes is applicable to joint programmes that are offered by higher education institutions within EHEA, including when partners from beyond EHEA are involved.

The EHEA is characterised by a diversity of approaches to external QA, including accreditation, evaluation or audit at the level of study programmes and/or institutions. While these different approaches respond to the needs and requirements of their respective contexts, it is one of the EHEA key commitments that they are all aligned with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

The ESG apply to quality assurance procedures of joint programmes as to all other types of programmes. Thus, the European Approach is mainly based on the ESG and on the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA).
In addition, the European Approach takes into account the distinctive features of joint programmes and, thus, specifies the required approach accordingly.

The EA is to be applied by EQAR-registered agencies or institutions not subject to mandatory programme-level external QA, to ensure the processes' compliance with the ESG.

In order to fulfil its role in dismantling obstacles to delivering joint programmes in Europe, the European Approach is to be applied without adding additional national requirements.

When used for external evaluations, the standards and the procedure of the European Approach should be applied in its entirety since a comprehensive implementation of the European Approach as a single instrument is crucial for achieving its objectives. When used for internal evaluations, the standards of the European Approach should be applied in its entirety.

## Part A. Application in Different Systems of External QA

The European Approach can be applied in one of two ways, depending on the needs of the consortium partners and the requirements of their external QA frameworks:

A. If some of the cooperating higher education institutions require external quality assurance at programme level [1](e.g. programme accreditation or evaluation is mandatory)[1], then the cooperating institutions should select a suitable quality assurance agency from the list of EQAR-registered agencies.
The agency will use the Standards (part B) and the Procedure (part C) to carry out a single evaluation or accreditation of the entire joint programme.
The external quality assurance decision should be accepted in all countries where the programme is offered, without any additional requirements.

B. If all cooperating higher education institutions from EHEA are subject to institutional level external QA by an EQAR-registered agency and are not required to undergo programme-level external QA they should[2] use Part B of the European Approach in setting up joint internal approval and monitoring processes for their joint programmes.
In these cases, no additional external evaluation or accreditation procedures at the programme level are necessary.

[1]This includes also models like accreditation of study fields, i.e. it related to all levels other than the institutional level.
[2] This does not imply obligation on part of institutions which are not obliged to undergo external QA at the programme level, but rather guidance if they decide to use the European Approach.

The standards employ the common English usage of "should" which has the connotation of prescription and compliance.

## Part B1. Eligibility for the application of the European Approach

***The agency that carries out the review procedure is responsible for checking the criteria under Eligibility. Only if these are met, the procedure may continue.***

**1. Consortium Agreement**

The institutions should lay down the terms and conditions of the joint programme in a formally approved consortium agreement that covers at least the following issues:

- Denomination of the degree(s) awarded in the programme
- Coordination and responsibilities of the partners involved regarding management and financial organisation
- Internal quality assurance policies and processes conducted by the consortium
- Admission and selection procedures for students
- Mobility of students and teachers and recognition of achievements, if applicable
- Examination regulations and student assessment methods.
- Degree awarding procedures in the consortium.

**2. Volume**

The volume of the joint programme should be aligned with the QF-EHEA volume descriptors for the different higher education cycles[3] and with the ECTS Users' Guide.

## Part B2. Standards for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes in the EHEA

***The peer reviewers evaluate compliance against the criteria.***

**1. Programme Design**

**1.1. Joint Ownership and Responsibility**

The joint programme should be designed and delivered jointly, as a shared responsibility of the consortium. This includes a joint ownership reflected in the programme.

The institutions should jointly:

- Design, manage and deliver the programme
- Define the common intended learning outcomes of the programme
- Implement the common admission and selection procedures
- Define student assessment methods and a common set of rules applicable to examination
- Support the mobility of students and staff

**1.2 Programme quality assurance**

The consortium should have reliable joint policies and processes for the design, approval, monitoring and periodic review of the joint programme.

[3] 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

### 1.3 Learning Outcomes

The intended learning outcomes should correspond to the appropriate level of the QF-EHEA. The ILOs should foster the achievement of knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy in the corresponding professional and/or disciplinary field(s), align with latest developments in the field, and support the relevance of the programme for the needs of students, society and the labour market.

