

ANNEX VIII

Quality Assurance Regulations

Bachelor of European Studies

Preliminaries

1. These Regulations outline the main principles applied in the joint Quality Assurance (QA) system of the BAES programme. They clarify how the Parties shape internal quality assurance processes and explain the main principles on which the system is based.

2. The present regulations is intended, in principle, to be stable in order to give Partners a common framework for quality assurance principles. In case changes are needed, the amendments to these regulations are to be discussed and decided upon by the Local Academic Coordinator Board, in close cooperation with the QA Board, and the Academic Steering Committee. To be applicable for the following academic year, changes to this regulation need to be decided upon by the end of June of each calendar year.

3. The educational quality of the BAES and its continuous improvement are priorities for the involved Parties. 4. To achieve this, they have developed a joint internal QA strategy, enabling continuous oversight and enhancement of the Joint Degree Programme in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders. Mutual trust between the Parties is the key aspect of the joint internal quality assurance strategy of the Joint Degree Programme.

I. Main Principles

1. Each Party involved in the delivery of the BAES undergoes cyclical external reviews, either on institutional and/or on programme level, in which the internal quality assurance methods applied by the institution are being scrutinized. These reviews are conducted by trustworthy agencies operating in line with the ESG, ensuring confidence in each Party's quality management systems.

2. Recognizing that each Party has a well-functioning internal quality assurance system, the Parties maximize the use of existing methods. This lean joint strategy avoids duplication and focuses on effectiveness and continuous improvement.

3. Without prejudice to paragraph 1 and 2, the Parties acknowledge the need for a joint framework to ensure effective decision-making and communication. All Parties must understand their responsibilities, how internal quality assurance outcomes are shared, and how actions for improvement are managed. To this end, a joint overarching system has been designed, balancing central management at the programme level with flexibility at the Party level. This includes:

- General principles for internal quality assurance as specified in the Consortium Agreement and implemented as described in these regulations.
- A joint structure to monitor the quality of the entire Joint Degree Programme.
- Transparency in the functioning of each Party's internal quality assurance systems.

4. Quality assessment in the BAES has been developed according to the [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(ESG\)](#) and the [European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes](#) adopted by the Ministers responsible for higher education in the European Higher Education Area in May 2015. The ESG provide guidance for internal and external quality assurance in higher education. The European Approach, which is mainly based on the ESG and on the Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA), facilitate integrated approaches to quality assurance of joint programmes that genuinely reflect and mirror their joint character.

II. The joint BAES AQ strategy

1. Based on the above principles, the joint QA strategy aims to ensure that BAES:

- 1) is designed to be and maintained as an international, multidisciplinary, and multilingual programme.
- 2) provides students with the profile of a formation in the area of European Studies, in which both critical thinking and research skills are emphasized so that they are able to embark on either continuous tertiary education and/or prepared for the professional fields linked to European Studies.
- 3) Adopts a curriculum aligned with the latest academic research in European Studies or disciplines related to the overarching field of European Studies and adapted to the evolving needs of society.
- 4) promotes international mobility and cultural diversity, allowing students to develop a broad perspective on European Studies.

- 5) emphasizes multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary education, enabling students to gain knowledge and skills from various disciplines such as history, politics, economics, law and others.
- 6) employs teaching methods that promote active learning, problem-based learning, and collaboration.
- 7) focuses on developing transversal skills that enhance students' employability in the job market by including practice-oriented projects, and courses that focus on skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving.
- 8) ensures that all students feel welcome and engaged, fostering an inclusive environment based on the principal values of human dignity and equality.
- 9) aims to contribute to the quality and visibility of European higher education and to foster intercultural understanding.
- 10) focuses on fostering a sense of community among students, regardless of their location.
- 11) utilizes technology to most effectively support hybrid and multi-campus education, while emphasizing the need for on campus learning support and peer to peer learning.

3. As mentioned in article 35 of the Consortium Agreement, the three main principles for the joint QA of the BAES are: the principle of verified trust, the principle of subsidiarity and the principle of core practices. The Parties undertake to put these principles into practice in the context of the BAES in the following manner:

- 1) All Parties shall actively contribute to the continuous improvement and development of the Joint Degree Programme in all its aspect in a sustainable and enhancement-driven manner and monitor together whether each Party adheres to the principles, according to the procedure laid down in this Annex.
- 2) Fostering accountability and transparency among the Parties, for example by sharing and collecting information on their own internal quality assurance methods in a 'knowledge base'.
- 3) The Parties agree on core practices for a smooth operation of the joint internal quality assurance system of the BAES.

5. By doing so, the Parties ensure that the BAES is embedded in a strong joint quality culture in which students, staff and external stakeholders work together to give shape to the best possible learning environment.

III. Obligations of the Parties

1. All the Parties commit to actively contribute to the continuous improvement of the BAES, by sharing and collectively discussing the output from all – local and joint - quality assurance activities that take place within the Joint Degree Programme. To this end, all the Parties:

A) accept that the responsibility to consider the output from the joint quality assurance processes is attributed to the Organs in accordance with the arrangements of Section 6 of the Consortium Agreement and article IV of this Annex;

B) consent that all relevant data, including the results of local assessments of the BAES programme, can be accessed by the members of the BAES Quality Assurance Board or to any other actor that is involved in the joint BAES QA system, who will treat those data in a confidential way.

