



AGENTUR FÜR
QUALITÄTSSICHERUNG DURCH
AKKREDITIERUNG VON
STUDIENGÄNGEN E.V.

FINAL REPORT

EUROPEAN JOINT MASTER OF BUSI- NESS ADMINISTRATION AI FOR BUSI- NESS TRANSFORMATION (MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRA- TION)

PROCEDURE UNDER THE EUROPEAN APPROACH

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences (Finland)

University of Seville (Spain)

Management Centre Innsbruck (Austria)

Technical University of Košice (Slovakia)

August 2024

Assessment following the European Approach
for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes



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**DECISION OF THE AQAS STANDING COMMISSION
ON THE STUDY PROGRAMME**

“EUROPEAN JOINT MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION AI FOR BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION” (MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION)

OFFERED BY THE

ULYSSEUS EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

FORMED BY

- **HAAGA-HELIA UNIVERSITY FOR APPLIED SCIENCES (FINLAND)**
- **UNIVERSITY OF SEVILLE (SPAIN)**
- **MANAGEMENT CENTRE INNSBRUCK (AUSTRIA), AND**
- **TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF KOŠICE (SLOVAKIA)**

Based on the report of the expert panel, and the discussions of the AQAS Standing Commission 22nd meeting on 26 August 2024, the AQAS Standing Commission decides:

1. The study programme **“European Joint Master of Business Administration AI for Business Transformation” (Master of Business Administration)** jointly offered by **Haaga-Helia University for Applied Sciences (Finland), together with University of Seville (Spain), Management Centre Innsbruck (Austria), and Technical University of Košice (Slovakia)** is accredited according to the Standards defined in the European Approach for Quality Assurance for Joint Programmes.

The accreditation is conditional.

The study programme essentially complies with the requirements defined by the criteria and thus the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) in their current version. The required adjustments can be implemented within a time period of twelve months.

2. The conditions have to be fulfilled. The fulfilment of the conditions has to be documented and reported to AQAS no later than **30 September 2025**. The confirmation of the conditions might include a physical site visit within the time period of twelve months.
3. The accreditation is given for the period of **six years** and is valid until **30 September 2030**.

Conditions:

1. The implications of legislation on the use of artificial intelligence (e.g., the AI Act) must be adequately represented in the curriculum, e.g., in the course on digital ethics.
2. The dissemination strategy of the ULYSSEUS consortium has to be adjusted to provide potential students with the following information on:
 - a. the graduation profile of the programme,
 - b. the central theme of the programme by explaining transparently the intersection of the modules, and
 - c. possible organizational challenges that students might face, e.g., housing situation at some partners in the consortium.

The following **recommendations** are given for further improvement of the programme:

1. It is recommended to create a higher visibility between the intended learning outcomes on the programme level and ULYSSEUS alliances' key goals.
2. To allow students to have a joint understanding at an earlier stage, it is recommended placing the course on digital ethics earlier in the sequence of the programme.
3. Generative AI as the main topic in the upcoming years of the discipline should be structurally implemented in the curriculum. It is suggested starting as an elective and then embedding the topic as a compulsory element.
4. It is recommended to carry out a careful monitoring of the first cohorts' background and the results of the entry exams to align with the admission requirements, if needed.
5. It is recommended that strategic industry participation in relevant committees should be integrated to enable the academic steering committee to act upon further developments in the discipline.

With regard to the reasons for this decision the Standing Commission refers to the attached assessment report.

**EXPERTS' REPORT ON THE ACCREDITATION
ON THE STUDY PROGRAMME**

- **“EUROPEAN JOINT MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION AI FOR BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION” (MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION)**

OFFERED BY

**HAAGA-HELIA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES (FINLAND),
UNIVERSITY OF SEVILLE (SPAIN), MANAGEMENT CENTRE INNSBRUCK
(AUSTRIA), AND TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF KOŠICE (SLOVAKIA)**

IN COOPERATION WITH

UNIVERSITY OF GENOVA (ITALY), AND UNIVERSITÉ CÔTE D'AZUR (FRANCE)

Date of site visit: 15 – 17 April 2024

Panel of experts:

Prof. Dr. Alex Rayón Jerez	Former Vice-Rector for International Relations and Digital Transformation /Director of Big Data and Business Intelligence at University of Deusto (Spain)
Prof. Dr. Igor Farkas	Comenius University Bratislava. Centre for Cognitive Science, Department of Applied Informatics, Faculty of Mathematics, Physics and Informatics (Slovakia),
Konsta Rönkkö	Chief Technology Officer at IBM Finland (Labour market representative),
Luft Kettenbeil	Master student (Applied Data Science) at University of Göttingen (Student representative)
Coordinator: Patrick Heinzer	AQAS e.V., Germany

I. Preamble

The Haaga-Helia University for Applied Sciences (Finland), together with University of Seville (Spain), Management Centre Innsbruck (Austria), and Technical University of Košice (Slovakia), and in cooperation with University of Genova (Italy), and Université Côte d'Azur (France), is applying for the accreditation of the study programme “European Joint Master of Business Administration AI for Business Transformation” leading to the joint degree of “Master of Business Administration”.

This final report by the panel of experts is based on the consortium’s written application documents and the results of the site visit held in Helsinki. In particular, the descriptive parts of the experts’ report refer to the submitted Self Evaluation Report.

AQAS – Agency for Quality Assurance through Accreditation of Study Programmes – is an independent non-profit organisation supported by more than 90 universities, universities of applied sciences and academic associations. Since 2002, the agency has been recognised by the German Accreditation Council (GAC). It is, therefore, a notified body for the accreditation of higher education institutions and programmes in Germany.

AQAS is a full member of ENQA and also listed in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) which confirms that our procedures comply with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), on which all Bologna countries agreed as a basis for internal and external quality assurance.

AQAS is an institution founded by and working for higher education institutions and academic associations. The agency is devoted to quality assurance and quality development of academic studies and higher education institutions’ teaching. In line with AQAS’ mission statement, the official bodies in Germany and Europe (GAC and EQAR) approved that the activities of AQAS in accreditation are neither limited to specific academic disciplines or degrees nor a particular type of higher education institution.

II. Assessment procedure

This report is the result of the external review of the master’s programme in “European Joint Master of Business Administration AI for Business Transformation” (UlyssusAI) (MBA) Haaga-Helia University for Applied Sciences (Finland), together with University of Seville (Spain), Management Centre Innsbruck (Austria), and Technical University of Košice (Slovakia), and in cooperation with University of Genova (Italy), and Université Côte d'Azur (France)

1. Criteria

The study programme is reviewed in accordance with the criteria of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes, which was agreed with the Ministers of the European Higher Education Area in May 2015.

2. Approach and methodology

Initialization of the procedure

In July 2023, the Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences mandated AQAS to implement the accreditation procedure using the European Approach. For this purpose, the consortium produced a self-evaluation report (SER) describing the programme in its entirety; this report was submitted in October 2023, together with the necessary documents, the relevant appendices on the study programme.

AQAS analysed the self-evaluation report for completeness, comprehensibility, and transparency. The accreditation procedure was formally initialised at the meeting of the AQAS Standing Commission in December 2023.

The final version of the self-evaluation report was submitted in February 2024.

Nomination of the panel of experts

The composition of the panel of experts follows the stakeholder principle and the requirements described in the European Approach. As a result, representatives from the relevant discipline(s), the labour market and the student body are involved. In addition, AQAS follows the Principles for the Selection of Experts of the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA).

The AQAS Standing Commission nominated the panel of experts in March 2024. AQAS informed the consortium about the members of the panel of experts, and the consortium did not express any concerns about the composition of the panel.

Preparation of the site visit

Prior to the site visit, the experts reviewed the self-evaluation report and submitted a short preliminary statement containing outstanding issues and any potential need for additional information. AQAS forwarded these preliminary statements to the consortium and the members of the panel in order to increase transparency of the process and the upcoming discussions during the site visit.

Site visit

Following a review of the self-evaluation report, the site visit was conducted from 15-17 April 2024 at the campus of Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences in Helsinki, Finland. During the site visit, the experts held separate discussions to interview various stakeholders, e.g. the university management, programme directors, teaching staff and non-academic staff from the consortium, as well as students. The site visit ended with a presentation of the preliminary results obtained by the expert group to the representatives of the universities.

Preparation of the experts' report

After the site visit, the panel of experts prepared the following report assessing the fulfilment of the criteria set out in the European Approach for Quality Assurance for Joint Programmes. The report included a recommendation to the AQAS Standing Commission. The report was sent to the universities for comment.

Decision

The experts' report, together with the consortium's comments, is the basis for the AQAS Standing Commission's decision on the accreditation of the programme. Based on these two documents, the Standing Commission took its decision on accreditation in August 2024. AQAS forwarded the decision to the universities, and published the report on its website as well as the DEQAR database.

III. General information

III.1 Introduction

UlysseusAI stands as a joint two-year Master's programme, encompassing a total of 120 ECTS credits. Coordinated jointly by Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences (HH) and offered in conjunction with several institutions within the Ulysseus European University Alliance, including the Management Center Innsbruck (MCI), the Technical University of Košice (TUKE), Université Côte d'Azur (UniCA), University of Genova

(UniGe), and University of Seville (USE), it is stated that this programme represents a significant cooperative effort.

The consortium consists of a mix of comprehensive universities (University of Seville, Université Côte d’Azur, and University of Genova), a technical university (Technical University of Košice), and universities of Applied Sciences (Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences and Management Center Innsbruck).

As stated in the self-evaluation report, while degrees are conferred by three institutions – HH, MCI, and USE – the remaining partners play an essential role in shaping the programme. It is stated that their contributions encompass collaborative design, facilitating student mobility, and actively participating in the delivery of studies. Following the SER, UlysseusAI furnishes students with advanced expertise in applying artificial intelligence to complex business scenarios per this interdisciplinary approach.

III.2 Basic information

Full name of the programme	European Joint Master of Master of Business Administration AI for Business Transformation
EQF level	7 (Master’s Degree)
Degrees awarded	Master of Business Administration
Number of ECTS points	120 ECTS
ISCED field(s) of study	/

IV. Assessment of the study programme

1. Eligibility

1.1 Status

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

Description

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences (Finland) was established in 2007 following the merger of Haaga Institute and Helia Business Polytechnic. Haaga Institute was Finland's first University of Applied Sciences (UAS), earning this status in 1991, followed by Helia in 1992. It is stated that currently, Haaga-Helia is among the 22 Universities of Applied Sciences in Finland, a list available on the Ministry of Culture and Education's website. It has been granted by the Ministry of Education and Culture the authority to confer higher education degrees on EQF levels 6 and 7. Notably, a UAS degree provides equivalent eligibility for government positions and further studies as a degree of the same level from a traditional research university.

The evidence provided for the **Management Center Innsbruck (Austria)** includes a confirmation by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy about the institution's legal status, giving information that universities of applied sciences in Austria are predominantly structured under private law and receive accreditation from AQ Austria. The legal framework governing these programmes is outlined in the University of Applied Sciences Studies Act (Fachhochschul-Studiengesetz) with subsequent amendments. This framework also outlines that MCI may carry out joint programmes (§ 3a and 3b). Within the universities of applied sciences, both Bachelor's and Master's degrees are conferred, holding equal standing with degrees granted by traditional universities. The MCI Management Center Innsbruck is among the accredited UAS, offering programmes that are on par with those provided by universities.

For the **University of Seville (Spain)**, a confirmation on the legal status of the university and the official status decree have been submitted. Both documents confirm the eligibility for collaborative programmes with higher education institutions abroad.

For the **Technical University of Košice (Slovakia)**, the statute of TUKE confirms that TUKE is a public university under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic, has the legal authority to act in its own name, and is represented by its Rector and other designated officials. Additionally, this document highlights TUKE's roles in providing higher education, conducting research, and engaging in expert and entrepreneurial activities, all governed by relevant laws and internal regulations.

The consortium has submitted evidence in the annexes regarding the eligibility to carry out joint programmes. This includes information on the following points:

In Finland, universities of applied sciences operate under the University of Applied Sciences Act 932/2014. Degree provisions, objectives, study structures, and other criteria are issued by government decree 1129/2014. Master degrees in Finnish universities of applied sciences are typically based on a 90 ECTS scope, but joint degrees of 120 ECTS can be awarded for international cooperation, subject to institutional approval.

In Austria, MCI primarily operates under the University of Applied Sciences Act, which includes a provision allowing for the establishment of joint degrees. MCI holds institutional accreditation and undergoes regular accreditation processes for new degree programmes within the University of Applied Sciences framework.

In Spain, the accreditation of joint degrees is governed by the Royal Decree 822/2021, which outlines the official University degree ordinance. The Ministry of Education approved the regulation for issuing joint diplomas in Spain in August 2010 (RD 1002/2010) and requires an agreement signed by the participating institutions.

In Slovakia, the accreditation of joint degrees is regulated by the Act on Higher Education Act No 131/2002, specifically under Article 54, which pertains to Joint Study Programmes.

According to the self-evaluation report, the General Roadmap for accrediting and granting the joint degree outlines key steps for the consortium partners within the Ulyseus European University alliance. These partners esteemed Higher Education Institutions in their respective nations all possess applicable legal frameworks enabling their participation in a joint programme.

Experts' evaluation

The experts testify that the documentation provided and the follow-up discussion during the site visit clearly demonstrate full compliance with the standard. The analysis of the annexes shows full institutional legitimacy and compliance within the respective national frameworks. All partners in the consortium are officially recognised as higher education institutions by the relevant authorities.

