Certification Report

International Certification procedure under the Erasmus+ Project „MENTORme "

Training programme: "Mentorship Training for HE students"

offered by:

Designer of the training programme: Universidad de Valladolid (UVA), Greece

Coordinator of Project: SPOLECZNA AKADEMIA NAUK (SAN), Poland

University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN), Cyprus

Platform Developer: Emphasys, Cyprus

Procedure

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Standing Expert Committee and lead management: not applicable

ACQUIN Accreditation Project Manager: Giorina Maratsi, Lisa Stemmler

Certification decision: 20th of June 2022, 13 March 2022

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<u>Abbreviations</u>

Institutions	
UVA	University of Valladolid, Spain
SAN	SPOLECZNA AKADEMIA NAUK, Poland
UCLan	University of Central Lancashire, Cyprus
EU terms	
EU	European Commission
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
HEI	Higher Education Institution
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
QA	Quality Assurance
PWFO	People with Fewer Opportunities
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Content

The **evaluation report** of the expert group is based on the self-evaluation documentation of the participating HEIs and organizations as well as the online discussions with the heads of the training programmes, the developers of the programme as well as administration and management of the education organisations.

Evaluation criteria are based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) in the official version valid at the time the contract is concluded. Since the assessed training programme is not a full degree programme, the standards of the ESG are not fully applicable; deviations are highlighted in the report.

1. General information

1.1. Short portrait of the institutions

Under the guidance of HEI SAN (Poland), the participating HEIs have developed a training programme accompanying the MENTORme project. The MENTORme Project (https://mentorme-programme.eu/) was successfully granted by European Commission (EC) under Strategic Partnerships. Main goal is the development of innovative practices for the improvement of civic engagement of universities.

The below short portrait of the institutions is focusing on (1) status and purpose, (2) general information on the assessed programme.

SAN

University of Social Sciences is the largest private educational institution in Poland, with more than 25 years of experience. The University offers a wide range of Bachelor and Master programmes in major cities in Poland and in the branch campus in London. The offer includes MBA and PhD studies and a unique American Master's degree programme in cooperation with Clark University. There are 18 departments, including Management, Finance and Accounting, Sociology, Psychology, National Security and IT studies.

SAN's goal is to equip students and graduates with specialist knowledge and practical skills needed in the 21st century's labour market, both at the local and international levels. Therefore, all programmes are developed in close cooperation with partner companies and institutions and provide students with an opportunity to participate in internship programmes and various projects in a real-world business environment.

The Institute of Educational Studies at the University prepares teachers to become professional educators, open for challenges of a rapidly changing environment. Students and future teachers are taught, how to teach effectively with the use of innovative and creative educational approaches and they collaborate closely with wide range of schools, educational organizations (e.g., Reginal Center for Teachers' Development of and Practical Education), associations and foundations as well as local and national authorities.

In the pedagogy course at the University of Social Sciences the project method is actively used, which implements a new paradigm in education. It is based on a constructivist approach, the advantages of which are motivation, cooperation, and the possibility of transferring the taught content to solving problems in practice. It enables learning based on interaction with the environment, a group of cooperating people. Based on own needs and experiences, it also allows for individual development. Knowledge building takes place through working on a specific problem in a real or similar environment.

UCLan

The University of Central Lancashire, Cyprus (UCLan Cyprus[1]), is located in Larnaka, and it is the first Branch Campus of the University of Central Lancashire and at the same time a fully licensed University in Cyprus. A unique and innovative model of a Cypriot and British University Educational Experience, accredited by the UK Quality Assurance Agency and the Cyprus Agency of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CYQAA) respectively. Built on strong academic foundations, the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan UK), counts more than 190 years of history and is considered among the top 6.5% of all worldwide Universities by the Centre for World University Rankings (CWUR) 2020/21.

UCLan Cyprus operates under the academic umbrella of UCLan UK, and further to the latest political changes of the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union (BREXIT), it is considered a unique University, bridging the UK and Europe in terms of research, academic standards, student experience and student exchange. The completion of studies at UCLan Cyprus will result in a Double Degree (two certificates) from the two Universities, UCLan UK and UCLan Cyprus, recognized not only in Cyprus and UK, but also across Europe and beyond.

The university's values include the following:

- The advancement and protection of knowledge, freedom of speech and enquiry.
- The promotion of educational opportunity for all.
- The protection of the rights and freedoms of individuals and respect for diversity.
- A commitment to health, well-being, sustainability and sustainable development.

The MENTORme training course is well-aligned with the university's values, especially with the promotion of educational opportunity for all. The training course will be offered by the School of Sciences.

The School of Sciences[2] cultivates a culture of unique partnerships between academia, industry, public authorities and the community in order to facilitate and promote the utilization of state-of-the-art practices. Through a unique and innovative curriculum that reflects current and future industry practices and needs, the School offers a wide range of academic courses in disciplines such as Computing, Web Design and Development, Mathematics, Engineering, Psychology and Sport & Exercise Science. The School adopts an interdisciplinary approach in its activities, trying to bring together expertise from the various disciplines to pursue cutting-edge responsible research and innovative activities to address complex challenges in our community and around the world. As such, the School fits well with the outreach, as well as the interdisciplinary, nature of the social inclusion training course.

