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9

Methodological report

Transnational European Evaluation Project II (TEEP II)

Education and Culture

DG Education and Culture

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Table of contents

Foreword

The second Transnational European Evaluation Project (TEEP II) was undertaken between August 2004 and June 2006. A methodology for evaluating transnational programmes had previously been tested during 2002–2003 by ENQA in the first Transnational European Evaluation Project (TEEP I). TEEP II was designed both to follow up and to develop further that work and so to continue to advance cross-border external quality assurance methods in an area where no single regulatory body can assume full responsibility.

TEEP II had three primary objectives, to:

- pilot the transnational quality evaluation of three different joint master's programmes;
- test the use of comparable quality evaluation criteria for joint master's degrees;
- develop a method for transnational external evaluation building on previous professional experience using common criteria.

The project involved many actors across several countries: six quality assurance agencies, three programmes (each with partners in a minimum of five countries) and experts from across Europe. Each programme shared its 'jointness', but in other areas there was divergence: subject, philosophy, objectives, history, etc. This made it possible both to compare and to contrast the three programmes and so to draw conclusions from a more robust vantage point.

The project was bracketed by two conferences, one at the beginning and one at the end of the exercise. Both conferences brought together all those involved and ensured a good level of mutual understanding with which to begin the project as well as an opportunity for shared reflection to close it.

The present report emphasises the importance for joint programmes of developing quality assurance and enhancement processes which operate across the programme as a whole – wherever it is delivered. It also stresses the need to mirror the essential transnational character of the programmes in the external evaluation process – through the participation of experts and quality assurance organisations from different countries, working together. TEEP II has demonstrated successfully how that can be achieved. The report identifies a number of areas for further work and proposes that through working together with the European University Association (EUA) ENQA may be able to refine the methods for external and internal evaluation of joint master's programmes.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed to and therefore made possible this important project, including the representatives of the three programmes, the members of the expert panels and the management group which, under Staffan Wahlén's able guidance, co-ordinated and ran the project.

Peter Williams
President,
ENQA

1. Executive summary

The aim of TEEP II (the second Transnational European Evaluation Project) was to develop a method for evaluating joint master's programmes. The project could also be seen as a means of engendering collaboration on a European scale. It involved the cooperation of six European quality assurance agencies and pilot evaluations of three different joint master's programmes; each of which involved partners in at least five different countries. Overall, experts from nine different countries participated in the exercise.

The criteria for the three pilot evaluations were based on the principles of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. These were developed by ENQA in cooperation with ESIB, EUA and EURASHE in the context of the Bologna process, and were endorsed by the Ministers of Higher Education at the Bergen ministerial meeting of May 2005. However, the evaluations were specifically designed to test the special conditions which apply to reviews of joint programmes. These conditions included the development of criteria for assessment of organisation and management, content, and the programmes' own quality assurance mechanisms under the specific circumstances.

Taking these requirements into account, the criteria developed for the project (see Appendix II) refer primarily to the unity of the programme and progression between elements. Prerequisites, such as the organisation of student mobility, also had to be taken into account. Special attention had to be paid to processes of internal cooperation with regard to teaching, learning and assessment, to the dissemination of information and to staff development. The expectation of reasonable parity of outcomes also had to be considered.

In order to be able to assess the programmes, the expert panellists involved were required to have a deep knowledge of the subject area(s) of the programmes under review and experience of transnational education and evaluation. In order fully to understand the relationships between the different parts of the programmes, it was desirable for them to visit as many partner institutions as possible. It was also important that the information from each site visit should be seen in the context of the programme as a whole and be forwarded to the main coordinator in order to contribute to its joint development.

Regularly recurring accreditation and/or compulsory participation in national evaluation is a requirement for programmes in many European countries. Who, then, should be responsible for these joint master's evaluations? TEEP II proposed that joint evaluations should be carried out by quality assurance organisations from two of the countries where the programme is in operation. It is suggested that the joint assessment made by these two organisations should be recognised as valid, after mutual agreement, for all the countries whose universities are involved in the programme. Such evaluations, including travel and fees paid to experts, it is proposed, should be funded through the quality assurance agencies in the countries where the programme is offered.

In other types of evaluation (for development, or for international accreditation, labels, etc.) the programmes themselves would have to meet the costs. An estimate of such costs is given in chapter 5.2.6.

A feedback conference, at which representatives of the programmes reviewed were given the opportunity of commenting on their experience of the pilot evaluations, concluded the project. Remarks were mainly positive. Programme reports, which also include responses from the programmes, are to be found on the ENQA website[1].

[1] http://www.enqa.eu/pubs.lasso

2. Introduction

2.1 The report structure

The report begins with a brief overview of the context and development of joint programmes and joint degrees. Chapter 3 describes the background to the project and the partners involved. In Chapter 4, the methodologies used in TEEP II are outlined and discussed, conclusions are drawn and lessons learned are identified. Chapter 5 outlines a possible methodology for evaluating joint degree programmes in the future on the basis of the experience of the different participants in the project. The report ends with a summary of comments from the programmes and experts in Chapter 6 and some final observations in Chapter 7.

2.2 The context of joint master's degrees

2.2.1 THE BOLOGNA PROCESS, THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND ERASMUS MUNDUS, EUA AND ITS JOINT PROGRAMME PROJECTS

International co-operation is an integral part of research and higher education. A range of exchange programmes have existed for a long time, and many young people have taken the opportunity to study abroad for a term or two. However, it is only in the last few decades that universities in different countries have begun to cooperate to develop programmes together in a systematic way. The ambition to develop European cross-border programmes (joint degree programmes), resulting in a truly trans-European degree, facilitating mobility and attracting students from outside the European Higher Education Area has existed for several years. It was mentioned in the Sorbonne Declaration (1998), and the Ministers of Higher Education involved in the Bologna process raised the issue at their meeting in Prague in 2001; it was an important item on their agenda at both Berlin (2003) and Bergen (2005) and will be followed up in the stocktaking process for the 2007 meeting in London.

The European University Association (EUA) carried out a thorough survey of the existence and status of joint master's degree programmes in Europe in 2002[2] and concluded that they "offer added value to European higher education". The report recommended the further development of such programmes but pointed particularly to recognition and funding problems. In a more recent study[3] of 10 carefully selected networks three themes were highlighted: quality assurance and recognition; student experience and mobility; and curriculum integration and sustainability. The report stated that "institution(s) awarding the joint degree is/are responsible for quality – in line with the principles stipulated by their national systems" and that "partners are bound by jointly agreed requirements". The project also contained useful advice for the establishment of new joint master's programmes in the form of 10 "Golden Rules" (Appendix III).

2 Survey on Masters Degrees and Joint Degrees in Europe by Christian Tauch and Andrejs Rauhvargers, September 2002: http://www.eua.be/eua/en/publications.jspx

3 Results of the EUA Joint Masters Project on Developing Joint Masters Programmes for Europe, March 2002 – January 2004: http://www.eua.be/eua/en/publications.jspx

As a result of recommendations in the above report a European Commission financed project on quality assurance of joint master's programmes was initiated by EUA (European Master's New Evaluation Methodology – EMNEM) parallel to TEEP II[4]. In contrast to TEEP II, however, the project dealt specifically with internal quality assurance. It is obvious that internal and external quality assurance are two sides of the same coin and that to some extent the same ground has been covered from two different perspectives. Hopefully, this combination will provide a more complete picture of the opportunities and challenges involved.

In 2003 the European Union through its Commission initiated the Erasmus Mundus programme in order to boost joint European master's programmes and make them attractive to students across the world. The Erasmus Mundus programme offers generous scholarships to students from third countries[5] as well as contributions towards costs involved in the administration of joint programmes. It is implemented in four actions:

- Action 1 – Recognition of high-quality integrated courses at master's level offered by a consortium of at least three universities in at least three different European countries. They must foresee a study period in at least two of the three universities and lead to the award of a recognised double, multiple or joint diploma.
- Action 2 – A scholarship scheme for third-country graduate students and scholars from the whole world. This scholarship scheme addresses highly qualified individuals who come to Europe to follow the Erasmus Mundus Master's Courses or to work for them.
- Action 3 – Erasmus Mundus Master's Courses selected under Action 1 also have the possibility of establishing partnerships with third-country higher education institutions. These partnerships allow for outgoing mobility of graduate EU students and scholars involved in the Erasmus Mundus Master's Courses.
- Action 4 – Enhancing attractiveness: It supports activities that improve the profile, the visibility and the accessibility of European higher education as well as issues crucial to the internationalisation of higher education, such as the mutual recognition of qualifications with third countries.

TEEP II involved programmes selected in 2004 under Action 1.[6]

2.2.2 THE CONCEPT AND CURRENT STATUS OF JOINT DEGREES

A student following a joint programme may end up with one or several types of diplomas. In most cases so far they have been awarded degrees issued by two universities (double degrees) or several universities (multiple degrees). In those cases successful students are provided with a qualification from each of the institutions involved. This arrangement does not, as a rule, present legal complications. Co-operation can be organised through agreements between partner universities and degrees can be awarded by each of the partners provided that they all have the competence and trust each other. In Finland the recommendation of the Ministry of

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4 As an outcome of the EMNEM project the EUA published Institutional Guidelines for Quality Enhancement of Joint Programmes, 2006: http://www.eua.be/eua/en/publications.jspx

5 A third country is defined by the European Commission as a country not included in the 25 EU Member States, the 3 EEA-EFTA states and the candidate countries for accession to the EU.

6 Since 2004 the programmes have evolved to include the later Actions, e.g. to involve students from third countries.

Education is that one of the members of a consortium should award the degree, but that it should be clearly indicated that it is offered in cooperation among several institutions.

To establish truly joint degrees, however, presents legal difficulties with which a number of countries have struggled and some are still struggling. The Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees (Committee of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications, 2004)[7] defines the term in the following way: "A joint degree should, for the purposes of this Recommendation, be understood as referring to a higher education qualification issued jointly by at least two or more higher education institutions or jointly by one or more higher education institutions and other awarding bodies, on the basis of a study programme developed and/or provided jointly by the higher education institutions, possibly also in cooperation with other institutions.
A joint degree may be issued as

a. a joint diploma in addition to one or more national diplomas;
b. a joint diploma issued by the institutions offering the study programme in question without being accompanied by any national diploma;
c. one or more national diplomas issued officially as the only attestation of the joint qualification in question.

The problem is that definition b. does not recognise the legality of the diploma. The definitions in the Recommendation are therefore not as widely accepted as they could have been.

For our purposes a "genuine" joint degree may be defined as: a joint diploma issued by the institutions offering a joint programme in place of all the national diplomas, attesting the successful completion of this joint programme. For some, the question remains as to who is responsible for the award. This has been solved in different ways by different countries. However, in spite of the encouragement, and even strong recommendation, by the Ministers responsible for higher education in the countries involved in the Bologna process, the number of existing international joint degrees is still limited and legal problems still exist in several countries.

TEEP II did not address the recognition challenges except in cases where they led to explicit difficulties for the further development of programmes. This applied, for example, to accreditation requirements in some countries.

2.3 Introduction to TEEP II

2.3.1 WHY TEEP II?

As indicated above, the enthusiasm for developing programmes leading to joint degrees, especially master's degrees, is shared by higher education institutions, Ministers of Higher Education in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), and the European Commission alike. As a result, a growing number of programmes have been initiated in recent years. Many of these are attractive and highly successful. However, the transnational nature of the programmes presents particular challenges from both a practical, administrative point of view (e.g. the beginning and end of the academic

7 http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/highereducation/recognition/lrc_EN.asp

year, planning, information, student accommodation) and from a scholarly point of view (what is the nature of the often interdisciplinary research that the programme is based on?).

Further, the pedagogical approaches in different universities in different countries need to be, if not harmonised, at least made explicit and related to the needs of the programme as a whole. Questions that need to be addressed include: What should be the extent of student activity in the learning and teaching process (oral and written presentations etc.)? How are the expected learning outcomes of a programme defined? Finally, the legal issue of national accreditation is a special problem that will have to be addressed in the further process of creating truly joint degrees.

Currently, it is most often the prerogative of national governments to accept or reject a study programme as valid. In order to solve the problem of recognition/ accreditation of transnational evaluation it is essential to establish processes that do not involve unnecessary duplication, in the interest of both programmes involved and the quality assurance organisations, but also assure all those involved of the quality of the qualification awarded. The application of multiple national requirements is not sufficient for such purposes. External quality assurance of joint degrees will have to involve arrangements based on mutual understanding and trust.

A methodology for evaluating transnational programmes was tested by ENQA in the first Transnational European Evaluation Project (TEEP I)[8] in 2002–2003. The report highlighted problems related to finding a common language and a common ground for the delivery of a programme but also the considerable benefits to the institutions and experts from many different countries involved in cooperating on a joint project. The project contributed to a "greater sharing of knowledge about approaches to quality assurance within European universities" [9]. The TEEP II project can be seen as a continuation and further development of cross-border external quality assurance methods in an area where no single regulatory body can assume full responsibility. The results could, to a large extent, be used to develop the evaluation of joint bachelor's and doctoral degrees.

It should be pointed out that, although there is broad consensus regarding the main processes of the methodology of evaluation of a higher education programme, the fact that a review may be carried out for different purposes must be taken into account. Should it be used ex ante for approval processes or is it rather intended for quality enhancement? The nature of criteria used for judgement or recommendations may vary with the aim, as will the general methodology, or at least the application of the methodology. These elements will depend on the answers to some of the fundamental questions of any evaluation: Why? For what purpose? For whom?

This does not mean, however, that an evaluation carried out for quality assurance does not contribute to enhancement. The two purposes may interact, and a problem is rather that different quality assurance agencies in different countries may be invested with different powers as regards control. If, as we believe, the evaluation of joint programmes has to be carried out in cooperation among different agencies, it is essential that trust should be established and maintained among agencies, even if their approaches have different emphases. The experience of TEEP II showed that

8 http://www.enqa.eu/projectitem.lasso?id=34835&cont=pastprojDetail

9 TEEP I Methodological report, March 2004, p.10: http://www.enqa.eu/files/TEEPmethod.pdf.

such cooperation may work very well when developing a model of evaluation for joint (master's) degree programmes. The important thing is that the model used should make it possible for students, governments and other stakeholders in all the countries where the programmes are offered to rely on and have confidence in the quality of these programmes.

2.3.2 BENEFITS

For European higher education quality assurance agencies it is important to be able to use the results of the project in terms of identifying relevant criteria and a quality assurance methodology for joint master's degree programmes. The nature of such programmes requires cooperation across borders. The way in which TEEP II was planned and implemented involved a considerable amount of collaboration between no less than six quality assurance agencies in different countries, which provided valuable experience for similar exercises in the future.