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences (Finland) complies with the University of Applied Sciences Act 932/2014 and government decree 1129/2014, confirming its authority to award joint degrees up to 120 ECTS.

The Management Center Innsbruck (Austria) adheres to the University of Applied Sciences Studies Act (Fachhochschul-Studiengesetz), confirming its legal status and ability to conduct joint programmes.

The University of Seville (Spain) complies with Royal Decree 822/2021 and RD 1002/2010, verifying its eligibility for collaborative programmes. The Technical University of Košice (Slovakia) meets the requirements of the Act on Higher Education Act No 131/2002, specifically Article 54 regarding Joint Study Programmes.

The consortium has provided comprehensive evidence regarding the eligibility to carry out joint programmes, including compliance with relevant legal frameworks in France and Italy. The self-evaluation report outlines a clear roadmap for accrediting and granting the joint degree within the Ulysseus European University alliance.

The institutions involved are recognised by their national authorities and possess the legal framework to participate in and award joint degrees, ensuring full compliance and legitimacy.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

1.2 Joint design and delivery

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

Description

Joint design framework

According to the self-evaluation report, the UlysseusAI programme has been collaboratively designed by the Ulysseus partner universities, their students, and associated partners, with Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences providing coordination.

The documentation includes evidence that the design process encompassed several key steps, including the creation of the “Handbook for Co-creation, Design Thinking and Flexible Curricula in Ulysseus Degrees”, the proposal for the joint Master’s degree in adherence to the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes, and the European Approach Group.

For instance, the handbook outlines essential elements of Ulysseus joint degrees and introduces methods to engage students and associated partners in the co-creation process. According to the documentation submitted, this handbook is a crucial guide in the collaborative design process.

The Co-creation Group is entrusted with shaping the academic content of the degree. This included defining learning outcomes, devising the study program, and establishing student assessment protocols. The group adhered to the guidelines outlined in the Ulysseus Co-creation Handbook. Its members included representatives from academic experts, students, and selected associated partners. According to the documentation submitted, this group played a pivotal role in defining the academic framework of the programme.

Co-creation process

As outlined in the SER, the degree's design process involved two key groups: the Co-creation and European Approach (EA) groups. The Co-creation group focused on curriculum, learning, and assessment, while the EA group handled administrative preparations for quality assurance.

The EA group addressed eligibility, admission, recognition, support, resources, transparency, and documentation, compiling necessary Annex documentation per the SER. The Co-creation group, concentrated on Learning Outcomes, Joint Study Programme, and Learning, Teaching, and Assessment.

The documentation states that the co-creation process began with an online brainstorming meeting in December 2022, followed by contributions from partner. A Teams group in Ulysseus Teams was established for document organization and contributions. From December 2022 to February 2023, partners compiled an extensive list of AI courses and submitted reflections on future degree objectives via Padlet, following the SER's guidance.

The outcomes provided a foundation for the on-site co-creation event in Helsinki on 6-7 February 2023, attended by HH, MCI, USE, and TUKE representatives. Other partners contributed through the Teams group. As highlighted in the SER, experts, students, and partners collaborated to shape the curriculum.

The results included a draft curriculum structure, suggested learning outcomes, specializations, and a mobility plan. Participants also discussed degree objectives and future graduate professions.

From February to June 2023, curricular co-creation focused on aligning learning outcomes with the QF-EHEA framework and selecting suitable courses. This led to a streamlined course distribution plan for semesters 1-3. Coordinators were nominated in June.. Experts defined module-level learning outcomes, and course syllabus development followed the planned curriculum, in accordance with the SER. Throughout, the EA group worked on their SER sections online, utilizing Teams for communication. Meetings and task updates were recorded.

In May 2023, a specific EA task force was formed to handle admission criteria, application processes, and student selection, adhering to national regulations and the online portal www.studyinfo.fi. Experts from HH, MCI, and USE led this effort.

In September 2023, an online workshop finalized the curriculum, addressed admission and mobility, and established thesis process regulations. The co-creation process ended in late September with the completion of the SER and Annexes. Representatives from all Ulysseus institutions collaborated, and negotiations ensured a cohesive curriculum. Comments from Associated Partners were integrated throughout, emphasizing the SER's collaborative approach.

Joint structure for academic governance, internal quality assurance, administration, and financial management

According to the SER, for the implementation of UlysseusAI, a joint academic governance structure has been established, integrated with Ulysseus and local structures. This includes two joint academic committees and a joint Master's team.

1. Academic Steering Committee: According to the SER, this committee manages the joint Master's program. It comprises one local academic from each participating institution, two representatives of Ulysseus Associated Partners, and one student. Following the documentation submitted, this committee oversees various aspects, including curriculum changes, admission, evaluation, and scholarships.

2. Ulysseus Internal Quality Assurance Committee: According to the SER, this committee ensures internal quality assurance and proposes improvement strategies. It consists of academics from partner universities, representatives of associated partners, and students from the current programme edition. As detailed in the SER, this committee manages internal evaluation strategies and coordinates accreditation.

3. Joint Master's Team: According to the SER, located at the coordinating institution HH, this team handles executive management, communication, and administrative and financial tasks. Comprising the UlysseusAI Academic Coordinator, HH's administrative coordinator, and an Administrative Assistant, this team collaborates with Admission Services and supports the selection process.

According to the SER, during mobility periods, HH, as the coordinating institution, will take care of communicating student data to the other universities to ensure that all students benefit from services like student rooms, canteens, libraries, language courses, and other necessary elements of support. The process will comply with the regulations of the GDPR.

According to the SER, all students during the Master's studies will have health insurance and administrative help. Non-EU students will receive special support jointly by the coordinating institution and the other host Institutions to facilitate and speed up the visa procedure.

Distribution of roles among partner universities, students, and associated partners in UlysseusAI

A) Consortium universities

The programme's partner institutions are part of the Ulysseus European Universities Alliance, with the USE serving as the coordinator. HH acts as the coordinating institution for UlysseusAI, the consortium's second joint Master's degree programme. HH is responsible for obtaining European accreditation for the partner universities' joint programme.

Initially, HH will admit students, while MCI and USE will later accept degree-seeking students who were initially admitted to HH and subsequently enrol at MCI and USE in accordance with their respective institutional rules. TUKE will currently host UlysseusAI students on a mobility basis.

As the coordinator, HH is tasked with issuing the joint degree (diploma) and its accompanying diploma supplement, awarded jointly. HH is also responsible for the administrative and financial management of UlysseusAI. The partner universities are involved in various aspects, including joint academic governance, recognition, teaching and evaluation, the Master's thesis process, mobility, and internal quality assurance procedures. They also support students based on their participation mode, along with resources and assistance in promoting and disseminating the joint programme.

B) Students

According to the SER, Ulysseus students have actively shaped the joint programme by providing input during the curriculum design phase. They are explained to continue to play a role in academic governance through student representation in the Academic Steering Committee of UlysseusAI, and they will participate in internal quality assurance procedures in line with the protocols of the participating higher education institutions.

Moreover, they will be given the option to participate in peer-teaching and peer-assessment, voluntarily. UlysseusAI students will also have the opportunity to become members of both the student association of Ulysseus and that of Haaga-Helia.

C) Associated partners

According to the SER, the Ulysseus Associated Partners are central in shaping and executing the joint programme. Ulysseus currently boasts 114 associated partners, which include regional and local governments, specific companies, business confederations, student and citizen associations, NGOs, research centres, and think tanks. Each of these partners has committed to collaborate in Ulysseus activities as annexed to the SER.

It is said that Ulysseus Associated Partners will actively engage in academic governance and quality assurance structures, as well as contribute to teaching and training, with a notable emphasis on fostering innovation and entrepreneurship. They will also collaborate in the Master's thesis process, leveraging their expertise and networks, and participate in the culminating event, organised as a Capstone – Hackathon. Additionally, they will support students, including involvement in the career guidance programme.

Following the SER, the extent of involvement in these activities will be determined through negotiations with each partner to establish a pertinent contribution profile. The level of commitment from Associated Partners

may, therefore, vary based on their available resources and, for example, the specific requirements for corporate expertise at different stages of the degree delivery.

Experts' evaluation

The analysis of the annexes and the self-evaluation report provides clear evidence that the programme has been collaboratively designed and will be delivered jointly by all partner institutions.

The UlysseusAI programme was developed through the combined efforts of the Ulysseus partner universities, their students, and associated partners, with Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences coordinating the process. The design phase included several critical steps, such as creating the "Handbook for Co-creation, Design Thinking and Flexible Curricula in Ulysseus Degrees" and proposing the joint Master's degree, both adhering to the European standards for joint programmes.

The "Handbook for Co-creation, Design Thinking and Flexible Curricula in Ulysseus Degrees" is considered good practice by the panel of experts. It embodies a collaborative approach, involving all stakeholders, which ensures that the programmes are relevant and meet diverse needs. This inclusive process fosters ownership and commitment, crucial for the success of joint programmes. Furthermore, the handbook incorporates design thinking principles to create flexible and adaptive curricula. This ensures that the programmes remain innovative and responsive to changes in higher education, providing students with a contemporary and future-proof education. Finally, the handbook offers practical guidelines for developing joint programmes, serving as a valuable resource for institutions. By documenting best practices, it advances the field and encourages similar initiatives.

It has been explained that the collaborative process began with an online brainstorming and continued with contributions via online discussions. An on-site co-creation event in Helsinki further developed the curriculum structure, learning outcomes, specializations, and mobility plan. This process ensured active participation from all partner institutions in shaping the curriculum and programme objectives. The experts believe that this sequence demonstrates clearly the joint character of the UlysseusAI programme.

The documentation shows that a joint academic governance structure has been established, including the Academic Steering Committee, the Ulysseus Internal Quality Assurance Committee, and the Joint Master's Team. These committees, with representatives from all partner institutions, oversee curriculum management, admissions, evaluation, and internal quality assurance.

From the expert's points of view, the roles among partner universities, students, and associated partners are well-distributed, ensuring comprehensive participation in academic governance, teaching, evaluation, the Master's thesis process, and internal quality assurance. This inclusive approach fosters innovation and entrepreneurship, enhancing the programme's overall quality and relevance.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

1.3 Cooperation agreement

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

- Denomination of the degree(s) awarded in the programme
- Coordination and responsibilities of the partners involved regarding management and financial organisation (including funding, sharing of costs and income etc.)

- Admission and selection procedures for students
- Mobility of students and teachers
- Examination regulations, student assessment methods, recognition of credits and degree awarding procedures in the consortium.

Description

The documentation provided included the Ulysseus Consortium Agreement, which is currently in effect, as an initial reference point. Additionally, the partner universities are interconnected through the Erasmus+ programme. Students, academics, and staff mobility is already operational within the Ulysseus partnership. A specific Cooperation Agreement for UlysseusAI is appended to this SER.

The consortium agreement includes the following main points:

- **Legal framework:**

It is outlined that all six Ulysseus partners collectively develop UlysseusAI. However, the degree will only be granted by the three Ulysseus higher education institutions in Finland (HH), Austria (MCI), and Spain (USE). These three countries adhere to the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes. After accreditation, UlysseusAI will be offered jointly by all six partners, but HH, MCI, and USE will confer the degree itself.

- **Management of the programme:**

The cooperation agreement defines the key roles and responsibilities of coordinating and partnering institutions in the UlysseusAI programme. The coordinating institution takes the lead in administrative, legal, and financial matters and manages accreditation processes. Partner institutions are tasked with programme management, providing essential information, and nominating committee representatives.

The Academic Steering Committee, formed by local academics and representatives, oversees programme implementation. The article underscores the collaborative nature of UlysseusAI, involving both institutions and students in various aspects of the programme's governance, admission, teaching, and evaluation processes. Students are encouraged to participate voluntarily in peer teaching and assessment.

- **Consortium structure:**

The consortium agreement elaborates on the consortium structure and its various committees:

- **Academic Steering Committee:** This committee, led by the Academic Coordinator, consists of local academics, Ulysseus partner representatives, and a student. It manages programme implementation, approves student admissions, curriculum changes, and coordinates with the internal QA Committee.
- **UlysseusAI Selection Jury:** Working alongside Admission Services, this Jury, composed of academics and associated partners, oversees the application and admission process. It also collaborates with the Academic Recognition Board to promote academic recognition.
- **UlysseusAI Internal Quality Assurance Committee:** Comprising academics, associated partners' representatives, and current students, this committee ensures programme quality and implements evaluation strategies. It liaises with internal monitoring bodies and the QA Management unit.
- **UlysseusAI Joint Master's Secretariat:** Located at HH, this unit, led by the Academic Coordinator and supported by administrative staff, manages executive tasks, communication with partners,

and handles administrative and financial matters. It collaborates with local administrative and financial staff across partner institutions.

Furthermore, it emphasises the integrated approach of UlysseusAI, involving partner institutions and students. It outlines their roles in academic governance, admission and recognition, teaching and evaluation, thesis process, mobility, and internal quality assurance. Students are encouraged to engage in peer-teaching and assessment voluntarily. The coordinating institution, HH, leads in accrediting the program, supported by the partner institutions. The joint degree is issued by HH, MCI, and USE, with HH managing administrative and financial aspects through the Master's Secretariat. All partner institutions actively contribute to the program's governance and support student success. Ulysseus students, having participated in the programme's creation, continue to engage in academic governance and internal QA procedures and have the option to partake in peer-teaching and assessment.