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[1] https://www.uclancyprus.ac.cy/

[2] https://www.uclancyprus.ac.cy/school/school-of-sciences/

UVA

The University of Valladolid has its origins in the 13th century. Over time, it has become one of the most important universities in Spain. Its activity is carried out in four campuses in Castilla and León: Palencia, Segovia, Soria, and Valladolid. In total, it offers 68 bachelor's degrees, 15 joint study programmes, 65 master's degrees and 29 doctoral programmes. It has 26 centers, 59 departments, 12 university institutes and 4 research and technology centers. It has 2480 professors and 19000 students.

The university is committed to lifelong learning, its leadership in mobility and its extensive network of international relations. It has prestigious research centers and its social and environmental commitment make it an exceptional academic environment.

Pedagogy Department of the Education and Social Work Faculty of the University of Valladolid will develop the training course. In this department, we can find two work areas: Didactics and School Organization and Methods of Research and Diagnostic in Education. In the second area, we have a research group named Q-ESE (professional qualifications, employability, and social entrepreneurship). The professionals that will be involved in this training belong to this research group.

EMPHASYS CENTRE

Emphasys Centre was established in 1998 and is operating as a highly successful Education, ICT Training (VET), Research and Software Development Centre, approved by the Cyprus Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport (MOECYS). It was set up with the vision to offer high-quality lifelong learning opportunities in the field of ICT to learners of all ages in order to upgrade their lives, ensure inclusion, access and participation in the digitalized economy.

Having in mind that 'education is the most powerful weapon to save the world' (Nelson Mandela), Emphasys is committed to support each learner, especially the vulnerable ones or the ones with fewer opportunities. In fact, this is aligned with the vision of MENTORme project, as its final aim is to bring closer together HE students and people with fewer opportunities.

1.2 General information on the assessed programme

The MENTORme Training Programme

Date of implementation	1/07/2022
Duration of the programme	50 hours
EQF Level	6
Number of ECTS points	2 ECTS
Maximum number of participants	5 per organization
Language of instruction	English
Target group(s)	Students of Higher Education related with social education
Entry requirements	Students of Higher Education related with social education
Form of study	Online
Tuition fee	Free

The MENTORme Project (www.mentorme.eu) focuses on "Promoting social inclusion of people with fewer opportunities through the development of mentorship programme for HEIs students". It aims at strengthening Higher Education Institutions' interaction with society, by supporting higher education students to become civically engaged through effective guidance and motivation practices and by raising cultural awareness and promoting diversity acceptance among them.

The project's main objective will be to develop an online tool in order to establish mentoring relationships between students – who will be the mentors, the professors – who will act as the supervisors and the people with fewer opportunities – who will receive mentorship as they will be the mentees.

The target group is primarily higher education students. Through their participation in the project, they will be able to acquire transversal competences linked to the social and civic field, practical experience during their studies, volunteer experience, among others. The ideal profile of students will be students in their final years of studies related to the social field (social education, pedagogy, social work or primary and secondary education). Eventually, the HEIs want to reach all students who are interested in social engagement.

The project brings together partners from 4 European countries and has a duration of 28 months (2020-2023).

The common methodology

All institutions commit to the importance of student-centered learning and a clear definition of learning outcomes. A course overview including learning outcomes and a description of the methodology of arriving at these learning outcomes is currently being compiled.

The training program

In this training program, civic and social competences are developed further, considering the Recommendation of the Council of the European Union on key competences published in 2018. The competences include:

- Multilingual competence (prepared by Emphasys):
  - Competence indicators
    - Be aware of one's own cultural worldview
    - Understand and respect cultural differences and particularities
    - Acknowledge different cultural practices and worldviews
    - Develop cross-cultural skills
    - Adapt to various culture particularities
    - Reflect on stereotypes already well established in society
    - Understand the advantages of being surrounded by culturally diverse environment

- Personal, social, and learning to learn competence (prepared by UVa and SAN):
  - Competence indicators
    - Understand the codes of the conduct and communication standards accepted in different societies and environments
    - To know different learning strategies, to know the need to develop competences and how to improve them, looking for educational, training, and professional opportunities, as well as the guidance and help available
    - Identify one's own capabilities, reflect critically and make decisions.
    - Work collaboratively and autonomously
    - Communicate knowledge clearly, using verbal and non-verbal communication consistently
    - Be able to listen actively and respond with constructive feedback
- Citizenship competence (prepared by UVa):
  - Competence indicators
    - Citizenship values
    - Social justice
    - Participatory attitudes

- Cultural awareness and expression competence (prepared by UCLAN):
  - competence indicators

- creative expression of ideas
- experience and emotion in a range of media
- cultural knowledge and understanding
- respect of diversity of cultural expression

2. Evaluation according to ESG standards

The quality of the course and the compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) were assessed by the expert group nominated on page 1 of this report.

2.1. Policy for quality assurance

> **ESG Standard 1.1: Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.**

Findings

The below findings are related to the policy for Quality Assurance, vision, mission, and strategy of the three (3) HEIs applying for certification under this procedure.