### 1.4 Curriculum

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

### 1.5 Credits and Workload

The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) should be applied, and the distribution of credits should be clear. The workload and the average time to complete the programme should be appropriate and monitored.

## 2. Admission and Recognition

### 2.1. Admission and progression

The admission requirements, selection procedures and study progression rules should be appropriate in light of the programme's level and content.
Admission and study progression rules should be transparently implemented at consortium level.

### 2.2. 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.

## 3. Learning, teaching and assessment

Learning, teaching and assessment should support the achievement of the intended learning outcomes of the programme and be delivered in a student-centred manner.

Assessment should demonstrate the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and assessment regulation should be applied consistently by the consortium, across partner institutions.

The diversity of students and their needs should be respected and attended to, especially in view of different cultural backgrounds.

## 4. Student Support

Consortium should provide all students of the joint programme with equal access to support services necessary for achieving the intended learning outcomes. Specific attention should be dedicated to supporting students in engaging with multiple and diverse learning environments.

## 5. Resources

### 5.1 Staff

The consortium should ensure that there is a sufficient number of staff at all institutions for delivering the joint programme. Staff profiles, in terms of their qualifications and professional experience should be adequate for implementing the study programme.
The consortium should offer sufficient professional development opportunities to their staff for working in an international and intercultural setting.

**5.2 Facilities**

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

**6. Transparency and Documentation**

Relevant information about the programme, such as admission requirements and procedures, course catalogue, examination and assessment procedures, should be well documented and published, taking into account students' needs.

**7. Quality Assurance**

The cooperating institutions should apply joint internal quality assurance processes in accordance with Part 1 of the ESG.

Joint internal quality assurance processes should include a structured, meaningful and visible role for students, staff, and other internal and external stakeholders. The core outcomes of these processes and the measures taken should be shared with the stakeholders, including students and staff.

## Part C. Procedure for External Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes in the EHEA

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

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

The external quality assurance procedure should be based on a self- evaluation report (SER) jointly submitted by the cooperating institutions. The SER should contain comprehensive information that demonstrates the compliance of the programme with the Standards for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes in the EHEA (part B).

In addition, the report should contain the necessary information about the respective national frameworks of the cooperating institutions that foreign agencies and experts might need in order to appreciate the context, especially the positioning of the programme within the national higher education systems.

The SER should focus explicitly on the distinctive feature of the joint programme as a joint endeavour.

**2. Peer reviewers [ESG 2.3 & 2.4]**

The agency should appoint a panel of at least four members. The panel should combine expertise in the relevant subject(s) or discipline(s), including the labour market/world of work in the relevant field(s), and expertise in quality assurance in higher education.

Through their international expertise and experience the peer reviewers should be able to take into account the distinctive features of the joint programme. The peer reviewers should collectively

possess knowledge of the HE systems of the HEIs involved and the language(s) of instruction used. The panel should include members from at least two countries involved in the consortium providing the programme. The panel should include at least one student.

The agency should ensure the impartiality of the experts and observe fairness towards the applying higher education institutions. To this end, the institutions should have the right to raise well-grounded objections against a reviewer but not a right to veto their appointment.

The agency should prepare the experts with resources on the review activity, their specific role, and the specifics of the quality assurance procedure. The preparation should focus particularly on the distinctive features of a joint programme.

**3. Site Visit [ESG 2.3]**

The site visit should enable the peer reviewers to discuss the joint programme based on the self-evaluation report and assess whether the programme complies with the Standards (part B).

The site visit should therefore include discussions with representatives of all cooperating institutions and in particular the management of the institutions and the programme, the staff, the students, and other relevant stakeholders, such as alumni and the professional field.

Although the site visit by peer reviewers is normally organised in-person to at least one location, the provision at all locations has to be taken into account.