- **Degree programme:**

The consortium agreement defines the programme's structure (two year's programme with 120 ECTS) indicating the field of expertise contributed by each partner:

1. **AI for Business – General**; at HH
2. **AI for Business – Advanced**; at MCI
3. **AI Methods**; at TUKE (first specialization module option)
4. **Transdisciplinary AI for Business**; at USE (second specialization module option)
5. **Transversal studies**; organised jointly
6. **Master's Thesis**; coordinated by HH with the cooperation of partners

- **Student administration:**

The consortium's agreement includes a fixed definition of the joint student application, selection, and admission procedures, joint academic recognition, enrolment and mobility, joint student assessment, student records, degree awarding institutions and degree, services available for students, student rights and responsibilities, and participation costs and other financial matters.

- **Staff:**

Based on documentation the programme is expected to draw expertise from:

1. Academic staff and researchers from Ulysseus partner institutions, well-versed in research, innovation, and transversal skill development within the program's interdisciplinary fields.
2. Ulysseus associated partners, representing public administrations, companies, technological centers, and citizen's associations, who contribute real-world insights and participate in teaching and assessment activities.
3. Invited experts from academia, research institutions, and public/private sectors, bringing additional research, innovation, and industry experience to the teaching teams.
4. UlysseusAI students have the option to engage voluntarily in peer-to-peer teaching and learning activities.

- **Quality assurance:**

According to the consortium agreement, UlysseusAI will establish a joint transnational Internal Quality Assurance System in accordance with European Higher Education Area standards. This system, outlined in the online Internal QA Handbook, will guide data collection, analysis, and enhancement to drive continuous programme improvement, including surveys targeting students, alumni, staff, and external stakeholders for

comprehensive feedback on programme design and teaching methods. These surveys will be administered through the Digital Platform, aligning with the EUROGRADUATE survey for graduate outcome assessment.

- **The dissemination of the programme:**

It is defined that the UlysseusAI programme will receive support for dissemination from the Ulysseus Dissemination Unit and communication departments of partner institutions. The programme's website, hosted on the Ulysseus Digital Platform, will serve as a comprehensive resource hub for academic content and events.

Furthermore, a comprehensive "Framework Agreement for Academic Recognition in Ulysseus" is already endorsed and is included in the documentation. This agreement encompasses provisions for the automatic recognition of qualifications and the recognition of periods spent abroad, prior learning, and work experience. It also establishes the "Ulysseus Academic Recognition Board," which will oversee coordination with the academic bodies responsible for recognition at each Ulysseus partner university, to promote flexible and automatic academic recognition within the Ulysseus network.

Experts' evaluation

After reviewing the evidence, it can be said that the current Ulysseus Consortium Agreement, along with the specific Cooperation Agreement for UlysseusAI, establishes a robust framework for collaboration among the partner institutions.

The Ulysseus Consortium Agreement, which is already in effect, forms a solid foundation for cooperation among the universities. This agreement is further strengthened by the Erasmus+ programme, which facilitates the mobility of students, academics, and staff within the Ulysseus network, ensuring all degree-awarding partners and TUKE are integrated into the joint degree programme.

The Cooperation Agreement for UlysseusAI, included in the self-evaluation report, provides comprehensive details regarding the legal framework, management structure, roles of consortium members, programme specifics, student administration, staff contributions, quality assurance measures, and dissemination strategies. This agreement will undergo an approval process at all partner institutions before the programme begins, with minor adjustments expected.

All six Ulysseus partners are involved in developing the UlysseusAI programme, though the degree will be awarded only some universities of the consortium.

The agreement clearly delineates roles and responsibilities. Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences (HH) will manage administrative, legal, and financial duties and oversee the accreditation process. Partner institutions are responsible for various aspects of programme management, providing essential information, and nominating representatives to various committees. The Academic Steering Committee, composed of local academics, partner representatives, and a student, will oversee the implementation of the programme, admissions, and curriculum adjustments.

The consortium structure, detailed in the agreement, includes several key committees: the Academic Steering Committee, which manages programme implementation and coordinates closely with the internal QA Committee; the UlysseusAI Selection Committee, which oversees application and admission processes and collaborates with the Academic Recognition Board; the UlysseusAI Internal Quality Assurance Committee, which ensures programme quality and implements evaluation strategies; and the UlysseusAI Joint Master's Secretariat, based at HH, which manages executive tasks, communication with partners, and handles administrative and financial matters.

The programme structure spans two years and 120 ECTS credits, encompassing general and advanced AI courses, specialization modules at TUKE and USE, transversal studies, and a Master's thesis coordinated by

HH. The agreement specifies joint procedures for student application, selection, and admission, academic recognition, enrolment, mobility, assessment, records, degree awarding, services, student rights and responsibilities, and financial matters.

Expertise for the programme will be drawn from academic staff and researchers at Ulysseus partner institutions, associated partners, and invited experts. Additionally, UlysseusAI students will have opportunities for peer-to-peer teaching and learning activities. A joint transnational Internal Quality Assurance System, as detailed in the Internal QA Handbook, will ensure continuous programme improvement through comprehensive feedback mechanisms aligned with EHEA standards.

Support for disseminating the UlysseusAI programme will come from the Ulysseus Dissemination Unit and communication departments of partner institutions, with a dedicated website on the Ulysseus Digital Platform serving as a central resource hub.

Overall, the experts testify that the well-defined agreements and collaborative structures ensure that the UlysseusAI programme is jointly offered, with active participation from all cooperating institutions in both design and delivery, guaranteeing a cohesive and high-quality joint degree programme.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

2. Learning outcomes

2.1 Level

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).

Description

The consortium's documentation includes annexes that outline the intended learning outcomes of this curriculum in regard to the European Qualifications Framework of Lifelong Learning (EQF), second cycle. According to the SER, the master's programme aims at level 7 following the European Qualifications Framework of Lifelong Learning (EQF).

The annex indicates that the consortium links the intended learning outcomes on the programme level with the five levels of a second cycle qualification in the EQF and links those with the respective modules in the curriculum. An overview of this can be shown as follows:

	MODULES						QF-EHEA LEARNING OUTCOMES				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5
1. Identify and assess potential data sources and operation models for business development to foster management support and to create business value.	x	x	x	x			x	x			x
2. Understand data and AI governance principles and management of AI development and implementation processes from the organization's executive (C-level) point of view.		x		x				x	x	x	
3. Implement the whole process from large and complex raw data to visualizations and/or models, including the presentation of results in appropriate AI-driven user interfaces.		x	x					x	x		x
4. Understand the mathematical and statistical concepts behind the building and evaluation of AI models.	x	x	x		x				x	x	
5. Demonstrate practical experience to use AI tools, platforms and frameworks for building AI based solutions by using AI programming and querying languages.		x	x	x			x	x			x
6. Apply, evaluate, design and co-create AI products and services that are trustworthy, ethical and comply with European rules and regulations as well as social requirements.		x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	
7. Integrate AI into business and public sector strategies and know how to assess the impact and ROI of AI initiatives.		x	x	x				x		x	
8. Demonstrate skills in project management, team leadership and collaboration to lead AI change projects (project and portfolio management, project controlling).	x	x	x	x	x	x		x			x

Experts' evaluation

During the site visit, the discussions focused on how the UlysseusAI programme's intended learning outcomes align with the European Qualifications Framework of Lifelong Learning (EQF) at level 7, second cycle. The consortium's documentation, including detailed annexes, provided a structured overview of this alignment, demonstrating a strong commitment to meeting European educational standards.

The self-evaluation report (SER) outlines the master's programme's aim to adhere to EQF level 7 standards. The annexes further elaborate on how the programme's intended learning outcomes (ILOs) are linked to the five levels of a second cycle qualification in the EQF, ensuring that each outcome corresponds to specific modules within the curriculum. This alignment guarantees that students acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and competencies that meet EQF standards.

During the on-site discussions, the expert's panel explored how the programme's ILOs are systematically integrated into the curriculum. The consortium representatives highlighted that each ILO is carefully linked to corresponding modules, providing a coherent learning path for students. This approach ensures compliance with the EQF and guarantees that the learning outcomes are both practically and academically relevant.

The discussions underscored several key points. The alignment with EQF level 7 was thoroughly examined, focusing on the depth of knowledge, advanced skills, and competencies expected at this level. The documentation clearly illustrates this alignment, showcasing the programme's dedication to European standards. The consortium representatives detailed the process of mapping ILOs to specific modules, ensuring that each module contributes directly to achieving the overall programme outcomes and providing students with a comprehensive and integrated learning experience.

The expert's panel also discussed the importance of a structured learning path that guides students through progressively advanced stages of learning. The annexes provide an overview of how the curriculum is designed to facilitate this progression, ensuring that students systematically build on their knowledge and skills.

Furthermore, the relevance of the learning outcomes to the current and future needs of the industry and society was a critical discussion point. The consortium emphasized that the programme is designed to equip students with practical and theoretical expertise, preparing them for leadership roles in AI and related fields. However, specific points for the enhancement of the programme are mentioned further below (see Chapter 3.1).

In conclusion, the on-site discussions confirmed that the UlysseusAI programme's intended learning outcomes are effectively aligned with EQF level 7. The detailed documentation and mapping of ILOs to modules ensure that the curriculum is coherent, comprehensive, and meets high educational standards. This alignment not only enhances the credibility of the programme but also ensures that graduates are well-prepared for professional and academic challenges in the European and global context.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

2.2 Disciplinary field

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

Description

The self-evaluation report elaborates that the curriculum is built on three key goals which form an essential part of the curriculum. The key goals read as follows:

KG 1 Ethical AI Principles: This key goal highlights the crucial need to follow ethical guidelines when employing AI in business. It encompasses key principles such as transparency, fairness, accountability, and non-discrimination. It is imperative that AI systems are constructed and put into operation with these principles as a foundation.

Courses include, for example, the following contents in Ethical AI:

- ethical approaches to designing and implementing AI solutions,
- ethical organizational development,
- ethical considerations in automation, privacy and data security, labor impact and social responsibility,
- ethical and legal considerations in the collection and use of marketing data.

KG 2 Responsible Governance:

Following the SER, this key goal advocates for the implementation of robust governance frameworks and mechanisms to oversee and uphold accountability in AI usage. It emphasizes the importance of taking proactive steps to mitigate potential biases, unintended consequences, and ethical quandaries that may emerge in the application of AI. This approach ensures a responsible and well-regulated use of AI technologies.

Courses include, for example, the following contents in Responsible Governance:

- data and AI governance,
- central standards and regulations in the area of information security management and using data, bias, accountability, transparency and explainability,
- responsibility and ethical decision-making.

KG 3 Sustainability Integration:

Courses include, for example, the following contents in Sustainable Integration:

- smart system and machine learning,
- data economy: optimizing processes, developing businesses and automation,
- impact of AI innovations on the business ecosystem and vice versa,
- labour impact and social responsibility.

The self-evaluation report gives evidence on the rationale of the programme. It highlights that AI's impact on business is likened to the transformative effect of the internet. AI's key advantage lies in automating a wide range of mechanical and cognitive tasks. It serves as a tool for enhancing sales and global customer access, though it also brings risks like inequality and bias.

According to the European Commission (2020), 42% of businesses currently use AI, with projections of 70% adoption by 2030, according to McKinsey. However, leveraging AI is hindered by a lack of knowledge resources. The EU needs more skilled digital professionals proficient in both technical and business competencies. Equipping students with these skills can catalyse transformative solutions.

The integration of AI in business transformation is underrepresented in higher education in the EHEA. This gap is especially prominent in existing Erasmus Mundus Joint Master programmes. This calls for models like UlysseusAI, to offer a forward-looking, globally impactful degree.

UlysseusAI states that the programme stands out for its interdisciplinary approach, co-created using design thinking methodology. It combines academic and practical knowledge seamlessly, making it attractive to a diverse pool of applicants. The curriculum is student-centred, accommodating various levels of prior knowledge. This allows for specialised paths, catering to different backgrounds and interests.

To succeed in the evolving business landscape, students must understand AI technology and business dynamics and its broader impact on society. UlysseusAI aims to ensure that AI developed in the EU aligns with fairness, ethics, and human-centricity principles. This is in line with Europe's Digital Decade goals.

The co-creation team has identified three key goals guiding the curriculum's design, aligning with current EU priorities. These objectives emphasise fairness, ethical awareness, and human-centric principles in AI development.

Based on the key goals and the rationale given in the SER, the programme outlines the intended learning outcomes on the programme level as follows:

ILO1. Identify and assess potential data sources and operation models for business development to foster management support and to create business value.

ILO2. Understand data and AI governance principles and management of AI development and implementation processes from the organization's executive (C-level) point of view.

ILO3. Implement the whole process from large and complex raw data to visualizations and/or models, including the presentation of results in appropriate AI-driven user interfaces.

ILO4. Understand the mathematical and statistical concepts behind the building and evaluation of AI models.

ILO5. Demonstrate practical experience to use AI tools, platforms and frameworks for building AI based solutions by using AI programming and querying languages.

ILO6. Apply, evaluate, design and co-create AI products and services that are trustworthy, ethical and comply with European rules and regulations as well as social requirements.

ILO7. Integrate AI into business and public sector strategies and know how to assess the impact of AI initiatives.

ILO8. Demonstrate skills in project management, team leadership and collaboration to lead AI change projects (project and portfolio management, project controlling).