The quality assurance policy of all participating HEIs include the mission and vision, strategic objective and tasks, principles and values underlying their activities, general vision for the development of skills of learners, teachers and heads of educational organizations. The quality assurance policy is aimed at implementing their strategic objective and tasks in the field of continuing education, improving the professional development of learners, ensuring their high competitiveness in the domestic and foreign educational services market.

The participating HEIs apply both internal and external quality control in the course. External quality control is carried out in this procedure through the external review of the training programme by ACQUIN. Internal quality control mechanisms include periodic feedback from the course participants.

At UVA for example a quality committee is elected by the Governing board in function of article 3 of the Regulation on the body to guarantee a quality system. At SAN each faculty provides a Curriculum Committee responsible for a systematic, cyclical review of programmes including: learning outcomes and conclusions from the analysis of their compatibility with the needs of the labour market, ECTS system, curricular content, educational methods, methods of verification and assessment of learning outcomes, professional practice, teaching results etc. UCLAN is embedded into a British educational system with strong quality assurance system.

Periodic reviews are carried out for each academic School in accordance with a published cycle agreed by Academic Standards and Quality Assurance Committee (ASQAC).

The education institutes' values underpin their work, since team commitment and tolerance, legitimacy and social accountability, team spirit and distributed leadership, innovative practice, orientation to science and practice, transparency of all procedures, collaboration, cooperation and partnership are visible in the governance structure and the outputs of the education institutes.

The administrative and management apparatus, employees and trainees are committed to the principles of the quality assurance policy, promote the integration of science, education and practice, and bear mutual responsibility for their implementation. The education institutes have concepts on gender equality and the promotion of equal opportunities.

Finally, competences and decision-making processes of the programme are clearly defined. Internal and external stakeholders participate in quality assurance processes and are responsible, within their competence, for the quality of the educational services provided. Within this context, the development and strengthening of cooperation with well-known and recognised international organisations of education and science is being sought.

Conclusion

Internal and external QA policies are well reflected, students' participation in QA is established in all participating HEIs in an appropriate manner.

The standard is fulfilled.

2.2. Design and approval of the programme

> **ESG Standard 1.2: Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.**

Findings

While designing the training material, each partner was responsible for specific sub-units. The expertise of each education institute was the deciding factor for which module they are going to design.

General objectives

The MENTORme training programme is designed for the development of innovative practices for the improvement of civic engagement of universities. The course aims to strengthen the interaction of the university with society through the development of an online tool to establish mentoring relationships. Its major aims are to:

- Enhance the cross-cutting skills and competences of higher education students.
- Engage students in a civic way through effective orientation and motivation practices.
- Develop tools for the promotion of civic engagement policies within the university environment.

- Make students culturally aware and promote diversity.

The training programme is aimed primarily at higher education students. Through their participation they will be able to acquire transversal competences linked to the social and civic field, practical experience during their studies, volunteer experience, among others.

In 2018 the European Commission (EC, 2018) defined 8 key competences that are intended to lay the foundations for making societies more equitable and democratic and to allow their citizens to develop and flourish throughout their lives.

The MENTORme training programme elaborates on 4 of these key competences that are linked to civic and social engagement, namely:

1. Multilingual competence
2. Personal, social, and learning to learn competency
3. Citizenship competence
4. Competence in cultural awareness and expression

These competences are considered equally important and can be applied in different life contexts. There is the possibility that they overlap as the criteria of one support the indicators of another. It should also be considered that these key competences implicitly carry transversal competences, understood as a set of skills that are not specific to a profession or environment and can be used in different activities and contexts.

General structural features

Following the four competences, the curriculum covers four separate units, taking a modular approach. This approach has been developed commonly between the participating HEIs, elaborating a curriculum template that outlined the overall course layout for the training programme.

The programme includes 50 hours of training – 5 hours for a starting exercise, 10 hours for each competence and 5 hours for final assessment – corresponding to 2 ECTS.

Each of the programmes is designed and implemented in a similar way. The training has a sound workload calculation, being expressed in academic hours, where one academic hour equals 45 minutes.

Target Group

The self-report defines target group as:

- HE Students who are studying in various fields such as social sciences (psychology, sociology, special needs), languages, IT, education, medicine or any other related field, art, music, etc. and who are:
  - interested in community or voluntary work through the new mentoring programme to be introduced, provided that they follow the relevant training to become MENTORS;

- o (b) interested to acquire an accredited module related to the acquisition of social and civic competences;
- o (c) interested to investigate further their career orientation and professional development;
- o (d) investing in their personal development.
- HE academics or assistants with various backgrounds who are interested to support the civic engagement initiatives of their HEI and its integration to the community through the implementation of the MENTORme programme, provided that they will follow the relevant training in order to become supervisors;
- Vulnerable groups of people (people with fewer opportunities, marginalised, refugees, migrants, asylum seekers, disabled people, people with special needs, senior citizens, early school leavers etc., mainly over 18+).

Learning Objectives

The learning objectives for each of the four competences taught in the training programme are:

- Multilingual competence:
  - o Be aware of one's own cultural worldview;
  - o Understand and respect cultural differences and particularities;
  - o Acknowledge different cultural practices and worldviews;
  - o Develop cross-cultural skills;
  - o Adapt to various culture particularities;
  - o Reflect on stereotypes already well established in society;
  - o Understand the advantages of being surrounded by culturally diverse environment.