**4. Review Report [ESG 2.3 & 2.5]**

The peer reviewers should prepare a report that contains relevant evidence, analysis and conclusions with regard to the Standards (part B). The report should be clear and accessible to the academic community, external partners, and other interested individuals. It should also be useful for the consortium and provide recommendations for improvement. In case the review results in a formal outcome the peer reviewers should make a recommendation for the 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.

**5. Formal Outcomes and Decision [ESG 2.6]**

If required, the agency should take a decision on the basis of the review report and the peer reviewers' recommendation for the decision. In case the review results in an accreditation decision, it grants or denies the accreditation (with or without conditions), based on the Standards (part B). The agency may supplement the formal outcome and the accreditation decision by recommendations.

The agency should give reasons for its accreditation decision. This applies in particular for accreditation decisions limited by conditions or negative decisions and for cases where the decision differs from the peer reviewers' conclusions and recommendation for the decision.

The agency should provide all necessary information emerging from the review requested by the public authorities, to be used by institutions in requesting the formal recognition of the accreditation decision, in different higher education systems.

**6. Complaints and Appeals [ESG 2.7]**

The institutions should have the right to appeal against a formal outcome or an accreditation decision, or to issue a complaint regarding the conduct of external assessment.

Any appeal against the formal outcome or accreditation decision, or complaint regarding the conduct of the agency is dealt with according to the procedure in place.

**7. Publication of outcomes [ESG 2.5]**

The agency should publish the full review report by peer reviewers, together with any other evidence and documents used in the decision-making. If applicable, the formal outcome or the accreditation decision should also be published on the agency's website.

In case the review was not conducted in English, at least an English summary of the review report and an English version of the decision, including its reasons, should be published.

**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.

The agency should be informed about significant changes in the programme which may affect compliance with the European Approach standards. The agency should address these.

**9. Periodicity [ESG 1.10**]

The joint programme should be reviewed periodically every 6 years, which should be specified in the published decision. If there is an accreditation decision it should be granted – if the decision is positive – for a period of 6 years.

# European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes (European Approach/EA)

## EA 2027 for consultation

| EUROPEAN APPROACH 2015 | OCTOBER 2026 VERSION |
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| **INTRODUCTION** | |
| Joint programmes are a hallmark of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). They are set up to enhance the mobility of students and staff, to facilitate mutual learning and cooperation opportunities and to create programmes of excellence. They offer a genuine European learning experience to students. Joint degrees express the "jointness" also in the awarding of the degree.<br><br>The present European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes has been developed to ease external quality assurance of these programmes. In particular, it will:<br>● dismantle an important obstacle to the development of joint programmes by setting standards for these programmes that are based on the agreed tools of the EHEA, without applying additional national criteria, and<br>facilitate integrated approaches to quality assurance of joint programmes that genuinely reflect and mirror their joint character. | **Introduction.**<br>Joint programmes are a hallmark of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).<br><br>They are set up to enhance the mobility of students and staff, to facilitate mutual learning and cooperation opportunities and to create programmes of excellence. In doing so, they offer a genuine European learning experience to students and facilitate development of intercultural competences highly relevant for an increasingly interconnected world.<br><br>The commitment to enable and strengthen joint or integrated study programmes has been present in the Bologna Process since its beginnings: in the Bologna Declaration (1999) and Prague Communique (2001) the ministers responsible for higher education committed themselves to promote "*integrated programmes of study*" and support "*joint degrees",* respectively. This commitment, further expressed in subsequent Bologna Ministerial Communiques, culminated with the ministers adopting the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes (in further text: European Approach) in 2015.<br>The European Approach has been developed to ease external quality assurance of joint programmes, and, in particular, to:<br>● dismantle an important obstacle to the development of joint programmes by setting standards for these programmes that are based on the agreed tools of the EHEA<br>● facilitate integrated approaches to quality assurance of joint programmes that genuinely reflect and mirror their joint character.<br><br>In 2024, the ministers requested that the European Approach is revised together with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) in order to ensure alignment with the ESG and up-to-date character of the document. The second |

