

## Accreditation Report

on the Study Programme “**Reuse of Modernist Buildings**” (M.Sc.)

according to the **European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes**

[▶ Content](#)

Partner Universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Coordinating partner: Technische Hochschule Ost-westfalen Lippe (Germany)</b></li> <li>• <b>University of Antwerp (Belgium)</b></li> <li>• <b>University of Belgrade (Serbia)</b></li> <li>• <b>Universidade de Coimbra (Portugal)</b></li> <li>• <b>Universidade de Lisboa (Portugal)</b></li> </ul>
Members of the Review Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Prof. PhD Jelena Atanacković-Jeličić:</b> Professor of Architecture and Urban Planning/University of Novi Sad; Serbia</li> <li>• <b>Catherine Dassis:</b> International Relations, Management of Joint Master programmes/University of Liège; Belgium</li> <li>• <b>Maïke Grüneberg;</b> Study Programme „BWL“ (B.Sc.) TU München; prev. “Bauingenieurwesen” (B.Sc.,M.Sc.) TU München; Germany</li> <li>• <b>Prof. AA: Dipl. Lydia Haack:</b> Co-Owner of Haack + Höpfner . Architekten; Germany and Professor of Design and Structural Design at HTWG Konstanz</li> <li>• <b>Prof. Dr.-Ing. Nicole Riediger:</b> Chair of the department Construction and Real Estate Management - International Project and Facility Management/Hochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft Berlin; Germany</li> </ul>
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## I Outline of the Accreditation Procedure

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of June 2021, the accreditation agency ACQUIN, full member of ENQA and listed in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), received a request for the first accreditation procedure of the concept for the international joint master programme “Reuse of Modernist Buildings (RMB)” (M.Sc.) by the Technische Hochschule Ostwestfalen-Lippe (TH-OWL).

Since external quality assurance of the RMB master programme is required for the cooperating higher education institutions, the assessment follows the Standards for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) according to the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes. The standards to be assessed are based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG), issued in October 2014 and approved by the European Higher Education Area ministers in May 2015.

The self-evaluation report including annexes, which was jointly delivered by the consortium on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September 2021, contained information on the national legal frames of all cooperating partners and served as the main document for evaluation.

The composition of the panel reflects the expertise deemed necessary by the procedural requirements in the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes. Two members of the expert group are full time lecturers in the relevant academic field, one of which is coordinating a joint degree programme. The representative of the professional field simultaneously represents the academic field as part time lecturer, ensuring that university lecturers hold the majority of the vote. Next to a student representative the review panel is complemented by one expert in coordination and administration issues regarding European Joint Programmes. The panel members represent three of the four partner countries contributing knowledge of their respective higher education systems. It is also ensured that the review panel has adequate experience in quality assurance measures at different levels. After confirmation of the nominated review panel by the cooperating partners, all panel members signed a statement of independence and confidentiality.

Upon studying the application documentation of the programme, the review panel reported their preliminary findings before the site visit to ACQUIN which collected and processed these statements for the preparatory meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September 2021. At this meeting, the panel discussed the preliminary findings, identified the most important issues for discussion with the programme partners and prepared the discussions with all parties involved. The discussions with all status groups (programme coordinators, examination board, teaching staff, universities` leaderships, students of the involved institutions, as well as a representative of the professional field) took place on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October 2021. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all discussions were held via online-conference. Since the review panel was not able to inspect spatial and technical resources on site, further information has been provided and evaluated in the days following the discussions.

Subsequent to the discussions with the delegations, the review panel discussed the findings and formulated its considerations and preliminary conclusions for each standard in a preliminary accreditation report, whereby composition and editing tasks were carried out by ACQUIN. These findings are based on observations during the site visit and on the assessment of the programme documents.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> of November 2021, ACQUIN sent the preliminary report to the TH-OWL, which was given the opportunity to respond to any factual inaccuracies in the report and prepare a statement responding to the report. Subsequently, the final report was forwarded to the Accreditation Commission of ACQUIN for final decision on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December 2021. The Accreditation Decision is documented in Chapter III of this report.

Upon successful accreditation of the RMB programme, the consortium intends to apply for external funding by the European Commission within the framework of the Erasmus Mundus programme.



## II Evaluation of the Study Programme

### 1 Composition and Profile of the Consortium

The Joint Master programme “RMB – Reuse of Modernist Buildings” (M.Sc.) (hereafter RMB) is based on the partnership among five academic institutions with complementary competencies in relevant scientific areas for the study, research, and design of the reuse of modernist buildings, namely the Technische Hochschule Ostwestfalen-Lippe in Germany (hereafter TH-OWL), the University of Belgrade in Serbia, the University of Antwerp in Belgium as well as the University of Coimbra and the University of Lisbon, both located in Portugal.

The concept for the two years joint master programme has its origin in the cooperative ERASMUS+ project ‘Reuse of Modernist Buildings. Design Tools for Suitable Transformation (RMB)’, which was conducted from 2016 to 2019. Together with 3 other international partners that have not been and will not be involved in the study programme, the University of Antwerp, TH-OWL, the University of Coimbra and the University of Lisbon were conducting this project jointly. For the study programme, the University of Belgrade joined the consortium.

The partners developed teaching and learning methodologies jointly to enable students to study at different locations within Europe in order to gain insight into different contexts and approaches in reuse theory, practise and design.

- **TH-OWL:** The university of applied sciences offers a total of 44 Bachelor and Master programs with more than 6,700 students and over 500 staff on three campuses. Its department “Detmold School of Architecture and Interior Architecture” has approximately 1,450 students throughout various German- and English-speaking study programmes, all of which are open for an interdisciplinary approach and collaboration with regional, national, and international institutions as well as business companies. Several laboratories (Construction Lab, Perception Lab, Urban Lab, Research Focus nextPlace), devices and technical equipment are available to monitor and evaluate the performance of existing spaces and buildings and to analyse user behaviour and user satisfaction. Teaching and research approaches are based on the concept of human-centered design to improve the wellbeing in interior and exterior spaces. Simulation, evaluation and monitoring of buildings and spaces are considered an essential part as a form of evidence-based design. The specialised expertise on typology versus conversion has been an integral part of the curriculum in architecture over the last 5 years.

Within the RMB programme, TH-OWL takes on the coordinating role. The students will spend the second half of the first semester at the Detmold School of Architecture and Interior Architecture, where they study contents regarding the academic focus on interior architectural

design, reuse of buildings, typological studies, urban/landscape design, research by design and design by research in existing buildings as an active approach.

- **University of Antwerp:** The University of Antwerp is an internationally oriented research university with a student body of 20,000, whereof 13 % are international students. It is characterised by its high standards in education, internationally competitive research, and entrepreneurial approach. It offers 30 Bachelor, 63 Master, 24 Advanced Master and 24 postgraduate programmes organised in 9 faculties, 48 centres and 20 institutes. 23 programmes are entirely taught in English. Doctoral programmes are available in all faculties.

Within the RMB programme, the students will spend the first half of the first semester at the University of Antwerp, where they study contents regarding the academic focus on interior design, history of Modernism in the Northwest of Europe, theory of reuse and heritage, heritage studies, and research techniques.

- **University of Coimbra:** With more than 700 years of experience in education, the University of Coimbra has affirmed its position over the years with a unique mix of tradition, contemporaneity, and innovation. Its large complex structure comprises three campuses, with 26,000 students, of which 16 % are international students from 90 different nationalities, and 3,020 academic and non-academic staff members, who are highly active and committed to the quality of research and education as well as to the development of knowledge and technology transfer activities. The university offers advanced training programs in different areas that bind to technology. In the field of internationalisation, it is a member of several university networks worldwide and its activities are carried out in close co-operation with international partners and stakeholders, including collaborative research, business partnerships, and cultural, scientific, and technical exchange. The Department of Architecture has been developing educational practices that integrate a social perspective of modern architecture history, re-use of existing buildings and design methodologies.

Within the RMB programme, the students will spend the first half of the second semester at the University of Coimbra, where they study contents regarding the academic focus on history of Modernism in southwest Europe, urban design and participation and social aspects in designing for reuse, and environmental design.