2. All the Parties should apply internal quality assurance processes in accordance with part one of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG).

3. The Parties shall be responsible for appointing sufficient and appropriately qualified staff to deliver the various elements of the degree programme specified in this Consortium Agreement, Common Education Regulations (Annex I) and Exam and Disciplinary Regulations (Annex II).

4. The Parties commit themselves to be fully transparent about the quality assurance tools they use and will share the input with the BAES Quality Assurance Board. They commit to collect data on the satisfaction of students for each course offered to BAES students, unless such a collection is prevented for causes of force majeure.

5. All the Parties ensure that students and teaching staff will be involved in their local QA assessment of the BAES. Additional stakeholders may also be involved if required by national regulations.

6. Parties ensure that teaching staff at each Party involved in the delivery of the degree programme shall be fluent in the programme's language of instruction for the provision of the degree programme at the Party. They shall also be available to teach and attend meetings at other Parties when required.

IV. Quality Assurance Board

1. The Quality Assurance Board is central in the implementation of the joint BAES QA strategy and practices.
2. the QA Board is a sub-board of the Local Academic Coordinator Board and assists it in evaluating the degree of achievement of learning objectives and the coherence of the programme and ensures that there are effective procedures for data collection, information analysis and proposals and the channeling of suggestions for improvement of the programme.
3. The composition, decision making process, and main tasks of the Quality Assurance Board are laid out in article 25, §3 of the Consortium Agreement.
4. The Quality Assurance Board meets at least two times a year, including a meeting at the start for the Academic year to make the joint quality assurance calendar and at the end of the academic year to prepare the annual summary report as described in article 5 of this Annex.
5. Each Quality Assurance Board meeting must be announced at least two weeks in advance, the agenda of the meeting shall be circulated at least one week before the meeting and the minutes of the meeting shall be digitally signed by the chairperson for the decisions to be valid and certified.

V. Transparency on internal quality assurance methods

1. The Parties undertake to ensure full transparency by sharing and collecting information on their own internal quality assurance methods in a 'knowledge base'. The knowledge base constitutes a self-service digital information tool, through which members of the Local Academic Coordinator Board, the Quality Assurance Board and the Academic Steering Committee and other relevant stakeholders, can obtain a full insight in the way of operation of each Party. The knowledge base shall allow all stakeholders involved in the management of the BAES to consult and compare information about the local systems with speed and ease.
2. The knowledge base is designed to provide staff and stakeholders with clear answers to concrete questions relating to any aspects of the internal quality assurance systems of the Parties, such as:
 - 1) The general description of the quality assurance system;
 - 2) The governance structure of the quality assurance system;
 - 3) The timing of the quality assurance system;
 - 4) Stakeholder engagement;

5) Quality assurance tools.

3. All Parties shall provide their own information in relation to the abovementioned topics, based on a set of accompanying questions. The information shall be updated by the Parties in the future whenever required.

4. The knowledge base can be consulted with simple navigation tools. The information can be browsed either by selecting specific Parties, or by selecting concrete topics. Concrete instructions on how to navigate through the available information shall be included in the homepage of the knowledge base.

VI. Quality assurance core practices and tools

1. The practices of quality assurance in BAES involve both internal and external stakeholders. Internal stakeholders include the students, teaching staff and support staff of the programme. External stakeholders include academic peers, representatives of the profession and alumni of the programme.

2. The Quality Assurance Board will ensure that all the aspects of the programme are monitored and improved on a regular basis. In line with the principle and criteria above, it will look in particular into the following aspects of the programme: learning outcomes, curriculum, international mobility, teaching staff, student support, learning environment, assessment, information on the programme and on the quality of the programme, as described in article IV.8.2 of the Common Education Regulations (Annex I),

3. Considering the main principle of subsidiarity and the lean joint quality strategy, the Quality Assurance Board meets at the start of each academic year to establish a joint quality assurance calendar for the upcoming year. This calendar includes all planned initiatives, responsibilities of the Parties, and dates for discussing the output. Whenever possible, output from internal quality assurance processes can be utilized, provided that full transparency about the methods is ensured.

4. The specific tools and methods may vary slightly each year, but the Quality Assurance Board ensures a balance of different methods, including both quantitative and qualitative data, as well as objective data and opinions.

6. The frequency of stakeholder consultations may differ, but the entire range of stakeholders and topics should be covered at least once every four years. Student satisfaction should be measured annually.

7. The Quality Assurance Board reviews the gathered information on the quality of the program and makes suggestions for continuous improvement. These suggestions are reported to the Academic Steering Committee and the Student Committee.

8. Each Party will communicate in a transparent manner which issues were identified, and how they will be remedied by the Party institution. Those issues which cannot be dealt with on the local level will be shared with the Quality Assurance Board for consideration. Each Party will also actively identify good practices and share these with the other Parties.

9. The Quality Assurance Board will communicate both internally and externally about the outcomes of internal quality assurance activities, and about the actions taken for further enhancement.

10. The Quality Assurance Board prepares a concise annual report that is submitted to the Academic Steering Committee. The annual report will include at least: a summary of the key QA actions undertaken in the previous academic year; a description of the collected data and the methodologies used; the analysis of the collected data, where these are comparable; an QA action plan with concrete measures to improve the programme for the next academic year.