The three programmes involved gained from the experience of external scrutiny of their activities, and other higher education institutions offering joint master's programmes may be expected to benefit from the outcomes of the project by learning about the evaluation methods and criteria applied in the project. The previously mentioned EUA's EMNEM project for developing principles for internal quality assurance of joint master's programmes was significant in this context. Many of its findings were helpful to this project.

The European Commission asked the TEEP II project to comment on three issues in particular:

- development of a method of transnational evaluation financed on a feepaying basis by the university networks themselves;
- development of a model of awarding a visible quality label for joint programmes;
- use of culturally mixed teams of experts, not on perfect country-to-country match of partner universities and corresponding agencies.

Reflections on these matters are of importance to the further progress of joint programmes and joint degrees, and are incorporated in the text in Chapters 4 and 5.

An additional benefit of TEEP II was that it raised awareness of issues concerning joint degrees in a number of European countries. International co-operation in the project was considerable. Besides the six quality assurance agencies, the Management Group (MG; see Appendix I) established to run the project also included a project administrator from ENQA and representatives from EUA, the ENIC-NARIC network and the European Commission, one from each organisation. The panels included experts (including students) from a total of nine different countries, and the institutions involved in the project via the programmes were located across ten countries.

3. Background and parties involved

3.1 Overview of the evaluation model

The general evaluation model used in the TEEP II project was based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area[10] developed by ENQA in cooperation with its European partners ESIB, EUA and EURASHE in the context of the Bologna process, and endorsed by the Ministers of Higher Education in the Bergen ministerial meeting of May 2005.

The specific methodology as outlined in the application for the European Commission Socrates grant which funded the project involved the following:

- testing of a common methodology and common predefined criteria;
- self-evaluation exercise by each of the programme teams culminating in a self-evaluation report;
- site visit by an international panel of experts (including both academic experts, quality assurance experts and a student) to discuss the self-evaluation report and gather additional information;
- preparation of an evaluation report by each of the panels and feedback from each of the programme consortia;
- preparation of a summary report on the methodology used and lessons learned.

3.2 Organisation

3.2.1 MANAGEMENT OF THE PROJECT

The following six quality assurance agencies were selected by the ENQA Board to carry out the project:

- Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO);
- Agency for Quality Assurance in the Catalan University System Higher Education (AQU), Catalunya;
- Comité National d'Evaluation, (CNÉ), France;
- Hungarian Accreditation Committee (HAC);
- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), UK;
- Swedish National Agency for Higher Education (HSV), Sweden (Co-ordinator).

It was deemed important that the project should be developed in close contact with other higher education organisations, particularly EUA and the ENIC-NARIC networks. Furthermore, it was natural that ENQA, as the initiator, should be involved in the running and administration of the project.

As indicated earlier, the direct responsibility for the project was given to a management group (MG) with representatives of the above-mentioned organisations plus the European Commission.

The MG met 10 times and had frequent email contacts throughout the two years of the project.

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10 http://www.enqa.eu/files/ENQA%20Bergen%20Report.pdf

3.2.2 FOCUS OF THE PROJECT

The focus of the evaluation was on the testing and development of methods and criteria for assuring the quality of joint master's degree programmes. As it is clear from the programme reports, the project was concerned mainly with organisation and management and the programmes' own quality assurance measures. Programme content in the sense of the literature used, the special orientation of courses or of the master's theses was touched upon only to the extent that was necessary for the experts to understand the details of the programmes and was not referred to in the reports. In future evaluations these aspects will have to be considered.

But content in the sense of, for example, the coherence of the programmes and the question of a common core was an important part of the evaluations and reports and is also referred to repeatedly in this report.

3.2.3 PROCESS

The project started in August 2004 with a meeting of the MG to prepare a detailed plan. The first step was the recruitment and selection of the programmes to be evaluated. It was already envisaged in the Socrates application that three programmes with five partners each would be involved, and it was agreed with the European Commission that they should be chosen from among the consortia that had been selected as Erasmus Mundus programmes. An invitation together with an accompanying letter from the Commission and a project plan was sent to all Erasmus Mundus beneficiaries in November 2004. 10 programmes expressed an interest in participating and three of them were selected by the MG. They were informed of their selection in January 2005 in a letter which invited them to a two-day launch conference in Stockholm in mid-March 2005.

Simultaneously, the MG prepared a self-evaluation manual and guidelines for experts, and work started on recruiting subject experts for the evaluation panels, including master's or doctoral students in the subject areas of the three programmes or related areas. The experts were appointed in February 2005 and invited to the launch seminar.

The conference, which took place on 17–18 March 2005, provided an opportunity for representatives of the three programmes to meet with the MG and the experts and to agree on the basic principles of the project, on the final version of the self-evaluation manual and on the detailed planning of the process for each programme. The criteria were discussed generally and individually with each programme so as to make it possible to add such criteria as might be relevant for each of them, or exclude those that might not be pertinent.

From March until the end of May 2005 the programmes conducted their self-evaluations. Self-evaluation reports were submitted (there was a certain amount of variation in the timing between the different programmes), and the site visits then commenced in June 2005 (in the case of one programme in September). The impressions from each site visit were reported back to the individual partner university in a short (3–5 pages) "feedback letter".

The site visits were concluded in November and programme reports were drafted by the three teams of quality assurance agencies responsible for each of the programmes. After approval by the experts, the reports were sent to the respective programmes for factual comment in January 2006. The programme reports were finally published on the ENQA website between July and August 2006[11] together with statements from the programmes.

A methodological report was drafted between December 2005 and April 2006 and circulated to the experts and consortia for comments and discussion at the closing conference in early May 2006. Reflections and comments were incorporated in this final version of the methodological report.

3.2.4 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF PROGRAMMES

As stated in 3.2.3, the programmes were chosen from among the 10 which had submitted their interest to the ENQA secretariat out of 19 selected for Erasmus Mundus status in 2004. The MG used the following criteria for selection:

1. They should have been among the programmes selected for funding in the Erasmus Mundus framework;
2. They should have produced graduates;
3. For methodological and practical reasons, each degree consortium or network should have had no fewer than three and no more than five participating institutions;
4. The programmes should have been offered in the countries of at least some of the agencies responsible for TEEP;
5. Three different academic areas should have been represented: engineering (or other technical or science field), social sciences and humanities.
6. The programmes could not expect to be funded for producing the self-evaluation report nor for extra meetings of their coordinating committees.

It turned out to be somewhat difficult to recruit programmes that met all these requirements. The lack of resources to fund self-evaluations ruled out several potential programmes, and as a result, it was necessary to rank the criteria. Thus, criteria 2 and 3 were ranked lower than the others.

Three programmes were finally selected:

- European Master of Arts in Media, Communication and Cultural Studies (CoMundus);
- European Master in Law and Economics (EMLE);
- Euro Hydro-Informatics and Water Management (EuroAquae).

CoMundus and EMLE both had seven European partners, but five of those were selected for site visits on the basis of discussions between the agencies and the programmes. EuroAquae was newly developed and had not yet produced graduates. (See also 4.4.1)

3.2.5 PROGRAMME DESCRIPTIONS

The three programmes represent three different areas set out in the above mentioned criterion 5: humanities, social sciences, and engineering/science. They are different in a number of respects, some of which have an impact on the way they operate and, to a certain degree, on the way they were perceived by the expert panels. They

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[11] http://www.enqa.eu/pubs/lasso

have different histories: two of them date back to the late nineteen-eighties and early nineteen-nineties, whereas one of them is new. They also differ in the number of partners in each consortium.

CoMundus

The CoMundus Programme is offered by a Consortium of seven European universities. The wider Consortium includes non-European partners who were not evaluated for the TEEP II project. The core of the Consortium was established, initially as a network, in 1988/89.

The programme requires one and a half years of study, and awards 90 ECTS credit points including a thesis in the final semester. The core of the programme involves four major areas of study:

- Theory, History, Epistemology of Media, Culture and Communications;
- Institutions, Law, Politics, Economy of the Media;
- Media as Text, Media Production and Analysis, Multimedia; and
- Audience, Reception and Media Education.

Each partner university must offer studies in each of the four areas for at least 10 ECTS credit points. Students apply to a home university, where they spend their first and third semesters and choose one host university (second semester) in one of the partner countries. The choice of the home and host university is based on the individual's focus of studies as well as language ability.

Student performance is assessed at the university at which the student is studying the given course, and the home university is responsible for marking the thesis. The final mark is based on the accumulated achievements.

Quality assurance is the responsibility of each of the partner institutions.

Since 1992/93 the programme has awarded a "European Master of Arts in Media, Communication and Cultural Studies", which is issued as a double degree by the two universities the student has chosen to attend.

EMLE

The EMLE programme started in 1990 as the Erasmus Programme in Law and Economics at the universities of Rotterdam, Gent, Oxford and Paris IX. Since then, the number of partner universities has increased continually and the network now comprises ten teaching centres within the EU. Seven of them are part of the Erasmus Mundus programme. The programme also has links with universities in Israel and the United States.

The programme covers one academic year (60 ECTS), subdivided into three terms, with courses starting in October and ending in June. In the first term, courses are offered at the universities of Rotterdam, Hamburg and Bologna while in the second term, courses are offered at Gent, Hamburg or Bologna. In the third term there is a range of courses and thesis topics to choose between, and courses are offered at the above-mentioned universities and in addition, at Aix-Marseille, Madrid, Manchester, Linköping/Stockholm and Vienna.

The programme is structured so as to give students basic courses in the first term, core courses covering the economic analysis of law in the second term and specialised courses in the third term. All courses are taught in English. Theses may also be written in the local language in the third term provided this is not the student's mother tongue. There are plans to introduce common examinations and a joint grading system has been in existence from the beginning.

Individual partner institutions are responsible for quality, and thus, the main responsibility for internal quality control lies with the local coordinators. However, a common course evaluation form has been developed and is used by all partners.

On completion of the programme, students are awarded a double or multiple degree i.e. an official degree from each partner university where they have spent a term. They also receive an informal EMLE certificate.

EuroAquae

The University of Nice - Sophia Antipolis (F), Brandenburg Technical University Cottbus (DE), Budapest University of Technology and Economics (HU), Polytechnic University of Catalonia (ES) and University of Newcastle upon Tyne (UK) are the partners of the 4-semester master programme (2 years or 120 ECTS). Students have to study at a minimum of 3 locations.

The Master is organised in a pedagogical continuum to provide introduction and common knowledge/soft skills (semester I – all locations); acquisition and the use of the hydroinformatics concepts, methods and tools (semester 2 – UK); a thematic specialisation: hydroinformatics systems, urban waters management, inland water management, decision support systems (semester 3 – all locations except UK); and for semester 4 (all locations), a research project or professional practice.

The programme has set up an external quality monitoring group consisting of one academic expert and one external stakeholder representative. They have participated in the design of four cyclical quality assurance processes involving:

- questionnaires to students, teaching staff, consortium member universities and future employers;
- an evaluation of the published information about the programme;
- an evaluation by the external experts of the questionnaire answers;
- an evaluation of the professional and academic relevance of the programme.

The rectors of the five universities have recently signed a document making joint awards in Hydroinformatics & Water Management possible from September 2006.

Languages used in the programmes

The language policies of EMLE and EuroAquae state that English is the universal language for teaching, teaching material, assessment and information. Other languages are permitted, for example for the final thesis, on certain conditions. In CoMundus, teaching is in the language of the country of each partner university, with the stated aim to ensure cultural diversity (the exception being the Danish partners, where teaching in English is widespread also for local students). The pros and cons of this policy are discussed at some length in the programme report.

The opportunity to take courses in a second language (the languages of the countries of the partner universities) is offered, but the courses are not always well coordinated with the teaching of the programme specific courses. Furthermore, there is limited time for language study, especially in master's programmes of 60 ECTS with the possibility of spending three months in three different countries. But longer stays do not necessarily lead to more contact with the native language of the country either in a formal learning situation or in day-to-day contacts with native speakers.

3.2.6 RESOURCES (FOR MANAGEMENT OF PROJECT, FOR PROGRAMMES)

The main source of revenue for TEEP II was a grant from the European Commission, which covered the travel costs of experts and MG members, meeting costs of the MG, the launching conference, the concluding conference, the reports and the administrative costs of the project. The participating agencies contributed through their work in the MG in meetings, the preparation of the self-evaluation manual and the guidelines for experts, the selection of experts, the running of the individual evaluations and the preparation of the programme reports and the methodological report. The experts (see Appendix 8.1) kindly agreed to participate pro bono. The three programmes produced self-evaluation reports, prepared the visits locally and organised and participated in the interviews with the visiting panels. Without all these generous contributions the project could not have been carried out.

It is clear that in future evaluations, resources to cover the costs of the panel and various other expenses will have to be found. The question of who should foot that bill and how that may affect the implementation of the evaluation is discussed in section 5.2.1 and cost estimates are given in section 5.2.6.

4. Description and analysis of methodologies used

TEEP II was a pilot project with certain natural constraints. For example, the responsibility for carrying out the evaluation was defined from the beginning. Similarly, resources were detailed in the project plan and allocated by the European Commission. The participating agencies, all members of ENQA, also contributed to the funding of the project through the work of the staff involved. Also the general framework of the evaluation model had been established from the outset.

The main aim of the project was to develop a methodology for evaluating joint master's programmes. As the project progressed, however, it became clear that in fact several methodologies had to be considered, mainly depending on whether the objective of the evaluation was quality enhancement or assurance.

4.1 Selection and composition of expert panels

4.1.1 DESCRIPTION

The character of the TEEP II project required three kinds of experts on each of the panels:

- academics, i.e. teachers and researchers in the fields under review;
- quality assurance experts;
- students.

It was considered important that the panel members had to have as full an understanding of the nature of the joint programmes as possible. The academics had to have a thorough knowledge of at least part of the field covered by the programme and the capacity to see that field in relation to the programme as a whole. The quality assurance experts had to be familiar with current higher education quality assurance methodology and with recent developments of European cooperation in higher education.

The members of the MG looked for experts for all the programmes in their respective countries in order to achieve diversity on all the panels. For practical reasons, the student members on the panels were recruited nationally by each of the quality assurance agencies represented in the MG. This turned out to be a workable solution.

Names and CVs were supplied and further information was collected in order to have the best possible basis for selection. Finally the programmes were consulted in order to avoid any conflict of interest. One of the programmes emphasised the importance of avoiding conflicts of interest, particularly on the grounds that if a member of a panel was in the process of establishing a similar programme this might have created a problem of competition.