- **University of Lisbon:** The University of Lisbon consists of 18 schools and over 100 research units, around 50,000 students, 4,000 lecturers, 2,500 non-academic staff and 400 degree courses. Founded in 1911, the Instituto Superior Técnico (IST) is the University's school of Engineering, Science and Technology and Architecture. It consists of 9 departments, about 10,000 students, and about 1,600 full time equivalent teaching and non-teaching staff. Internationalisation has been defined as a key strategic goal over the past few years with an increasing number of international students and staff as well as increasing participation in international, academic

networks and partnerships of excellency. Through more than 500 agreements with other institutions worldwide, IST participates in more than 50 double degree programmes, and joint PhD programmes, thus promoting a highly modern and culturally diverse society. IST combines different disciplines in the building sector and bridges design and research, architecture, engineering sciences, building technology, and urban planning, transcending the traditional divides of science versus art and qualitative versus quantitative.

Within the RMB programme, the students will spend the second half of the second semester at the University of Lisbon, where they study contents regarding the academic focus on Modernism and housing, architecture and sustainable development, environmental design and users' behaviour in buildings, building technology and general assessment of buildings in use, and theory of reuse and building.

- **University of Belgrade:** Founded in 1808, the University of Belgrade consists of 31 faculties, 11 research institutes, 13 University centres, the Computer Center and the University Library with more than 3,500,000 volumes. Offering more than 350 study programs to approximately 100,000 students, it is the largest university in the Southeast of Europe. Establishing, strengthening, and developing cooperation with universities in Serbia, Europe and the world, as well as with international organizations dealing with higher education is one of the main objectives of the University. The University of Belgrade actively supports the strategy of internationalization, participates in international exchange programs with over 200 universities, as well as in European projects. About 1,000 outgoing and incoming students, teachers and non-teaching staff take part in international exchanges annually. The Faculty of Architecture has experts in the field of Architectural and Urban Design and its three Departments - Architecture, Urbanism, and Architectural Technologies. It is strongly devoted to establishing an academic and creative working environment which encourages professionalism and intellectual exchange of ideas and opinions through 25 laboratories.

Within the RMB programme, the students will spend the whole third semester at the University of Belgrade, where they study contents regarding the academic focus on history of Modernism in southeast Europe, urban morphology, building performance simulation and verification and structural systems, and construction techniques of modernist buildings.

## 2 Profile of the Study Programme

The adaptive reuse of buildings has been the subject of considerable attention by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. To support the reuse building industry in residential environments, including housing, community buildings and facilities (e.g., schools, healthcare), factual input with measurable, controllable data on spatial, functional, environmental, social, and historical quality and cost efficiency is highly

needed. Many tools, services, product solutions, and design strategies have been developed in different parts of Europe to meet specific needs and concerns, building codes and legislation, and to support geographic and demographic conditions. Since the experiences and approaches are different in each country, the new study programme seeks to collect existing national and international results from different regions in Europe in order to develop new transnational teaching material.

The joint master programme RMB is a second cycle master course addressing students all over the world with a bachelor's degree equivalent to 180 ECTS credits in the fields of architecture, interior architecture landscape architecture, conservation, heritage, and civil engineering. The two-year master programme amounts to 120 ECTS credits. Successful completion of the programme leads to the academic degree Master of Science (M.Sc.) which is jointly awarded by all consortium partners.

The first intake of students is scheduled for September 2023 with an initial number of 15 students that can be extended to a maximum of 20.

The joint administration, organisation and conduction of the programme will be ensured by a cooperation agreement, a joint examination regulation as well as jointly drafted processes for admission, selection, recognition, and quality assurance.

In the drafted cooperation agreement, the consortium agrees on the following finalities:

- “The students learn to deal with heritage and reuse issues in a self-conscious, methodological clear and respectful way. They will approach the topic of conservation, transformation, and reuse from a broad perspective, including spatial patterns, cultural heritage, climate and construction principles, social and technical evaluation, and the monitoring of built spaces. They have a holistic, multidisciplinary view and knowledge on reuse, but in the end, will be specialists as well because of the RMB specific focus on the field of Modernist Architecture Heritage.
- Students will be able to develop further on individual basis their gained knowledge on the issue of reuse of modernist buildings, and by doing so, contribute the improvement/development of the reuse theme. They can solve independently and in a responsible manner complex assignments in the field of heritage and reuse, in design practice as in science and research.
- Through the helicopter view on reuse on a European scale, and the international collaborations between students and teachers during the master course, RMB graduates will be very well prepared for the European job market. Through the application of distant learning and designing skills in project-based learning during their RMB master, students are very well equipped for contemporary working practices of ‘Footloose’ offices with collaborators in different geographical locations. They combine a high sensitivity for local conditions with a



broad experience and knowledge of international best practices, and cooperative, effective working skills.”

The programme aims at opening employment perspectives in architectural offices, heritage offices, construction companies and Public Services. The RMB Master Course does not allow to register as architect.

To achieve these objectives, students have to complete successfully all modules of the programme. According to their special expertise, each partner offers certain modules focusing on different aspects of the programme. This results in a dense mobility scheme:

The first semester is taught in the northwest of Europe: The first half of the semester in Antwerp (University of Antwerp), Belgium, and the second half in Detmold (TH-OWL), Germany.

The second semester is taught in the southwest of Europe: The first half of the semester in Coimbra (University of Coimbra) and the second half in Lisbon (University of Lisbon), both in Portugal. Half semesters result in a duration of seven to eight weeks at one study location.

The third semester is taught in the southeast of Europe, in Belgrade (University of Belgrade), Serbia.

Students spend the fourth semester at one of the partner universities for their thesis, depending on the topic. Each University shall receive a similar number of students. The RMB programme is concluded at the end of the fourth semester through an Academic Examination leading to the master’s degree. This exam is the result of a research that can take the form of a dissertation or of a design project work.

### **3 Assessment per Standard**

#### **3.1 Eligibility: Status, Joint Design and Delivery, Cooperation Agreement**

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

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

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

*- Denomination of the degree(s) awarded in the programme*

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

### **Description:**

All universities of the consortium are public universities.

The degree awarded in RMB is a jointly awarded Master of Science (M.Sc., Joint Degree) within the Erasmus Mundus Master Course. The completion of the curriculum is rewarded by a Joint Master Degree diploma detailing both the common and specialised curriculum, signed by all members of the consortium. According to the information provided within the self-evaluation report, the respective national laws in Higher Education enable all five universities to award a Master of Science jointly. A transcript of records describing curriculum contents and the academic contribution of the institutions as well as a joint diploma supplement are delivered to each graduate.

A consortium committee consisting of 5 members jointly supervises the degree programme. The TH-OWL provides the chairperson and takes an overall coordinating role. The other partner universities provide each one member (programme director) for the consortium committee (examination board).

The consortium committee (examination board) acts as local coordinators during the mobility semesters at the respective university. The chairperson will liaise with the other committee members from the consortium partners on all curriculum, assessment, student progression and quality issues. This is outlined in the drafted cooperation agreement accordingly. The TH-OWL will also host the central exam office and facilitates the ILIAS platform for coordinating, communicative, and management actions. The consortium committee will ensure that the RMB programme is consistent with the aims and objectives declared.

The cooperation of the consortium partners has already been tested in the RMB pilot project that will continue in the RMB study programme. To formalise the responsibilities, the partners will sign a partnership agreement once the study programme undergoes the application process for an Erasmus Mundus Master. The drafted cooperation agreement nominates scope and nature of the cooperation as well as the jointly awarded degree. Furthermore, it includes information on the responsibilities regarding management and financial organisation.

### **Assessment:**

All partner institutions are registered public higher education institutions (HEIs). The panel trusts the nominated national laws for higher education grant eligibility for awarding the joint degree. For the

final decision these laws need to be attached to the application for accreditation; the respective passages should be highlighted and translated into English.

The joint programme is built on a strong network, which already had the opportunity to build and improve its jointness through its previous experience in the joint RMB project within the framework of an Erasmus+ Strategic partnership. This helped four of the five partners to learn how to work together and lead to the preparation of the master programme, including the development of necessary processes, such as admission criteria, pedagogical methods, exams regulations, course content, etc. This “testing-phase” may guarantee smooth relations between partners, who are already used to work together and who had the time to identify which added value each could bring to the implementation of the RMB joint master.

Jointness is also reflected in the way the RMB Consortium is built. It involves partners with complementary profiles on an academic point of view and a good geographic balance. Each partner brings a specificity: Belgrade and Lisbon focus on technical aspects, e.g. building performance simulation for Belgrade, sustainable development and building technology for Lisbon; Antwerp provides aspects on heritage studies, TH-OWL on urban/landscape design, and Coimbra on social aspects. This list, of course, only shows few examples.