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| | version of the European Approach was hence adopted by the Iasi/Chisinau EHEA ministerial conference in 2027. |
| | **Scope, context and applicability**<br><br>European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes is applicable to joint programmes, regardless of whether they lead to joint degrees or double/multiple degrees (see Glossary in Section *tbd* for definitions of these terms) and regardless of the level of higher education. This approach is applicable primarily to joint programmes offered jointly by higher education institutions from two or more countries and does not aim to address the quality assurance of programmes delivered jointly by different institutions from a single country.<br><br>European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes is applicable to joint programmes that are offered by higher education institutions within EHEA, including when partners from beyond EHEA are involved. |
| The EHEA is characterised by a diversity of approaches to external QA, including accreditation, evaluation or audit at the level of study programmes and/or institutions. While responding to the needs and requirements of their respective context, these different approaches find their "common denominator" in the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). | The EHEA is characterised by a diversity of approaches to external QA, including accreditation, evaluation or audit at the level of study programmes and/or institutions. While these different approaches respond to the needs and requirements of their respective contexts, it is one of the EHEA key commitments that they are all aligned with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). |
| The ESG apply to quality assurance procedures of joint programmes as to all other types of programmes. Thus, the European Approach is mainly based on the ESG and on the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA). In addition, the European Approach takes into account the distinctive features of a joint programme and, thus, specifies the 'standard' approach accordingly. The procedure and criteria are closely based on those developed and tested within the JOQAR project.<br>"Joint programmes" are understood as an integrated curriculum coordinated and offered jointly by different higher education institutions from EHEA countries[1], and leading to double/multiple degrees[2] or a joint degree[3]. | The ESG apply to quality assurance procedures of joint programmes as to all other types of programmes. Thus, the European Approach is mainly based on the ESG and on the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA).<br><br>In addition, the European Approach takes into account the distinctive features of joint programmes and, thus, specifies the required approach accordingly.<br><br>The EA is to be applied by EQAR-registered agencies or institutions not subject to mandatory programme-level external QA, to ensure the processes' compliance with the ESG.<br><br>In order to fulfil its role in dismantling obstacles to delivering joint programmes in Europe, the European Approach is to be applied without adding additional national requirements.<br><br>When used for external evaluations, the standards and the procedure of the European Approach should be applied in its entirety since a comprehensive implementation of the European Approach as a single instrument is crucial for achieving its objectives. When used for internal evaluations, the standards of the European Approach should be applied in its entirety. |

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| [1] This proposal relates only to joint programmes offered jointly by higher education institutions from two or more countries, and does not address the quality assurance of programmes delivered jointly by different institutions from a single country.<br>[2] Separate degrees awarded by higher education institutions offering the joint programme attesting the successful completion of this programme. (If two degrees are awarded by two institutions, this is a 'double degree').<br>[3] A single document awarded by higher education institutions offering the joint programme and nationally acknowledged as the recognised award of the joint programme. | |
| **PART A. APPLICATION IN DIFFERENT SYSTEMS OF EXTERNAL QA** | |
| The European Approach should be applied depending on the needs of the cooperating higher education institutions and the requirements of their national frameworks: | The European Approach can be applied in one of two ways, depending on the needs of the consortium partners and the requirements of their external QA frameworks: |
| ● If some of the cooperating higher education institutions require external quality assurance at programme level (e.g. programme accreditation or evaluation is mandatory), then the cooperating institutions should select a suitable quality assurance agency[4] from the list of EQAR-registered agencies.<br>The agency will use the Standards (part B) and the Procedure (part C) to carry out a single evaluation or accreditation of the entire joint programme. The result is to be accepted in all EHEA countries.<br>Dependent on the national legal framework, the external quality assurance decision should come into force or be recognised in all countries where the programme is offered, as agreed in the Bucharest Communiqué. | A. If some of the cooperating higher education institutions require external quality assurance at programme level [4](e.g. programme accreditation or evaluation is mandatory)[1], then the cooperating institutions should select a suitable quality assurance agency from the list of EQAR-registered agencies.<br>The agency will use the Standards (part B) and the Procedure (part C) to carry out a single evaluation or accreditation of the entire joint programme.<br>The external quality assurance decision should be accepted in all countries where the programme is offered, without any additional requirements. |
| [4] In the case of joint programmes that lead to qualifications aiming to satisfy the minimum agreed training conditions in a profession subject to the European Union Directive 2005/36/EC, the joint programme would need to be notified to the European Commission by the competent authority of one EU Member State. The cooperating institutions will need to bear this in mind when identifying and contacting an agency to conduct the review. | |

[4]This includes also models like accreditation of study fields, i.e. it related to all levels other than the institutional level.