Experts' evaluation

The experts positively assess that the UlysseusAI programme's intended learning outcomes (ILOs) are comprehensively defined and align well with the rationale outlined in the self-evaluation report. Collectively, these ILOs ensure that graduates possess a robust blend of technical, managerial, and ethical competencies, preparing them for diverse roles in the AI field. They also ensure proficiency in handling datasets, developing visualizations, and presenting results through AI-driven user interfaces.

Moreover, the programme places significant emphasis on understanding the mathematical and statistical foundations of AI, as well as gaining practical experience with relevant tools, platforms, and programming languages. This hands-on experience is crucial for the practical application of theoretical concepts in real-world settings.

Importantly, the ILOs highlight the importance of designing and implementing AI solutions that are ethical, trustworthy, and compliant with European regulations. This focus ensures that graduates are not only skilled in AI technology but also aware of their responsibilities in creating socially responsible and legally compliant AI systems.

Furthermore, the ILOs prepare students to integrate AI into business and public sector strategies, assessing the impact of AI initiatives on organizational goals. They also develop essential skills in project management, team leadership, and collaboration, which are vital for leading AI projects and driving change within organizations.

While the intended learning outcomes comprehensively cover the programme's scope, it is recommended that these outcomes more explicitly reflect the ULYSSEUS alliance's key goals (**Finding 1**). During the on-site discussions, stakeholders emphasized the importance of aligning the programme's objectives with the broader mission of the ULYSSEUS alliance. It is believed that the incorporation of these strategic priorities will lead to a situation where the programme can further enhance its visibility and commitment to these critical areas. The alignment will attract prospective students, faculty, and industry partners who value a comprehensive, ethical, and sustainable approach to AI education, thereby enhancing the programme's overall impact and success.

The self-evaluation report elaborates that the curriculum is built on three key goals that form an essential part of the programme: Ethical AI Principles, Responsible Governance, and Sustainability Integration. These goals are designed to ensure that students gain comprehensive knowledge and skills relevant to their disciplinary fields.

From the expert's point of view the integration of AI in business transformation is underrepresented in higher education within the EHEA, particularly in existing Erasmus Mundus Joint Master programmes. This gap necessitates models like UlysseusAI to offer a forward-looking, globally impactful degree. UlysseusAI stands out for its interdisciplinary approach, co-created using design thinking methodology. It seamlessly combines academic and practical knowledge, making it attractive to a diverse pool of applicants. The curriculum is student-centred, accommodating various levels of prior knowledge, allowing for specialized paths tailored to different backgrounds and interests.

To succeed in the evolving business landscape, students must understand AI technology, business dynamics, and its broader societal impact. UlysseusAI aims to ensure that AI developed in the EU aligns with principles of fairness, ethics, and human-centricity, consistent with Europe's Digital Decade goals. The co-creation team has identified three key goals guiding the curriculum's design, aligning with current EU priorities. These objectives emphasize fairness, ethical awareness, and human-centric principles in AI development.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

2.3 Achievement

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

Description

According to the SER, it is stated that the curriculum ensures alignment between learning outcomes, teaching activities, and assessment procedures. Detailed programme information, student support, and course completion guidelines will be available through an online platform and a dedicated online Handbook for students. Additionally, teaching and learning resources will be accessible on the LMS Moodle platform.

The UlysseusAI Student's Handbook provides comprehensive information on programme context, objectives, workload, intended learning outcomes, course content, teaching methodology, assessment criteria, and other relevant details. It serves as a vital resource for students throughout their academic journey.

In addition, the documentation indicates that the curriculum's structure supports the students' learning process and the achievement of the intended learning outcomes on the programme level. The structure points out that each semester equals a module, while module 6 is marked as a transversal module throughout the programme. An overview has been submitted to the documentation:

- 1st semester (basic business and technical skills in AI, Module 1)
- 2nd semester (advanced business and technical skills in AI, Module 2)
- 3rd semester (specialization studies, Modules 3 or 4)
- 4th semester (Thesis, Module 6)
- Module 5 (transversal studies complements the core studies during semesters 1-4)

Experts' evaluation

The experts positively assess that the UlysseusAI programme's curriculum is meticulously structured to ensure alignment between learning outcomes, teaching activities, and assessment procedures. According to the self-evaluation report (SER), the programme information, student support, and course completion guidelines will be comprehensively available through an online platform and a dedicated online Handbook for students. Additionally, essential teaching and learning resources will be accessible on the LMS Moodle platform.

During the site visit, discussions with faculty and programme coordinators focused on how these alignment strategies are effectively integrated into the joint programme. The consortium emphasized the importance of cohesive and transparent communication among partner institutions to ensure consistent implementation of learning outcomes and assessment methods. This integration is facilitated through regular joint meetings and collaborative workshops where faculty from all institutions share best practices and synchronize their teaching methodologies.

The UlysseusAI Student's Handbook serves as a crucial resource for students, providing extensive information on the programme's context, objectives, workload, intended learning outcomes, course content, teaching methodology, assessment criteria, and other pertinent details. This handbook is designed to guide students throughout their academic journey, ensuring they have access to all necessary information to succeed in their studies.

The documentation also indicates that the curriculum's structure is designed to support students' learning processes and help them achieve the intended learning outcomes at the programme level. Each semester is

equated to a module, with the curriculum comprising a well-defined progression of modules. Specifically, the first semester focuses on basic business and technical skills in AI (Module 1), the second semester on advanced business and technical skills in AI (Module 2), the third semester on specialization studies (Modules 3 or 4), and the fourth semester on the thesis (Module 6). Additionally, Module 5, which consists of transversal studies, complements the core studies throughout semesters 1 to 4.

In the discussions, it was highlighted that the curriculum's modular structure facilitates a smooth transition for students between different partner institutions, allowing them to benefit from diverse teaching expertise and resources. The integration of transversal studies across the semesters enriches the core curriculum, providing a comprehensive educational experience. This modular approach also supports the joint programme by ensuring that all partners can contribute uniquely to the curriculum while maintaining a unified educational framework.

The on-site discussions also addressed the mechanisms in place for continuous feedback and quality assurance. Faculty and coordinators explained that regular evaluations and feedback from students are used to refine the teaching and learning processes. Joint committees, involving representatives from all partner institutions, oversee the quality assurance processes, ensuring that the programme remains aligned with its intended outcomes and meets high academic standards.

The experts commend the UlysseusAI programme for its well-organized and student-centered curriculum. The clear alignment between learning outcomes, teaching activities, and assessment procedures, supported by detailed resources and a structured module progression, ensures that students are well-prepared to achieve their academic and professional goals. The availability of comprehensive programme information and support resources further enhances the student experience, contributing to the programme's overall effectiveness and success. The integration strategies discussed on-site demonstrate a strong commitment to maintaining a cohesive and high-quality joint programme across all partner institutions.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

2.4 Regulated professions

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

The joint degree is exempt from the European Union Directive 2005/36/EC. For this reason, the criterion is not applicable.

3. Study programme

3.1 Curriculum

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

Description

According to the documentation submitted, the UlyseusAI master's programme encompasses 120 ECTS over four semesters, with each semester comprising 30 ECTS, distributed across core studies (Modules 1-4), transversal studies (Module 5), and the master's thesis (Module 6).

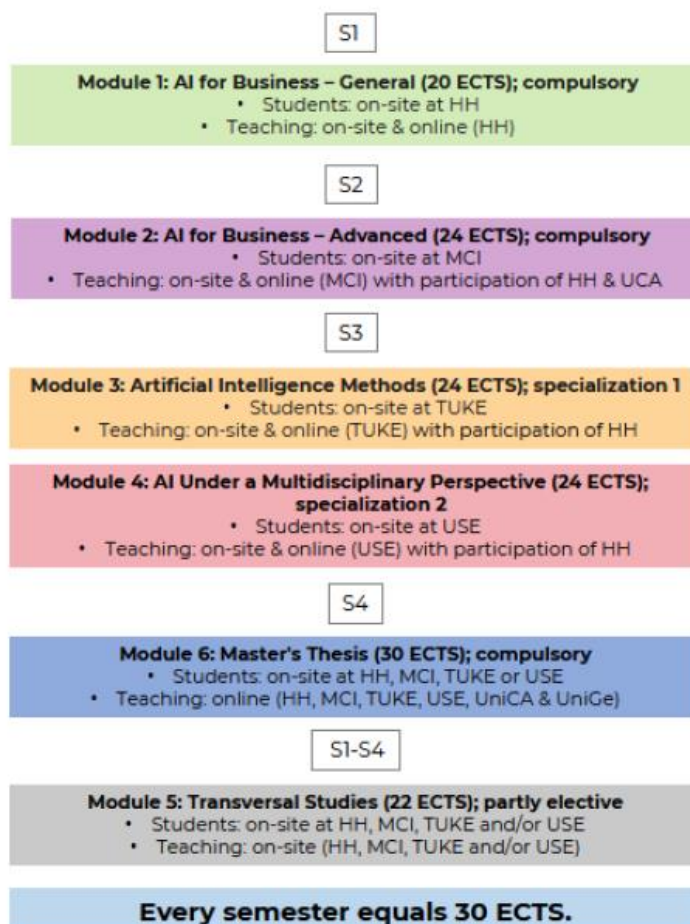


Table 1: Curriculum overview from SER

Following the overview, the programme starts for the whole cohort at Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences in the first semester (General studies); in the second semester, the cohort moves to Management Center Innsbruck while teaching is supported by Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences and Université Côte d'Azur (Advanced studies). The start of the second year is marked by another move to either the Technical University of Košice or the University of Seville, depending on the specialisation chosen by the students. In both cases, teaching will be additionally supported by Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences (Specialisation). The fourth semester will consist of the master's thesis, which can be written at HH, MCI, TUKE or USE. Depending on the supervisor, it might be supported by professors from the other consortium partner (UniCA and UniGe).

On the micro level, the annexes provide information on the composition of each module. Consequently, an overview of the programme can be displayed as follows:

First semester (Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences – General studies)		Second semester (Management Center Innsbruck – Advanced studies)	
Course name	ECTS	Course name	ECTS
<u>Compulsory</u>		<u>Compulsory</u>	
Orientation to UlysseusAI	0	Programming techniques	5
Academic Writing	2	Data and Information Management	5
Artificial Intelligence in Business	5	Smart systems and machine learning	4
Applied Design Research 1	3	Operational Excellence	5
Data analytics	5	Data Economy	5
Management of Digital Service Development	5	AI Innovation Project	5
Mathematical Principles of AI	5	Applied Design Research 2	1
<u>Electives</u>			
Evolving organisation <i>or</i> Learning culture in organisations	5		
Third semester			
Specialisation A – Artificial Intelligence Methods (Technical University of Košice)		Specialisation B – AI under multidisciplinary perspective (University of Seville)	
Course name	ECTS	Course name	ECTS
<u>Compulsory</u>		<u>Compulsory</u>	
Deep learning	6	Automating Business processing using AI	4
Computer vision	6	Marketing Data Analysis and trend prediction	4
Advanced Data analysis methods	6	AI application in human resources management	4
Knowledge Discovery	6	Recommendation and personalisation systems	4
		Security and fraud detection in business transactions	4
		Advanced Data Analysis to identify patterns and trends	4
Applied Design Research 3	1	Applied Design Research 3	1
Thesis Part 1A	5	Thesis Part 1A	5

Fourth semester	
Course name	ECTS
<u>Compulsory</u>	
Digital Ethics	5
Master thesis	25

The consortium states that the curriculum is designed to meet high academic and quality assurance standards. However, the consortium also points out that the delivery will be dynamic. Recent literature, technological advancements, evolving corporate partnerships, and opportunities for teacher mobility will actively shape the programme within the framework presented in the documentation.

Experts' evaluation

The UlysseusAI master's programme is well-structured and designed to provide a thorough education in AI for business transformation. The curriculum is meticulously designed to offer an in-depth education in Artificial Intelligence (AI) applied to Business Transformation. Spanning 120 ECTS over four semesters, the programme is distributed across core studies (Modules 1-4), transversal studies (Module 5), and culminates with a master's thesis (Module 6). Each semester comprises 30 ECTS, ensuring a balanced and comprehensive learning experience.

The first semester, conducted at Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, focuses on general studies that lay the foundational knowledge necessary for AI in business. Key courses include Artificial Intelligence in Business, Data Analytics, and Mathematical Principles of AI. The second semester, held at Management Center Innsbruck with contributions from Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences and Université Côte d'Azur, delves into advanced studies with courses such as Programming Techniques, Smart Systems and Machine Learning, and Operational Excellence.

In the third semester, students choose between two specialisations. Specialisation A, hosted by the Technical University of Košice, focuses on advanced AI methods such as Deep Learning, Computer Vision, and Knowledge Discovery. Specialisation B, offered by the University of Seville, examines AI from a multidisciplinary perspective, with courses like Marketing Data Analysis, AI in Human Resources Management, and Security in Business Transactions. The fourth semester is dedicated to the master's thesis, which can be conducted at any of the partner institutions, supported by supervisors from within the consortium. The programme's delivery is designed to be dynamic, adapting to advancements in technology, evolving corporate partnerships, and opportunities for teacher mobility.