The MG decided that the members from the six quality assurance agencies should join the panels as quality assurance experts. It was estimated that five panel members would be needed for each site visit. Past experience (e.g. the first TEEP project) had shown that it was unlikely that all panel members would have the opportunity to be present at all five site visits. It was thus considered necessary to establish a pool of a total of at least eight experts for each of the programmes to be evaluated. Ideally, these experts would have come from different European countries and preferably not from the countries of the institutions involved. The countries represented in the expert groups were as follows:

CoMundus
Agencies: HAC (Hungary) and QAA (UK)
Academic experts: Sweden, Belgium, Ireland, Lithuania, UK
Students: France, UK

EMLE
Agencies: HSV (Sweden) and NVAO (Flanders – the Netherlands)
Academic experts: The Netherlands, Finland, Germany, Spain, UK
Students: Sweden, Belgium

EuroAquae
Agencies: CNÉ (France), AQU (Spain)
Academic experts: France, Hungary, Sweden, Spain, Spain
Students: Hungary, Spain

Each programme evaluation was coordinated by one of the agencies involved (the CoMundus evaluation was coordinated by HAC; EMLE by HSV; and EuroAquae by AQU), whereas the responsibility for organising each individual site visit and the secretarial functions alternated between the agencies of each agency pair.

Although the composition of each visiting group varied to some extent, the organisation made it possible to have a reasonable degree of continuity across the site visits, which contributed to comparability and consistency of judgements. Two quality assurance experts from the two collaborating agencies were present at all visits, one of them functioning as organiser and secretary, the other focusing on the quality assurance aspects in the interviews. The student members (all except one of whom were PhD students in study areas related to the subjects of the programme) focused their questions on the experiences of students in the programmes.

Certain differences in the way in which the teams have operated may be discerned:

- The EMLE team did not appoint one person as chair but the chairmanship varied from site visit to site visit. The CoMundus team had two alternating chairs and EuroAquae three.
- The EMLE panel was considered as one assessment panel. After each site visit the site panel shared their conclusions with the assessment panel as a whole in order for everyone to have a full overview of the programme. The CoMundus panel had a similar strategy.

4.1.2 COMMENTS

In the TEEP II process the agencies involved were responsible for the project from beginning to end. This included the selection and briefing of programmes and experts, the organisation of site visits and the writing of reports. In future evaluations this role will be assumed by one or several bodies external to the programmes reviewed. A discussion of what organisation(s) might be given that responsibility will be found in section 5.2.1.

The procedure for the selection of TEEP II panel members involved scanning and searching on the basis of the MG's familiarity with the field of higher education in their home countries and information from the evaluated programmes with regard to possible candidates. The outcome was successful, in that the experts functioned well as teams and gave valuable input to the evaluation process, analysis and recommendations.

Finding subject area experts in specialised internationally oriented interdisciplinary areas may in future be more problematic. In several such programmes there may be a limited availability of experts, and the question of conflict of interest is therefore a delicate one. It is important, however, that content experts should be represented on the panels not least for the sake of the legitimacy of the outcome of the evaluation project. Students and other stakeholders have a very reasonable claim that the quality of the content should be addressed and evaluated.

The composition of the teams in the TEEP II project corresponded well to the nature of the programmes. However, it should be pointed out that since all three programmes are mainly professionally, rather than theoretically, oriented, several of the discussions during the interviews at the site visits touched upon the professional relevance of the programmes. The question of employability was, therefore, addressed more in depth on those two panels which included a representative of a profession.

The recruitment of student panel members may also be a delicate matter. Like the subject area experts, they must be familiar with the subject area under review. They must also have international experience and thus have an overall degree of legitimacy vis-à-vis the evaluated programmes. Suitable candidates may be found via the National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB) or through the national student unions, as was the case in the CoMundus evaluation. The other methods used in TEEP II, i.e. through MG members approaching universities in their respective countries or through personal contacts, were successful in this project, but working through established organisations may be advisable as a general methodological approach.

In TEEP II the inclusion of students on the panels was a positive experience. They were all doctoral students who were conversant with (part of) the respective fields. They had had recent experience as students at master's level and understood well the needs of students in an international environment.

TEEP II used pools of experts. This required the exchange of knowledge and experiences, since not everybody could participate in all site visits. The MG's experience in this respect was positive, and yet there were difficulties in making the whole panel think as one team. Ideally, therefore, the same knowledge and information should be shared by all simultaneously. This presupposes one group visiting all sites during a limited period of time.

The two agency members in each of the panels played an active role in the discussions as organisers and quality assurance experts. Moreover, the programme secretary, who was one of the agency members, provided considerable input into the reports, although the reports represent the views of the team as a whole.

LESSONS LEARNED

- It is advisable to limit the number of panel members. It may, however, be necessary to have a pool with more than one or two members of each category, from which to select participants for site visits. In that case, the transfer of knowledge and experiences is important;
- A panel including subject area expertise, quality assurance expertise, students and, where relevant, stakeholders will bring together adequate expertise for a successful evaluation. Panel members should have international experience and an understanding of the character of joint provision;
- Current students or recent graduates from master's programmes similar to those under review will contribute to focusing relevant student-related questions in the evaluation process.

4.2 Brie f ng of experts and programmes

4.2.1 DESCRIPTION

In order to launch the project, to agree on the basic principles, the general time frame and the planning of the individual evaluations a two-day meeting was held in Stockholm on March 17–18, 2005. The participants included representatives of the programmes to be reviewed, the expert panels and the members of the MG.

The programme of the launch meeting (see Appendix IV) was devised so as to provide an opportunity for everybody involved to become familiar with the purpose and process of the project and to get to know each other. Thus there were four kinds of group meetings:

- a plenary session at the beginning of the meeting, with an introduction to the project as a whole: aims, expected outcomes, process, reporting and timetable to be followed by a general discussion at the end to sum up the various points of view;
- separate meetings of programmes to guide each of them through the self-evaluation document and process as well as the guidelines prepared for the experts, and to agree on any changes in the self-evaluation manual reflecting the specificities of each programme;
- concurrent separate meetings of panels in order to agree on the roles and the tasks; and
- joint meetings of each programme and "its" expert panel in order to agree on the parameters of each evaluation, dates of site visits, etc.

4.2.2 COMMENTS

While the above process was necessary for the particular purpose of TEEP II, it cannot be seen as a feature of a regular evaluation.

The selected experts, though they may have experience in evaluation, as was the case in the TEEP II pools, will need advance briefing. The project funding did not allow for more than the brief introduction, at the launch meeting, to the specific nature of joint programmes and the rationale of the methodology provided. There is a need for a briefing session that explains the meaning of the process and the criteria and includes discussions on panel members' views on their role as a team and as individual team members. The self-evaluation will have to be discussed and the extent to which it addresses strengths and weaknesses in relation to the criteria.

It is also necessary to agree on the precise design of the evaluation, the timeframe, the exact format of the self-evaluation process and the timing and character of the site visits. This may be done through a meeting of a representative of the organisation responsible for review and the coordinator of the programme.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Brie f ng before the review and the preparation of a manual to support the panel will contribute to the relevance of the evaluation process;
- An early meeting of the programme coordinator, a representative of the agency involved and the chair of the expert panel will lead to a common understanding of the evaluation process as a whole for all parties concerned.

4.3 Self-evaluation

4.3.1 DESCRIPTION

The self-evaluation manual

The aim of the self-evaluation exercise was for the programmes to reflect systematically on their own procedures and performance with regard to management and organisation, content (in the sense of coherence and relevance), and quality assurance.

To support the self-evaluation exercise and to establish common ground, the MG prepared a manual (Appendix II) explaining the purpose and framework of the evaluation, and setting out the criteria to be applied in the self-evaluation and external evaluation processes. The manual further described the self-evaluation process and specified areas to be covered, as well as facts and figures relating to students, teaching resources, organisation and management and the programme's own quality assurance processes which would form a key part of the evaluation's evidence base.

The self-evaluation process

It was envisaged that each of the participating programmes would set up a group of representatives from all the partner institutions. The group would appoint a coordinating chairperson and include at least one student. It would get its legitimacy by being officially designated by the Board/Council/Committee responsible for the programme and circulate a draft version of its report among all the members of the consortium before finalisation.

Ideally, such an exercise involves the participation of all the partners of the consortium, management, teaching staff and students. It addresses strengths as well as challenges with particular emphasis on the character of the joint programme. The outcome should be a self-evaluation report to be used as a frame of reference for the development of the programme itself and for the expert panel. The launch meeting was expected to provide the opportunity for programme-related modifications and additions to the self-evaluation manual.

The three programmes went about the self-evaluation in slightly different ways:

- CoMundus: The self-evaluation report was mainly prepared by a group of authors from the coordinating group. In dividing up the writing activities the group utilised the guidelines. The self-evaluation manual provided the basis for a two-day discussion by the whole Consortium at a meeting in London at the end of April 2005.[12]

[12] CoMundus Self-Evaluation Report, p. 22.

- EMLE: The self-evaluation report was written by the coordinator and assistant coordinator. A draft version was sent to the coordinators of the partner universities in the Consortium and to some students of the programme as well, asking them for comments, which were then included in the document.
- EuroAquae: The self-evaluation report was written by the coordinator.

4.3.2 COMMENTS

Self-evaluation process and reporting

The contents of self-evaluations of joint master's programmes differ from self-analyses of more traditional programmes in several ways. Questions to be discussed are, for example, the following

a. The issue of the joint delivery must be addressed both from a content point of view (How are the aims of the programme met through the provision and different courses across the different institutions? How is progression assured through the programme?) and from a practical point of view (What are the arrangements to assist students with accommodation, visas, residence permits etc.?). An essential issue is the degree of centralisation versus institutional freedom, regarding both contents and delivery (teaching methods, assessment methods, student evaluation etc.).
b. How is it ensured that the programme is at master's level in relation to, for example, the Dublin descriptors? An answer to this question probably requires both consistent internal monitoring and follow-up of students.
c. How do the constituent parts lead up to the aims of the programme as a whole, both academically and professionally?
d. What are the relevant benchmarks and how have they contributed to the development of the programme?
e. What is the added value of jointness?
f. What are the quality assurance mechanisms for the programme, and how are they applied?
g. What is the level of central support for the programme at the individual partner universities?

In order to shed light on these issues, it is necessary to have the different partner universities' views on how the above questions (and others, as developed in e.g. EMNEM[13]) are addressed and resolved and on how each of them fulfils its own role. This does not necessarily mean that all partners must write their own reports. It may be reasonable for that to happen (EMNEM gives excellent recommendations for how it could be done), but for external evaluation purposes it is more essential that there is a common text agreed by all partners and to which they have given input, reflecting the challenges and strengths of the consortium as a whole as well as those of each individual partner. The CoMundus two-day consortium meeting (see above) is a fine example of how consensus can be reached, or different points of view highlighted.

The input from students in the self-evaluation process is important. Collecting student views may be a particular problem, particularly in one-year master's

[13] Institutional Guidelines for Quality Enhancement of Joint Programmes, EUA (see footnote 3).

programmes, where they do not stay long in any one institution and none of them has experience from all partner institutions. Even if a student evaluation after each course is a regular feature in all partner institutions, students' views on the programme as a whole may be difficult to obtain. The use of joint IT solutions such as electronic questionnaires or learning platforms such as Blackboard could solve many problems both in this respect and others.

The three programmes involved in TEEP II had all developed routines for course evaluations, but none of them had implemented systematic models of either alumni or stakeholder surveys. With regard to the outcome of the (self-)evaluation, this may mean that there will be an emphasis on academic merit [in terms of the intrinsic values of the academic field(s) of which it is a part] rather than on usefulness to society at large. However, the monitoring model developed in EuroAquae, with two experts following the process continuously, is a useful way of obtaining relevant stakeholder input.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Regular reviews organised by the programmes themselves, as outlined in the European Standards and Guidelines, will serve as a useful tool for a successful self-evaluation process;
- A systematic self-evaluation process which covers the programme as a whole and is based on reports or at least on substantial input from all individual partners contributes to the preparation of a report which is useful for the programme as well as for the visiting panel;
- Addressing issues relating to the special characteristics of joint programmes helps to provide both the programme and the visiting team with a good understanding of these characteristics;
- The implementation of a self-evaluation exercise leads to useful results if it functions as part of the programme's own regular quality assurance procedures for collecting and analysing the views of students, alumni and stakeholders.

4.4 Site visits

4.4.1 DESCRIPTION

Organisation of the site visits

In all three programmes all partner universities were visited as planned. Two of the programmes have more partners than the five envisaged in the original application. In those cases site visits were carried out at the five partner institutions most relevant to the project, as agreed between the consortium and the panel. These were, for example, universities where compulsory courses were provided. If there were two partners in a country only one of them was visited, but representatives of both were present during the visit.

The structure of the visits was similar across the three programmes. The schedule included a meeting of the panel the day before the actual interviews in order to agree on the questions to be put to the different groups and question strategies. The interviews were scheduled to last for about one hour with 15 minutes between every two groups to allow for follow-up discussions in the panel. A typical visit would be structured in the following way:

Day 0
Planning meeting of the evaluation panel
Day 1

09.00	– 10.00	Meeting with self-evaluation group/local coordinators
10.00	– 10.15	Panel discussion
10.15	– 11.15	Meeting with teaching staff
11.15	– 11.30	Panel discussion
11.30	– 12.30	Meeting with students (including alumni where possible)
12.30	– 13.30	Lunch (panel only)
13.30	– 14.00	Brief tour of learning resources, including library
14.00	– 15.00	Meeting with rector and other senior management representatives
15.00	– 15.15	Panel discussion
15.15	– 16.15	Final discussion with self-evaluation group/local coordinator
16.15	–	Final panel discussion

As regards the different groups that the panels met, the institutions were asked to select 5–10 people per group, but the outcome varied in size from category to category and from site to site and occasionally exceeded 10. The majority of groups tended to include between 5 and 7 members, and as was the case in TEEP I, the ambition was to avoid overlap of participants between interviews. This, however, could not always be avoided. In retrospect, interviewing some of the same persons from different angles sometimes proved a benefit.

The order of the visits varied with each of the three programmes. In the EMLE evaluation, the coordinating institution was the first one visited. In the case of EuroAquae it was the last one, and with CoMundus it was in the middle of the process.

4.4.2 COMMENTS

Bene f ts and challenges of the site-visits

Site visits by an external panel must be seen as an integral and indispensable part of the process. They are necessary for verification of statements made in the self-evaluation reports and to make sure that the programme functions as an integrated whole. Also, they provide an opportunity for programmes to discuss important issues with external experts in the field.