- Personal, social, and learning to learn:
  - o Understand the codes of the conduct and communication standards accepted in different societies and environments;
  - o To know different learning strategies, to know the need to develop competences and how to improve them, looking for educational, training, and professional opportunities, as well as the guidance and help available;
  - o Identify one's own capabilities, reflect critically and make decisions;
  - o Work collaboratively and autonomously;
  - o Communicate knowledge clearly, using verbal and non-verbal communication consistently;
  - o Be able to listen actively and respond with constructive feedback;
  - o To be resilient and cope with uncertainty and stress.

- Cultural awareness and expression competence
  - o Understand basic notions related to creative expression of ideas;
  - o Understand the expression of experiences and emotions in arrange of media;
  - o Develop their sense of cultural knowledge and understanding;
  - o Acknowledge the significance of respect for diversity of cultural expression;
  - o Express and interpret ideas, experiences and emotions with empathy;
  - o Communicate with foreigners more efficiently;

        o   Enjoy and appreciate works of art and other forms of cultural expression;
        o   Reflect on and engage in creative processes.

- Citizenship competence
  - Citizenship values;
  - Social justice;
  - Participatory attitudes.

Conclusion

The expert group considers it very sensible that the European Union recommendation on Key Competences is the major reference of the project. This ensures content validity and favors possible transfer within the project.

After studying the developed modules and learning contents, the expert group concludes that the training units are well researched and constructed in a pedagogically comprehensible manner. Several links, videos, embedded topics for discussion, and tasks for individual reflection secure an engaging learning process.

However, some content (e.g., respect of diversity) could be improved with introduction of practical case studies. The constructivist approach of the training platform (Moodle) offers suitable solutions to organize the content and offer practical components in the learning path. At times, the proposals may have excessive content that can be adapted according to the first teaching experiences. For further improvement, the expert group recommends:

- include aspects of democracy and social inclusion in the further development of the Citizenship Competence and offer practical tips on how people can respect diversity,
- emphasize the aspect of social inclusion as well as cultural diversity in the Cultural Awareness Competence (practical examples, cases studies),
- since the Personal, Social and Learning to Learn Competence seems quite comprehensive, it might be worth considering splitting it into two parts; for better transparency the referenced literature should clearly state mandatory vs. compulsory reads; finally, the first run-through should be used to discuss whether a more dynamic approach could be used in this competence.

Since the course descriptors and contents are still in the process of finalization, the expert group trusts in the ability of all project partners to finish the drafted contents. However, the expert group identifies an urgent need to fully develop the learning outcomes of the programme. The lack of imbedding the overall learning outcomes in the competence framework limits the meaning, reach, and comparability of the training action. An alignment with the framework would also offer stronger guidance when establishing the content and learning process in order to offer a fully viable, comprehensive, and sustainable learning programme.

A sensible solution is the creation of a competence matrix referring to the underlying competence framework as well as to the course syllabi.

The standard is not fulfilled.

The expert group suggests the following condition:

- The learning outcomes must be defined in reference to the applicable competence framework.

The expert group suggests the following recommendations:

- include aspects of democracy and social inclusion in the further development of the Citizenship Competence and offer practical tips on how people can respect diversity,
- emphasize the aspect of social inclusion as well as cultural diversity in the Cultural Awareness Competence (practical examples, cases studies),
- since the Personal, Social and Learning to Learn Competence seems quite comprehensive, it might be worth considering splitting it into two parts; for better transparency the referenced literature should clearly state mandatory vs. compulsory reads; finally, the first run-through should be used to discuss whether a more dynamic approach could be used in this competence.

2.3. <u>Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment</u>

ESG Standard 1.3: Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.

Findings

<u>Teaching and learning</u>

The Interactive platform for HE students and academics will contain:

a. e-LEARNING environment.

The learning platform is built on Moodle. Users will be able to register and log in securely with their credentials in the education platform.

Users will be able to view all available courses and register for a specific course they wish to partake. Each course will contain an announcement board, the learning material in the form of an online booklet, downloadable links for pdf, word, and presentation documents. Content can also be provided in the form of embedded links such as YouTube videos.

The course content is presented in learning sequences: a set of interwoven videos, reading material, exercises and content with automatic assessments and instant feedback, tailored discussion spaces and collaborative tools.

Learners can move at their own pace following a self-regulating learning process while they receive instant feedback upon completion of different types of assessments providing superior pedagogy.

A progress bar will indicate the percentage of completion for each course the user is registered in.

Supervisors will be able to view enrolled students and see how many students have completed the course, how many are still in the progress of completing a course and how many have yet to start a course. Additionally, a supervisor will be able to give assignments, create tests, see grades, award Badges, initiate a private discussion with a student and post a thread on a forum.

b. e-COMMUNITY.

The participants of the project such as the students, HE academics, staff, experts, volunteers, and professionals which are registered in the Learning environment will be able to interact with each other in the form of a Forum discussion board located in the same area as the available courses. The forum will be divided into various topics of interest.

c. e-LIBRARY.