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| ● If all cooperating higher education institutions are subject to external quality assurance at institutional level only and have "self-accrediting" status, they may use the European Approach in setting up joint internal approval and monitoring processes for their joint programmes (according to ESG 1.2 & 1.9), if they deem it useful in their context.<br>Hence, in these cases no additional external evaluation or accreditation procedures at the programme level are necessary. | B. If all cooperating higher education institutions from EHEA are subject to institutional level external QA by an EQAR-registered agency and are not required to undergo programme-level external QA they should[5] use Part B of the European Approach in setting up joint internal approval and monitoring processes for their joint programmes<br>In these cases, no additional external evaluation or accreditation procedures at the programme level are necessary. |
| ● The European Approach may also be used for joint programmes that are offered by higher education institutions from both within and outside the EHEA. Involved institutions from non-EHEA countries are encouraged to inquire whether their national authorities would accept the Standards (part B) and be able to recognise the decision of an EQAR-registered agency, if applicable. | |
| | The standards employ the common English usage of "should" which has the connotation of prescription and compliance. |
| **PART B1. ELIGIBILITY FOR THE APPLICATION OF THE EUROPEAN APPROACH** | |
| **1.1 Status**<br>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.<br><br>**1.2 Joint design and delivery**<br>The joint programme should be offered jointly, involving all cooperating institutions in the design and delivery of the programme. | **1. Consortium Agreement**<br>The institutions should lay down the terms and conditions of the joint programme in a formally approved consortium agreement that covers at least the following issues:<br>- Denomination of the degree(s) awarded in the programme<br>- Coordination and responsibilities of the partners involved regarding management and financial organisation<br>- Internal quality assurance policies and processes conducted by the consortium<br>- Admission and selection procedures for students<br>- Mobility of students and teachers and recognition of achievements, if applicable<br>- Examination regulations and student assessment methods.<br>- Degree awarding procedures in the consortium. |
| | **2. Volume** |

[5] This does not imply obligation on part of institutions which are not obliged to undergo external QA at the programme level, but rather guidance if they decide to use the European Approach.

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| | | The volume of the joint programme should be aligned with the QF-EHEA volume descriptors for the different higher education cycles[6] and with the ECTS Users' Guide |
| **PART B2. STANDARDS FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE OF JOINT PROGRAMMES IN THE EHEA** | | |
| **1. Programme Design** | **1.3 Cooperation Agreement**<br>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:<br>- Denomination of the degree(s) awarded in the programme<br>- Coordination and responsibilities of the partners involved regarding management and financial organisation (including funding, sharing of costs and income etc.)<br>- Admission and selection procedures for students<br>- Mobility of students and teachers<br>- Examination regulations, student assessment methods, recognition of credits and degree awarding procedures in the consortium. | **1.1. Joint Ownership and Responsibility**<br>The joint programme should be designed and delivered jointly, as a shared responsibility of the consortium. This includes a joint ownership reflected in the programme.<br>The institutions should jointly:<br>- Design, manage and deliver the programme<br>- Define the common intended learning outcomes of the programme<br>- Implement the common admission and selection procedures<br>- Define student assessment methods and a common set of rules applicable to examination<br>- Support the mobility of students and staff |
| | | **1.2 Programme quality assurance**<br>The consortium should have reliable joint policies and processes for the design, approval, monitoring and periodic review of the joint programme. |
| | **2.1 Level [ESG 1.2]**<br>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). | **1.3 Learning Outcomes**<br>The intended learning outcomes should correspond to the appropriate level of the QF-EHEA. The ILOs should foster the achievement of knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy in the corresponding professional and/or disciplinary field(s), align with latest developments in the field, and support the relevance of the programme for the needs of students, society and the labour market. |
| | **2.2 Disciplinary field** | |