There is no doubt that meeting representatives of all the partners of the consortia is an essential ingredient in the evaluation. In TEEP II the visits provided an opportunity to validate the information and impressions provided by the self-evaluation and to ascertain how, or even whether, partners met the criteria set out in the self-evaluation manual individually and as a consortium. They made it possible to form cumulative hypotheses regarding the programme as a whole by building on the results from one visit to the next. Interviewing students and staff from the different environments was important for the understanding of the functioning of the programme as a whole and of the relationship of the courses offered by the various partners of the consortium. Meeting senior management of the different institutions in person helped to draw conclusions as to their degree of commitment.

In some cases, the panels of TEEP II met alumni of the programme, and one or two visits included interviews with employers/stakeholders. Both these groups contributed important information on employability and skills/learning outcomes related to working life. Yet, it is the experience of TEEP II that because of practical problems (e.g. a site may not be teaching in all semesters, or the visit may take place during an examination period) it may be difficult to find both the right kind of student/alumnus and the right kind of stakeholder. This raises the eternal question of the representativeness of interviewees, particularly of student groups. Additional ways of probing student and stakeholder opinion have to be found, e.g. internet-based questionnaires, the results of which could be discussed with management and teachers (see 4.3.2 above).

The order of the visits may be significant for the result of the evaluation. The experience of TEEP II is that different arrangements may yield different results and that it is advisable to consider desired outcomes when planning the visits. Visiting the coordinating institution first may contribute to a good overview of the programme as a whole, and to formulating hypotheses about the programme which may or may not be verified at the subsequent sites. Visiting the coordinating institution last, may provide an opportunity to sum up and to clarify questions raised in the previous visits.

LESSONS LEARNED

- It is advantageous for an understanding of the programme to experience as many environments offered as possible;
- An in-depth meeting of the panel before the f rst visit facilitates a common understanding of the programme as a whole and the development of hypotheses regarding the programme. It gives an opportunity to work out interviewing strategies and clarify the roles of each member during the interviews;
- When planning the visits, the teaching schedules of sites should be taken into consideration to make sure all sites are active in the programme at the time of the visits;
- The order in which the different institutions are visited may have an impact on the development of the interviews and the understanding of the programme;
- The productiveness of the meetings with the different groups may be improved by the identi f cation of areas for concern deriving from the self-evaluation report;
- Interviewing both the programme management and institutional senior management, alumni and stakeholders contributes to a better understanding of the role of the programme at the individual institution;
- Students who are nearing the end of a course or the programme have an overview which may yield useful information in interviews;
- Where the timetable of the site visit is organised so as to give the expert panel the opportunity to discuss impressions between interviews and to sum up the main conclusions in a session at the end, it is easier to identify the main strengths and challenges.

4.5 Reporting

4.5.1 DESCRIPTION

As stated above, the TEEP II project prepared three kinds of feedback for the programmes and as part of the project output. The immediate response was to the individual consortium partners visited. This was done in the form of a letter stating the panel’s views on the strengths and challenges of the particular site and its place in the programme. The second form of feedback was a report on the programme as a whole concentrating on administration and organisation as well as the quality assurance procedures in place (or not in place). The final feedback, the present methodological report, provides information on and analysis of the particular methods used in the TEEP II project and proposals for a methodology to be applied in the future accreditation and evaluation of joint degrees.

Feedback letters

The feedback letters were designed in essentially two distinct ways. The CoMundus feedback letters were organised in accordance with the three main themes of the evaluation: organisation and management, academic level and content and quality assurance. Each of these headings summarised positive features and development opportunities for the consortium as a whole and for the institution. The reports from the five sites built upon each other, in that the findings about the previous site or the whole programme were either corroborated or disproved with regard to their validity for the programme as a whole.

In the EMLE evaluation, the letters focused on the institution visited and commented mainly on features of interest to quality assurance and the administration and organisation of teaching and student support, pointing out strengths and areas of concern. Remarks were made particularly with regard to the appropriate level of harmonisation of teaching, courses and assessment.

EuroAquae feedback letters were similar to the EMLE letters. The EuroAquae evaluation panel felt, however, that the letters were not functional, since the main aim of the evaluation exercise was to report on the programme as a whole, and feedback to individual partners might contradict the conclusions drawn in the programme report.

Programme reports

The programme reports were designed according to a similar structure for which the MG prepared an outline with the main chapter headings. Partly to test and compare different reporting strategies, the MG decided not to provide an overly rigid framework, and consequently the actual reports differ to some extent in the application of the given structure. The common features involve an introductory chapter describing the TEEP II project, its methodologies and the programme under review, an evaluation of organisation and management, programme and programme delivery and quality assurance. The final chapter contains conclusions and recommendations to the programme as a whole. Although the criteria developed for the reviews are used and referred to consistently, the actual selection varies slightly between the reports.

The CoMundus report identifies a number of recurring features affecting the quality of the programme, and comments specifically on good practice and developmental opportunities for each of the three sections (organisation and management, delivery and quality assurance). Here, the main chapter on the programme's strengths and developmental opportunities also contains the panel's recommendations. The concluding chapter is a brief summary.

The EMLE report lists the main criteria for each of the main sections and discusses under headings including sets of criteria how and to what extent the programme meets them. The final chapter, which is comparatively short, summarises the observations and makes recommendations.

The Euroaquae report is the longest of the three, and brings up points that are to be expected in a new programme, with more explicit references to the criteria than the other two reports. It discusses more in detail than the other two reports the problems of organisation and management, notably the question of student fees. It goes on to describe and analyse programme and programme delivery, particularly in terms of learning outcomes, and then brings up the particular challenges of quality assurance related to a new programme. Finally, there is a chapter on institutional issues, including a discussion of the kind of degree to be awarded and the question of equity between non-EU students and EU students. Description and analysis are interwoven throughout, except in the final conclusions and recommendations.

The different structures of the programme reports are to a large extent a consequence of those of the feedback letters.

4.5.2 COMMENTS

The use and usefulness of two kinds of feedback

The project required feedback to the individual partners visited as well as to the three programme coordinators. The letter to the partners was developed in order to provide relevant advice for the particular site and for the individual institution. The programme reports analysed the performance of both the programme as a whole and the constituent parts. In this way each institution got a reasonably full treatment in the context of the entire programme. In deciding on this scheme, the MG had in mind the nature of the TEEP II project as a pilot exercise, in which the voluntary cooperation and input on the part of the programmes deserved ongoing reflection, both for the MG and the programmes themselves.

This procedure may, however, involve a risk of not addressing sufficiently the role of the site in the programme. Individual feedback may, therefore, affect the balance between the programme coordination and coordinator and the local coordinator. This balance may vary among programmes, and different strategies for reporting may have to be applied depending on whether, for example, there is strong programme leadership or more devolved programme management. The fundamental issue, which will have to be considered in reporting, is the added value provided by different kinds of feedback.

It should be added that the feedback letters in TEEP II were considered useful by both the individual partner institutions and the programmes as a whole.

The slightly different structures of the three programme reports did not seem to have any impact on reactions from the consortia, whose responses indicated that they were largely content with the discussions of strengths and challenges as well as with the recommendations.

LESSONS LEARNED

- The structure of reports may vary according to the nature of the programmes and the relationships between the partner institutions;
- Whether written feedback should be given to the individual partner institutions may depend on the way in which the consortium as a whole is managed;
- A report that discusses strengths and challenges with regard to the programme as a whole, and includes a list of panel recommendations is useful to programmes;
- The language of the report should be clear and explicit, keeping in mind that not all readers of the report will be native speakers and may not understand the nuances of the report language.

4.6 Criteria or reference-points?

4.6.1 DESCRIPTION

Having a shared understanding and use of particular terms is critical to the success of transnational quality assurance. Terms that are widely used but sometimes with different interpretations and applications include, for example, 'criteria', 'standards', 'guidelines' and 'reference points'.

Agreement on the criteria and on their application was critical to the success of TEEP II. The term criterion is sometimes used for aspects that require a judgement on whether a particular level of performance has been met, or not. It is, however, also used for aspects that may be regarded as 'reference points' that invite reflection, discussion and commentary. The criteria applied in TEEP II were of both these kinds, and agreement on their individual use, and particular interpretation, was an important part of the discussions held at the opening conference and critical to the success of the project.

The criteria used in TEEP II were developed from:

- the criteria used in TEEP I;
- the generic reference points for master's degrees prepared by the Joint Quality Initiative (the so-called Dublin descriptors);
- the "Golden Rules" for new joint master's programmes established by the European University Association; and
- the generic competencies developed within the TUNING project.

The TEEP II criteria were broadly divided into three categories: organisation and management, programme content and delivery and quality assurance.[14]
The criteria regarding organisation and management define best practice in respect of aims, management, information and arrangements for welcoming and supporting guest students as well as policies concerning language.

Criteria under the heading 'Programme and Programme delivery' include reference points for ensuring that the programme meets the requirements for the master's degree. They also cover various generic competencies having to do with both the ability to work in an interdisciplinary and multicultural environment, and the capacity for synthesis and analysis, creativity and skills with regard to computing, decision-making and adapting to new situations. One of the most important items refers to the added value of programmes that are both interdisciplinary and transnational.

Finally, the quality assurance criteria refer to joint strategies for quality assurance in order to 'tease out' the quality of jointness of a programme, and methods to ensure that aims are met and standards upheld.

4.6.2 COMMENTS

The criteria developed in the self-evaluation manual worked well for the purpose of determining the strength and sustainability of the programmes involved in TEEP II and the sustainability of the external evaluation process. The panels used statements from the self-evaluations as starting-points for explorative questions, and for judgements and

[14] For a full list of all criteria, as well as references to TEEP I, the Dublin descriptors, the "Golden Rules" and the TUNING project, please see the self-evaluation manual (Appendix II).

recommendations, explicitly in two of the programme reports, and more implicitly in one of them.

The self-evaluation guidelines were a test vehicle for the quality assurance of the programme as a whole, including content and delivery. The evaluations included these aspects, mainly to make statements on coherence, comparability and sustainability across the programmes, but not on the individual courses. This is because the main focus of the project was not on contents but rather on organisation, management and internal quality assurance. Therefore, testing the validity of the criteria related to the competencies and learning outcomes (the TUNING statements and Dublin descriptors) proved to be a problem. In order to test in more detail than just the reference points for master's level and generic competences, it would be necessary to delve more deeply into the quality of the contents of the programme, for example through reading theses or external examiners' reports, than was possible in TEEP II. It is obvious, however, that defining and assessing the level of a programme and the standards of the degree is crucial for the success of the process.

It is also clear that criteria related to contents of the programmes will have to be developed more in detail by the experts in collaboration with those under review. This is also foreseen in the proposed criteria, which assume that the programme should itself make appropriate analyses of learning outcomes, which will then serve as a basis for the evaluation by the expert panel. TEEP II involved programmes that demonstrate the considerable differences that exist among joint master's level degree programmes in terms of length, coherence, number of partners and maturity. It is crucial that an evaluation should be able to demonstrate that the learning outcomes are compatible with the standards required for a master's degree.

The criteria (Golden Rules) developed by EUA[15] were especially useful for judging organisation and management, although they were designed particularly for the establishment of new joint programmes. A point that came out very clearly was the importance of institutional support for the smooth and effective operation and, in the last resort, survival of a joint master's programme.

LESSONS LEARNED

- The criteria proposed in the Self-evaluation manual could serve as a basis for further development;
- It should be made explicit how deeply the experts should probe the subject area and contents, e.g. the degree to which learning outcomes have been reached, the infrastructure such as the quality of laboratories and library holdings and the coherence of the curriculum;
- Criteria regarding contents and delivery will have to be adapted to suit individual programmes as well as different purposes, but correspond to what may be required for a master's degree.

[15] http://www.eua.be/eua/en/publications.jspx

4.7 A closing conference (and a follow-up?)

In order to discuss the outcomes of the project, and particularly to confirm the lessons learned and the conclusions to be drawn by the different participants (Management Group, programme representatives and experts) a two-day conference was held in Stockholm on 4–5 May 2006.

The programme of the closing conference was devised so as to provide an opportunity for all those involved to express their opinions on the process. Some of the conclusions are to be found in Chapter 6.

It could be argued that future evaluations should have a similar sign-off session in order to discuss conclusions, recommendations and processes. This would give valuable information for further development. Such a seminar might include representatives from the different sites, programme management, student representatives, and, ideally, other stakeholders.

It could, finally, also be maintained that, in the spirit of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance, there should be follow-up procedures after a certain period of time. The Standards prescribe that a follow-up should take place in cases where an evaluation has contained recommendations for action or required an action plan.

4.8 Role and cooperation of agencies

4.8.1 DESCRIPTION

TEEP II involved intense collaboration of six different quality assurance agencies from six different countries. The actual process of evaluating each of the programmes was conducted by two agencies working closely together to plan each of the stages from briefing programmes and experts to the writing of reports. Contacts were maintained via email and telephone, as well as through discussions at the meetings of the MG. The staff from the two agencies took turns organising site visits and taking responsibility for secretarial duties (cf. 3.2.1).

The language used throughout was English.

4.8.2 COMMENTS

The arrangements for cooperation between all three pairs of agencies worked well and their relationships were productive and valuable. Joint efforts contributed to finding suitable experts from different countries. It was easy to agree on roles and the division of tasks. Communication via email and telephone was smooth, and there were few, if any, complications with regard to reaching agreement on the running of the projects and the conclusions to be drawn.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Cooperation between evaluation organisations works well if there is agreement on the division of roles and duties; there are enough resources and time allocated by each organisation.

5. A proposal for a methodology for evaluating joint master's degree programmes

5.1 Points of departure

5.1.1 FACTORS AFFECTING THE DESIGN AND STRUCTURE OF AN EVALUATION OF JOINT MASTER'S DEGREES

The three master's programmes involved in TEEP II were different with regard to age and maturity, the number of partners, coherence and length. These factors (and others) may have an impact on the design and structure of an evaluation.

Age and maturity play a role in at least two ways: a programme which has been in existence for over a decade (as was the case with two of the TEEP programmes) has made it possible for the members of the consortium to get to know each other thoroughly. They have had the opportunity to try out different methods regarding organisation and management, teaching and assessment methods and quality assurance strategies. On the other hand, they may be losing the momentum for innovation and improvement. This may call for special focus on the sustainability of the programme.

The number of partners involved will obviously play a role in the extent and cost of the evaluation and will have knock on effects for the size of the expert panel and the number of site visits, among other things.