The registered users of the e-Learning platform will be able to view the contents of the e-LIBRARY which will contain tools and resources in the format of documents (word, presentations and pdf's) and web links. There will also be filtering options according to the target group and topic.

d. e-TOOL for Assessment.

Upon completion of the training material, each registered user can access the assessment mode. Their knowledge and skills will be validated such as key social and civic competences to become MENTORS. The methodology of the Open Badges will be utilized, as a validation method based on non-formal learning procedures. The assessment will be in the form of quizzes with reflective questions, situating the students in real-life situations for which they should find the right solutions by answering correctly.

Assessment

In order to gain credits for this training, students will have to pass the final assessment. For easy recognition, the Open Badges system was employed, providing a badge for each module and a final badge for a final evaluation of all the content worked on in the training.

Each competency has an associated evaluation rubric with four levels of difficulty. Each of these levels must reflect the learning outcomes to be achieved by the student. For the evaluation, three multiple-choice questions will be created for each of the levels of the rubric.

The evaluation of the training will consist of a test with nine questions for each competency (taking the questions of levels 1, 2 and 3 of the rubric). By passing each of these tests, the person will get the badge for each test passed. To obtain the final badge, the student must take a final test composed of 12 questions taken from level four of the competency rubrics. When the student passes this last evaluation, he/she will get the final badge and will be credited with the civic and social competences that have been worked on in the training.

Expert group considers that the universities should provide students with a document explaining the badges gained during the programme in order to be easier for them to use it for their future recommendation and for employers to understand what the training stands for.

Conclusion

The training programme is based on online self-paced sessions that enhance the flexibility and accessibility of the programme. At the same time, learners have the freedom to decide how and in which context they want to implement their knowledge. Since learners will be able to access all contents upon signing in, the expert group recommends introducing the programme with a "Welcome" – ideally via a short video – in order to explain the first steps and secure structured navigation within the programme. The expert group also suggests that each module in the platform provides information concerning the topic, learning objectives and outcomes.

The expert group praises that the proposal is designed to mobilize key competences in university students and considers the implemented approaches for learning, teaching and assessment as generally suitable. All necessary contents are developed well reflected in a very detailed manner; however, it is not always clear how the students are supposed to gain certain competences. The expert group wishes to recommend that the responsible partners should present the syllabi in a way that reflects the students learning path (e.g., case studies, exercises…). Also, group assignments could be also considered for certain activities within the designed modules.

The chosen assessment method should always be aligned with the objectives, contents, and methodology; it should be valid, reliable, and transparent, so that it allows comparability of learning. Also, assessment of learning outcomes should always showcase what and how a student is learning (formative assessment). Regarding the fact, that exclusively multiple-choice tests will be used as assessment methods, the expert group recommends considering further methods of evaluation throughout the programme. At the current state, the expert group can only assume that the proposed activities promote autonomous, engaged, and shared student learning. In summary, the learning environment should not merely be a tool for monitoring learning, but for formative student learning. Therefore, the assessment method planned for the course should be aligned with the learning objectives and outcomes.

In order to offer the students a quick and easy way to provide feedback, the expert group recommends implementing a feedback-button or link to an online survey.

The standard is fulfilled with recommendations.

The expert group suggests the following recommendations:

1. The course syllabi should be presented in a way that reflects the student learning path.

2. The platform should offer an introduction video for better orientation.

3. Each module in the platform should provide information concerning the topic, learning objectives and outcomes.

4. The platform should implement a feedback function.

5. The platform developers should implement a technical solution to access PowerPoint presentations within the platform, so the users do not have to download the files first.

6. The expert group recommends considering further methods of assessment.

7. Universities should provide students with a document explaining the badges gained during the programme.

2.4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

ESG Standard 1.4: Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.

Findings

All participating HEIs have a well-described procedure for admission and enrolment of learners into the training programme as well as the certification of achievements.

Admission

The course is particularly targeted at students of Higher Education in their final years of studies related to the social field (social education, pedagogy, social work or primary and secondary education) and solid command of the English language. The project partners plan to open the course to students of all backgrounds and to export the course to other interested HEIs.

Certification-Progression

The monitoring of the progression as well the final assessment will be performed through the Moodle platform. To accredit the training and ensure recognition, the Open Badges system is developed, providing a badge for each module and a final badge for the successful final assessment of all the content worked on in the training.

The procedure allows three attempts for a successful final assessment via the online learning platform.

Conclusion

The standard is fulfilled.

2.5. Teaching staff

> **ESG Standard 1.5: Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.**

Findings

All three institutions state in their self-documentation to have identified staff for the programme.

UVA includes teachers belonging to the Department of Pedagogy of the Faculty of Education and Social Work of the University of Valladolid. Many of the university courses taught in this center are related to the social field and the attention to different groups of society.

For the development of the training, the university includes professionals from the Faculty of Education and people who are working in the Observatory for the Validation of Professional Competences (Observal). Their training is related to pedagogy and teaching in both formal and non-formal education. In the case of the people working at Observal, they have experience in working with development and training in basic and transversal competences.