[6] 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

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| | The intended learning outcomes should comprise knowledge, skills, and competencies in the respective disciplinary field(s). | |
| | **2.3 Achievement [ESG 1.2]**<br>The programme should be able to demonstrate that the intended learning outcomes are achieved. | |
| | **2.4 Regulated Professions**<br>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. | |
| | **3.1 Curriculum**<br>The structure and content of the curriculum should be fit to enable the students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. | **1.4 Curriculum**<br>The structure and content of the curriculum should enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes |
| | **3.2 Credits**<br>The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) should be applied properly and the distribution of credits should be clear. | **1.5 Credits and Workload**<br>The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) should be applied, and the distribution of credits should be clear. The workload and the average time to complete the programme should be appropriate and monitored. |
| | **3.3 Workload**<br>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.<br>The workload and the average time to complete the programme should be monitored. | |
| **2. Admission and Recognition [ESG 1.4]** | **4.1. Admission**<br>The admission requirements and selection procedures should be appropriate in light of the programme's level and discipline. | **2.1. Admission and progression**<br>The admission requirements, selection procedures and study progression rules should be appropriate in light of the programme's level and content.<br>Admission and study progression rules should be transparently implemented at consortium level. |

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| | **4.2. Recognition**<br>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. | **2.2. Recognition**<br>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. |
| **3. Learning, Teaching and Assessment [ESG 1.3]** | **5.1 Learning, and teaching and assessment**<br>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. | **3. Learning, teaching and assessment**<br>Learning, teaching and assessment should support the achievement of the intended learning outcomes of the programme and be delivered in a student-centred manner.<br>Assessment should demonstrate the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and assessment regulation should be applied consistently by the consortium, across partner institutions.<br>The diversity of students and their needs should be respected and attended to, especially in view of different cultural backgrounds. |
| | **5.2 Assessment of students**<br>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. | |
| **4. Student Support [ESG 1.6]** | **6. Student Support [ESG 1.6]**<br>The student support services should contribute to the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. They should take into account specific challenges of mobile students. | **4. Student Support**<br>Consortium should provide all students of the joint programme with equal access to support services necessary for achieving the intended learning outcomes. Specific attention should be dedicated to supporting students in engaging with multiple and diverse learning environments. |
| **5. Resources [ESG 1.5 & 1.6]** | **7.1 Staff**<br>The staff should be sufficient and adequate (qualifications, professional and international experience) to implement the study programme. | **5.1 Staff**<br>The consortium should ensure that there is a sufficient number of staff at all institutions for delivering the joint programme. Staff profiles, in terms of their qualifications and professional experience should be adequate for implementing the study programme.<br>The consortium should offer sufficient professional development opportunities to their staff for working in an international and intercultural setting. |
| | **7.2 Facilities**<br>The facilities provided should be sufficient and adequate in view of the intended learning outcomes. | **5.2 Facilities**<br>The facilities provided should be sufficient and adequate in view of the intended learning outcomes. |