The joint conclusion after the discussion with the teaching staff and the coordinators is that incorporating legislative implications on AI into the course on digital ethics is essential. With the rapid advancement and deployment of AI technologies, understanding the legislative framework, such as the AI Act, ensures that students are not only technically proficient but also aware of the legal and ethical boundaries within which AI operates. This knowledge is critical for developing responsible AI solutions that comply with regulatory standards and societal expectations. As AI becomes increasingly integrated into various sectors, it is imperative for future AI professionals to navigate the complex legal landscapes, ensuring their innovations are both lawful and ethical. Legislation like the AI Act provides a structured approach to managing the development and deployment of AI systems. By incorporating this framework into their studies, students will learn to foresee potential legal pitfalls and address them proactively. This integration will prepare students to anticipate and respond to legal challenges, fostering a proactive approach to AI governance and compliance. Furthermore, understanding these

regulations will help students design AI systems that prioritize user privacy, data protection, and transparency, thereby building trust and acceptance among users and stakeholders. Therefore, legislative implications on artificial intelligence (e.g., the AI Act) must be adequately represented in the course on digital ethics (**Finding 2**).

The experts have learned that the general assumption is that the cohorts will be relatively broad bringing together people with business and IT backgrounds. The ethical implication for programme like that in the nearer future will be crucial for the upcoming generations. Therefore, it is recommended that repositioning the digital ethics course earlier in the programme will help students develop a foundational understanding of ethical considerations in AI from the outset. This joint understanding is crucial as it influences their approach to subsequent technical courses and projects. It has been discussed that early exposure to ethical principles fosters a culture of responsibility and integrity, which is indispensable in the field of AI. By addressing ethical issues at the beginning of their studies, students can better integrate these principles into their technical work, promoting a holistic approach to AI development. This early emphasis on ethics ensures that students are equipped to critically evaluate the societal impact of their work, encouraging the development of AI technologies that are not only innovative but also socially responsible. By understanding the ethical implications of their work from the start, students can make informed decisions that balance innovation with ethical considerations. This approach helps in preventing potential misuse or unintended consequences of AI technologies, thus fostering the creation of AI solutions that benefit society as a whole (**Finding 3**).

Furthermore, a major point of the discussion between the experts and the stakeholders of the ULYSSEUS consortium has been on the integration of Generative AI content into the curriculum. The discussion resulted in a joint acknowledgement that generative AI represents a significant area of growth and innovation within the AI discipline. Therefore, the experts believe that the curriculum should take that into account. However, the implications on the curriculum as such have been discussed and, thus, it can only be introduced to the curriculum gradually. However, the discussion with other stakeholders showed a clear trend that this topic will be focussed on the future. Therefore, by initially introducing it as an elective, the programme can gauge student interest and industry relevance. This flexible approach allows the curriculum to adapt based on feedback and emerging trends, ensuring that it remains aligned with the latest advancements and demands in the field of AI.

As the importance of Generative AI continues to rise, embedding it as a compulsory element might ensure that all graduates are proficient in this critical area. Generative AI has vast applications, from creating content and automating creative processes to enhancing predictive models and personalisation systems. Its ability to generate new data, ideas, and solutions can revolutionize industries such as entertainment, marketing, healthcare, and finance. By gaining expertise in Generative AI, students will be better prepared to harness its potential in diverse business applications, thereby enhancing their employability and the programme's relevance (**Finding 4**).

Overall, the experts concluded that the curriculum is well-crafted to provide a thorough and dynamic education in AI for business transformation with a sufficient balance between the two disciplines. It is believed that the curriculum will prepare students on a high level.

Conclusion

The criterion is partially fulfilled.

3.2 Credits

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

Description

According to the SER, the utilisation of ECTS by partners facilitates establishing and documenting learning paths, enhancing flexibility and comparability. It is stated that the workload distribution has been collectively determined and allocated fairly for students in accordance with ECTS, regardless of their mobility within different modules as outlined in the UlyseusAI study plan.

Experts' evaluation

Based on the documentation available, the experts confirm that the master's programme adheres to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) standard, ensuring a clear and fair distribution of credits across the curriculum and across all partners. The use of ECTS by partners within and outside Europe facilitates the establishment and documentation of learning paths, enhancing flexibility and comparability for students.

From the expert's perspective, this is particularly relevant given the programme's structure, which involves student mobility across multiple institutions and countries. Regardless of their location within different modules, students can expect a consistent approach to credit allocation, as outlined in the UlyseusAI study plan.

The programme supports students in managing their learning experiences effectively. Each credit earned reflects a specific amount of student workload and learning outcomes, aiding in the comparability of qualifications across borders and enhancing the flexibility of the educational pathways available to students. This approach aligns with the broader objectives of the Bologna Process, promoting transparency, mobility, and mutual recognition of qualifications.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

3.3 Workload

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

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

Description

According to the SER, workload allocation has been jointly agreed upon and distributed equitably according to ECTS standards, regardless of students' mobility pathways. The defined student workload per ECTS point is 26 hours at Haaga-Helia (HH) and 25 hours at Management Center Innsbruck (MCI), Technical University of Košice (TUKE), and University of Seville (USE).

Experts' evaluation

According to the Self-Evaluation Report (SER), the UlysseusAI master's programme has effectively applied the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) standards to ensure equitable workload distribution across its diverse modules. This alignment with ECTS standards facilitates the creation and documentation of clear learning pathways, promoting flexibility and comparability for students, regardless of their mobility between partner institutions.

The student workload per ECTS point has been defined by the institutions delivering the courses: 26 hours at Haaga-Helia (HH) and 25 hours at Management Center Innsbruck (MCI), Technical University of Košice (TUKE), and University of Seville (USE). This approach ensures that all students, regardless of their study location, can anticipate and manage their workload effectively, contributing to a balanced educational experience. It has been discussed that individual variations might be visible, but the experts agreed that this approach is logical.

The UlysseusAI master's programme adheres to the standard that a joint master programme typically amounts to 90-120 ECTS-credits, aligning with the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA). The programme's total of 120 ECTS credits is well within the recommended range, ensuring comprehensive coverage of the subject matter while facilitating the achievement of learning outcomes within a reasonable time frame.

Moreover, the commitment to monitoring the workload and the average time to complete the programme has been discussed on-site. The involvement of internal QA structures highlights a proactive approach to maintaining academic standards and supporting student success. This continuous monitoring ensures that the programme remains responsive to student needs and industry developments, fostering an environment where students can thrive academically and professionally.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

4. Admission and recognition

4.1 Admission

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

Description

The programme is led by Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, serving as the sole gateway for entry into the programme. As a result, it is stated that the entry prerequisites and admission standards align with the national and institutional guidelines set forth by HH. These criteria are uniformly applied to all applicants, irrespective of their country of origin.

Admission requirements

According to the SER and the cooperation framework, candidates applying to UlysseusAI must hold a university qualification equivalent to at least a Bachelor's degree (EQF level 6) and have a minimum of two years of post-bachelor's degree work experience. Proficiency in English at a B2 level, as per the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), is also required. For applicants from non-English speaking

countries, proof of English proficiency can be demonstrated through English-medium education or by presenting a certified language proficiency equivalent to B2 in the CEFR.

Application procedure

All applications for admission must be submitted online through the official application portal used by Finnish higher education institutions. It offers information in both languages. It is stated that additionally, the website guides applicants on how to upload the necessary supporting documents during the online application process.

It is stated that applicants from EHEA universities, including Ulysseus university partners, will find their Bachelor's degrees automatically recognized in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention and the Ulysseus Academic Recognition Agreement, as specified in the annexes.

However, an official document from their university is required for those holding a Bachelor-equivalent qualification from a non-EHEA HEI. This document should certify the level of studies and confirm eligibility for the Master's studies. Additionally, applicants must provide officially certified copies and English translations of their diplomas and grades, along with an official certificate detailing the ECTS content of the subjects.

As stated in the SER, it is crucial to note that successful admission to UlysseusAI does not imply validation of the applicant's previous qualification to a comparable EHEA qualification for purposes beyond access to this Master's degree program.

All the required documents, which encompass proof of B2 (CEFR) English proficiency (please refer to the provided lists of accepted tests), work certificates demonstrating at least two years of pertinent post-bachelor's degree work experience, and a motivation letter delineating the applicant's selection of this degree program, stating their goals and interests, and illustrating how their studies and work experience align with the intended Master's degree, must be submitted via the online application portal.

Selection process

According to the self-evaluation, Haaga-Helia Admission Services, acting as the Master Secretariat, oversees the application and admission process. As stated in the documentation, after the application deadline, Haaga-Helia Admission Services reviews the submitted documentation on the study portal to ascertain applicant eligibility.

Following the SER, the admission policy is designed to ensure equal access to higher education for qualified European and Third-country applicants. Haaga-Helia Admission Services, representing the coordinating institution, is responsible for processing all applicant documents. Haaga-Helia Admission Services will provide the motivation letter of each eligible applicant to the Selection Jury of UlysseusAI.

As detailed in the documentation, the Selection Jury comprises academic representatives from all partner institutions. One representative per partner institution and two representatives from the associated partners will be.

Based on the list of eligible candidates obtained from the Master Secretariat, as detailed in the documentation, the Haaga-Helia Master Programmes secretariat and the Selection Jury collaboratively organize an online entrance examination for eligible candidates. Detailed instructions on the exam arrangements will be provided for all eligible applicants.

After the entrance examination, as per the documentation, Haaga-Helia Admission Services will submit to the Selection Jury a list of the top 60 applicants. They will be selected for the second evaluation round, the interview with the Selection Jury. The result of the interview, as per the documentation, will add up to 50 points to the candidate's score. During the interview, the basic scientific background of the applicant, the relevance of

work experience, transversal skills, motivation, communication skills, and his/her English level will be evaluated.

According to the self-evaluation and the SER, upon the results of the entrance examination and the interview, the Selection Jury, assisted by the Master Secretariat, will rank the eligible applications according to the results of the entrance examination and the interview.

The documentation states that the selection process includes multiple parts and scores. This encompasses a multi-choice task with a maximum of 50 points. Additionally, an interview accounts for 50 points in the evaluation process. As detailed in the documentation, the entire process has a maximum of 100 points, with the lowest passing score set at 20 points. In order to pass the entrance examination, the applicant must achieve at least the lowest score from each part and section of the examination.

Based on the outcome of the Selection Jury, the Admission Services, in accordance with the documentation, will add to the study portal the information on the 30 successful candidates who can be accepted into the Master's programme and a reserve list. The outcome of the application process will be added also to non-successful candidates.

All applicants will receive an email with a link to the admission results letter when all the results have been published. According to the self-evaluation and as indicated in the documentation, the applicant will also find his/her points and the lowest score for gaining admission in the results letter.

As stated in the documentation, the applicant must accept the offer of admission by the given deadline, or he/she will lose his/her offer. Applicants can accept only one offer of admission per academic term. Accepting an offer of admission is a binding choice, and he/she cannot cancel or change his/her choice later.

According to the self-evaluation and following the SER, the applicant/student must enrol as present or absent for each academic year by the given deadline. Without enrolment in the given timeframe, the applicant/student will lose his/her study rights.

Transparency and equality policies

To ensure transparency of the access and admission process, comprehensive information regarding the call for the upcoming academic year can be found on the Ulysseus website as well as the Finnish national portal. As stated in the documentation, details regarding the application and admission procedures are accessible to applicants and, subsequently, to accepted students through the Finnish national portal *Opintopolku*.

Following the SER, in alignment with the Equal Opportunities Policy of the consortium, UlysseusAI is dedicated to nurturing diversity, inclusivity, and gender equality. This commitment is upheld through admission measures tailored for all disadvantaged or discriminated groups, including ethnic minorities, individuals with a migration background, those with disabilities, individuals from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, or students with parents of lower educational attainment, among others. As indicated in the documentation, UlysseusAI actively promotes the recognition of qualifications and prior learning, irrespective of cultural background, to enhance social inclusion and diversification.

Experts' evaluation

After analysing the admission requirements and selection procedures for the UlysseusAI programme, the experts can testify that the admission criteria and procedures, led by Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, are transparent and accessible. They are clearly outlined on the Ulysseus website and the Finnish national portal, *Opintopolku*. Detailed instructions on application requirements, including necessary documents and English proficiency proof, are provided to ensure applicants understand the process. It has been discussed during the site visit how the consortium provides specific support services provided to applicants, such as help desks, guidance counsellors, or informational webinars.

The admission criteria are uniformly applied across all participating institutions, as Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences acts as the sole gateway for entry. As outlined in the SER, this consistency is maintained by adhering to the national and institutional guidelines set by Haaga-Helia. The centralized admission process, managed by Haaga-Helia Admission Services, includes a standardized online application procedure, consistent evaluation of qualifications, and a coordinated selection process involving a Selection Committee from all partner institutions. Typical for programmes who are not running yet is that there is no detailed information on internal quality assurance measures to ensure a consistent application of the criteria. However, the site visit demonstrated that all stakeholder involved in that process have that on their agenda once the programme runs.

The strategy of the UlysseusAI programme discussed during the site visit ensures that the institutions communicate effectively through the official application portal, providing clear instructions on the application process, document submission, and necessary qualifications. The website guides applicants on uploading supporting documents.

However, the experts' discussion focused predominantly on the topic of IT for business for versus business for IT. In fact, it became clear that the programme strives to combine both components. Therefore, careful monitoring of the first cohorts' background and the results of the entry exams is essential to ensure alignment with the admission requirements. This is important because it ensures that the programme attracts and admits students whose backgrounds and skills are aligned with the programme's interdisciplinary goals. Monitoring the first cohorts will help identify any gaps or mismatches between the students' qualifications and the programme's requirements, enabling adjustments to be made to the admission criteria or preparatory support provided to incoming students. The consortium should implement a system to track and analyze the backgrounds and entry exam results of the first cohorts. This will involve collecting detailed data on applicants' educational and professional backgrounds, as well as their performance in entry exams. Based on this analysis, the admission requirements and processes can be refined to better align with the programme's goals (**Finding 5**).