UCLan Cyprus will involve 2-3 academics from the School of Sciences, who have experience with knowledge transfer activities within the university and their research work and expertise is adjacent to technology, ethics and social sciences and teaching and learning in higher education. The selected academics are already fellows of the Higher Education Academy in the UK.

SAN has selected three university teachers with backgrounds in organizational psychology, pedagogy and social policy.

Continuous improvement

The HEIs demonstrate a commitment to ensure that the training programme is a success. The education institutes are focusing on reskilling and upskilling the competences of staff and alumni. Through various educational programmes and seminars, people are trained properly to be competitive towards the current needs of the labour market.

Conclusion

All HEIs have appropriate staff expertise within their institutions to facilitate learning for the training programme effectively. The HEIs also offer Continuing Professional Development strategies for teaching staff to ensure currency and updating of knowledge/skills. Staff capacity does not appear to be an issue at this time, although appropriate plans will need to be considered when actual student numbers are known, in particular if numbers exceed the predicted recruitment figures.

Since the programme will be available to further HEIs that were not part of the developer team, the expert group recommends the preparation of a general guideline for all trainers.

The standard is fulfilled.

The expert group suggests the following recommendation:

- The programme should include a general guideline for trainers in the mentorship training.

2.6. Learning resources and student support

> **ESG Standard 1.6: Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.**

Findings

Learning resources

The MENTORme educational resources will be offered freely and openly for educators, professionals and self-learners for use and sharing through the MENTORme online learning platform. The mobile app and e-mapping tool serve to connect a community of teachers, learners (mentors and mentees) and local project activities of interest for PWFO and representatives of PWFO groups & organizations.

All learning content and learning support is available via online platform and mobile app. For a later stage of the project an e-mapping tool will be provided for further development. This tool will provide information on social practices supporting PWFO's and. It is a dynamic and interactive tool to record, present and map out organised initiatives-programmes-good examples to support vulnerable people in partner countries, either for promoting LLL or social and medical support through the welfare system. The mobile app however facilitates mentorship events. Specifically, the app allows registered users to create new "offers" or "needs", as well as reserve slots for specific events. Unregistered users can browse the available mentorships and search by location or keyword. It is developed for mentors and their supervisors, PWFO and representatives of PWFO groups & organizations.

Conclusion

The project partners developed a full set of necessary Learning resources which will be provided for free. The expert group praises the open-source approach and confirms a targeted elaboration of the contents. The experts do however suggest integrating further on compulsory and supporting literature.

Further material equipment and computer technology for an effective and meaningful learning process as well as student support will be provided by the participating HEIs. They allow high-

quality training and preparation of learners within the training program. Strengths of the programme are the free and open access content, the university's community outreach to PWFO and fostering social engagement in all students interested in the program. In overall, expert group believes that the material created and the way the lesson will be delivered promotes student-centered learning.

The standard is fulfilled.

2.7. Information management

> **ESG Standard 1.7: Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.**

Findings

The Software Development Department of Emphasys is involved in the design, development, pilot-testing and evaluation of various e-learning tools, platforms, websites, applications and assessment portals etc. based on the needs of the project being implemented by the organization.

UCLan reviews the status and operation of its courses annually. The University requires staff responsible for each course, to undertake the review and to report the outcomes using a standard format. The purpose of the annual monitoring process is to aid the University in its pursuit of excellence; specifically: to evaluate and improve course quality; to ensure the best possible student experience within the resource available; to ensure that appropriate action is taken to remedy any identified shortcomings; to identify and disseminate innovative practice and commendations; to build up information needed for the periodic review process and for external reviews. Feedback is gathered from students via the module feedback questionnaires, which are issued on completion of each module. In addition, student representatives from each year of each programme are invited to discuss and provide feedback to the Head of School and course teams by attending Student Staff Liaison Meetings once each semester. Action plans arising from these meetings are monitored through the school and academic quality department. Finally, at the end of each module, the academics leading a module are asked to complete a module review form that is provided to the course leader.

SAN has institutionalized a Curriculum Committee responsible for a systematic, cyclical review of programmes including: learning outcomes and conclusions from the analysis of their compatibility with the needs of the labour market, ECTS system, curricular content, educational methods, methods of verification and assessment of learning outcomes, professional practice, teaching results and the degree to which students achieve learning outcomes, results of monitoring the professional career of graduates, key quantitative indicators of students' progress and failure in learning and achieving learning outcomes, stage papers, thesis and diploma examinations, feedback from students on their satisfaction with the programme of study, study conditions and support for learning, feedback from academic staff and employers,

information on the career paths of graduates in order to adapt to the changing labour market and the development of academic disciplines. The systematic evaluation of the study programme is performed by internal stakeholders (teaching staff, students) and external stakeholders (employers, graduates of the course).

Supervisors will be able to view enrolled students on the training platform and see how many students have completed the course, how many are still in the progress of completing a course and how many have yet to start a course. Additionally, a supervisor will be able to give assignments, create tests, see grades, award Badges, initiate a private discussion with a student and post a thread on a forum. Since a forum between students will also be created where they will be able to exchange knowledge, tasks can be evaluated and corrected before the module's testing, so students can reflect on their errors and understand better the modules.