The coherence of the programme is dependent on how many courses of different kinds are involved, and how they relate to each other to constitute a whole. The TEEP II programmes differed in this respect. EMLE has essentially two components, which represent two quite different fields merging into a synthesis: the economic interpretation of law. EuroAquae aims to build up a programme with a wider choice of specialisation, in which the different parts build on each other, but still leave room for a fair amount of individual choice. CoMundus has four components, which represent somewhat different aspects of media and communication. Such differences will have to be taken into account, particularly in relation to the expertise needed for the panels.

The relationship between 'input' factors such as curricular content, programme length etc and 'output' achievements, for example the learning outcomes, is a common theme in discussions about evaluation methodologies in higher education. The Dublin descriptors laid down in the Framework for Qualifications of the EHEA adopted by the ministers in their Berlin communiqué set out the learning outcomes associated with the award of master's degrees.

The master's programmes evaluated in TEEP II differed in length from 60 ECTS (EMLE) to 120 ECTS (CoMundus). Whilst they were to some extent considered in relation to the Dublin descriptors, the project did not consider possible impacts of the different programme lengths on students' academic achievements. However, from an organisational perspective, and with the importance attached to interviewing students, the arrangements for student mobility within the programmes did impact on the programme of site visits.

5.1.2 DIFFERENT AUDIENCES HAVE DIFFERENT NEEDS AND REQUIRE DIFFERENT APPROACHES

Depending on the purpose of the evaluation and the audiences addressed, the process and the outcome will differ. Ministries may need an assurance that the programme meets certain standards. Other stakeholders (employers, students) may require information on the quality of the programme in relation to that of other programmes. Evaluations undertaken to satisfy these audiences will be more oriented towards assessing the programme against predefined criteria. The programme itself, on the other hand, will need advice on how to enhance its quality. These two aims are not necessarily opposed. An assessment-oriented evaluation may very well provide programmes with ideas on how to improve.

The evaluations of the three programmes involved in TEEP II had, to some extent, different emphases. The CoMundus review was more responsive to the specific expressed needs of the programme, whereas the other two were stricter with regard to the criteria and role played by the panel. In a sense, this reflects a difference (however small) between an enhancement-led exercise and an assessment-oriented one.

Whichever the purpose, it is important that the evaluation gives the programme an opportunity for self-reflection and systematic self-evaluation of its own strengths and weaknesses, and that the report provides advice and recommendations for development.

5.1.3 FITNESS FOR PURPOSE

What is it that makes a joint master's programme different from other programmes? The answer to this question, which has been touched upon before, has at least three dimensions: academic, relating to contents; pedagogical, relating to teaching and learning; and practical, relating to the conditions of students and teachers. Some of the challenges in relation to these dimensions are:

1. The programme is provided as a single unified entity made up of components from different universities. The joint provision gives an added value, but also a challenge, compared to programmes taught by a single provider. This requires close cooperation to agree on purpose, contents and the curriculum as a whole, as well as the individual components taught at the partner institutions. This does not mean, for example, that only one teaching methodology or assessment method is applied, but that teachers and students must know what to expect and what is expected of them.
2. Close cooperation is needed to agree on internal quality assurance procedures.
3. From a practical point of view, students need support with everything from lodging, visas and residence permits, to social life in a new environment where the language barrier may be a problem.
4. An information system which reaches out to all those involved (teachers, students, administrative staff and university management) is essential.
5. Challenges related to external circumstances are national requirements for accreditation and differences in degree requirements between partner universities in different countries.

The European standards and guidelines for external quality assurance[16] apply to the evaluation of joint degree programmes too, but the constraints listed above necessitate special considerations:

1. The criteria for evaluation will have to address the above challenges.
2. The purpose for which the evaluation is carried out must be clearly identified.
3. The experts selected for the task of evaluating a joint master's programme will have to have international experience and be able to appreciate the special conditions.
4. The self-evaluation needs to reflect the views and roles of all the partner universities, as well as the challenges listed above.
5. The question of who should be responsible for an evaluation of a joint master's programme must be addressed and solved.

With a view to the specific nature of joint master's programmes and of the experiences gained by TEEP II, the MG proposes the evaluation model outlined in section 5.2. It is based on the assumption that it should accommodate the characteristics of the programmes and national requirements and also be an instrument for both quality enhancement and assurance. Further, it also considers that the costs incurred should be as limited as possible. This applies, regardless of whether the programme or a quality assurance organisation funds the external evaluation.

5.1.4 PRINCIPLES

The general principles of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area also apply to the evaluation of joint master's degrees.

Moreover, in order to obtain as full an understanding as possible of the quality of a programme it is advisable to assess both the prerequisites of the programme provision, the teaching and learning process and the outcomes. Prerequisites include, for example, organisation, funding and infrastructure. The process relates to teaching and assessment methods and internal quality management. Outcomes may refer to students' learning outcomes and the extent to which graduates are satisfied with the programme in relation to their (future) employment. This structure will facilitate an understanding of the outcomes in the light of prerequisites and process.

5.2 Proposal

5.2.1 INITIATION AND GENERAL CONDITIONS

Who takes the initiative and the responsibility for the evaluation of a joint programme will depend on the type and purpose of the review. In the view of the MG, different types of evaluations will require different methods. At the same time, the three variants outlined below in A–C are not, of course, mutually exclusive but contain common elements and can therefore be combined if appropriate:

A. **An evaluation of a joint programme is part of a mandatory accreditation/ evaluation process required by the legislation of one or several countries.**
   In TEEP II, two of the programmes involved have undergone (partial) accreditation. EMLE has been accredited by NVAO, which accredits all provision

[16] Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, 2005, pp. 19-23.

that leads to a Dutch or Flemish degree. In this particular case, the expert panel looked at the quality assurance arrangements, the outline of the programme and the qualifications of the teachers abroad. A few students and teachers from locations other than Flanders and the Netherlands were also interviewed. Site visits abroad were not undertaken, but may be part of the procedure, if necessary. As a consequence the programme was accredited as a Dutch degree.

A similar exercise has been carried out by ZeVA (the Central Evaluation and Accreditation Agency, Hannover, Germany) with regard to the CoMundus programme. A site visit was coordinated with that of TEEP II. But the fact that the programme is accredited in one country does not automatically lead to accreditation in other countries.

In the view of the MG the most natural way of solving the accreditation or evaluation problem is by way of mutual multilateral agreements among agencies provided they have an official mandate to do so. Such arrangements are discussed, planned, and, in some cases, already exist. Thus, for example, the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA)[17], created in 2003, has as its ultimate aim the achievement of mutual recognition of accreditation decisions among the partners before the end of 2007.

The most far-reaching example of a successful implementation is the Washington Accord, an agreement among agencies in the U.S., Canada, Australia, Ireland, Hong Kong, Japan, New Zealand, South Africa and the United Kingdom in the area of engineering, which commits them to recognising each others' accreditation systems. This arrangement makes it possible for graduates of a programme accredited by any quality assurance agency under the agreement to practice engineering in all areas covered by it. The Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees[18] by the Committee of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications (2004) proposes a similar arrangement for joint degrees.

An agreement among European agencies with regard to joint (master's) degree programmes would require only one evaluation/accreditation process for a programme to be recognised in all countries where a consortium operates. The process may be most usefully carried out by two accreditation/evaluation agencies in cooperation. The experience of TEEP II in this respect, as described in 4.8 above, is positive. The model outlined in this report could, hopefully, be used as a point of departure for the methodology of such an undertaking.

The choice of which agencies would undertake the evaluation would have, in each case, to be decided by agreement of the agencies of the countries in which the consortium is represented. We anticipate that the costs of the evaluation exercise would be shared among the respective agencies, since it is part of a procedure that is mandatory in the countries involved.

It must be stressed that national legislation needs to be updated to accommodate acceptance of accreditation/evaluation by other countries (such

[17] http://www.ecaconsortium.net

[18] http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/highereducation/recognition/lrc_EN.asp

legislation has already been introduced in Flanders). This was envisaged in the Bergen Communiqué, but until it becomes reality, case-by-case agreements will have to be worked out.

B. An evaluation is part of a voluntary evaluation/accreditation process for the purpose of awarding a quality label.

There is, it is argued, a need to highlight the very best of provision in European higher education both generally but also particularly to attract the best students in Europe and in third countries. One of the purposes of Erasmus Mundus is to promote and support such higher education around the world. A question may be asked about whether a 'quality label' would assist in the identification and promotion of such high quality programmes, providing a clear indication of excellence for prospective students from Europe and third countries and enhancing the attractiveness of such programmes. It might be reasonable to anticipate that programmes with a label could also serve as a benchmark for other joint master's programmes.

The idea of a European 'quality label' for joint master's programmes raises several questions, however: who would benefit from a label? Who might/should award it, and on what basis? What responsibilities would it entail?

It could be argued that the Erasmus Mundus status itself constitutes a form of 'quality label'. The selection process for Erasmus Mundus is, however, done solely as a desk exercise on the basis of written documentation provided with the application, including quality assurance aspects. There are not any visits to institutions or interviews with programme representatives or students, which could identify whether for example the intended outcomes are actually being met. A more interactive process would be needed for a substantive 'quality label', although the precise aims of such a process would need to be clearly identified and a cost/benefit analysis undertaken to ensure that any methodology kept to the 'necessary and sufficient', thus providing the greatest chance of sustainable success.

The general model for such a review may follow the principles outlined in 5.2.2 – 5.2.5, but the criteria for assessment would have to be adapted to suit specific purposes. The programme, that would submit itself for review, might be expected to demonstrate consistent high quality in its organisation and management, and in the provision of teaching, and meet the high scholarly and professional standards required of a (master's) degree. Crucially, it would have to have developed its own reliable and stringent quality assurance processes that reflected the 'jointness' of and across the programme, as opposed to there merely being actions that amounted to no more than a sum of (different) quality assurance processes in the different partners.

It is unlikely that any label of value would be awarded unless a programme was well established and had produced graduates; feedback from alumni (and perhaps their employers as well) would be a significant element in any worthwhile evaluation.

Who might run the evaluations and award the label? For an evaluation process to be credible it would have to be carried out by an organisation that had both the authority to award such a label and was acceptable at least to the higher education communities in the countries represented in the consortia, their 'stakeholders', and any local regulatory or evaluation bodies.

With current uncertainties associated with wider mutual recognition of accreditation decisions made by national or regional bodies, it might be that a joint body would need to be created, perhaps from two or more quality assurance agencies relevant to the countries involved in any consortium of providers. It is unclear however on what basis such a body would have authority to award a 'label', other than the intrinsic status of the organisations involved. What formal status might such a label have or need? Perhaps a label that has no formal (legal) status in itself, but is valued through the status of the organisations involved in its 'award', would have market value.

With increasing formal responsibilities associated with decision making processes of almost any kind, the award of such a label would require controls that would for example be able to demonstrate consistency of process, and there would be an inevitable question about whether some centralised process or monitoring might be needed. Who might do this, or have the authority to do it, is unclear at present.

As in most other evaluations for the purpose of awarding a stamp of excellence (e.g. EQUIS, conducted by the European Foundation for Management Development), the costs will have to be borne by the programme, and be included in the budget. They will depend essentially on the number of members of the expert team and the number of site visits and meetings of the experts.[19]

The question was raised whether the evaluations conducted within TEEP II should have resulted in the awarding of labels. The MG concluded that this would have been entirely unsuitable, because TEEP II was a pilot project in which different methods were tried out. Further, the three programmes involved did not volunteer for that purpose.

C. The evaluation is part of a voluntary process for the purpose of quality enhancement.

An evaluation for the sole purpose of quality enhancement could, in principle, be carried out according to the model described in 5.2–5.5. The exact implementation would, of course, depend on the specific needs of the programme. The difference between a solely enhancement oriented evaluation and other types would be that no judgement would be made about the programme's meeting predefined criteria but that, rather, the focus would be on its strengths and weaknesses and on recommendations for enhancement.

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19 For examples of cost estimates, see 5.2.6.

5.2.2 SELECTION, COMPOSITION, BRIEFING AND WORKING METHODS OF EXTERNAL PANEL

Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area state that external evaluation should include:

- the use of international experts;
- care in the selection of experts;
- participation of students;
- appropriate briefing or training for experts.

The expert panels involved in the evaluation of joint programmes will need to include expertise in the subject areas of the programmes, which are often interdisciplinary and professionally oriented. This means that it is helpful if there is representation of subject experts in all fields covered by the programme, or, ideally, if there are experts who have relevant experience of interdisciplinary areas involved. It is also advisable, whenever relevant, to include stakeholders, e.g. possible employers with an interest in and knowledge of the area.

In the case of reviews of joint programmes, 'international' also implies that experts should have considerable experience of transnational education and come from different countries, not necessarily those represented in the consortium.

The experience of having students on the panel of experts in TEEP II was a positive one, and the MG proposes that this be the norm in evaluations of joint programmes. If the students have recently graduated from or are at the end of similar programmes, with knowledge of the advantages and challenges facing such studies, they will be in a position to make considerable contributions.

It is vital that care should be exercised to avoid conflicts of interest. Such conflicts may arise from current or previous close contacts with one or several of the institutions under review, or plans to develop programmes similar to the one under review.

Depending on the number of partners involved in a consortium, and on the number of sites to be visited, it may be necessary to appoint a pool of experts, from which to draw individuals to conduct the site visits. A site would normally be visited by a team consisting of 4–5 persons, including:

- chair, who is also an academic expert;
- academic expert and/or stakeholder representative;
- student (alumnus);
- secretary, who is also a quality assurance expert.

As a general principle, it is advisable to keep the number of experts as low as possible, both to reduce costs and to establish a tightly-knit and efficient group. For tightly-knit programmes with few partners one expert could probably suffice, which would reduce the size of the visiting team to 4.

Briefing experts initially and throughout is a necessary part of the process. In view of the costs involved in getting a panel together, some of the information will have to be available in a briefing package explaining the purpose, methods, roles and ethical considerations involved. E-mail would be a major means of communication, and the use of a joint digital project workspace would help to disseminate and update current information as well as to simplify the whole working process.

In view of the TEEP II experience it is advisable to organise an initial meeting of the panel in order to reach agreement on purpose, process, interpretation of criteria and roles of panel members and to develop a common understanding of the programme under review. This may be done after the self-evaluation has been submitted and before or in conjunction with the first site visit. A final meeting after a draft version of the team's report has been written could help to reach agreement on the conclusions to be drawn and the recommendations to be made.