The broad geographic balance allows to cover different ways modernism has been implemented throughout Europe: Northern Europe with Germany and Belgium, Southern Europe with Portugal, and Eastern Europe with Serbia, while the topic in itself (modernism in buildings) is international. Gathering these various aspects of modernism allowed a joint design of the programme, each institution bringing on the one hand the regional aspect of modernism, and on the other hand, each having complementarity in the approaches (some more technical, some more “social sciences oriented”).

The mobility scheme designed for the students makes them study in each of the partner universities, either for a half or a full semester, which ensures a joint and quite balanced delivery of the programme, since each partner will host all students at a certain point.

The good quality of jointness may also be explained by the fact that four of the five partner universities run other joint degrees in the framework of Erasmus Mundus (Coimbra, Lisbon, Antwerp, Belgrade). These institutions are therefore used, even at the administrative staff level, to work together with other partner universities in a coordinated way.

The self-report and its annexes showed a well-prepared consortium that has reflected on many points in a quite extensive way, such as admission and selection procedures for the students or examination regulations. The review panel considers especially the examination regulation very well detailed and very thorough, since it includes even aspects that are often left behind (such as the question of retakes). It details admission conditions, language level requirements, retakes, grade

conversion (based on a grade conversion table), modes of examination and even presents the tasks of the “Overarching examination committee” which is an additional element of the jointness of the programme.

The same level of precision and detail is achieved for the admission and selection procedure, even if some elements need to be updated if the Consortium wants to meet the Erasmus Mundus Master Degree criteria (e.g. restriction of 10 % of scholarship holders with the same nationality applies to all nationalities, for the whole funding period, not only to the nationalities of the Consortium University for each cohort).

The Consortium Agreement mentions the denomination of the degree awarded in the programme and clearly specifies that RMB graduates may not register as architects. It also addresses the financial redistribution between the partners (even if the two annexes A and B mentioned in the core text are missing). The responsibilities of each partner in terms of management is mentioned, but not in a detailed manner. The admission and selection procedure is only mentioned shortly in the Consortium Agreement, but is on the other hand very well detailed in the Admission and Selection Regulations. The mobility scheme of the students is only outlined vaguely in the Consortium Agreement. The Examination regulations and student assessment methods are not mentioned in the Consortium Agreement but are very thoroughly detailed in the Examination Regulations. The same applies for the recognition of credits and degree awarding procedures.

Resulting from the impression the panel gained during the discussions, the timeline for signing the cooperation agreement and publishing all documents has seemingly not been clarified yet. Due to the fact that the programme will undergo an Erasmus Mundus application process before taking in the first students, there is no urgency in these matters yet. The review panel does however assume, that not only all documents but also all processes will be communicated adequately to potential students of the programme. The panel trusts that the consortium agrees on a suitable timeline.

The panel concludes that the standard for the cooperation agreement is not fulfilled and needs to be amended accordingly. Furthermore, the panel trusts that the cooperation agreement will be signed prior to the first recruitment of students.

### **Conclusion:**

The panel concludes that the standard is not fulfilled.

- The cooperation agreement needs to cover the following issues:
  - Admission and selection procedures for students
  - Mobility scheme of students and teachers
  - Examination regulations, student assessment methods, recognition of credits and degree awarding procedures in the consortium.

### 3.2 Learning Outcomes [ESG 1.2]

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

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

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

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

#### **Description:**

The intended learning outcomes described in the Examination Regulations have been designed to match the framework for higher education qualification (Level 7) on a National and European level. The RMB outcomes are placed in a Matrix to compare them with the national qualifications in the partner countries and the European qualifications.

According to § 2 of the Examination Regulations,

“(1) The objective of the degree programme is that students will obtain deep and qualified academic expertise and knowledge of procedures of a conceptual / design, technical / constructive and methodical kind in the areas of building conversion and reuse of modernist buildings, following an initial university diploma which entitles them to enter into a career. The programme brings together technical aspects from interior architecture, monument preservation, landscape and urban development, as well as building technology and construction related to building conversion and reuse of modernist buildings in a holistic manner. Students will be empowered to further develop these areas of expertise on their own and to solve complex problems both in practice and on an academic level through research and development, integrating qualified constructive / design, technical and methodological skills and knowledge. The European and international character of the RMB Joint Master’s program prepares students for an international and interdisciplinary career field, as well as for teamwork based on a broad spectrum of expertise.

(2) In particular, the Master’s degree program is designed to empower graduates to work independently in academic research and development and complete a Ph.D. If desired. Furthermore, successfully completing the degree programme will enable students to enter senior civil service positions.

(3) The Master’s examination is designed to determine whether the student has obtained a deep level of professional expertise, and whether they are able to independently solve complex problems based on academic expertise and methods. “

RMB prepares for positions in the following professional fields:

- Consultant designer support in dealing with reuse of modernist build in architecture, heritage, urban design, and landscape design offices,
- Specialist on Technical support in dealing with reuse of modernist build heritage contractor companies,
- Reuse specialist in modern buildings' intervention sites,
- Reuse specialist in international, national and local administration bodies and in offices related to management, programming, and architectural modernist build heritage,
- Specialist in museology and museography of modernist architecture, urban design, and landscape,
- Successful completion of the programme qualifies graduates for the higher civil service and for a doctorate at a scientific college or University.

The aim of the RMB is a practice-oriented and interdisciplinary scientific qualification that - based on a first planning and/or humanities related degree - enables students to work in the fields of design, planning, heritage studies and production of neighbourhoods, buildings or building elements.

In thirteen subject modules - before the thesis - a broad spectrum of theoretical-scientific content is taught and practised in interdisciplinary and practice-oriented study projects. The subject-specific learning objectives and the competences to be imparted in the individual modules and units are described in the module handbook.

The consortium describes the RMB programme as scientifically based and research oriented. In accordance with the formulated qualification objectives, it imparts both subject-specific and interdisciplinary (job-related) competences in all modules.

The study programme is intended to enable students to plan and execute, or monitor and operate, quarters, buildings, supporting structures and components as well as the associated upstream conceptual and planning measures in a holistic, resource-saving manner and under the aspect of process optimisation. In addition to the acquisition of current theoretical competences, the focus of most modules is on dealing with relevant topics and task areas from everyday professional practice.

In the RMB programme, methodological skills are accordingly deepened in a goal-oriented manner, both scientifically and practically. In cooperation with companies, authorities, cultural settings and planning offices, excursions, plant visits and internships contribute to an additional deepening of subject-specific competences. Students are also provided with a sound knowledge base on current and new technologies and findings. Interdisciplinary cooperation is an essential part of the Master's programme, which is addressed and practised through interdisciplinary group work within the

framework of integrative projects (design studios) as well as through networking in the basic subjects (theory and fundamentals) and tools and methods (specialised skills).

The students should be enabled to independently and responsibly develop individual solutions appropriate to the respective task in terms of design, construction and monument preservation, in coordination with the client, user and planning team and to control the planning and realisation process at the interfaces of the project participants.

In many modules, project work takes place in small groups, in which students with different academic first degrees work together in interdisciplinary teams and acquire comprehensive communication and presentation skills. These skills are closely linked to the acquisition of social and intercultural skills. Team and communication skills, working together in interdisciplinary groups, project-oriented work, intercultural sensitivity, etc. are competences that are promoted by the specific, integrated and international structure of the degree programme.

The RMB programme does not qualify students to take up a regulated profession.

#### **Assessment:**

The programme aims at opening employment perspectives in architectural offices, heritage offices, construction companies and Public Services. This contributes to the support of the reuse building industry in many fields.

The designed learning outcomes align with the corresponding level in the Framework for Qualifications in the European Higher Education Area. Applicable national qualification frameworks were considered adequately. They comprise knowledge, skills, and competencies in the respective disciplinary fields and are well reflected in the intended learning outcomes of the modules. However, in some cases the course catalogue describes the intended competencies on module level more like contents rather than competencies. Therefore, the aspired learning outcomes are not fully formulated in a consistent and competence-oriented manner, including the description of the design studios. The review panel considers the revision of the learning objectives in the following modules as necessary.

The programme design and contents are very well suited to achieve the intended objectives.

Key competencies, especially international, intercultural, and interdisciplinary skills, as well as self-organization, responsibility and autonomy are intensely taken into consideration.

Overall, the review panel wishes to suggest a sharpening of the profile by strengthening the technical know-how, for example in the fields of civil engineering and materials science (see chapter 3.3).

#### **Conclusion:**

The panel concludes that the standard is not fulfilled.

- The course catalogue must reflect the aspired learning outcomes consistently and in a competence-oriented manner.