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

4.2 Recognition

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

Description

According to the self-evaluation, all partner universities within the Ulysseus Alliance have established internal regulations and procedures for recognising qualifications and study periods, including prior learning, as emphasised in the annexes. Ulysseus acknowledges the recognition of qualifications and prior learning, encompassing professional experience, for accredited Master's programmes and non-accredited coursework. The allocation of credits recognised is contingent on the QF-EHEA level of studies conducted and their alignment with the Joint Master's course content outlined in the Intended Learning Outcomes. This recognition is said to operate within the confines of prevailing national regulations on academic acknowledgement. The assessment and evaluation of achieved learning outcomes, as defined in the UlysseusAI curriculum, govern the recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

As stated in the documentation, the principles and instruments guiding academic recognition within the Ulysseus consortium are rooted in various references, including the Lisbon Recognition Convention, the European

Recognition Manual, the QF-EHEA framework, the ESG, the ECTS Users' Guide, the Database of External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR), and the Council Recommendation on automatic recognition.

Following the SER, the Ulysseus Alliance has delineated a comprehensive "Framework Agreement on Academic Recognition" (provided in the annexes) to diminish existing administrative barriers. This aims to foster academic recognition of qualifications and earned credits across all Ulysseus universities. The overarching objective is to facilitate flexible learning and student mobility, with academic recognition founded on mutual trust, European higher education principles, and quality assurance, all underpinned by the ideals of equality and transparency in processes.

Within this framework agreement, Academic Recognition, defined by the Lisbon Recognition Convention and the 2018 Council Recommendation on automatic mutual recognition, encompasses automatic recognition for admission access, recognition of learning periods abroad, and recognition of prior learning and work experience. It ensures that a higher education qualification awarded in one Member State is automatically acknowledged at the same level for further studies at any other Ulysseus partner Institution. It is said that this is done without necessitating an additional recognition procedure while still allowing the hosting Institution to establish specific evaluation and admission criteria for particular programmes.

Furthermore, the agreement aims to ensure that outcomes of study periods abroad, including regular subjects and Ulysseus "Educational Activities", are fully acknowledged by the Ulysseus home Institution. This recognition is prearranged in a learning agreement and corroborated in the transcript of records or a certificate of completion of the study period in accordance with the ECTS system.

Recognition of prior learning and work experience is also facilitated, whereby learning outcomes from formal education or non-formal and informal learning, along with work experience, may result in full or partial recognition for the degree the student is pursuing or intends to get recognised in adherence to the processes of the Ulysseus home and/or host Institution. It is stated that this prevails from national regulations.

As outlined in the Ulysseus Framework Agreement on Academic Recognition, which includes two annexes detailing basic rules for automatic recognition of qualifications and recognition of learning periods abroad, prior learning, and work experience, a template of the Ulysseus Learning Agreement is provided. This aims to streamline recognition processes within the Alliance.

Additionally, the Agreement establishes the Ulysseus Academic Recognition Board, comprising one representative from each partner, tasked with coordinating with the academic bodies responsible for recognition at each Ulysseus partner university. This is done to promote flexible and automatic academic recognition within Ulysseus and to support the UlysseusAI Selection Committee when necessary. The Board is also responsible for updates to the framework agreement and its annexes, representation of Ulysseus in pertinent academic forums on recognition, provision and dissemination of information about academic recognition in Ulysseus, and reporting on academic recognition matters to the Ulysseus General Committee following each meeting.

In addition to the Ulysseus Academic Recognition Agreement, partner Universities maintain an "Academic Recognition Working Document" detailing the processes and limitations of prior learning recognition in each Ulysseus University. This encompasses previous qualifications, work experience, and informal and non-formal learning. Besides advancing towards unified, automatic, and flexible academic recognition processes within Ulysseus, this document is seen as a tool for academic recognition requests from non-Ulysseus students.

The Ulysseus Alliance states that it provides a set of academic recognition application forms to be utilised by students when seeking academic recognition in UlysseusAI. This document is integrated into the UlysseusAI Student's Handbook.

Experts' evaluation

Based on the documentation and annexes including explicit documents on recognition within the Ulysseus alliance, it can be stated that the programme has established robust procedures and frameworks for recognizing qualifications and study periods, including prior learning and professional experience.

The recognition of qualifications within the Ulysseus Alliance is governed by internal regulations and procedures, as emphasized in the annexes. This recognition encompasses professional experience, accredited Master's programmes, and non-accredited coursework. The allocation of credits is contingent on the QF-EHEA level of studies and their alignment with the joint master's course content outlined in the intended learning outcomes. The recognition process operates within the confines of prevailing national regulations on academic acknowledgement. The assessment and evaluation of achieved learning outcomes, as defined in the curriculum, govern the recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

The principles and instruments guiding academic recognition within the Ulysseus consortium are rooted in various references, including the Lisbon Recognition Convention, the European Recognition Manual, the QF-EHEA framework, the ESG, the ECTS Users' Guide, and the Council Recommendation on automatic recognition. A comprehensive "Framework Agreement on Academic Recognition" aims to diminish administrative barriers and foster academic recognition of qualifications and earned credits across all Ulysseus universities.

Furthermore, the recognition procedures are consistent and transparent across all participating institutions. The same document ("Framework Agreement on Academic Recognition") ensures that higher education qualifications awarded in one member state are automatically acknowledged at the same level for further studies at any other Ulysseus partner institution without necessitating an additional recognition procedure. This agreement also includes automatic recognition for admission access, recognition of learning periods abroad, and recognition of prior learning and work experience.

To handle discrepancies in recognition practices, the Ulysseus Academic Recognition Board, comprising one representative from each partner, coordinates with the academic bodies responsible for recognition at each Ulysseus partner university. This board is designed to promote flexible and automatic academic recognition, supports the UlysseusAI Selection Committee when necessary, updates the framework agreement and its annexes, and addresses academic recognition matters. Each partner university also maintains an "Academic Recognition Working Document" detailing the processes and limitations of prior learning recognition, which upholds national and institutional regulations. Still, there is no evidence on the fit for purpose for these procedures, but given the documentation and the follow up discussion, the experts are confident that these procedures will be a good tool for the programme. It has been stated that this board provides updates to the framework agreement and its annexes, disseminates information about academic recognition within Ulysseus, and reports on academic recognition matters to the Ulysseus General Committee following each meeting. The Academic Recognition Working Document, maintained by each partner university, serves as a tool for continuous improvement by detailing the processes and limitations of prior learning recognition and aligning with national and institutional regulations.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

5. Learning, teaching and assessment

5.1 Learning and teaching

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

Description

According to the self-evaluation, the Ulysseus consortium is dedicated to an outward-looking, transdisciplinary approach to education that prioritizes student-centred, flexible, and work-based pedagogics. These methods are designed to establish robust and enduring links between academia, government, industry, and civil society.

As stated in the documentation, the university strongly emphasises student-centred pedagogy, exemplified by the creation of individualized study plans. These plans aim to incorporate connections to the professional world and international networks in unique and tangible ways. Students will formulate their study plans during the orientation days at the outset of Semester 1.

Following the SER, Ulysseus underscores the importance of forging strong connections between students' personalized learning trajectories and the surrounding communities from the commencement of studies until graduation. This approach ensures the ongoing evolution of both the curriculum and the competencies necessary for the workforce.

Social cohesion and promoting human rights are integral components of Ulysseus' pedagogical framework, as evidenced by the active promotion of inclusion, accessibility, universal design, and participation. These principles are upheld in all learning environments, including digital platforms. All educators' collective responsibility is to enhance these inclusive practices further.

Ulysseus has instituted an "Innovative Learning Solutions Programme for Teachers," overseen by the Haag-Helia University of Applied Sciences. As outlined, this programme includes benchmarking activities and collaborative development endeavours to organise workshops and online courses for teachers, facilitated through the Digital Platform. Additionally, an "Inter-campus pedagogical mentoring Handbook" has been established.

The Ulysseus Virtual Environment for Learning, Teaching, and Assessment, encapsulated by the Ulysseus Digital Platform, serves as the hub for teaching and learning activities. It encompasses virtual classrooms, e-learning and assessment spaces for both students (in the form of Ulysseus Moodle) and teachers (providing pedagogical competence courses). Furthermore, it offers collaborative workspaces for lecturers' transnational teams to coordinate their teaching efforts, as well as for students to engage in collaborative projects and COIL initiatives with peers and instructors across various Ulysseus institutions.

Experts' evaluation

The site visit demonstrated that the Ulysseus consortium is dedicated to an outward-looking, transdisciplinary approach to education that prioritises student-centred, flexible, and work-based pedagogics. The consortium emphasised a transdisciplinary approach that aligns with the overarching educational philosophy, ensuring that learning outcomes are designed to be flexible and applicable across various disciplines.

The student-centred approach, exemplified by the creation of individualized study plans according to the mobility options taken by students, will incorporate connections to the professional world and international networks in tangible ways, ensuring relevance and coherence across the curriculum. Students will formulate their study plans during the orientation days at the outset of Semester 1, thus embedding discipline focused and international experiences from the very beginning of their studies.

The discussion with the teaching staff furthermore underpinned Ulysseus' importance of forging strong connections between students' personalized learning trajectories and the surrounding communities from the commencement of studies until graduation. From the expert's point of view, this approach ensures the ongoing evolution of both the curriculum and the competencies necessary, aligning with student-centred, flexible, and work-based pedagogics.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

5.2 Assessment

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

The SER outlines four aspects concerning this criterion: the UlysseusAI grading system and assessment criteria, the fit-for-purpose assessment, the need to address the diversity of students, and UlysseusAI's ethical research commitment.

Grading system and assessment criteria

According to the self-evaluation, the programme will employ a grading system ranging from 0 to 100%. As stated in the documentation, the consortium has endorsed an equivalence table aligning this system with the corresponding EHEA and national grading systems, which have been added to the annex. This measure is intended to facilitate communication among teachers and administrative staff across partner universities regarding students' transcript of records.

In accordance with the SER, to attain a passing grade in each course, students must achieve 50% or higher unless otherwise specified by the academic regulations of the partner university delivering the course. The module description tables encompass details such as module workload, overarching objectives, intended learning outcomes, primary module content, teaching and learning methodologies, as well as assessment methods. Generally, students who do not pass individual courses can sit for a supplemental examination or resubmit required coursework.

According to the documentation, UlysseusAI is committed to implementing a transparent compensation policy prior to the commencement of the joint program. Nevertheless, it is imperative to uphold institutional regulations for retake procedures on different semesters and modules.

Fit-for-purpose assessment

Following the aligned teaching principles, UlysseusAI teaching teams will implement "Fit-for-purpose" assessment methods tailored to the specific context and the level of capabilities required for assessment. These methods will allow students to demonstrate their skills and competencies in alignment with the Intended Learning Outcomes.

As outlined in the UlysseusAI joint programme, the assessment approach is competence-based, encompassing the evaluation of student performance across various assessment components towards achieving the Intended Learning Outcomes of each course. Oversight of program-level assessment will be coordinated by the Academic Steering Committee while teaching teams in each module and course will assess student performance in accordance with the guidelines specified in the module and course descriptions.

This emphasis on Intended Learning Outcomes underscores the adoption of ‘continuous/formative assessment’, which tracks student progress throughout the programme of study rather than relying solely on a “single/summative assessment” at the program’s conclusion. A diverse array of assessment methods, including traditional examinations and academic writing, will be advocated for both single and continuous assessment. A comprehensive database of assessment methods is currently being developed to ensure an innovative approach to group and individual assessment.

Various assessment methods will be deployed across the courses, including but not limited to:

- Time-limited open-book/take-home examinations,
- Pre-release of materials for students to engage with prior to synchronous assessment (Flipped classroom methods),
- Asynchronous online assessments, which are less affected by contextual variations and time zones,
- Essays,
- Project assignments,
- Reports (such as research-based reports, research-informed position papers, or “in-company reports”),
- e-Portfolios,
- For small group activity assessment: proposal documentation, research reports, prototyping, oral presentations, pitching, and peer feedback, among others.

The module description tables encompass details such as module workload, overarching objectives, intended learning outcomes, primary module content, as well as the teaching and learning methodology and assessment methods. Corresponding information at the course level can be found in Annex 5.

The pedagogical advancement of UlysseusAI, which involves ongoing reflection on assessment principles and methods, will benefit from the extensive pedagogical expertise within Ulysseus institutions and the available mentoring programme accessible to all UlysseusAI teachers.

Diversity of students

According to the self-evaluation, UlysseusAI aligns with EU policies on equality and non-discrimination in accordance with related EU strategies and policies in Education, Research, and Innovation. This commitment extends to actively promoting diversity, inclusiveness, and equality within the learning process and the students' daily life.

As stated in the documentation, diversity, equality, equity, and inclusion are fundamental European values endorsed and practised by all Ulysseus partners. These concepts encompass various dimensions that are implemented through actions at the alliance level, institutional level, and within the specific programmes.

Following the SER, detailed information regarding diversity, equality, equity, and inclusivity can be found in the respective institutional documentation of the four partners responsible for delivering the degree. These documents are accessible through the provided links.