5.2.3 SELF-EVALUATION PROCESS

The TEEP II Self-evaluation manual describes a process expected to "stimulate internal discussions within and among the participating institutions, include ample time and scope for reflection on emerging matters and provide opportunities to comment on and assist continuous improvement in the quality of the programmes."

In order to achieve this, the programme could most usefully utilise its "regular routines for collecting and analysing information about its own activities" [20] and, where necessary, supplement those with special investigations. It is essential that the process should take place with the involvement of all partner universities and include views of students, alumni and stakeholders.

It is good practice to set up a group consisting of representatives from the different institutions, including students. For the coordination of the work it is to be recommended that a chairperson should be appointed, who is also the contact person with the external body responsible for the overall evaluation. The group and its chairperson should be officially designated by the leadership of the programme.

The process and the report should take into account the criteria developed regarding organisation and management, programme level and content and quality assurance. The methodology and questions developed in EMNEM would be a valuable point of departure.

5.2.4 SITE VISIT(S)

A site visit (or visits) is an essential part of any evaluation and may be organised along different lines, depending on needs and resources:

The panel chair may be given the task, together with a representative of the organisation responsible for the evaluation, of conducting a preliminary visit to the coordinating site to discuss any special requirements on the part of the panel or the programme and to prepare for the self-evaluation exercise and the evaluation process.

With regard to the organisation of the visits, the whole panel needs to meet before the beginning of the process to discuss the programme and the self-evaluation. Such a meeting could be combined with the briefing session referred to in 5.2.2 or the first site visit. It is also essential that before each visit the panel should meet for a few hours to discuss the specifics and role of that site in relation to the programme as a whole.

Alternative solutions for site visits may be chosen. One possibility is that all sites of the programme are visited and key groups are interviewed (programme coordinators, teachers, students, alumni, stakeholders, administrative staff institutional leadership). Each group should be interviewed separately in order for the views of the different categories to be heard.

[20] Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, 2005, p. 18.

For reasons of cost, it may be necessary to reduce the number of visits. Other alternative solutions will then have to be found, which will ensure that the experts obtain sufficient information from relevant groups to be able to draw correct conclusions and give useful feedback. A minimum requirement is for the panel to visit the coordinating institution and for the other sites to be represented by students, teachers and management. The MG recommends the first version, however. Its experience with TEEP II was that almost every site visited highlighted different issues, which might have been overlooked in a single visit. It is difficult to appraise the different environments that students meet without firsthand knowledge, so visiting several (if not all) of the sites is beneficial.

The order in which the sites are visited may vary with the strategy of the expert team. In TEEP II three different models were used (see 4.4.2), and the conclusion drawn was that visiting the coordinating institution first will help to formulate hypotheses of the functioning of the programme as a whole, whereas visiting the coordinating institution last will make it possible to draw conclusions based on the evidence from the previous visits. It is a question of a deductive vs. an inductive method.

At the end of each site visit there should be enough time for the panel to sum up its discussions and draw preliminary conclusions.

5.2.5 FEEDBACK AND REPORTING

TEEP II produced two kinds of feedback: site reports (feedback letters) and final programme reports. As has been discussed above, there may not be a need for immediate feedback to each site, and it may even be counter-productive for the programme as a whole.

The end product of the evaluation exercise is the panel's report on the programme. It is good practice for the panel to submit a draft version to the programme coordinator for factual verification before publication.

Reports may be structured in different ways depending on the needs of the programme under review. Considerations which require special attention may have emerged in the process. Reports resulting in accreditation may have to be structured differently from reports aiming at support and enhancement. In the MG's view, however, a report should include the following main elements:

- description of the programme;
- assessment of organisation and management;
- assessment of programme content and programme delivery, including reflections on the added value of 'jointness';
- assessment of the programme's own quality assurance processes;
- features of good practice;
- recommendations for improvement.

Finally, if the budget allows, a feedback session could be held at the coordinating institution with the chair and secretary of the panel and representatives of the programme.

5.2.6 ESTIMATED COSTS

The costs involved in the evaluation of a joint degree programme will include expenditure for travel and per diem, fees for panel members and administrative costs. The estimates given below presuppose that panel members take part in the process as peers and colleagues on the basis of the principle of academic reciprocity. Consequently, the proposed fee is nominal. The estimates also take into account the fact that the report should be published on the Internet to avoid printing costs. They are further based on the actual costs of travel and allowances claimed by the experts in TEEP II in accordance with European Commission regulations. These amounted to 50 200€ for 67 claims or 750€ per claim.

Two calculations are provided, which are based on different assumptions. One is a low-budget example, which involves a panel of four members visiting only the coordinating institution for two days, with representatives of the other partners of the consortium being present. The visit also includes a briefing session with the panel members. The other example assumes visits to five partner institutions by five panel members. The estimate of the number of working days is based on the number of visiting days plus extra days for preparation and reading report drafts. It is also assumed that the chair and the secretary will need extra days for the preparation of the report.

The final costs of an evaluation will, of course, depend on the size of the expert panel, the number of partners and the number of sites visited as well as on the way in which various sessions can be combined. Different alternatives can be easily calculated on the basis of the examples below. It should be emphasised that neither example takes account of the costs of the consortium for partners' travel arrangements or for the self-evaluation exercise including the writing of the report.

TEEP II: Estimated costs

Example 1. *(a two-day site visit combined with a briefing session; 4 panel members)*

TYPE OF EXPENDITURE	PERSONS	DAYS	AMOUNT	
Chair and secretary, 10 days x 300 EUR x 2 persons	2	10	300¤	6 000¤
Other panel members, 6 days x 200 EUR x 2 persons	2	6	200¤	2 400¤
Travel costs Average travel costs	4		500¤	2 000¤
Per diem (hotel and subsistence)	4	2	250¤	2 000¤
Secretarial work, administration and material				1 000¤
Total				**13 400¤**

Example 2. *(visits to five institutions, the first one combined with a briefing session; 5 panel members)*

FEES FOR EXPERT PANEL MEMBERS	PERSONS	DAYS	AMOUNT	
Chair and secretary	2	15	300 ¤	9 000 ¤
Other panel members	3	10	200 ¤	6 000 ¤
Travel costs	**Persons**	**Sites/days**	**Amount**	
Average travel costs	5	5	500 ¤	12 500 ¤
Per diem (hotel and subsistence)	5	5	250 ¤	6 250 ¤ ¤
Secretarial work, administration and material				2 000 ¤
Total				**35 750 ¤**

5.2.7 A GENERIC MODEL AND EXAMPLE TIMESCALE OF AN EVALUATION PROCESS

Identification of programme(s): through selection or submission	2–3 months
Clarification of purpose of evaluation: draft criteria established	
Selection of panel of experts	
Briefing of programme and experts and finalisation of criteria	
Programme(s) prepare self-evaluation documents	3 months
Site visits	1–3 months
Feedback and draft report	
Opportunity to comment on draft report	1–2 months
Final report published	
Possible feedback session with programme	
Possible follow-up, optimally after 2 – 3 years	

6. Feedback from programmes and closing conference

The TEEP II project included one opening conference and one closing conference attended by the Management Group, the subject and student experts and representatives of the three programmes. The final conference was designed as a feedback mechanism, providing an opportunity for the programmes to exchange experiences and for the experts and agencies to share information on the reception of the evaluation outcomes. In this sense, it may be seen as an organic part of an evaluation process. In this case, for obvious reasons, the focus was on the methodology. Thus, one day was specifically devoted to group discussions on the methods applied in the project (see Appendix 8.4). Many of the comments have been incorporated into the main text. Some of the salient points raised in the discussion are found below.

Focus of evaluation: Organisation – Content – Quality assurance

As has been repeatedly stated in the previous chapters, the pilot evaluation focused on the organisation and management of the programmes and the adequacy of quality assurance arrangements. Content, mainly in the sense of coherence and progression was addressed more clearly in one of the programmes. It was generally agreed that in future evaluations questions of the quality of the provision would have to be assessed, regardless of the purpose of the evaluation (quality assurance or enhancement). This will require experts who are fully conversant with the different aspects of the field under review and have international experience.

Joint vs. double or multiple degrees

One of the programmes will shortly be awarding its first joint degrees, i.e. a document signed by the five universities involved, not accompanied by any national diploma. The other two issue double or multiple degrees. It was maintained that in certain cases students preferred a national degree, because it might be more prestigious than the joint degree awarded by a consortium, however well established this consortium might be. Nevertheless, this situation can be expected to change as joint degrees become more commonly accepted.

Added value

Evaluations would have to address the question of the added value of joint provision and joint degrees and assess the degree to which programmes offer value beyond that of a programme offered at a single university. Thus, the opportunities for international contacts, the value of international environments and different perspectives etc. will have to be assessed to a larger extent than has been the case in TEEP II.

Different steps of the evaluation process

The views of the experts and programmes largely mirror those expressed in this report. Thus there was general agreement that the presence of students and stakeholders on the panels was desirable.

Site visits, preferably to all the sites, and interviews with all the partners represented in the programme, were considered to be essential in spite of the costs involved. It was suggested that costs would have to be covered through fundraising from external sources. In the long term, however, universities would have to include them in their budgets.

The feedback letters to individual sites were found by at least one of the programmes to be of considerable value. They would, however, have to be communicated to the main coordinator of the programme in order to be of use in the planning and implementation of the programme as a whole and thus contribute to the joint development.

Feedback letters from programmes

In addition to the comments made at the final conference, the three programmes were given the opportunity to express their views on the programme reports and on the entire evaluation process in feedback letters to the MG. These formal responses from the programmes have been included as annexes in the programme reports.

Generally speaking, the three feedback letters reflected points considered to be essential with regard to the programmes and the assessments. The EuroAquae response stressed three things, all related to the fact that they were a relatively new programme: their own internal formative evaluation, the fact that they would – from September 2006 on – be awarding "genuine" joint degrees, and the fact that their graduates were joining major companies for professional practice during the fourth semester. These can all be considered part of successful development strategies in a recently started joint programme.

CoMundus pointed to the current development strategies of the programme that had been established as a result of TEEP II. Among other things, they concerned strengthening the joint character of the programme by developing, for example, common research and publication activities through seminars, conferences and symposia. CoMundus was also looking for ways of institutionalising the programme in order to reach a stronger legal position as an organisational entity.

The EMLE feedback letter was very helpful towards the finalisation of the programme report in question and of the methodological report. It was also concerned with factual clarifications and with the structure of part of the methodological report. The EMLE response pointed out that the greatest benefit of the TEEP II project had been to raise awareness across accreditation agencies with regard to the fact that joint master's programmes needed joint quality assurance strategies.

7. Concluding remarks and recommendations for further development

7.1 What has the project shown?

The aim of TEEP II was to develop a methodology for the evaluation of joint master's programmes. If we mean by methodology a set of measures to be applied when evaluating the quality of the provision of transnational education at master's level, this aim was achieved. The present report includes a proposal for how to initiate an evaluation under varying circumstances. The question of who should carry out an evaluation is discussed and a suggestion is put forward for mutual recognition by accreditation or evaluation agencies of evaluations of joint master's programmes. In the report there is a model for a self-evaluation process, for selecting and briefing expert panels and for how site visits may be conducted. There is also a discussion on feedback and reporting. The self-evaluation manual (Appendix II) contains a proposed a set of criteria for assessment, which should, however, be modified to harmonise with the nature of the evaluation and the special character of the programme.

The pilot evaluations indicated that the same overall methodology may be applied for evaluations with different purposes and that the two main purposes, quality assurance and quality enhancement, can be the object of one and the same exercise and lead to tangible results in terms of effective measures taken by those under review.

It may also be pointed out that the methodologies used in the pilot evaluations were reasonably successful in the way that they led to further development of the programmes under review. The extent to which this happened varied, but there is little doubt that the evaluations had an impact upon and contributed to changes in procedures and in some cases also in content. For example, one of the programmes was considering introducing a common core to be offered at all sites.

7.1.1 THE CULTURE OF JOINTNESS

The crucial object of evaluation is the jointness of the programmes. The question of a "culture of jointness" (an expression borrowed from the EMNEM report) is fundamental to the development of all joint programmes and to evaluations of such programmes. Any review must take this into account. It means that self-evaluations must address jointness both in the way they are carried out and in reporting. The selection and briefing of peers must reflect the character of this form of educational provision. Unfolding the common culture must be at the heart of the site visits, and this is one reason why as many sites as possible ought to be visited or at the very least represented at meetings. Evaluation reports must also take this into consideration. For example, the coordinators of a programme, and preferably all partners should be informed of any feedback to individual partner institutions. Finally, two or more quality assurance agencies working together in the organisation of the evaluation of joint programmes will add to the understanding of the unique character of transnational joint provision.

7.1.2 LEGAL ASPECTS

The legal aspects of joint versus double or multiple degrees were addressed to some extent in the pilot evaluations. They did not play a major role in the assessment exercise and different views on the role of the legal framework were expressed by the programmes involved. In the Management Group's view, however, the provision in legislation for joint degrees in all the countries where such programmes are offered, would facilitate cooperation within the programmes as well as among quality assurance organisations.

A related legal complication, which also affects reviews, is the definition of what constitutes a master's degree. The three programmes involved in the pilot evaluations differed in length between 60 and 120 ECTS credits. Some countries define the minimum length as 60, others as 120. For evaluation purposes, this problem may be solved by assessing a programme in terms of learning outcomes required by a master's degree. The legislation in several countries, however, specifies the number of ECTS credits required for a master's degree. In cases, involving countries with different legal requirements the evaluation of joint master's programmes will be affected.

7.2 Further developments

Several references have been made in the previous chapters to the parallel project, EMNEM (European Masters New Evaluation Methodology), conducted by the European University Association. The aim of that project was to develop a methodology for internal quality assurance of joint master's programmes within the university. The two projects, TEEP II and EMNEM, thus surveyed the same landscape from two different vantage points. For the sake of information-sharing EMNEM was represented in the TEEP II Management Group, and representatives of TEEP II participated in an EMNEM seminar and in the final meeting. Important insights were shared and duplication was avoided.

The future development of joint master's programmes and the evaluation of such provision will profit from further cooperation in this field. Thus a next step might be an evaluation of joint master's programmes that would combine the methodology for external evaluation outlined in this report and the EMNEM Institutional Guidelines for Quality Enhancement in Joint Programmes.