### 3.3 Study Programme [ESG 1.2]

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

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

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

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

#### **Description:**

According to the study schedule (Annex 1 of the Examination Regulations), the RMB programme contains 25 modules all of which award ECTS credits ranging between 3 and 6 per module. For the Master's thesis 30 ECTS credits are awarded.

According to § 5 (2) of the Examination Regulations, "students must obtain 120 credits in their mandatory and elective areas, including the Master's thesis and associated presentation with colloquium. A single credit is based on between 25 and 30 hours of work."

The study cycle is organised according to geographical areas and pedagogical themes. Each semester focuses on the European territory the universities that coordinate the unit's programme are located in. Design studios as a workshop format link the curricula of the universities. In the first, second and third semester, the design studio starts with a two-week workshop that may include a study trip. In the fourth semester, an international colloquium will be organised to share the pedagogical experiences and the research achievements. During summer break, students may attend an internship in architectural offices and institutions, offices of architecture, interior architecture, or heritage.

Parallel to the design studios as the core of the teaching program, accompanying modules provide lectures and seminars on specialised subjects, both general information and specialised information based on regional and national contexts in history, climate, legislation, and culture, thus providing information and skills that can directly be used in the design studios and in the thesis.

Within the course of the RMB programme, special emphasis is placed on the students' project- and practice-related group work. The study results are preferably presented in the form of presentations



or reports. A comparison on previous consecutive and advanced study programmes has shown that the consistently very high motivation of students who have consciously and specifically decided to apply for a master's programme positively affects their attitude to work.

In semester 1 to 3, the contents are taught in the form of 7 weeks blocks, splitting each semester in two halves. The combination of the different module parts over the three semesters form continuous lines of coherent content in the fields History of Modernism, Reuse Theory, Environmental Design, Urban Space, and Design Studios.

The first semester focuses on fundamental knowledge on modernism and the specifics of modernism in the Northwest of Europe.

In the first study phase in Antwerp, the curriculum offers the following contents within four modules: history of modernism, concept, styles, society, heritage, reuse theory, principles of monument preservation and reuse, legislation, cultural aspects of reuse, the principles of sustainable building and reuse, monitoring and parameters for sustainability. Two of the four modules are practice-oriented and comprise visiting and observing buildings and areas.

The second study phase in Detmold comprises three modules. The students start working with case studies and analyse building typologies in modernism and their adaptability of and potentials for reuse, a preparation to be put to practise in the design studios. The working method is experimental, problem-based learning. They practice research in archives and databases as well as free ground floor plans with a focus on interior design and actively use modernist concepts in a restoration/renovation project with the whole building (interior, exterior, wider context) in focus.

This first semester also serves to bring the students, who have acquired their first university degree in different disciplines, to the same professional level, to eliminate deficits and at the same time to introduce them to an interdisciplinary approach and working method.

In the second semester, the focus shifts from conceptual and building object scale to the scale of the neighbourhood, urban planning, social aspects of modernity and the role of current and future users.

The five modules of the study phase in Coimbra as well as the three modules in Lisbon focus on the concepts of modernity and the active use of these concepts in a reuse design project. The accompanying special-skill modules support this focus with practising of skill for participatory methodologies and evaluation of the role of the user in defining new uses through monitoring user behaviour, energy use and potentials for new user groups and the effect of this on the design process and results.

The six modules of the third semester in Belgrade are designed to deepen the knowledge on the specific topic of housing within modernism. They integrate conceptual, social, urban and landscape design and typological aspects in a holistic view on modernism through the subject of housing as

well as technological aspects of building construction components, such as energy, statics, adaptability. The final design project again is built up in two parts: The first part focuses on a specific aspect of designing in existing buildings, namely the building itself as a sketchbook, designing on a one to one scale in the building itself, and current and future users. The last design studio is meant for students to define the initial topic and focus for their thesis project.

A pre-course to the thesis will be structured as a workshop focused on developing the students' research project. Each session will explore one theme, as *leitmotiv* for presentation and critic of student work. Professors or researchers will bring case studies for discussion and comparison with students' proposals. Students develop a trajectory for including objectives, timeframe, methods for their thesis project and the location. The workshop is a closure of the third semester and can be attended in presence or online.

In the fourth semester, an individual topic is dealt with in the Master's thesis and a personal focus is set. The content of the thesis can be developed from the design studios, or the papers written and designed in other modules. The Master's thesis can also be co-supervised by a university lecturer from one of the international partner universities or a suitably qualified supervisor from practice as a co-lecturer.

Master's theses often take place in cooperation with external partners from science and industry. The research orientation is further supported by the targeted integration of scientific discourse and the use of external experts during conferences, symposia, and workshops. The ability to work scientifically is acquired through research and the preparation of scientific texts in individual modules from the first semester onwards. In addition to basic theoretical methodological knowledge specifically in the field of reuse, active conference participation, lectures and poster presentations strengthen involvement in current scientific discussion. Graduates are thus enabled for further scientific work, e.g. in the context of a doctorate or research work in companies.

### **Assessment:**

The RMB programme addresses students not only from different countries but also from different backgrounds of expertise: Architecture, Interior Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Urban Design, Architectural Engineering, Humanities (Conservation Science, Cultural Heritage, Architecture History). A joint design studio in the first semester seeks to achieve a common basis for all students, which the review panel considers a suitable approach that needs constant monitoring since students from the different disciplines of Architecture, Urban Design, or Civil Engineering provide very different backgrounds from e.g. Conservation Science or Cultural Heritage. The review panel praises the fact that the planned studio operation using the 'workshop methodology' offers the opportunity to perceive other perspectives of international students as enrichment.

The concept of the master's programme RMB is generally regarded to be fit to meet the set goals. Both the examination system and the workload indicate that the programme can be successfully completed within the standard period of study. However, minor adjustments to the curriculum and therefore the teaching standards seem necessary.

The programme seeks to give the students in-depth and qualified scientific knowledge and skills in design and its methodologies in the field of reuse of modernist buildings. It is designed to lead to a RMB master's degree that is aimed at academic specialisation based upon research, innovation or expansion of professional competences and critical awareness of knowledge issues in the field of reuse. History, Reuse, Environmental Design, Urban, Design, Typology, Research and Assessment are considered to be a good basic classification. However, the weighting of the overall teaching contents could be more focused on technical know-how. Whilst the general holistic learning and teaching approach to the topic of conservation and transformation including spatial planning and cultural heritage is very well represented in the course, the intended outcome of specialist knowledge is less traceable. Technical aspects such as climate and construction principles as well as tools of technical evaluation that lead to specialist knowledge seem underrepresented in the programme. Working with (external) experts within a laboratory environment, that are familiar to scientific methods providing measurable, controllable data on environmental, technical and material issues could be strengthened within the curriculum. Since the review panel cannot detect the areas of civil engineering and materials science within the course catalogue, a revision of the curriculum for adequate consideration seems necessary. The same applies for legal issues the students may face in the profession.

Overall, the modules represent sensibly structured learning units with a well-suited system of assessment. The ECTS is applied consistently throughout the whole programme, and the contribution of each consortium partner is clearly outlined and defines a specific role within the curriculum. Student diversity is adequately taken into account in the curricular design, organisation, forms of teaching and learning.

### **Conclusion:**

The panel concludes that the standard is not met.

- The curriculum must contain the learning contents "Building materials", "Construction basics" as well as research training in legal issues to show a balanced approach regarding the profile of the study programme.

### **3.4 Admission and Recognition [ESG 1.4]**

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

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

**Description:**

The application process consists of two steps. First, applicants will have to complete and submit the application via the German online system *Uni-Assist*, which will be accessible through a link on the RMB website. *Uni-assist* evaluates applications by international student applicants for 180 German universities. They evaluate the student's certificates on formal criteria and forward these to the TH-OWL, the coordinating partner institution. Applicants fill out the online application form, indicate if they are applying for an Erasmus Scholarship and include required documents in pdf format (relevant certificates and transcripts of previous studies, proof of relevant experience in the field, portfolio of relevant works for architects, all documents must be in English).

Upon registration, the application will be processed by the RMB Consortium Committee. The selected candidates have to send all required documents to the RMB coordinating university (TH-OWL) in hard copy by post. The coordinating university will issue an acknowledgment of receipt.

§ 4 of the Examination Regulations stipulate the applicable requirements for study and entrance restrictions. According to § 4 (1), students must

“1. verify that they have completed a Bachelor's or diploma examination, or in exceptional cases another final examination, in an engineering or planning sciences degree program such as Architecture, Interior Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Urban Design, Architectural Engineering, Humanities (Conservation Science, Cultural Heritage, Architecture History) with a standard programme length of at least six semesters (180 credits),

2. verify that they have special suitability for the Master's degree programme in RMB according to the aptitude admission, selection and assessment regulations.