Conclusion

All participating HEIs have a formalized way of management aspects, including information management. An important component of this system is the governance structures, the way decisions are made, the inclusion of multiple stakeholders in the evaluation processes.

Via their internal monitoring systems, the HEIs collect key figures and student statistics, including student progression, success, and drop-out rates. students' satisfaction with their programmes differs from one partner institution to another. Standardisation at the level of the whole course is worth considering.

The standard is fulfilled.

2.8. Public information

> **ESG Standard 1.8: Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible.**

Findings

Information materials on the programme are gathered on the project website www.mentorme.eu and within the MENTORme online interactive platform. Users will be able to register and log in securely with their credentials in the education platform. They can view all available courses and register for a specific course they wish to partake. Each course will contain an announcement board, the learning material in the form of an online booklet, downloadable links for pdf, word and presentation documents. Content can be also in the form of embedded links such as YouTube videos.

All participating HEIs offer information on their activities and programmes via their separate websites.

Conclusion

The information on the programme as well as on the HEIs provided online is complete, useful, clear and easily accessible to all stakeholders, partners and the general public.

The standard is fulfilled.

2.9. On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes

> **ESG Standard 1.9: Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.**

Findings

SAN

University of Social Sciences (SAN) has an Internal Education Quality Management System, which implements the SAN Quality Policy and applies to all forms and types of studies. It covers all main and auxiliary aspects related to the educational process conducted at the University, including those related to reviewing and updating the curriculum, I.A.: monitoring, reviewing and improving the curriculum and the learning outcomes assumed in the program, as well as conducting surveys on the quality of the educational process. As part of the Internal Education Quality Management System the following operate: The Education Quality Committee and the Curriculum Committee, whose permanent members include representatives of employers, academic staff and students. The committees are not only consultative and advisory in nature, but also carry out work on the improvement of the study program; their task is to constantly adapt the programme to the needs and expectations of employers and labour markets.

At each field of study, there is a Curriculum Committee responsible for a systematic, cyclical review of programmes including: learning outcomes and conclusions from the analysis of their compatibility with the needs of the labour market, ECTS system, curricular content, educational methods, methods of verification and assessment of learning outcomes, professional practice, teaching results and the degree to which students achieve learning outcomes, results of monitoring the professional career of graduates, key quantitative indicators of students' progress and failure in learning and achieving learning outcomes, stage papers, thesis and diploma examinations, feedback from students on their satisfaction with the programme of study, study conditions and support for learning, feedback from academic staff and employers, information on the career paths of graduates in order to adapt to the changing labour market

and the development of academic disciplines. The systematic evaluation of the study programme is performed by internal stakeholders (teaching staff, students) and external stakeholders (employers, graduates of the course).

UCLan

The University is responsible both, for the standards of its awards and for the quality of its students' learning experience. Annual monitoring is the process by which the University regularly, and reasonably frequently, reviews the status and operation of its courses.   The University requires staff responsible for each course, to undertake a review annually and to report the outcomes of this review, using a standard format. The purpose of the annual monitoring process is to aid the University in its pursuit of excellence; specifically: to evaluate and improve course quality; to ensure the best possible student experience within the resource available; to ensure that appropriate action is taken to remedy any identified shortcomings; to identify and disseminate innovative practice and commendations; to build up information needed for the periodic review process and for external reviews. Feedback is gathered from students via the module feedback questionnaires, which are issued on completion of each module. In addition, student representatives from each year of each programme are invited to discuss and provide feedback to the Head of School and course teams by attending Student Staff Liaison Meetings once each semester. Action plans arising from these meetings are monitored through the school and academic quality department. Finally, at the end of each module, the academics leading a module are asked to complete a module review form that is provided to the course leader.

UVA

The quality of HE is assessed by the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation (ANECA). It is a regional agency, belonging to the Ministry of Universities, whose objective is to contribute to the improvement of the quality of the higher education system through the evaluation, certification, and accreditation of teaching, teaching staff and institutions.

Students also participate in the evaluation of the contents and faculty teaching the subjects, as an internal evaluation of each Faculty. At the end of each term, students receive an e-mail where they can access the teaching survey to evaluate both the faculty and the subject in general. These results are then reported to the departments for consideration in future courses.

Conclusion

The regular monitoring and review of the programme ensures that it is appropriate to create a supportive and effective learning environment for students. It includes the evaluation of:

- The content of the programme that ensures that it is up to date;
- The changing needs of society;
- The workload, progression and completion of students;

- The effectiveness of student assessment procedures;
- The expectations, needs and satisfaction of the students in relation to the program;
- The learning environment and support services and their suitability for the purpose of the programme.

With the certification procedure, the programme is reviewed and the information collected will be used to adapt deficiencies and ensure that all standards are up to date.

As already mentioned in chapter 2.4, the expert group recommends installing a fixed option for student feedback within the platform. Revised programme specifications are published.

The standard is fulfilled.

2.10. Cyclical external quality assurance

ESG Standard 1.10: Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.

Findings

According to the self-evaluation reports, the participating HEIs conduct external quality assurance procedures in accordance with the internal quality assurance regulations. Since the HEIs are not obliged to go through external accreditation procedures, the current international certification procedure by ACQUIN is conducted voluntarily as part of the MENTORme project.