Appendix I

Management Group and Expert Teams

Management Group:

- Axel Aerden, NVAO, Flanders and the Netherlands
- Cloud Bai-Yun, ENIC-NARIC, UK
- Fiona Crozier, QAA, UK
- Bruno Curvale, CNÉ, France
- Mark Frederiks, NVAO, Flanders and the Netherlands
- Josep Grifoll, AQU, Catalunya
- Nick Harris, QAA, UK
- Fabrice Hénard, CNÉ, France
- Emmi Helle, ENQA Secretariat (Secretary)
- Sara Karlsson, HSV, Sweden (until 20 November 2005)
- Gemma Rauret, AQU, Catalunya
- Christina Rosznyai, HAC, Hungary
- Andrée Sursock, EUA, Belgium
- Tibor Szanto, HAC, Hungary
- Staffan Wahlén, HSV, Sweden (Chair)

Expert teams:

CoMundus

- Göran Bolin, Chair *(Professor of Media Studies, Södertörns högskola, Sweden)*
- Farrel Corcoran, Chair *(Professor, School of Communication, Dublin City University, Ireland)*
- Hilde van den Bulck *(Professor of Media Studies, University of Antwerp, Belgium)*
- Audrone Nugaraite *(Director, Institute of Journalism, Vilnius University, Lithuania)*
- Jenny Rice *(Associate Dean, Academic Studies, School of Humanities, Languages and Social Sciences, University of Wolverhampton, U.K.)*
- Niki Strange *(Doctoral Student in Digital Media, University of Sussex, U.K.)*
- François Tavernier *(Doctoral Student in Information and Communication Sciences, Université Paris XII Val-de-Marne, France)*
- Fiona Crozier *(Assistant Director, Quality Assurance Agency, U.K.)*
- Nick Harris *(Director, Quality Assurance Agency, U.K.)*
- Tibor Szántó *(Secretary General, Hungarian Accreditation Committee)*
- Christina Rozsnyai *(Programme Officer, Hungarian Accreditation Committee, who was also co-ordinating secretary for the CoMundus Evaluation)*

EMLE

- Michael Faure *(Academic Director, Professor, Maastricht European Institute for Transnational Legal Research)*
- Eva Jansson *(Professor of Economics, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona)*
- Wolfgang Mincke *(Professor Römermann Rechtsanwälte, Hannover)*
- Kalle Määttä *(Professor of Law and Economics, University of Jyväskylä)*

- Paul Periton *(Professor, Head of Centre for Academic Standards and Quality, Nottingham Trent University)*
- Vladimir Bastidas *(Doctoral student in Law, Stockholm University, Sweden)*
- Stephan Neetens *(Master's student in Law, Leuven Katholieke Universiteit)*
- Axel Aerden *(NVAO, the Netherlands and Flanders)*
- Mark Frederiks *(NVAO, the Netherlands and Flanders)*
- Staffan Wahlén *(HSV, Sweden)*
- Sara Karlsson *(HSV, Sweden, who was also co-ordinating secretary for the EMLE evaluation)*

EuroAquae

- Péter Bakonyi *(Professsor, VITUKI, Environmental Protection & Water Management Research Institute, Hungary)*
- François Laulan *(EU Consultant in Engineering and Education, France)*
- Jan-Erik Gustafsson *(Professor, Land and Water Resources Engineering, Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden)*
- Ignasi Rodríguez-Roda *(Professor, Civil Engineering, University of Girona, Catalonia, Spain)*
- Miquel Salgot *(Professor, natural Products, Vegetal Biology and Soil Science, University of Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain)*
- Csilla Balogh *(Doctoral student in Environmental Sciences, University of Veszprém, Hungary)*
- Esther Huertas *(Doctoral student in Land, Water and Environmental Sciences, University of Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain)*
- Bruno Curvale *(Chargé de mission, CNÉ, France)*
- Fabrice Hénard *(Chargé de mission, CNÉ, France)*
- Gemma Rauret *(Director, AQU, Catalonia, Spain)*
- Josep Grifoll *(Head of Quality Assessment Area, AQU, Catalonia, Spain, who was also co-ordinating secretary for the EuroAquae evaluation)*

Appendix II

Self-evaluation manual

Transnational European Evaluation Project II (TEEP II) Self-evaluation manual

1. Background

1.1 Aim of the project

The current project forms the second stage of the ENQA Transnational European Evaluation Project (TEEP I) carried out in 2002-2003[1]. It aims to contribute to the development of a method for the evaluation of joint programmes and to the process of development of joint degrees in the European context. It does so by evaluating the organisation and management, level and content, and quality assurance systems of three European joint Masters programmes.

1.2 Methodology

The project is based on an internationally recognised evaluation model[2] and is undertaken in dialogue with higher education institutions. It involves:

1. The testing of a common methodology and common criteria;
2. The selection of three joint Masters programmes wishing to participate in the project;
3. A self-evaluation exercise by each of the programme teams;
4. The preparation of a self-evaluation report by each of the programme teams;
5. A visit by an international panel of experts (including both subject area and quality assurance experts and a student) to discuss the self-evaluation report and gather additional information;
6. The preparation of an evaluation report by each of the panels and feedback from each of the programme consortia;
7. The preparation of a summary report on the methodology used and lessons learned.
8. A contribution to the establishment of a methodology shared at the European level.

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1 http://www.enqa.eu

2 The peer review model is a bottom-up approach to evaluation, practised by quality assurance agencies worldwide. Its benefits include providing legitimacy and encouraging self-reflection. Within the Bologna process, ENQA has a mandate to establish a peer review system for quality assurance agencies in Europe.

1.3 Anticipated benefits for participating programme consortia

The likely benefits from participating in the project include:

- An opportunity to share experiences with other programmes, networks and peers, in order to assure continuous improvement of the programme quality and quality assurance;
- The development of criteria that are commonly agreed and that have been tested and offer a dimension of transparency;
- A contribution to the development of the quality assurance of joint degree programmes on the basis of the recommendations from the experts, and identification of good practice for comparable programmes and networks;
- The opportunity to obtain feedback, which may help in identifying opportunities for improvement including the quality assurance 'culture';
- The opportunity to promote the institutions, programmes and networks.

2. Framework for evaluation

This section sets out the framework for the evaluation of joint Masters programmes, including some criteria. In establishing the framework, the following have been considered:

- The criteria used in TEEP I;
- The generic reference points for Masters degrees suggested by the Joint Quality Initiative (so called Dublin descriptors);
- The "Golden Rules" for new joint Masters programmes established by the European University Association;
- The generic competencies developed within the TUNING project.

Criteria and regulations that exist within national contexts are also taken into consideration.

As the focus of the project is on the particularity of joint degrees at Masters level, the criteria have been adjusted to suit this purpose. Special account has also been taken of the interdisciplinary nature of the programmes.

While content is an important aspect, the emphasis in the project is on the joint delivery of the programme and the quality assurance system attached to this.

The criteria should not be interpreted as detailed prescriptions but rather as pointers towards the further development of programmes. The project is not intended to lead to either implicit or explicit ranking.

2.1 Organisation and management[3]

Criteria under this heading could include:

a. The aims of the programme are clearly defined.
b. The processes of developing the aims and choosing partners for the programme should be interconnected.

[3] Section 2.1 draws upon the "Golden Rules" established by the EUA: http://www.eua.be/

c. The management of all participating institutions supports the goals and objectives of the programme. The programme is fully recognised by all participating institutions.
d. Academic and administrative aspects of the programme are adequately staffed and funded. A sustainable funding strategy is in place.
e. Mechanisms for co-operation, including degree of institutionalisation, role of each partner, financial management, communication system etc, are spelled out and understood by all parties.
f. Responsibilities are clearly defined and shared amongst participating institutions. Lead roles and responsibilities are identified.
g. Information about the programme is easily accessible to students and others.
h. Arrangements for reaching out to and receiving guest students and scholars are in place, e.g. in terms of accommodation, mentor schemes, language courses, activities aiming at social integration, and assistance with visas and social insurance.
i. The infrastructure, e.g. library and other information sources, premises and equipment, meets the needs of the programme.
j. A language policy is in place.

2.2 Level and content

Criteria under this heading could include:

a. The programme has established its own reference points, possibly utilising the Dublin descriptors[4] (below), to ensure that students achieve the competence level required for a Masters degree.

Qualifications that signify completion of the second cycle are awarded to students who:

- have demonstrated knowledge and understanding that is founded upon and extends and/or enhances that typically associated with Bachelors level, and that provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas, often within a research context;
- can apply their knowledge and understanding, and problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their field of study;
- have the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity, and formulate judgements with incomplete or limited information, but that include reflecting on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgements;
- can communicate their conclusions, and the knowledge and rationale underpinning these, to expert and non-expert audiences clearly and unambiguously;
- have the learning skills to allow them to continue to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous.

4 http://www.jointquality.org

b. The programme encourages the further integrated development of generic competencies[5] such as:
- Ability to work in an interdisciplinary team
- Appreciation of diversity and multiculturality
- Knowledge of the field of study
- Knowledge of the profession
- Capacity for analysis and synthesis
- Capacity for applying knowledge in practice
- Capacity for generating new ideas (creativity)
- Capacity to adapt to new situations
- Capacity to learn
- Critical and self-critical abilities
- Decision-making skills
- Computing skills
- Ethical commitment
- Interpersonal skills
- Knowledge of a second language
- Research skills
- Other

c. The programme ensures the development of subject specific competencies. *[NB. Subject specific criteria will be specified for each programme. The Stockholm launching conference provides an opportunity to discuss such criteria, and participants are encouraged to bring ideas and proposals to the conference.]*
d. The programme, through its joint delivery, provides an added value as compared to similar programmes delivered at national level.
e. Teacher qualifications are sufficient and appropriate to the aims of the programme.
f. Opportunities for staff development are provided.
g. The programme is linked to research activities and/or recognised professional standards.
h. The learning environment, including teaching and learning methods and assessment methods, favours the aims of the programme. Assessment methods are common to all parts of the programme or, at a minimum, agreed by all partner institutions.

2.3 Quality assurance

Criteria under this heading could include:

a. The programme formulates and implements a joint quality assurance strategy/ies. Strategies may consider e.g. changes in student demand, external expectations, developments in teaching and learning, and new research areas.
b. Quality assurance practices involve students, staff and other stakeholders from all participating institutions.
c. The programme evaluates whether its aims are met and standards upheld.

5 http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/educ/tuning/tuning_en.html. While the TUNING statements are aimed at the first cycle level, they nonetheless provide useful reference points for joint Masters programmes too.

d. Quality assurance includes coordination of assessment across the whole programme to ensure that all of its expected competences/learning outcomes are achieved.
e. The programme develops mechanisms for follow-up and continuous improvement.

3. The self-evaluation process

This section presents practical information and advice on the self-evaluation exercise.

3.1 Aim of the exercise

It is important that the self-evaluation exercise fulfils the following aims:

- to provide a framework to stimulate internal discussions within and among the participating institutions;
- to include ample time and scope for reflection on emerging matters;
- to provide opportunities to comment on and assist continuous improvement in the quality of the programmes.

3.2 Self-evaluation group

For the completion of each self-evaluation report, a group should be set up consisting of representatives from institutions participating in the programme.

The group should appoint a chairperson, responsible for co-ordinating the work and for being the contact point between the self-evaluation group and the external body responsible for the overall evaluation. The group should include at least one student involved in the programme.

The self-evaluation group (including the chairperson) should be officially designated by the Board/Council/Committee responsible for the programme.

It is desirable that a draft of the self-evaluation report be circulated for comment among staff and students involved in the programme at each institution before it is submitted to the external body.

Each self-evaluation group is responsible for the preparation of their report.

3.3 Self-evaluation report

The self-evaluation report should provide accurate documentation to be used by the panel of experts in their preparations, site visit, evaluation and report writing. It should also provide clear evidence of the reflective discussions that were an integral part of the self-evaluation exercise.

The self-evaluation report should be not more than 25 pages in length, structured as far as possible in accordance with the headings of section 4 below.

The report should be submitted electronically and in 6 paper copies to the contact person of the external body responsible for the evaluation of the programme.

4. Themes for self-evaluation

This section sets out the areas to be covered in the self-evaluation exercise and self-evaluation report.

With the exception of the factual information requested in section 4.1, the report should express evaluation and analysis rather than sheer description. Identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats will be an important aspect of this. The bulleted questions under each heading may serve as a starting point to your self-evaluation. They do not however constitute a compulsory or complete list of issues.

4.1 Facts and figures[6]

4.1.1 BASELINE INFORMATION

Name of programme	
Name of co-ordinating institution	
Names of other participating institutions	
Length of programme (academic years + ECTS)	
Website address of programme	

4.1.2 STUDENTS

Please copy the table and provide the following information for each institution admitting students to the programme.

INSTITUTION X

	No. of applicants		No. of admissions		No. of degrees awarded		No. of students admitted from each institution			
	W	M	W	M	W	M	X	Y	Z	…
2002										
2003										
2004										

INSTITUTION Y

etc…

6 Facts and figures may be provided in a different format if more convenient.

4.1.3 TEACHING RESOURCES 2004/2005

Please copy the table and provide the following information for each institution contributing teaching resources to the programme. *[NB. This table will be discussed at the Stockholm launching conference. Participants are encouraged to consider its appropriateness, and possible amendments.]*

INSTITUTION X

Teacher (names not required)	Title	Contribution to the programme (full-time equivalent)	Gender	Academic degree	Academic field/ discipline	Professional qualification (if any)	Research activity (member of research team)
1							
2							
3 etc…							

INSTITUTION Y

etc...

4.2 Organisation and management

4.2.1 AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME

Please analyse and evaluate the aims of the programme, e.g. by addressing:

- Why was the programme established?
- What are the overall aims of the programme?
- How were the aims determined?
- Other

4.2.2 CHOOSING PARTNERS FOR THE PROGRAMME

Please analyse and evaluate the basis on which partner institutions were selected e.g. by addressing:

- How/through what process did partner institutions come together to set up the programme?
- What motivated the various partner institutions to join?
- Other

4.2.3 Mechanisms for co-operation

Please analyse and evaluate the mechanisms of co-operation within the network, e.g. by addressing:

- What are the respective roles of the programme co-ordinating team and the different institutions within the network? Are the roles clear and satisfactory?
- To what extent have the mechanisms for co-operation been formalised and agreed?
- How are financial matters managed within the network? Is the system satisfactory?