3. All applicants who did not obtain their university entrance qualification at an English-speaking institution must submit verification of their fluency in English, verified [specific] tests or certificates, with the minimum score / minimum result stated [...].”

According to § 4 (2), the joint examination committee will determine whether the requirement of the special suitability is fulfilled.

The process of recognition of qualifications and periods of studies (including recognition of prior learning) follows the Lisbon Recognition Convention and subsidiary documents. It is part of the General Examination Regulations (§ 10) of the TH-OWL.

- Examination results obtained in degree programmes at other state or state-recognised universities are recognised upon request as long as there is no significant difference concerning the skills acquired to the achievements replaced.

- Upon request, other knowledge and qualifications can be recognised based on submitted documents if this knowledge and these qualifications are equivalent in terms of content and level to the examination performances they are to replace.
- The examination board decides on recognition as defined in the exam regulations, in cases of doubt, after consulting the examiners responsible for the modules.
- It is the responsibility of the requesting person to provide the required information concerning the achievement to be recognised. The documents must contain evidence supporting the statements made about the obtained examination performances and other knowledge and qualifications to be recognised. In addition, when transferring credits, the relevant degree programme examination regulation, the respective module description and the individual Transcript of Records or similar document must be submitted, and a Learning Agreement if available. The examination board's responsibility is to prove that an application as per paragraphs 1 and 2 does not meet the recognition requirements. As defined in paragraphs 1 and 2, decisions must be made at the latest within 8 weeks after the examination board's submission of all application documents.
- Based on recognition as defined in paragraph 1, the University can and, if an application has been made, must place the applicant into an academic semester whose number results from the amount of ECTS credits acquired through the recognition in proportion to the overall number of the ECTS credits that can potentially be acquired in the RMB programme. If the digit after the decimal point is less than five, the result is rounded down to the nearest whole semester. Otherwise, the number is rounded up. The examination board is responsible for placement into a higher academic semester. In case of doubt, the examination board decides after consulting the examiners responsible for the modules.
- If academic and examination performances are recognised and transferred, the grades – assuming that the grade systems are comparable – must be carried over and used to calculate the overall grade. If the grade systems are not comparable, the note “passed” is carried over. If the recognition of the achievements is declined, a decision must be issued concerning this, including its reasons.
- Examination results and their credits may only be recognised once within a degree programme.

### **Assessment:**

The RMB programme addresses students not only from different countries but also from different backgrounds of expertise: Architecture, Interior Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Urban Design, Architectural Engineering, Humanities (Conservation Science, Cultural Heritage, Architecture History).

The documentation that has been submitted for the process of accreditation explains admission requirements and selection procedures in detail. The panel considers the admission requirements as appropriate with regard to the level and discipline of the curriculum as well as regarding the aspired learning objectives.

Resulting from the impression the panel gained during the discussions, the timeline for the student application process has seemingly not been clarified yet. Due to the fact that the programme will undergo an Erasmus Mundus application process before taking in the first students, there is no urgency in these matters yet. The review panel does however assume, that not only all documents but also all processes will be communicated adequately to potential students of the programme.

During the discussions, special attention was dedicated to the application process, which is presented in a concise and clear manner. Recognition regulations mainly apply in the case of expected applicants who obtained competencies in other degree programmes at state or state-recognised universities as well as other knowledge and qualifications which can be recognised based on submitted documents (if this knowledge and these qualifications are equivalent in terms of content and level to the examination performances they are to replace). The process of recognition of qualifications and periods of studies (including recognition of prior learning) follows the Lisbon Recognition Convention and subsidiary documents and is adequately described in the General Examination Regulations.

Procedures of how to transfer ECTS credits and grades are well explained. The review panel does not doubt that the admission process and procedures will be applied consistently and transparently. It therefore concludes, that admission requirements and selection procedures are appropriate in light of the programme's level and discipline.

Since the joint examination board is the decision-making body as defined in the Examination Regulations and the admission procedure follows the process outlined in the jointly stipulated Admission and Selection Process, the process of application and recognition can be recognized as a joint process (see also chapter).

### **Conclusion:**

The panel concludes that the standard is met.

### **3.5 Learning, Teaching and Assessment [ESG 1.3]**

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

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

**Description:**

In order to motivate students to participate actively and to achieve optimal results, the RMB programme uses different formats for teaching, learning and assessing. According to the information of the consortium partners, these formats are tailored to the content and learning goals of the respective modules, taking the principles of problem-based learning as a binding element.

- All learning activities are contextualised to a larger problem;
- The students are supported in developing ownership for the overall problem or task;
- The tasks designed for the students are authentic;
- The nature of the tasks and the environment reflect the demands of possible employment after finishing the RMB master;
- The students are given the freedom to design not only the results but also the working progress;
- The learning environment supports and challenges the students' thinking (different locations, areas, countries, and cultures and working in actual existing buildings, i. e. in workshops and buildings subject to the given assignment);
- Students are supported and challenged to think in alternatives, change their perspective, and test alternative perspectives and options;
- Learning contents, results, and processes are reflected.

Due to the character of the RMB programme, students will spend only limited time at the different study locations. The maximum number of 20 students is a limiting factor regarding the range of elective courses offered in the programme. However, blended learning possibilities have been available and were tested across the partner institutions to offer a solution for custom made learning paths and options for delivery and assessment forms. Different pedagogical methods and special attention for different cultural backgrounds, as well as gender-specific aspects of learning and teaching, have been developed and tested in a three-year trial of the RMB project. The study programme has been designed as a specialised study programme on the reuse of modernist buildings, and students can choose from the module programme the master has to offer.

The examination regulations of RMB regulate the assessment of the achieved learning outcomes. They provide the legal framework and are applied consistently among the partner institutions. The RMB examination regulations were designed to provide a fair and transparent assessment procedure in which possible complaints procedures are also considered.

Students receive a list with criteria for assessment and evaluation upon entering a module; assessment is carried out by a minimum of two examiners and in most modules in the presence of fellow students.

According to the module handbook, the assessment methods contain written papers and exams, presentations, case studies, individual and workgroup projects, visuals, and models. Examination forms for most modules and all studios are presenting a paper or a design. The papers produced in one of the initial modules can continue, a more in-depth investigation and elaboration in a successive module. Only the modules that require the reproduction of specific, exact information have a written exam to prove the acquired knowledge.

Since the grading system in the partner countries differ, § 7 of the examination regulations ensures a consistent process of converting grades into the national grading systems of the partner countries by providing a transfer table. § 8 (2, 3) stipulates, that "Examinations which the student does not pass may be repeated a maximum of three times. Repeat examinations may also be completed at partner universities. They will be graded by testers at the partner university offering the exam. If the student does not pass their Master's thesis with associated presentation and colloquium, this may be repeated one time."

### **Assessment:**

The assessment methods are clearly described in the examination regulations and fully stated in the course catalogue, containing written papers and exams presentations, case studies, individual and workgroup projects, visuals, and models. The panel finds that the forms of examination within a module generally correspond well with the described learning tasks. Students receive a list with criteria for assessment and evaluation upon entering a module which makes the assessment process very transparent.

The conversion of assessment results and grades into the national grading systems of the partner countries follows clearly set rules. The template suggests a distinction between five grades from very good, good, satisfactory, sufficient to not sufficient. The translation into the schedule into the national grading systems of the partner countries appears to be comprehensible and plausible and makes the process transparent.

The examination regulations provide an adequate legal framework and ensure consistent application among the partner institutions. According to § 7 of the Examination Regulations an overarching examination committee is assigned for the organization of the examinations. Since this committee consists of a representative from each partner university, a joint delivery and coordination is ensured. Agreements on how often this panel meets will be established before the study programme is implemented.



In § 18 (2, 3) of the Examination Regulations, it is specified that the Master's thesis will be evaluated by four examiners. Beside the involvement of an external examiner, the review panel considers the nomination of examiners from more than one partner institution to be advisably. The written part of the Master's thesis with presentation and colloquium is assessed as a unit and the examiners consult before determining the grade offering a good opportunity for a regular exchange.