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| **6. Transparency and Documentation [ESG 1.8]** | **8. Transparency and Documentation [ESG 1.8]**<br>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. | **6. Transparency and Documentation**<br>Relevant information about the programme, such as admission requirements and procedures, course catalogue, examination and assessment procedures, should be well documented and published, taking into account students' needs. |
| **7. Quality Assurance [ESG 1.1 & part 1]** | **9. Quality Assurance [ESG 1.1 & part 1]**<br>The cooperating institutions should apply joint internal quality assurance processes in accordance with part one of the ESG. | **7. Quality Assurance**<br>The cooperating institutions should apply joint internal quality assurance processes in accordance with Part 1 of the ESG.<br>Joint internal quality assurance processes should include a structured, meaningful and visible role for students, staff, and other internal and external stakeholders. The core outcomes of these processes and the measures taken should be shared with the stakeholders, including students and staff. |
| **PART C. PROCEDURE FOR EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF JOINT PROGRAMMES IN THE EHEA** | | |
| 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 consortium should jointly select a suitable EQAR-registered quality assurance agency. The agency should communicate appropriately with the competent public authorities of the countries in which the cooperating higher education institutions are based. |
| **1. Self-Evaluation Report [ESG 2.3]**<br>The external quality assurance procedure should be based on a self-evaluation report (SER) jointly submitted by the cooperating institutions. The SER should contain comprehensive information that demonstrates the compliance of the programme with the Standards for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes in the EHEA (part B).<br>In addition, the report should contain the necessary information about the respective national frameworks of the cooperating institutions that foreign agencies and experts might need in order to appreciate the context, especially the positioning of the programme within the national higher education systems.<br>The SER should focus explicitly on the distinctive feature of the joint programme as a joint endeavour of higher education institutions from more than one national higher education system. | | **1. Self-Evaluation Report [ESG 2.3]**<br>The external quality assurance procedure should be based on a self- evaluation report (SER) jointly submitted by the cooperating institutions. The SER should contain comprehensive information that demonstrates the compliance of the programme with the Standards for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes in the EHEA (part B).<br>In addition, the report should contain the necessary information about the respective national frameworks of the cooperating institutions that foreign agencies and experts might need in order to appreciate the context, especially the positioning of the programme within the national higher education systems.<br>The SER should focus explicitly on the distinctive feature of the joint programme as a joint endeavour. |
| **2. Review Panel [ESG 2.3 & 2.4]** | | **2. Peer reviewers [ESG 2.3 & 2.4]** |

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| The agency should appoint a panel of at least four members. The panel should combine expertise in the relevant subject(s) or discipline(s), including the labour market/world of work in the relevant field(s), and expertise in quality assurance in higher education.<br>Through their international expertise and experience the panel should be able to take into account the distinctive features of the joint programme.<br>Collectively, the panel should possess knowledge of the HE systems of the HEIs involved and the language(s) of instruction used. The panel should include members from at least two countries involved in the consortium providing the programme. The panel should include at least one student.<br>The agency should ensure the impartiality of the experts and observes fairness towards the applying higher education institutions. To this end, the institutions should have the right to raise well-grounded objections against a panel member, but not a right to veto their appointment.<br>The agency should brief the experts on the review activity, their specific role, and the specifics of the quality assurance procedure. The briefing should focus particularly on the distinctive features of a joint programme. | The agency should appoint a panel of at least four members. The panel should combine expertise in the relevant subject(s) or discipline(s), including the labour market/world of work in the relevant field(s), and expertise in quality assurance in higher education.<br>Through their international expertise and experience the peer reviewers should be able to take into account the distinctive features of the joint programme. The peer reviewers should collectively possess knowledge of the HE systems of the HEIs involved and the language(s) of instruction used. The panel should include members from at least two countries involved in the consortium providing the programme. The panel should include at least one student.<br>The agency should ensure the impartiality of the experts and observe fairness towards the applying higher education institutions. To this end, the institutions should have the right to raise well-grounded objections against a reviewer but not a right to veto their appointment.<br>The agency should prepare the experts with resources on the review activity, their specific role, and the specifics of the quality assurance procedure. The preparation should focus particularly on the distinctive features of a joint programme. |
| **3. Site Visit [ESG 2.3]**<br>The site visit should enable the review panel to discuss the joint programme based on the self-evaluation report and assess whether the programme complies with the Standards (part B).<br>The site visit should therefore include discussions with representatives of all cooperating institutions and in particular the management of the institutions and the programme, the staff, the students, and other relevant stakeholders, such as alumni and the professional field.<br>Although the site visit should normally be restricted to one location, the provision at all locations has to be taken into account. | **3. Site Visit [ESG 2.3]**<br>The site visit should enable the peer reviewers to discuss the joint programme based on the self-evaluation report and assess whether the programme complies with the Standards (part B).<br>The site visit should therefore include discussions with representatives of all cooperating institutions and in particular the management of the institutions and the programme, the staff, the students, and other relevant stakeholders, such as alumni and the professional field.<br>Although the site visit by peer reviewers is normally organised in-person to at least one location, the provision at all locations has to be taken into account. |
| **4. Review Report [ESG 2.3 & 2.6]**<br>The review panel should prepare a report that contains relevant evidence, analysis and conclusions with regard to the Standards (part B). The report should also contain recommendations for developing the programme further.<br>In case the review results in a formal outcome the review panel should make a recommendation for the decision.<br>The conclusions and recommendations should pay particular attention to the distinctive features of the joint programme. | **4. Review Report [ESG 2.3 & 2.5]**<br>The peer reviewers should prepare a report that contains relevant evidence, analysis and conclusions with regard to the Standards (part B). The report should be clear and accessible to the academic community, external partners, and other interested individuals. It should also be useful for the consortium and provide recommendations for improvement.<br>In case the review results in a formal outcome the peer reviewers should make a recommendation for the decision. |