- What are the methods of communication?
- How often and under what circumstances does the programme co-ordinating team meet to discuss the running of the programme?
- Do staff of the participating institutions meet to discuss their respective contributions to the programme?
- Other

4.2.4 SUPPORT AND RECOGNITION

Please analyse and evaluate the level of support and recognition that the programme receives, e.g. by addressing:

- What is the legal status of the programme and the award?
- What are the respective roles of the different institutions in the recognition process?
- Have you encountered any obstacles with regard to recognition? If so, what?
- In what way is the programme supported, e.g. by management of the individual institutions?
- Other

4.2.5 STAFFING AND FUNDING

Please analyse and evaluate the staffing and funding of the programme, e.g. by addressing:

- Is there a joint funding strategy for the programme? If so, please describe this.
- On what basis are joint resources distributed?
- What academic and administrative staff resources are attached to the programme? Please comment on teaching resource figures provided at 4.1.3.
- What funding requirements does the running of a joint programme have compared to a programme provided by one institution only?
- Generally speaking, are the resources available to the programme sufficient?
- Other

4.2.6 INFRASTRUCTURE

Please analyse and evaluate the infrastructure available to the programme at each of the partner institutions, e.g. in terms of IT equipment, library and information services, and premises at the various partner institutions.

4.2.7 RECRUITMENT AND INFORMATION

Please analyse and evaluate the student recruitment system, e.g. by addressing:

- How are prospective students informed about the programme by the various partner institutions?
- Other

4.2.8 RECEPTION OF STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS

Please analyse and evaluate the arrangements for receiving guest students and scholars, e.g. by addressing:

- How are students introduced to the programme and to the courses offered at each institution?

- What kind of assistance do guest students and scholars get at the various institutions? Is the support system satisfactory?
- Does the cultural heterogeneity of the student group require special attention? If so, in what way? How may the cultural heterogeneity benefit the programme?
- Other

4.2.9 LANGUAGE POLICY
Please analyse and evaluate the language policy of the programme, e.g. by addressing:
- What are the language requirements for completing the programme?
- What special provisions are made regarding language?
- Does language pose any particular problems? If so, how are they solved?
- Other

4.3 Level and content
4.3.1 PROGRAMME STRUCTURE
Please analyse and evaluate the structure of the programme, e.g. by addressing:
- To what extent does the programme have a compulsory 'core'?
- What are the optional elements?
- What is the progression within the programme?
- Other

Please enclose a programme description, e.g. in the form of a chart, outlining the different parts of the programme including compulsory and optional elements.

4.3.2 ACADEMIC STANDARD
Please analyse and evaluate the academic standard of the programme, e.g. by addressing:
- How is compatibility of academic standards throughout the programme achieved?
- Does the interdisciplinary nature of the programme present particular challenges?
- What academic added value is achieved through the joint delivery of the programme?
- What are the student admission requirements? What is the academic level of students at entry?
- To what extent does the profile of the academic staff match the aims of the programme?
- What are the opportunities for staff development?
- In what way is the programme linked to research and professional activities at the participating institutions?
- Other

Please enclose reading lists for the various parts of the programme.

4.3.3. TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS
Please analyse and evaluate the teaching and learning methods used in the programme, e.g. by addressing:
- What teaching and learning methods are used within the programme (e.g. lectures, small group teaching, seminars, course work, thesis preparation/ supervision, laboratory work, trainee placements etc.)? What methods are the most commonly used? What are their respective pros and cons?

- What assessment methods are used within the programme (e.g. written examination, laboratory experiment write-up, essay, oral examination, project report)? What methods are most commonly used? What are their respective pros and cons?
- Is there a common approach to teaching and learning methods within the programme or do these vary from one institution to another, and/or between different stages in the programme? If so, how?
- In what way does the learning environment favour academic achievement?
- To what extent do the teaching and learning methods contribute to critical and independent thinking?
- Other

4.3.4 COMPETENCES/LEARNING OUTCOMES

Please analyse and evaluate the expected competences/intended learning outcomes of the programme, e.g. by addressing:

- What are the expected competences/intended learning outcomes of the programme? Which of these are subject-related and generic, respectively?
- How were the expected competences/intended learning outcomes developed?
- Are the expected competences/intended learning outcomes published and made available to students and staff?
- To what extent are the expected competences/intended learning outcomes designed to reflect the aims of the programme?
- Are the “Dublin descriptors” and/or the competencies developed within the TUNING project relevant to the programme?
- To what extent have the expected competences/intended learning outcomes been attained? How do you know?
- Other

4.4 Quality assurance

4.4.1 QUALITY ASSURANCE STRATEGIES

Please analyse and evaluate your strategic work on quality assurance, e.g. by addressing:

- What is the overall philosophy and strategy for quality assurance at programme level?
- Do separate strategies exist for quality assurance at programme and thematic/course level?
- Other

Please enclose strategic document/s, if available.

4.4.2 PARTICIPATION IN QUALITY ASSURANCE

Please analyse and evaluate the level of participation in quality assurance, e.g. by addressing:

- Where does the responsibility for quality assurance at programme level lie?
- What parties are otherwise involved (e.g. at thematic/course level)?
- What is the level of participation by students, staff and/or other stakeholders?
- Other

4.4.3 QUALITY ASSURANCE PRACTICES
Please analyse and evaluate your quality assurance practices, e.g. by addressing:
- How is quality assurance organised at programme level and thematic/course level, respectively?
- How is the programme evaluated (e.g. with regard to aims and objectives, student competences/learning outcomes, teacher competence and staff development, teaching and learning methods, relevance in relation to labour market requirements)?
- What use is made of input from e.g. reports from accrediting or other external bodies, staff and student feedback, feedback from former students and their employers, response from professional organisations, labour market representatives or discipline associations, student progress information, external examiners' reports?
- Other

4.4.4 FOLLOW-UP AND IMPROVEMENT
Please analyse and evaluate the mechanisms for follow-up and continuous improvement, e.g. by addressing:
- Where does responsibility for follow-up lie?
- How are shortcomings identified and remedied?
- Other

Please provide example/s, if any, of how the quality assurance practices have resulted in changes to the programme to the benefit of staff, students and/or other stakeholders.

4.4.5 THE SELF-EVALUATION EXERCISE
If you wish, please comment on your experience from this self-evaluation exercise, e.g. by addressing:
- What is the usefulness of the guidelines?
- What alterations do you suggest, if any?
- Other

Your feedback is most valuable in the process of developing a model for the evaluation of joint degrees.

4.5 Summary
Please provide a summary of the main strengths of the programme and the main challenges it is facing, as you see it.

Checklist
Please submit the following documentation to the contact person of the external body responsible for the evaluation of the programme:
- ☐ Self-evaluation report (£ 25 pages)
- ☐ Quality assurance strategy/ies (if available)
- ☐ Programme description (e.g. chart) outlining the different parts of the programme including compulsory and optional elements
- ☐ Reading lists for the various parts of the programme

The documentation should be submitted electronically as well as in 6 paper copies.

Appendix III

EUA Golden Rules for New Joint Masters Programmes

1. Know why your are setting up the programme
2. Choose your partners carefully
3. Develop well-defined programme goals and student-learning outcomes with your network partners
4. Make sure that all the institutions (and not just academic colleagues) fully support the goals and objectives of the programme
5. Ensure that sufficient academic and administrative staff resources are involved in the programme
6. Ensure that a sustainable funding strategy for the programme is in place
7. Take care that information about the programme is easily accessible to students
8. Organise and plan sufficient meetings in advance
9. Develop language policy and encourage local language learning
10. Decide who is responsible for what

Appendix IV

Launch conference programme

Agenda for the TEEP II Launching Conference

Conference venue: Hotel SAS Radisson Royal Park Hotel, Frösundaviks Allé 15, Solna, tel. +46 (0)8 624 55 00

THURSDAY 17 MARCH

TIME	ACTIVITY
Morning	Arrival
12.00 – 13.00	Lunch
13.00 – 13.15	Welcome and introduction • Sigbrit Franke, University Chancellor, National Agency for Higher Education (HSV), Sweden Chair: Staffan Wahlén (HSV)
13.15 – 14.15	Short introduction of participating programmes and agencies[1] Chair: Staffan Wahlén (HSV)
14.15 – 15.15	Presentation of TEEP II: • European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and TEEP II, Emmi Helle, ENQA secretariat • Experience from TEEP I, Nick Harris, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), UK • Introduction to the project, Staffan Wahlén (HSV) • Discussion
15.15 – 15.45	Coffee
15.45 – 17.00	Self-evaluation process • Fiona Crozier (QAA) • Discussion
17:00 – 18:00	CoMundus group work: • Project planning Chairs: Christina Rozsnyai, Hungarian Accreditation Committee (HAC) and Nick Harris (QAA) EMLE group work: • Project planning Chairs: Sara Karlsson (HSV) and Mark Frederiks, Netherlands-Flemish Accreditation Organisation (NVAO) EURO-AQUAE group work: • Project planning Chairs: Josep Grifoll, Agency for Quality Assurance in the Catalan University System (AQU) and Bruno Curvale, Comité National d'Évaluation (CNE) Experts' group work: • Project planning Chairs: Staffan Wahlén (HSV), Fiona Crozier (QAA), Tibor Szanto (HAC), Gemma Rauret (AQU) and Axel Aerden (NVAO)
20:00 – 21:30	Dinner

[1] One person from each programme and agency, respectively, briefly introduces the programme/agency (three minutes each).

FRIDAY 18 MARCH

TIME	ACTIVITY I	ACTIVITY II	ACTIVITY III	ACTIVITY IV
09:00 – 10:30	Continued CoMundus project planning	Continued EMLE project planning	Continued EURO-AQUAE project planning	Continued project planning by the experts
10:30 – 10:45	Coffee			
10:45 – 12:00	CoMundus detailed planning with experts • Introduction of experts to the group • Timetable • Project development	EMLE detailed planning with experts • Introduction of experts to the group • Timetable • Project development	EURO-AQUAE detailed planning with experts • Introduction of experts to the group • Timetable • Project development	(Experts join the respective programme groups)
12:00 – 13:00	General Discussion, all participants			
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch			
Afternoon	Departure			

Appendix V

Closing conference programme

Agenda for the TEEP II Final Conference

Conference venue: Hotel Birger Jarl, Tulegatan 8, Stockholm
Tel. +46-8-674 1800

THURSDAY 4 MAY

<table>
<tr><th>TIME</th><th colspan="3">ACTIVITY</th></tr>
<tr><td>Morning</td><td colspan="3">Arrival</td></tr>
<tr><td>12.00 – 13.00</td><td colspan="3">Lunch</td></tr>
<tr><td>13:00 – 13:15</td><td colspan="3">Welcome by Sigbrit Franke, University Chancellor, National Agency for Higher Education (HSV), Sweden</td></tr>
<tr><td>13:15 – 13:45</td><td colspan="3">TEEP II and its results, Staffan Wahlén, Senior Advisor (HSV)</td></tr>
<tr><td>13:45 – 14:45</td><td colspan="3">TEEP II from the point of view of the programmes and of the expert panels
Reactions from CoMundus, EMLE and EuroAquae and the three expert panels,
Chair: Tibor Szanto, Secretary General, Hungarian Accreditation Committee (HAC)</td></tr>
<tr><td>14:45 – 15:15</td><td colspan="3">Coffee break</td></tr>
<tr><td>15:15 – 16:30</td><td>Break-up sessions

Group 1:
CoMundus – discussion on the programme report (experts and programme representatives)
Chairs: Christina Rozsnyai, Programme Of f cer (HAC) and Nick Harris, Director of Development and Enhancement Group, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)</td><td>

Group 2:
EMLE – discussion on the programme report (experts and programme representatives)
Chairs: Staffan Wahlén (HSV) and Mark Frederiks, Policy Adviser, Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands & Flanders (NVAO)</td><td>

Group 3:
EUROAQUAE– discussion on the programme report (experts and programme representatives)
Chairs: Gemma Rauret, Director, Agency for Quality Assurance in the Catalan University System (AQU) and Bruno Curvale, Project Manager Comité National d’Évaluation (CNÉ)</td></tr>
<tr><td>16:30 – 17:30</td><td colspan="3">Feedback and plenary discussion, Chair: Josep Grifoll, Head of Quality Assessment Area (AQU)</td></tr>
<tr><td>19:30</td><td colspan="3">Dinner</td></tr>
</table>

FRIDAY 5 MAY

<table>
<tr><th>TIME</th><th colspan="3">ACTIVITY</th></tr>
<tr><td>09:00 – 09:15</td><td colspan="3">Introduction to day 2, Fiona Crozier, Assistant Director (QAA)</td></tr>
<tr><td>09:15 – 10:00</td><td colspan="3">Conclusions from the EUA’s European Masters New Evaluation Methodology (EMNEM) Project, Presentation by David Crosier, Programme Development Director, European University Association (EUA) and by Stefanie Hofmann, Head of Project, Accreditation, Certi f cation and Quality Assurance Institute (ACQUIN) and ENQA Vice-President</td></tr>
<tr><td>10:00 – 11:00</td><td>Break-up sessions [1]

Group 1:
CoMundus – discussion on the methodological report (experts and programme representatives)
Chairs: Christina Rozsnyai (HAC) and Nick Harris (QAA)</td><td>Group 2:
EMLE – discussion on the methodological report (experts and programme representatives)
Chairs: Staffan Wahlén (HSV) and Mark Frederiks (NVAO)</td><td>Group 3:
EUROAQUAE– discussion on the methodological report (experts and programme representatives)
Chairs: Gemma Rauret (AQU) and Bruno Curvale (CNÉ)</td></tr>
<tr><td>11:00 – 11:30</td><td colspan="3">Coffee break</td></tr>
<tr><td>11:30 – 12:00</td><td colspan="3">Feedback including a discussion on a possible follow-up project,
Chair: Axel Aerden, International Policy Adviser (NVAO)</td></tr>
<tr><td>12:00 – 12:30</td><td colspan="3">A view from the European Commission, Ingrid Rigler,
Directorate General of Education and Culture, European Commission</td></tr>
<tr><td>12:30 – 13:00</td><td colspan="3">Final discussion and conclusions, Chair: Staffan Wahlén (HSV)</td></tr>
<tr><td>13:00 -14:00</td><td colspan="3">Lunch and departure</td></tr>
</table>

1 It was decided on the spot to mix the groups of the second day, while the Chairs remained the same.

ENQA Occasional Paper 9, Methodological report of the Transnational European Evaluation Project II (TEEP II), emphasises the importance for joint programmes of developing quality assurance and enhancement processes which operate across the programme as a whole. The report is an outcome of the Transnational European Evaluation Project II (TEEP II) undertaken by ENQA in collaboration with its six member agencies between August 2004 and June 2006. It outlines a possible method – based on the pilot evaluations by TEEP II of three Erasmus Mundus joint master's programmes – for evaluating similar programmes in the future.

ENQA

Occasional Papers 9

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