The types of courses, such as project work, seminar-based teaching, exercises or seminars offered in the course of study are considered appropriate for reaching the desired competencies. The mix of individual and group work appears to be appropriate. Individual work offers a good opportunity to close possible gaps in a student's knowledge (prior knowledge) in a particular subject area. The core of the courses seemingly lies in the 'workshop methodology' with personal supervision of the students in the "design classes". This typical form of supervision is a very time-consuming and personnel-intensive form of teaching which usually brings a high quality of results. Particularly where students move frequently from university to university it is vital that these 'design studios' work well on an operational level. Due to the character of the RMB programme, students will spend only limited time at the different study locations. Since the programme is fixed to a tight schedule, the flexibility within the given structure is very limited. However, the panel considers elective courses as important for students' professional and personal development. Especially with respect to the different background of the students, a number of elective courses could be provided via distance learning in order to establish a common level amongst the students as well as to provide flexibility in the programme. Therefore, the review panel recommends considering the adaption of blended-learning solutions, which might also provide relieve to the delivery of the demanding study programme, also regarding the intense mobility scheme. These teaching formats could also be implemented upon special need, for example when a frequent change of location is additionally restricted due to unforeseen circumstances. The review panel sees further benefit for the joint delivery of learning contents in a joint offer of certain courses (like an introduction course or a final course), regardless of physical location. Of course, special teaching and learning formats depend on separate funding.

At the same time the review panel understands that the consideration for an Erasmus Mundus Joint Master must take into consideration the criteria established by the European Commission, including the physical mobility of students. The panel acknowledges that the RMB programme already includes three online courses according to the module catalogue, but recommends further discussion on this issue.

Overall, the methodologies described in the educational modules are considered adequate.

### **Conclusion:**

The panel concludes that the standard is met.

The panel recommends:

- Since the mobility scheme appears to be very demanding, the panel would like to recommend considering possibilities of further distance learning options.
- The consortium should outline a timeline for the student application process.

### 3.6 Student Support [ESG 1.6]

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

#### **Description:**

The RMB programme is split between five locations within the two years programme, requiring students to move several times. Therefore, it is essential to secure outstanding backup and support for RMB students. The international offices (IO) of all consortium partners support the students in different aspects and help them find their way in housing, travelling, and legal issues. The IO of the coordinating partner TH-OWL takes a central role. However, all IOs of the partners have a shared responsibility, and deal with the local circumstances. All partner institutions have venues, learning spaces and facilities available for the visiting students and teachers.

Students are free to choose travel means and accommodation, but RMB will suggest itineraries and make agreements and reservations for RMB staff and students. It is not just on travel issues, but also on studying, personal matters, health etc., that RMB offers student support.

The **TH-OWL** International Office supports international students and guests during their stay in Detmold, mainly regarding the following issues:

- finding suitable accommodation,
- planning of the journey to Detmold,
- enrolment at the TH-OWL,
- orientation on campus and in the city (e.g. welcome meeting, city rally, campus tour),
- formalities (e.g. health insurance, registration with the city, formalities for the immigration office),
- German language courses

All information can be found at the website of the IO TH-OWL.

First contact for all questions on the RMB master regarding visa, travel and accommodation is the nominated General Coordinator and the Advisor for Outgoing/Incoming at Campus Detmold of the TH-OWL.

The TH-OWL student team and its buddy team help international students to find their way around and acts as the students' personal contact. They answer questions on various topics such as studying, student life, and more. All students involved in the student team are completing a Bachelor's, Master's or cooperative doctoral programme at the TH-OWL.

The Central Student Advisory Service of the TH-OWL is an institution that is independent of the departments and examination offices and offers services for study orientation, during the beginning and course of studies, as well as when students have doubts about their studies or drop out. It supports students and prospective students in their decision-making process, always keeping their individual situations, abilities and goals in mind. Its understanding of counselling is characterised by a person-centred approach in which openness to results and confidentiality are central matters. It defines its services as help for self-help to strengthen the decision-making and self-competence of those seeking advice.

The **University of Antwerp** supports students in finding accommodation, travelling and legal issues but also provides other services such as the counselling office or international student housing officers. All information is accessible on the website of the university.

The **University of Belgrade** offers extensive support to incoming students of the RMB programme. The International Relations Office of the University of Belgrade has a crucial role in finding accommodation (e. g. in the student dormitory or in one of the two hostels run by the independent institution "Students' Centre Belgrade"), travelling and legal issues for all international students. Also, students are encouraged to contact the Erasmus Students Network Belgrade for help in accommodation issues.

Being experienced in hosting international students, the **University of Coimbra** has a special Erasmus Mundus office with an appointed contact person. It also offers support by "Mobility buddies" assigned to every incoming student at the University of Coimbra, who contacts the incoming student prior to arrival via e-mail and assists the students to arrange accommodation, to find their way around campus, etc. Mobility Buddies also show exchange students the city, student's nightlife and may help in issues like opening a bank account. The International Relations Offices and the Erasmus Student Network of Coimbra manage this program. A general information sheet as well as the universities website provides information on contacts for travel, visa, money, insurance, and housing purposes.

As part of the **University of Lisboa**, the IST provides extensive information in two pdf for international students coming to Lisbon. Furthermore, a General Coordinator as well as an Erasmus+ contact person are designated for the RMB students. The Mobility and International Cooperation Office of IST supports with administrative and academic procedures for incoming and outgoing students, assists with visa issues, contracts and scholarships, provides housing services for international

students and researchers, and organizes events that facilitate the reception and integration of the students (welcome session, 1day, etc.).

### **Assessment:**

Considering the intense mobility scheme, the review panel concludes that students will need the support of all universities to a certain extent. During the discussions with the teaching staff and coordinators of the programme, the panel was informed that accommodation will be provided at some locations, yet not at every location. Regarding the experience with student mobility within the review panel, even one change of location within a master programme can – depending on home-country and culture – be very challenging for the students, which occasionally results in a delay of the graduation. Since the consortium partners already host international master's degrees, they are mostly aware of possible problems. However, the special challenge in the RMB programme lies in the very short periods of the students' staying in one location in the first year of studies. Finding accommodation and getting all required administration issues organised programme for only seven to eight weeks besides studying a very demanding full-time master before moving to the next location means very high stress for the students. The panel comes to the conclusion that it would be a great relief to the students if accommodation would be provided, especially at those locations where the students only spent seven to eight weeks. This way the students could focus on their studies, even if other administrative and organisational issues that might be unforeseen would still need to be taken care of. The current support scheme regarding accommodation, visa, insurance etc. is therefore not regarded as sufficient.

Furthermore, once the organisation is taken care of, students will have to adapt to their new study locations as quickly and smoothly as possible in order to handle the workload of the programme. The review panel understands that the consortium is discussing the possibilities of a joint mentoring programme for the students, which however is not definite yet. The panel wishes to recommend the timely establishment of a concept for a mentoring programme tailored to the programme requirements. Furthermore, students should receive all necessary information on available study spaces and other needs before arriving at a new study location. A comprehensive guide (online or in form of a brochure) should be provided accordingly.

The RMB programme describes an intense and compact semester programme. Not only are the semesters of the first year divided into two halves, it also requires students to move between the locations within a short period of time. Problems of studyability may arise when students cannot follow the programme under circumstances that cannot be influenced, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, or due to personal circumstances like illness or changes in the personal situation of the students. In order to provide the best possible chances in completing the programme successfully, elements of flexibility should be made available within the semester schedule. The review panel

considers elements of distance learning options or hybrid teaching models like blended learning as a reasonable solution (see chapter 3.5).

Regarding visa requirements, the study programme is expected to have a long period between acceptance in the programme and the actual start of the studies. The consortium proved itself aware of this issue and is planning to allow for sufficient time, even if the students may not have finished their bachelor's degree by the time of application. Admission under conditions will therefore be possible.

Since due to the current pandemic the visit of the review panel has only been possible via online-discussions, the review panel has been able to talk to all status groups of all partner institutions. Even if the panel could not verify the barrier-free accessibility of all institutions, none of the interviewed status groups have stated any problems.

Finally, the expert group would like to emphasise that continuous monitoring is indispensable, especially with regard to the special challenges of the international and interdisciplinary student body and the high mobility within the programme. The review panel sees the need for an especially strong student support that has to be stated more clearly, especially regarding accommodation issues. The panel also recognises the high motivation of all university staff involved in the programme and is very optimistic that the consortium will find constructive solutions well before the start of the programme.

### **Conclusion:**

The panel concludes that the standard is not met.

- Due to the high mobility scheme in the programme, the consortium must provide a reliable concept for student support (e.g. visa, insurance and registration for all study locations) including the provision of accommodation.

The panel recommends:

- The consortium should establish a concept for a mentoring programme tailored to the programme requirements.
- Before arriving at a study location, the students should receive all necessary information on available study spaces etc.