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| The institutions should have the opportunity to comment on a draft version of the review report and request correction of factual errors. | The conclusions and recommendations should pay particular attention to the distinctive features of the joint programme.<br>The institutions should have the opportunity to comment on a draft version of the review report and request correction of factual errors. |
| **5. Formal Outcomes and Decision [ESG 2.5]**<br>If required, the agency should take a decision on the basis of the review report and the recommendation for the decision, considering the comments by the higher education institutions 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 (part B). The agency may supplement the formal outcome and the accreditation decision by recommendations.<br>The agency should give reasons for its accreditation decision. This applies in particular for accreditation decisions limited by conditions or negative decisions and for cases where the decision differs from the review panel's conclusions and recommendation for the decision. | **5. Formal Outcomes and Decision [ESG 2.6]**<br>If required, the agency should take a decision on the basis of the review report and the peer reviewers' recommendation for the decision. In case the review results in an accreditation decision, it grants or denies the accreditation (with or without conditions), based on the Standards (part B). The agency may supplement the formal outcome and the accreditation decision by recommendations.<br>The agency should give reasons for its accreditation decision. This applies in particular for accreditation decisions limited by conditions or negative decisions and for cases where the decision differs from the peer reviewers' conclusions and recommendation for the decision.<br>The agency should provide all necessary information emerging from the review requested by the public authorities, to be used by institutions in requesting the formal recognition of the accreditation decision, in different higher education systems. |
| **6. Appeals [ESG 2.7]**<br>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. | **6. Complaints and Appeals [ESG 2.7]**<br>The institutions should have the right to appeal against a formal outcome or an accreditation decision, or to issue a complaint regarding the conduct of external assessment.<br>Any appeal against the formal outcome or accreditation decision, or complaint regarding the conduct of the agency is dealt with according to the procedure in place. |
| **7. Reporting [ESG 2.6]**<br>The agency should publish the review report and, if applicable, the formal outcome or the accreditation decision on its website. In case the review was not conducted in English at least an English summary of the review report and an English version of the decision, including its reasons, should be published. | **7. Publication of outcomes [ESG 2.5]**<br>The agency should publish the full review report by peer reviewers, together with any other evidence and documents used in the decision-making. If applicable, the formal outcome or the accreditation decision should also be published on the agency's website.<br>In case the review was not conducted in English, at least an English summary of the review report and an English version of the decision, including its reasons, should be published. |
| **8. Follow-up [ESG 2.3]**<br>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. | **8. Follow-up [ESG 2.3]**<br>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.<br>The agency should be informed about significant changes in the programme which may affect compliance with the European Approach standards. The agency should address these. |
| **9. Periodicity [ESG 1.10**]<br>The joint programme should be reviewed periodically every 6 years, which should be specified in the published decision. If there is an accreditation | **9. Periodicity [ESG 1.10**] |

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| decision it should be granted – if the decision is positive – for a period of 6 years.* During the 6-year period, the agency should be informed about changes in the consortium offering the joint programme.<br>* *A period of 6 years is widely applied in EHEA countries.* | The joint programme should be reviewed periodically every 6 years, which should be specified in the published decision. If there is an accreditation decision it should be granted – if the decision is positive – for a period of 6 years. |