All participating HEIs are accredited by relevant national accreditation bodies to provide their education services at national level. Both kinds of external evaluation are planned as ongoing routines.

Conclusion

The assessed programme complies with the requirements of cyclical external quality assurance.

The standard is fulfilled.

3. Recommendations to the accreditation committee of ACQUIN

3.1. Assessment of the implementation following the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (ESG) as amended:

Standard 1.1 Policy for quality assurance: Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders

The standard is **fulfilled**.

Standard 1.2 Design and approval of programmes: Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

The standard is **not fulfilled**.

Standard 1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment: Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.

The standard is **fulfilled**.

Standard 1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification: Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.

The standard is **fulfilled**.

Standard 1.5 Teaching staff: Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.

The standard is **fulfilled**.

Standard 1.6 Learning resources and student support: Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.

The standard is **fulfilled**.

Standard 1.7 Information management: Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use the relevant data relevant to the successful conduct of studies and other activities.

The standard is **fulfilled**.

Standard 1.8 Public information: Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible.

The standard is **fulfilled**.

Standard 1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes: Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.

The standard is **fulfilled**.

Standard 1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance: Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.

The standard is **fulfilled**.

3.2. Certification recommendation

The expert group recommends the certification of the training programmes with **one condition** and **nine recommendations.**

Condition

- The learning outcomes must be defined in reference to the applicable competence framework.

Recommendations

1. The course syllabi should be presented in a way that reflects the student learning path.

2. The platform should offer an introduction video for better orientation.

3. Each module in the platform should provide information concerning the topic, learning objectives and outcomes.

4. The platform should implement a feedback function.

5. The platform developers should implement a technical solution to access PowerPoint presentations within the platform, so the users do not have to download the files first.

6. The expert group recommends considering further methods of assessment.

7. Universities should provide students with a document explaining the badges gained during the programme.

8. In the further development of the training materials the following aspects should be taken into consideration:
   - include aspects of democracy and social inclusion in the further development of the Citizenship Competence and offer practical tips on how people can respect diversity,
   - emphasize the aspect of social inclusion as well as cultural diversity in the Cultural Awareness Competence (practical examples, cases studies),
   - since the Personal, Social and Learning to Learn Competence seems quite comprehensive, it might be worth considering splitting it into two parts; for better transparency the referenced literature should clearly state mandatory vs. compulsory reads; finally, the first run-through should be used to discuss whether a more dynamic approach could be used in this competence.
9. The programme should include a general guideline for trainers in the mentorship training.

4. Decision of the ACQUIN Accreditation Commission

4.1. Certification Decision

Based on the evaluation report of the expert group, on 20th of June, 2022 the Accreditation Commission of ACQUIN takes the following decisions unanimously:

The Erasmus+ "MENTORme" Project training programme "Mentorship Training for Higher Education Students" is certified with the following condition and recommendations:

Conditions

- **The learning outcomes must be defined in reference to the applicable competence framework.**

Recommendations

- The course syllabi should be presented in a way that reflects the student learning path.
- The platform should offer an introduction video for better orientation.
- Each module in the platform should provide information concerning the topic, learning objectives and outcomes.
- The platform should implement a feedback function.
- The platform developers should implement a technical solution to access PowerPoint presentations within the platform, so the users do not have to download the files first.
- The expert group recommends considering further methods of assessment.
- Universities should provide students with a document explaining the badges gained during the programme.
- In the further development of the training materials the following aspects should be taken into consideration:
  - o include aspects of democracy and social inclusion in the further development of the Citizenship Competence and offer practical tips on how people can respect diversity,
  - o emphasize the aspect of social inclusion as well as cultural diversity in the Cultural Awareness Competence (practical examples, cases studies),
  - o since the Personal, Social and Learning to Learn Competence seems quite comprehensive, it might be worth considering splitting it into two parts; for better transparency the referenced literature should clearly state mandatory vs. compulsory reads; finally, the first run-through should be used to discuss whether a more dynamic approach could be used in this competence.
- The programme should include a general guideline for trainers in the mentorship training.

The certification is valid until 30th of June 2023.

The project partners must submit documents that prove the fulfilment of the conditions by 30th of March 2023. If the Accreditation Commission comes to the conclusion that the conditions are fulfilled, the accreditation will be extended until 30th of September

2027. If the project partners fail to prove the fulfilment of the conditions in due time, the certification will not be extended.

The certification procedure may be suspended for up to 18 months upon request from the project partners, with the expectation that the project partners will remedy the deficiencies within the given time frame. This statement must be submitted until 11 August 2022.

4.2. Fulfilment of conditions

The Społeczna Akademia Nauk as Coordinator of the Erasmus+ Project "MENTORme" has submitted the necessary documents for the fulfilment of the conditions in due time. The Accreditation Commission of ACQUIN decided on its meeting on 13 March 2022:

The conditions of the Erasmus+ "MENTORme" Project training programme "Mentorship Training for Higher Education Students" to be offered at the University of Valladolid (Spain), Społeczna Akademia Nauk (Poland) and University of Central Lancashire (Cyprus) are fulfilled. The accreditation period is extended until 30 September 2027.