### **3.7 Resources [ESG 1.5 & 1.6]: Staff and Facilities**

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

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

### **Description:**

The selection of RMB staff is regulated over national procedures and extended with special requirements regarding language, working in different cultural circumstances with students from different cultural backgrounds. Teaching staff for RMB modules is employed by the respective partner universities and has only a part of their working hours allocated to the RMB programme. The format of study programme allows new teaching staff a gradual entry into RMB, starting with the participation in workshops, guest lectures or acting as guest critic before taking responsibility for specific modules or design studios. All initially planned staff members have participated in the RMB prequel project and were actively involved with students and external participants in developing the curriculum for the study programme. A complete list of RMB staff across all partners includes eleven professors, 22 assistant professors, and nine scientific assistants. The majority of professors teaching in the RMB programme are members of an interdisciplinary research foci in their respective departments and involved in research projects.

All staff involved in teaching matters are subject to regular assessment and evaluation procedures and obliged to follow training courses regularly related to the RMB professional content and training on teaching and learning.

Besides the academic staff, all five universities in this consortium have allocated three non-academic staff members (25 %) to the RMB programme, namely Higher Technicians for administrative service, Technical Assistants to attend the students, Technical Assistants to the library service, Operational Assistant to support the classrooms.

The RMB programme will be conducted in the buildings of the partner universities with access to the teaching facilities at the following departments: Department of Architecture at the University of Coimbra, Department of Civil Engineering and Architecture at IST (University of Lisbon), Faculty of Architecture at TH-OWL, Faculty of Design Sciences at the University of Antwerp, and Faculty of Architecture at the University of Belgrade.

The schools of architecture are widely equipped with a print shop/workshop, Offices for teachers, Meeting room, Research laboratory, Library, Computers Room, Exhibition Room, Students' Association Office, Secretariat Office, Scientific Committee Meeting Room, Department's Director Office, Bar. All venues are accessible barrier-free.

The IT department of the TH-OWL is responsible for providing the necessary infrastructure for all online activities. ILIAS is the platform that has been used and proven over many years to do so; it is hosted by the TH-OWL. Next to the support by staff over the existing university channels, a 50 % job is created for specific student and staff support in the RMB programme. All Universities offer sports facilities, daycare, medical services, and special conditions for travelling by public means.

### **Assessment:**

Based on the information provided in the self-report as well as during the discussions, the review panel considers the professional and international expertise of teaching staff as well as non-academic staff absolutely adequate for the purposes of the RMB programme. The selection of teaching staff follows the selection criteria of each partner university, which the panel regards suitable for the Master's degree. The qualifications proven in academic matters fully meet the standards.

According to the documents presented before and after the discussions, the laboratories and technical equipment at the partner universities fully meet contemporary standards that are necessary for the realisation of the RMB programme. Throughout all locations, the students have access to technical equipment such as computer labs and 3D printers, but also to equipment necessary for manual work such as workshops and different laboratories. Furthermore, learning space will be available exclusively for RMB students during their stay at each consortium partner.

Overall, the review panel has no doubt that the resources at the partner universities are more than sufficient to support the delivery of all intended learning outcomes.

### **Conclusion:**

The panel concludes that the standard is met.

## **3.8 Transparency and Documentation [ESG 1.8]**

*EA:*

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

### **Description:**

All information on the RMB programme, admission criteria, learning outcomes, qualification awarded, teaching, learning and assessment procedures, learning opportunities, graduate employment information, and further activities will be accessible on a website for the RMB programme, which is planned to go online well before the study programme is being implemented. This website will be visible on the websites of all consortium partners as well. For dissemination purposes information will also be placed at the *Uni-assist* website and the Erasmus Websites of national agencies. There are links to the partner organisations and affiliated institutions, blog facilities, calendar events, the press's information, the RMB press office, and the Partners press offices.

The RMB website will provide:

- documents exchange and pre-releases

- Standard formats for presentations and publications
- A member's blog
- Educational material (MOOC's)
- A YouTube channel showing lectures and speeches by project partners

Besides the planned website, information and dissemination of the RMB programme will include the following non-digital formats:

- Facts sheet flyer
- Project results, updates
- Press releases and publication material
- Exhibitions and events
- Paper presentations at conferences
- Seminars

Projects will also be published in the universities magazines as well as in an RMB yearbook.

Content-related as well as organizational information is documented in the module descriptions, the Examination Regulations, Admission and Selection Regulation and the Course Syllabi, all of which will be available to RMB students.

The drafted cooperation agreement will clarify procedural details and responsibilities.

### **Assessment:**

The currently available website for RMB solely contains information related to the previous project, the Erasmus+ Strategic partnership. Therefore, it does not yet display the requested information on the study programme, such as admission requirements and procedures, course catalogue, examination and assessment procedures. Since the study programme is scheduled to start in the winter term of 2023, the review panel consents that it is not yet necessary to have the website available. On the other hand, the review panel wishes to emphasize the necessity of a timely publishing of all relevant information on the RMB master, ideally via website as planned by the programme coordinators. In this context, the panel recommends to clearly state on the website or in the planned information brochure, that the Master Programme does not lead to a regulated profession in order to avoid false expectations on the part of prospective students.

However, all necessary information has been prepared by the Consortium and the review panel finds this information well documented in a very detailed way via "Curriculum / Course Study Plan, Module descriptions and Methodologies handbook", "Admission and Selection procedure" and "Examination Regulations".



The only exception may be seen in the provided course plan, which does communicate all modules of the study programme, but its structure makes it very hard to understand a chronological sequence regarding the curriculum but even more the location of certain modules within a semester. In order to ease the understanding of the course programme by the students, the course study plan has to be structured in a chronological way. In addition, a timeline of the programme should be displayed including the joint academic calendar – clearly stating beginning and end of each study phase at a certain partner university, exam session (if any), as well as winter and summer breaks.

### **Conclusion:**

The panel concludes that the standard is not met.

- The course plan must be clearly arranged regarding the chronology of the study programme, the academic calendar of the different locations and the intended examination periods.

The panel recommends:

- The public information on the study programme (e.g. Website or brochure) should clearly state that the Master Programme does not lead to a regulated profession in order to avoid false expectations in prospective students.

### **3.9 Quality Assurance [ESG 1.1 & part 1]**

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

#### **Description:**

Regarding the management of quality assurance throughout the programme, the TH-OWL will act as the coordinating partner. Art. 2 of the drafted cooperation agreement nominates the overall coordinator at the TH-OWL and lists the coordination of quality issues among other tasks regarding the RMB programme. The evaluation regulations at the TH-OWL describe the monitoring process in order to ensure and continuously develop the quality of the RMB programme. For this purpose, an evaluation officer for RMB will be appointed as contact person for all evaluation issues.

The quality management system established at the TH-OWL includes regular evaluation of all courses and programs. Feedback meetings with students are accompanied by questionnaires. Students and teachers evaluate all modules through a standardised list of questions. It is planned to adopt this system by evaluating all modules once a year. The evaluation team of the TH-OWL supports the evaluation of the questionnaires, which are available in English.

According to the TH-OWL, well-founded data on studies and teaching are regarded essential in order to implement targeted and systematic measures and recommendations for action and to guarantee

the high quality of the RMB programme in the long term. In addition to regular course evaluations, the TH-OWL will also conduct annual surveys of students and graduates on topics of study and teaching, access to the labour market, potential for improvement, general satisfaction, and others. Therefore, all RMB students will be given the opportunity to share their personal assessment of the RMB study conditions, to highlight strengths, and to name potential for improvement. The consistently high response rates at the TH-OWL in previous evaluation procedures show that students perceive the survey as an effective tool for actively shaping and continuously optimising the study conditions.

Central topics are:

- Courses offered: organisation, content, research and practical relevance
- Student support and counselling, support services
- General conditions of study
- Workload, time management
- Personal situation

Via active alumni work, the RMB programme aims to inform students about current developments and offer opportunities to participate in the RMB project beyond their studies and stay informed for professional and private purposes. Therein, the RMB programme wishes to promote the exchange of experience and knowledge transfer, offer career guidance, point out further education opportunities, provide insights into current student life, contact alumni for surveys, and invite them to participate in shaping the study programme even after graduation.

Beside quality management through staff and supportive staff from all partners and students, external quality checks will be implemented through an advisory board. The TH-OWL is responsible for contacting the Advisory Board and organising yearly feedback meetings. The advisory board is planned to comprise representatives from industry, higher education, government and finance and to comment on RMB's proceedings and qualities. Currently, the Advisory board has three members and will be extended and diversified in the upcoming period.

