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European Approach for Quality

Assurance of Joint Programmes

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What is European Approach?

- European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes (EA)
 - Adopted by European Ministers responsible for higher education, has been developed to ease external quality assurance of these programmes: **it defines standards that are based on the agreed tools of the EHEA, without applying additional national criteria.** This is expected to **facilitate integrated approaches to quality assurance of joint programmes**, which genuinely reflect and mirror their joint character. (EQAR - <https://www.eqar.eu/kb/joint-programmes/>)

What is European Approach?

- EA is based on **one single joint programme accreditation that** – in *principle* – is recognised in **all EHEA countries involved**. This approach should **replace the separate national programme accreditations** in the joint programme consortium countries.
- The **main characteristics** of the European Approach are as follows:
 - If **some** of the cooperating higher education institutions are required to undergo external quality assessment or accreditation at programme level, then the co-operating institution should select a suitable quality assurance agency from the list of EQAR registered agencies;
 - This agency will then **use the agreed standards and procedures of the European Approach** to carry out a single evaluation or accreditation of the entire joint programme;
 - The **external quality assurance decision is to be accepted and recognised** in all EHEA countries where the programme is offered. Countries **should not apply any additional national criteria**. (Rosa Becker JOINT PROGRAMMES FROM A TO Z 2020)

What is European Approach – Reality?

- EQAR website (<https://www.eqar.eu/kb/joint-programmes/national-implementation/>) states that as of now:
 - In 17 countries European Approach **is available to all higher education institutions** (change from 13 in 2020)
 - In 11 countries EA is available to **some** higher education institutions or **only under specific conditions (change from 16 in 2020)**
 - In 19 countries (**including Ukraine!**) EA **currently is not available** to higher education institutions (change from 20 in 2020)
- What is more EA is sometimes permitted on **case-by-case basis** that goes beyond this list.

European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes – Standards and Procedure

- The following slides were based on the materials of Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders ([https://www.nvao.net/files/attachments/.103/European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes.pdf](https://www.nvao.net/files/attachments/.103/European_Approach_for_Quality_Assurance_of_Joint_Programmes.pdf))

EA – Standards – Standard 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.**
- **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.
- **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.

EA – Standards – Standard 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).
- **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.

EA – Standards – Standard 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.**
- **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.

EA – Standards – Standard 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.

EA – Standards – Standard 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.

▪ 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.

EA – Standards – Standard 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.

EA – Standards – Standard 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.

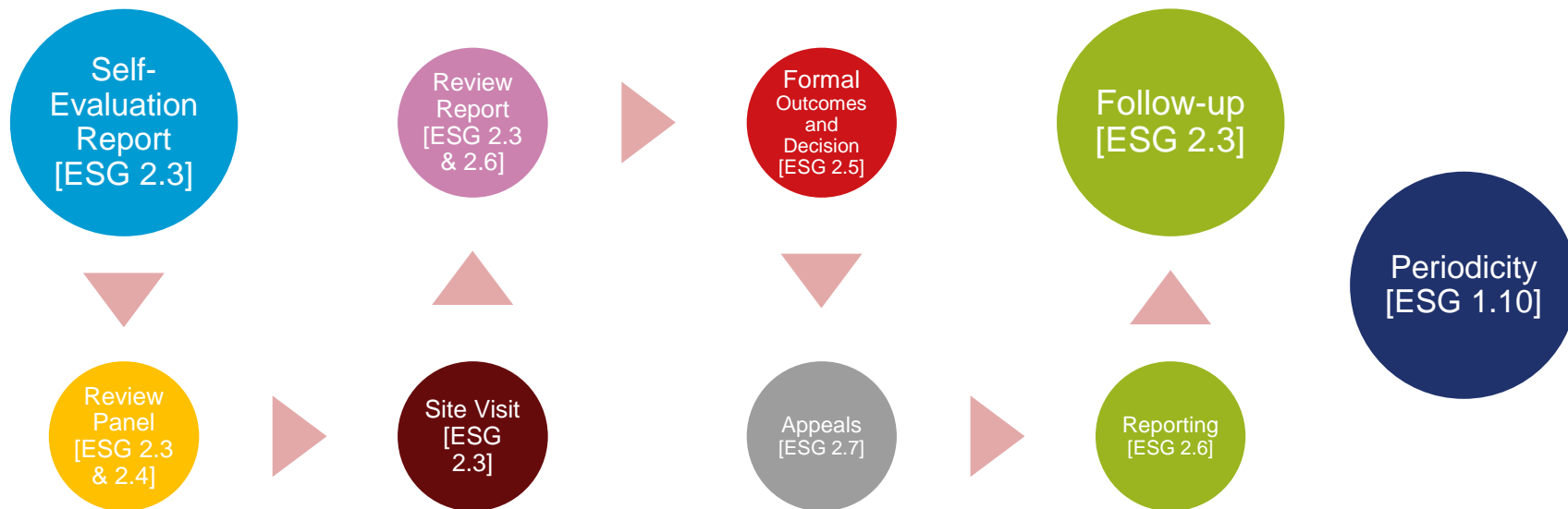
EA – Standards – Standard 8 - Transparency and Documentation [ESG 1.8]

- 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.

EA – Standards – Standard 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** (https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf).

EA - Procedure



Where to look for further information?

- Additional information can be found here:
 - <https://impea.eu/ea-introductory-training/>
 - Series of materials on EA, including its philosophy, implementation and criteria.
 - **The site works as a web toolkit for everything connected with EA.**
 - https://www.nvao.net/files/attachments/.103/European_Approach_for_Quality_Assurance_of_Joint_Programmes.pdf
 - Materials of NVAO that often works with EA.

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