Additionally, The Ulysseus Gender Equality Programme and the websites of partner institutions offer further supplementary information.

In line with the commitment to inclusivity, all university partners have established practices and guidelines to cater to students with special needs. Moreover, Ulysseus is actively developing a “Special Needs Programme” with the objective of accommodating the diverse needs of students. This programme aims to facilitate flexible learning paths, employ a range of pedagogical methods, conduct regular evaluations, and make necessary adjustments to modes of delivery and pedagogical approaches. It also seeks to empower learners with a sense of autonomy while ensuring they receive appropriate guidance and support from teachers. Furthermore, it emphasizes the promotion of mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship and outlines proper procedures for addressing students’ complaints.

Ethical research commitment

As stated in the documentation, each partner institution is committed to maintaining the high standards of scientific practice and conducting research and development in strict adherence to ethical principles. Furthermore, all institutions have established guidelines for ethical conduct. Of particular relevance for the review are the guidelines set forth by the degree-awarding institutions: HH’s “Responsible Conduct of Research” endorsed by the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK, The Rectors’ Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences Arene’s ethical guidelines, MCI’s commitment to academic standards, and USE’s Ethics Committee.

Following the SER, the thesis process in UlysseusAI is designed to align with the national regulations governing Master’s theses in Finnish UAS institutions. These processes are further guided by the coordinating partner, HH, and collectively endorsed by the other degree-awarding institutions participating in the joint degree. Oversight of the thesis process is conducted jointly under the coordination of the Academic Steering Committee, ensuring representation from all partners.

Upon successful completion, it is the responsibility of the student to publish the thesis in the open collection of the national Theseus online repository of Universities of Applied Sciences in Finland. It is important to note that, in cases where the commissioning party expresses a preference for non-publication in an open collection, the thesis will be securely stored in the restricted collection of Theseus. Thesis metadata and abstracts remain accessible in both collections.

Suspected cases of plagiarism in theses undergo thorough review by Haaga-Helia’s Thesis Ethics Committee, a process in which all degree-awarding institutions within UlysseusAI may contribute their expertise.

Moreover, the alliance states to promote openness in four critical areas: fostering an open operating culture, championing open access publishing, advocating for transparent data practices, and actively supporting open education initiatives.

Experts’ evaluation

As a follow-up on the comprehensive documentation, the experts have discussed the assessment modalities for students in the programme, and the differences between the partners. The programme will employ a grading system ranging from 0 to 100%, as agreed in the cooperation agreement. The consortium has endorsed an equivalence table aligning this system with the corresponding EHEA and national grading systems, facilitating communication among teachers and administrative staff across partner universities regarding students’ transcripts of records.

To attain a passing grade in each course, students must achieve 50% or higher unless otherwise specified by the academic regulations of the partner university delivering the course. The module description tables encompass details such as module workload, overarching objectives, intended learning outcomes, primary module content, teaching and learning methodologies, and assessment methods. Generally, students who do not

pass individual courses can sit for a supplemental examination or resubmit required coursework. Based on the discussions, the experts state that it is visible that UlysseusAI is committed to implementing a transparent compensation policy prior to the commencement of the joint programme, while upholding institutional regulations for retake procedures across different semesters and modules.

Following the aligned teaching principles, UlysseusAI teaching teams will implement “Fit-for-purpose” assessment methods tailored to the specific context and the level of capabilities required for assessment. These methods will allow students to demonstrate their skills and competencies in alignment with the Intended Learning Outcomes. The assessment approach is competence-based, encompassing the evaluation of student performance across various components to achieve the Intended Learning Outcomes of each course. Oversight of programme-level assessment will be coordinated by the Academic Steering Committee, while teaching teams in each module and course will assess student performance according to the guidelines specified in the module and course descriptions. This advanced approach across the alliance is commendable and testifies the high level of preparation within the alliance.

This emphasis on a constructive alignment of the intended learning outcomes in the curriculum is underscored by the adoption of continuous assessment, tracking student progress throughout the programme rather than relying solely on summative assessment at the programme’s conclusion. The site visit discussions showed that a diverse array of assessment methods, including traditional examinations and academic writing, will be advocated for both single and continuous assessment. A comprehensive database of assessment methods is being developed to ensure an innovative approach to group and individual assessment. Various assessment methods will be deployed across the courses. The pedagogical advancement of UlysseusAI, involving ongoing reflection on assessment principles and methods, will benefit from the extensive pedagogical expertise within Ulysseus institutions and the available mentoring programme for all UlysseusAI teachers.

Based on the documentation provided and fact checked by the experts, it can be said that UlysseusAI aligns with EU policies on equality and non-discrimination in accordance with related EU strategies and policies in Education, Research, and Innovation. This commitment extends to actively promoting diversity, inclusiveness, and equality within the learning process and students’ daily lives. Detailed information regarding diversity, equality, equity, and inclusivity can be found in the respective institutional documentation of the four partners responsible for delivering the degree. The Ulysseus Gender Equality Programme and partner institutions’ websites offer further supplementary information. In line with the commitment to inclusivity, all university partners have established practices and guidelines to cater to students with special needs. Ulysseus is actively developing a “Special Needs Programme” to accommodate the diverse needs of students, facilitating flexible learning paths, employing a range of pedagogical methods, conducting regular evaluations, and making necessary adjustments to delivery modes and pedagogical approaches. This programme also aims to empower learners with autonomy while ensuring appropriate guidance and support from teachers, promoting mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship, and outlining proper procedures for addressing students’ complaints.

The thesis process in UlysseusAI is designed to align with national regulations governing Master’s theses in Finnish UAS institutions, guided by the coordinating partner, HH, and endorsed by the degree-awarding institutions participating in the joint degree. Oversight of the thesis process is coordinated by the Academic Steering Committee.

According to the policies and regulations, students are responsible for publishing their theses in the national Theseus online repository of Universities of Applied Sciences in Finland. If the commissioning party prefers non-publication in an open collection, the thesis will be securely stored in the restricted collection of Theseus, while metadata and abstracts remain accessible. The thesis is considered a public document, granting anyone the right to request access. Published theses, including abstracts and metadata, must not contain information classified as trade secrets, confidential, or infringing on privacy.

The experts testify good mechanisms to avoid plagiarism. Suspected cases of plagiarism in theses undergo thorough review by Haaga-Helia's Thesis Ethics Committee, with input from all degree-awarding institutions within UlysseusAI. The alliance actively promotes openness in four critical areas: fostering an open operating culture, championing open access publishing, advocating for transparent data practices, and supporting open education initiatives, integral to UlysseusAI's ethos and approach to research and education.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

6. Student support

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

Following the documentation in the SER, student support is differentiated in joint student support instruments and individual partner instruments:

Joint instruments

a) Student support services

According to the self-evaluation, the joint student support framework in Ulysseus encompasses a range of services, guides, and programmes aimed at ensuring comprehensive support for students. The Ulysseus Central Management Office, headquartered in Seville, houses the Dissemination Unit, which promotes academic offerings and maintains the application system. Additionally, they facilitate the socialization and networking of UlysseusAI students through various social media platforms. It is stated that this unit also serves as a conduit for students' feedback and contributions via the dedicated web page.

In Innsbruck, Austria, the International Centre of Ulysseus hosts the Mobility Office, overseeing Mobility Programmes for students, faculty, and staff, including initiatives like the Green Deal Mobility Scheme. They also manage the Welcome Programme and advocate for implementing the European Student Card.

Under the coordination of TUKE, the Ulysseus Student Association actively provides extensive support and mentoring to all Ulysseus students, including participation in the Ambassador's programme.

The projected UlysseusAI students' network, assisted by the digitalization unit and social media platforms, will offer students mentoring, networking, and job-seeking advice.

b) Support guide and programmes

To facilitate initial integration, the Ulysseus welcome guide will be provided for incoming Ulysseus and international students, researchers, faculties, and non-academic staff. Welcome weeks and sessions will be organized at each partner university, featuring guided tours of the university facilities.

It is outlined that the Ulysseus Ambassadors programme pairs student tutors with incoming students to aid their assimilation into the host institutions' academic, linguistic, cultural, and social environment.

Through the Ulysseus Career Guidance Programme, mentors will be assigned to Ulysseus students to provide ongoing advice and guidance in determining their academic path, whether professionally or research-oriented.

Accessible via the Ulysseus Digital Platform or in-person, the Ulysseus Language courses will promote plurilingualism and multiculturalism.

The Ulysseus International Mobility Guide and Ulysseus Green Mobility Scheme will facilitate students' movement around the Ulysseus Campus in an accessible and sustainable manner.

Established to support students with specific academic needs, the Ulysseus Special Needs Programme ensures inclusive learning environments.

Dedicated to promoting the transnational mobility of students with special needs, the Ulysseus Mobility for All Programme (Mob4All@Ulysseus) plays a vital role.

Finally, it is stated that the Ulysseus Gender Equality Programme is committed to mainstreaming gender balance within the Ulysseus community.

Individual instruments

a) Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences

According to the self-evaluation report, Haaga-Helia University provides a range of crucial services to support students' academic journey.

Following the SER, appointed guidance counsellors work closely with academic coordinators, students, and partner universities to ensure a flawless experience. This includes an intensive orientation at the start of studies, with participation from programme coordinators in UlysseusAI.

Following Haaga-Helia's Equality Plan, students have access to confidential services free of charge. This includes The Safer Space initiative for student and staff well-being, as well as specialized services like admission guidance and advice on degree applications.

Guidance counsellors are helping students plan their Master's studies and connect with additional resources. Special attention is given to Ulysseus AI degree students, particularly during the first year and later stages of international mobility and thesis preparation.

Lecturers and thesis supervisors are available to support study choices and progression. Study Services offer practical information on study rights, certificates, graduation processes, and technical support for electronic study plans.

Career and Recruitment Services provide valuable workshops, mentoring, and job-seeking guidance. Study Psychologists are on hand to assist students with study skills, coping mechanisms, and overall well-being.

Haaga-Helia offers dedicated support for students with special needs, including extended examination time and private testing rooms. The University Chaplain provides non-denominational guidance on matters affecting studies and well-being.

Additional services include healthcare, library and information resources, study facilities, labs, IT support, international mobility services, student dining, housing, sports, and student union activities.

b) Management Center Innsbruck

According to the self-evaluation and as stated in the documentation, MCI places a strong emphasis on providing comprehensive support for students. The university's commitment to academic success and well-being is evident in the various services offered.

As outlined in the SER, the student portal stands as a crucial starting point, offering indispensable guidance on effective learning strategies and aiding in the admission process. Healthcare resources are readily available, catering to both local and international students, aligning with MCI's dedication to holistic student support.

As indicated in the documentation, the extensive library resources serve as a cornerstone for academic excellence. The MCI Career Center, following the SER guidelines, acts as a vital link to professional opportunities, facilitating connections between students and internships or career platforms. Additionally, IT services ensure access to essential resources, reflecting MCI's commitment to technological accessibility.

As stated in the documentation, well-equipped study spaces are strategically placed in terms of physical facilities, fostering an environment conducive to learning. The nearby University of Innsbruck's dining hall, in line with MCI's mission, provides nutritious and cost-effective meals, complemented by exclusive discounts for registered students.

For mental health and well-being, according to the self-evaluation, confidential counselling services are readily accessible, addressing concerns such as learning strategies and exam anxiety. Pastoral care and access to religious communities are provided, reflecting MCI's inclusive approach.

Additionally, as outlined in the documentation, tailored support is offered for students with special needs, ensuring an inclusive and accommodating university experience. The MCI Student Union, adhering to SER guidelines, represents student interests and offers a range of services and activities, further enhancing the student experience.

c) Technical University of Košice

Following the SER, the Technical University of Košice provides a dedicated support centre, offering comprehensive counselling services addressing various needs. This includes assistance with psycho-social challenges arising from potential social exclusion. The centre's services cover information dissemination, crisis intervention, and instructional programmes. It actively engages in preventive initiatives and facilitates peer support groups. Additionally, it supports international students in securing accommodations for an optimal learning environment. It is stated that collaboration with internal and external partners ensures a smooth and holistic support system for the university community.

d) University of Seville

Per the self-evaluation and documented policies, the International Centre at the University of Seville, under the Vice-Rectorate for Institutional Projection and Internationalization, focuses on expanding the university's global presence and collaborations. It provides essential services for international mobility and projects. The centre includes specialized offices and offers comprehensive services, from managing mobility to promoting international relations. Additionally, the University of Seville extends a broad spectrum of student support services, covering areas like disability assistance, legal advice, health promotion, and more, ensuring a conducive learning environment.

Experts' evaluation

Based on the discussions and supplied with the consortium's documentation, it became clear that the Ulyseus joint student support framework, while not running yet for the programme, is well-structured and comprehensive, offering a range of services aimed at ensuring robust support for students across all partner institutions. The Ulyseus Central Management Office, through its Dissemination Unit based in Seville, plays an important role in promoting academic offerings and maintaining the application system. This unit facilitates socialisation and networking for UlyseusAI students via social media platforms and serves as a conduit for student feedback through a dedicated web page, demonstrating a commitment to continuous improvement. The general observation is that the structure for the UlyseusAI programme is clearly visible, and the relevant positions

now need to make experiences with the first cohorts for the programme. Therefore, there are currently still evidences that cannot be assessed in this ex-ante accreditation, but the experts have no doubt that the strong consortium will solve upcoming problems in case there will be some.