Since all partners have their own systems of assessment, quality assurance and monitoring, the individual universities are responsible for the implementation of the national quality systems for teaching and learning. All partner Universities employ teaching staff involved in the RMB programme and assess this staff according to national standards. Additionally, all partners have internal control procedures for content, personnel, management and finances. The RMB programme will be integrated in these internal quality routines. Modules a consortium partner offers for the RMB programme may also be offered in other master courses and therefore be subject to their internal quality checks.

### **Assessment:**

All partner universities proved to have independent quality assurance process in accordance with part one of the ESG.

During the discussions it was clearly stated that the TH-OWL takes the lead in evaluating the RMB programme not only on module level but also regarding all further matters. Students and teachers evaluate all modules through a standardized questionnaire. The data protection policies for the RMB programme established by the consortium provide an adequate framework. The outcomes of all evaluations are shared with staff, teaching staff, students and the advisory commission. Results will be reviewed and discussed jointly among all consortium partners in order to decide further measures for improvement. The review panel finds the evaluation process clearly structured.

Since the consortium has already been working jointly on previous projects, the partners established an awareness of the different needs and processes of their partners.

In the discussion with the students the peer group gained the impression, that the students of all partners feel included in the system and their feedback is valued. Teaching staff as well as supporting staff members are generally very helpful with possible issues.

In case of conflict and/or appeal the consortium provides a clear strategy describing different steps of escalation and containing the contact possibilities at TH-OWL, which again takes the coordinating role. The review panel regards this as a well-suited instrument for students and applicants reflecting justice as well as awareness.

Since the review panel concludes that the RMB programme is very demanding, the workload should be monitored closely via evaluation of students' workload as well as the overall success rate once the study programme started.

Overall, the peer group concludes that the quality management system planned for the RMB programme provides adequate instruments for the further development of the study programme.

### **Conclusion:**

The panel concludes that the standard is met.

The panel recommends:

- Once the study programme started, the workload should be monitored closely.

## 4 Conclusion of the Review Panel

### 4.1 Conclusion regarding the cooperation between the partners and the jointly delivered programme

Overall, the panel concludes that the study programme is very appealing but also very demanding. The concept of the master's programme RMB seems to meet the set goals. Both the examination system and the workload indicate that the programme can be successfully completed within the standard period of study. However, minor adjustments to the curriculum and therefore the teaching content and documentation of the programme seem necessary. The panel regards the main challenge in the extraordinarily high mobility of the students, as well as the early point in time of the accreditation, as this means that some organisational details are still being developed. However, it is a great advantage that there is already experience with the cooperation of the consortium partners, the concept is well planned, even if it is not yet documented in detail.

The intended learning outcome as described in the curriculum, course study plan, module descriptions, and methodologies handbook are in accordance with the examination regulations. The study programme itself shows a very specific but also appropriate orientation in terms of content, which, apart from a few selective exceptions mentioned in the report, result in a well-rounded picture. Student diversity and the specific requirements of mobile students are adequately taken into account in the curricular design, organisation, forms of teaching and learning as well as supervision.

According to the current findings, the panel recommends accreditation.

### 4.2 Accreditation Proposal

Based on the findings in the self-evaluation report as well as during the discussions, the review panel proposes the following conditions and recommendations:

#### Conditions

- The cooperation agreement needs to cover the following issues:
  - Admission and selection procedures for students
  - Mobility of students and teachers
  - Examination regulations, student assessment methods, recognition of credits and degree awarding procedures in the consortium.
- The course catalogue must reflect the aspired learning outcomes consistently and in a competence-oriented manner.

- The curriculum must contain the learning contents “Building materials”, “Construction basics” as well as research training in legal issues in order to show a balanced approach regarding the profile of the study programme.
- Due to the high mobility scheme in the programme, the consortium must provide a reliable concept for student support (e.g. visa, insurance and registration for all study locations) including the provision of accommodation.
- The course plan must be clearly arranged regarding the chronology of the study programme, the academic calendar of the different locations and the intended examination periods.

### Recommendations

- Once the study programme started, the workload should be monitored closely.
- Since the mobility scheme appears to be very demanding, the panel would like to recommend considering possibilities of further distance learning options.
- The consortium should establish a concept for a mentoring programme tailored to the programme requirements.
- Before arriving at a study location, the students should receive sufficient information on available study spaces etc.
- The public information on the study programme (e.g. website or brochure) should clearly communicate that the Master Programme does not lead to a regulated profession.
- The consortium should draft a timeline for the student application process.

### 4.3 Overview of the Assessment according to Assessment Standards

Standard	Assessment
<b>1. Eligibility</b>	
1.1 Status	Compliant with the standard
1.2 Joint design and delivery	Compliant with the standard
1.3 Cooperation Agreement	Partly compliant with the standard
<b>2. Learning Outcomes</b>	
2.1 Level	Compliant with the standard
2.2 Disciplinary field	Partly compliant with the standard
2.3 Achievement	Compliant with the standard
2.4 Regulated Professions	Not applicable
<b>3. Study Programme</b>	
3.1 Curriculum	Partly compliant with the standard
3.2 Credits	Compliant with the standard
3.3 Workload	Compliant with the standard
<b>4. Admission and Recognition</b>	
4.1 Admission	Compliant with the standard
4.2 Recognition	Compliant with the standard
<b>5. Admission and Recognition</b>	
5.1 Learning and teaching	Compliant with the standard
5.2 Assessment of students	Compliant with the standard
<b>6. Student Support</b>	
	Partly compliant with the standard
<b>7. Resources</b>	
7.1 Staff	Compliant with the standard
7.2 Facilities	Compliant with the standard
<b>8. Transparency and Documentation</b>	
	Partly compliant with the standard
<b>9. Quality Assurance</b>	
	Compliant with the standard
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>Accreditation under conditions</b>

### III Decision/ Decisions of the Accreditation Commission of ACQUIN

#### 1. Accreditation Decision

Based on the jointly delivered self-evaluation report of the consortium, the accreditation report of the external review panel, and the statement of the consortium on the accreditation report, the Accreditation Commission of ACQUIN complies with the assessment by the expert group and makes the following decision unanimously on its meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December 2021:

#### Conditions

- The cooperation agreement needs to cover the following issues:
  - Admission and selection procedures for students
  - Mobility of students and teachers
  - Examination regulations, student assessment methods, recognition of credits and degree awarding procedures in the consortium.
- The course catalogue must reflect the aspired learning outcomes consistently and in a competence-oriented manner.
- The curriculum must contain the learning contents “Building materials”, “Construction basics” as well as research training in legal issues in order to show a balanced approach regarding the profile of the study programme.
- Due to the high mobility scheme in the programme, the consortium must provide a reliable concept for student support (e.g. visa, insurance and registration for all study locations) including the provision of accommodation.
- The course plan must be clearly arranged regarding the chronology of the study programme, the academic calendar of the different locations and the intended examination periods.

The accreditation is valid until the 31st of March 2023.

The Higher Education Institution must submit documents that prove the fulfilment of the conditions by 20th of September 2022. If the Accreditation Commission comes to the conclusion that the conditions are fulfilled, the accreditation will be extended until the 30th of September 2028. If the Higher Education Institution fails to prove the fulfilment of the conditions in due time, the accreditation will not be extended.

The accreditation procedure may be suspended for up to 18 months after response from the Higher Education Institution, with the expectation that the Higher Education Institution will remedy the deficiencies within the given time frame. This statement must be submitted until the 20th of January 2022.

## Recommendations for further Development

- Once the study programme started, the workload should be monitored closely.
- Since the mobility scheme appears to be very demanding, the panel would like to recommend considering possibilities of further distance learning options.
- The consortium should establish a concept for a mentoring programme tailored to the programme requirements.
- Before arriving at a study location, the students should receive sufficient information on available study spaces etc.
- The public information on the study programme (e.g. website or brochure) should clearly communicate that the Master Programme does not lead to a regulated profession.
- The consortium should draft a timeline for the student application process.

## 2. Fulfilment of Conditions

The Higher Education Institution has submitted the documents that prove the fulfilment of the conditions in due time. These documents have been forwarded to the ACQUIN Standing Expert in the field of Architecture with request for examination. The Standing Expert comes to the conclusion that the conditions are fulfilled. Based on the statement of the Standing Expert, the Accreditation Commission of ACQUIN makes on the 22nd of July 2022 the following decision unanimously:

**The conditions of the study programme „Reuse of Modernist Buildings“ (RMB) (M.Sc., Joint Degree) are fulfilled. The accreditation period is extended until 30th of September 2028.**