The International Office at the Management Center Innsbruck (MCI), which will host the Mobility Office, plans to oversee mobility programmes for students, faculty, and staff, including several initiatives. The office is tasked with managing the Welcome Programme and advocating for the implementation of the European Student Card, supporting student mobility and integration. Additionally, the Ulysseus Student Association aims to provide support and mentoring, including the Ambassadors programme, which will actively engage students in support networks and peer mentoring. The UlysseusAI Students' Network, assisted by the digitalisation unit and social media platforms, is expected to offer mentoring, networking, and job-seeking advice, highlighting a strong focus on employability and career readiness. The Ulysseus welcome guide and organised welcome weeks and sessions at each partner university are intended to ensure students are well-oriented and integrated into their new environments. The Ulysseus Ambassadors Programme will pair student tutors with incoming students, aiding their academic, linguistic, cultural, and social assimilation into host institutions, promoting a supportive and inclusive environment.

The Ulysseus Career Guidance Programme is set to provide mentors for ongoing academic and career advice, ensuring students receive continuous support in their academic and professional development. Language courses available via the Ulysseus Digital Platform or in-person are planned to promote plurilingualism and multiculturalism. Furthermore, the Ulysseus International Mobility Guide and Green Mobility Scheme are designed to facilitate student movement in a sustainable manner, demonstrating a commitment to accessibility and sustainability. The Ulysseus Special Needs Programme and the Mobility for All Programme (Mob4All@Ulysseus) are expected to ensure inclusive learning environments and support for the transnational mobility of students with special needs. The Gender Equality Programme aims to mainstream gender balance, reflecting a commitment to equality and diversity.

Complementing these joint support initiatives, each partner institution will also provide tailored support services to meet the specific needs of their students, thereby enriching the overall student experience within the Ulysseus Joint Programme. Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences plans to offer robust pre-arrival support services, including guidance counsellors who will work closely with academic coordinators and students to ensure experiences from orientation to graduation. However, explicit details about visa assistance and pre-arrival communication mechanisms are areas where the programme needs to gain more experience and develop further. Orientation days and sessions, as well as the Ulysseus welcome guide, are intended to help new students integrate into their new environments. More detailed descriptions of these activities, the involvement of academic and administrative staff, and sessions addressing cultural adaptation would provide a fuller picture and can be developed as the programme gains more experience.

Academic support at Haaga-Helia will include guidance counsellors, academic coordinators, and extensive lecturer and thesis supervisor availability. The Ulysseus Ambassadors programme is also set to aid student integration. Administrative support will include services such as housing, subsidized meals, libraries, and IT services. Guidance counsellors will focus on organisational aspects, and a mobility officer will support students at the alliance level.

Psychological support services are planned, and more details on how these services will be promoted and accessed, as well as provisions for emergency support and crisis intervention, will be specified in the nearer future. These aspects will become clearer as the programme gains more operational experience. The Ulysseus Career Guidance Programme and the MCI Career Center will link students with professional opportunities. Detailed descriptions of internships, job placements, and collaboration mechanisms among partner institutions will be further refined as the programme progresses.

The Ulysseus Ambassadors programme and various UlysseusAI student network activities will promote integration. However, more specific details on student organisations, clubs, events, and language support services are necessary and will be better defined as the programme gains more experience in these areas. The Dissemination Unit will facilitate feedback from students, and surveys will be used to collect opinions. More explicit details on how feedback will be collected, analysed, and utilised for continuous improvement, as well as regular evaluations of support services and communication of results to students, will be developed further as the programme operates and gathers more feedback data.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

7. Resources

7.1 Staff

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

Description

According to the self-evaluation and the documentation, UlysseusAI is dedicated to delivering high-quality education through a collaborative effort of experienced lecturers and professors. Most instructors hold PhDs and possess extensive teaching and industry experience, ensuring a well-rounded educational experience.

Following the SER, the diverse composition of partner institutions, including research universities, universities of applied sciences, and a technical university, enriches UlysseusAI's curriculum. This allows for integrating theoretical research outcomes with practical business transformation initiatives.

It is stated that the administrative and service staff across partner institutions have a proven track record in international cooperation, playing a crucial role in programme management. The Master's Secretariat, Joint Master's Team, Admission Services, and Internal QA Committee operate under the guidance of the Academic Steering Committee of UlysseusAI, ensuring smooth operations.

UlysseusAI emphasizes the development of transnational teaching teams, teacher mobility, and innovative pedagogical methodologies to further elevate the teaching quality. This aligns with the program's commitment to continuous improvement and dissemination of information.

As per the self-evaluation, all teaching staff are proficient in English and undergo an orientation process to uphold UlysseusAI's values and educational principles. Ongoing initiatives will focus on creating innovative strategies for professional development, delivering practical pedagogical training, and offering a diverse learning experience with a strong European dimension, including various forms of mobility and cross-campus collaboration.

Experts' evaluation

The panel of experts have assessed the staffing situation of the UlysseusAI programme, and have thoroughly reviewed the documentation provided to the experts. This documentation included CVs of staff involved in the programme. Based on that evaluation, the experts confirm that the UlysseusAI programme is dedicated to delivering high-quality education through the collaborative efforts of experienced lecturers and professors from the consortium's staff involved in the programme. Most of the teaching staff members hold PhDs title or higher ranks, which demonstrates a strong academic foundation in the UlysseusAI programme.

The programme benefits from the teaching and industry experience of its staff. From an expert's perspective, this experience is crucial in bridging theoretical knowledge with practical applications, providing a solid learning experience. The composition of partner institutions, including research universities, universities of applied sciences, and a technical university, contributes to a curriculum that integrates theoretical research with practical business transformation initiatives.

The discussion with the stakeholders also demonstrated that the administrative and service staff across partner institutions have a proven track record in international cooperation, which plays a crucial role in programme management with bigger consortia. The documentation indicates that UlysseusAI places a strong emphasis on developing transnational teaching teams, promoting teacher mobility, and adopting innovative pedagogical methodologies, with specific overarching frameworks supporting this exchange.

Also, on the structure of the programme itself, it can be stated that various administrative and support entities are integrated such as the admission services, and Internal QA committee, all operating under the guidance of the Academic Steering Committee.

As stated above, UlysseusAI's strategy for staff development includes initiatives focused on innovative strategies for professional development, practical pedagogical training, and creating a diverse learning experience with a strong European dimension. The emphasis on teacher mobility and cross-campus collaboration further enhances the programme's international perspective. Additionally, all teaching staff are proficient in English and undergo an orientation process to uphold UlysseusAI's values and educational principles.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

7.1 Facilities

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

Description

As indicated in the self-evaluation and detailed in the documentation, UlysseusAI offers several level of facilities:

a) General facilities (applicable to all consortium members)

1. Ulysseus Digital Platform: This advanced platform offers various digital teaching solutions, including the Ulysseus Moodle. This platform hosts various courses, catering to formal (e.g., joint degrees) and informal (e.g., MOOCs, short courses, language courses with free access for Ulysseus students) education. All courses, whether synchronous or asynchronous, are guided and supported by dedicated teachers. The platform also facilitates meetings and mentoring. The Ulysseus MS Teams also serve as the primary collaborative tool, ensuring teamwork between students. The Ulysseus Intranet (SharePoint) serves as the internal repository for the Alliance. The Match4coop application has also been introduced to enhance networking and project matchmaking among researchers, fostering collaboration in education, research, publications, and new projects.

2. Ulysseus Innovation Hubs: Spread across partner universities, the six Ulysseus Innovation Hubs are dedicated to addressing R&D challenges that resonate with our regions and cities. These hubs are intricately linked to local nodes around each partner university, bolstering the Innovation Ecosystem. The implementation strategy for these hubs has been collectively agreed upon and is currently in progress.

3. Libraries, Databases, Equipment, and Labs: These resources support the information provided in the annexes. Each consortium university boasts state-of-the-art facilities tailored for learning, research, and innovative endeavours.

b) Institution specifics

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences

As stated in the documentation, Haaga-Helia offers a comprehensive array of services and facilities designed to support both students and faculty in various academic and entrepreneurial activities. The university provides a detailed welcome guide and a 360° virtual walking tour for easy navigation of its campuses. It houses the AI Innovation Hub, focusing on applying AI in business and education. The StartUp School fosters entrepreneurial skills, while the Project Financial Support and Research Services provide essential administrative and financial backing for projects. Haaga-Helia's library spans five campuses, offering extensive physical and digital resources, including books, e-books, journals, and databases. The institution also features specialized labs such as LAB8 for service experience development, Softala for software creation, and SalesLab for enhancing sales skills. Additional unique facilities include the eComLab for e-commerce innovations, 3D + Robo Lab for robotics projects, and creative spaces like DigiCave and Krea. Furthermore, Haaga-Helia supports innovative learning through environments such as the Financial Management Escape Room and the student-founded accounting firm, Taseco.

University of Seville

According to the SER, the University of Seville provides a broad range of facilities and services to support its academic community. The welcome guide offers essential information about the university and its campuses, facilitating easy navigation for new students. The Modern Language Center delivers comprehensive language training, evaluation, and certification. The Secretariat for Evaluation and Training focuses on research skills and academic development. The university also offers social and professional support through its Academic Staff Area and Continuing Education Center. Community services at Sevilla include legal and psychological support, family reconciliation, special needs services, and health promotion. The university boasts extensive sports facilities and occupational risk services. Additionally, Sevilla is home to 134 departments and numerous research centers, including joint initiatives with the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), providing a robust infrastructure for scientific research and academic excellence.

MCI Entrepreneurial School

MCI Entrepreneurial School is said to be dedicated to supporting students and faculty through its diverse services and facilities. The welcome guide provides detailed information about MCI and its campuses. The library services at MCI offer guidance and support throughout students' studies, in collaboration with the University Library of Innsbruck. The Career Centre acts as a dynamic interface between academia and business, providing career planning support, seminars, and individual advisory sessions. MCI's Language Center offers a variety of language courses, including Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Turkish, and Austrian sign language. The Entrepreneurship Center supports entrepreneurial activities, fostering innovation among students, faculty, and graduates. MCI's Research and Transfer Centers focus on strategically important topics, providing solution-oriented research results through continuous collaboration with industry. The institution also boasts modern IT infrastructure, including state-of-the-art computer rooms, accessible PC workstations, campus-wide wireless LAN, and various digital platforms for study organization and eLearning.

Technical University of Košice (TUKE)

The Technical University of Košice (TUKE) states that it offers a wide range of facilities and services aimed at fostering innovation and supporting academic activities. The welcome guide provides essential information about TUKE, its campuses, and local navigation. The Data Living Lab at TUKE continuously builds a data infrastructure integrating real-time market data, supporting responsible data economy development and innovation. The university offers extensive datasets, including public procurement, business registries, financial statements, and geospatial data, facilitating research and education. TUKE's high-performance computing platforms provide access to two HPC infrastructures and a central supercomputer, supporting research and innovation. The TUKE Startup Centre and Incubator are key components of the university's entrepreneurship acceleration unit, offering incubation environments and support for the formation and development of hi-tech startups and spin-off companies.

Experts' evaluation

The site visit included on-site and virtual demonstrations of the facilities for all degree-awarding institutions. It became clear that the infrastructures provided by the degree-awarding institutions adequately support the intended learning outcomes of the UlysseusAI programmes.

The Ulysseus Digital Platform is a key component, offering a variety of digital teaching solutions, including Ulysseus Moodle. This platform hosts various courses for both formal education, such as joint degrees, and informal education, including MOOCs and short courses. The platform supports both synchronous and asynchronous learning, facilitated by dedicated teachers, and includes tools like Ulysseus MS Teams for collaboration and Ulysseus Intranet (SharePoint) for internal document management. The Match4coop application further supports networking and project matchmaking among researchers, which can be seen as a strong asset for cooperation activities between staff.

The Ulysseus Innovation Hubs, located across the partner universities in the consortium, aim to address regional R&D challenges and support local innovation ecosystems. These hubs are linked to local nodes around each partner university, and their implementation is underway based on a collectively agreed strategy. The site visit of the facilities included the visit of the Innovation Hub located at Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, where the experts discussed with researchers the current dimension of AI and the relevance to business. The online demonstration demonstrated that each consortium university offers modern libraries, databases, equipment, and labs that are tailored to support learning and research. These facilities provide essential resources for academic and research activities.

The facilities at Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences are designed to support both academic and entrepreneurial activities through a comprehensive array of services. These include a detailed welcome guide and a virtual campus tour, an AI Innovation Hub, and a StartUp School, as well as Project Financial Support and Research Services. The university's library system spans multiple campuses and offers extensive resources such as books, e-books, journals, and databases. Additionally, Haaga-Helia features specialised labs for service experience development, software creation, and sales training, along with unique facilities dedicated to e-commerce, robotics, and creative projects. Innovative environments like the Financial Management Escape Room and a student-founded accounting firm provide hands-on learning opportunities.

At the University of Seville, a wide range of facilities and services support the academic community. Orientation materials and guides help new students navigate the campuses, while the Modern Language Center offers comprehensive language instruction, assessment, and certification. The Secretariat for Evaluation and Training enhances research skills and academic development, and various departments provide social and professional support. Community services include legal and psychological assistance, family reconciliation, special

needs support, and health promotion. The university also has extensive sports facilities and occupational health services. Its robust research infrastructure is supported by numerous departments and research centres, including collaborations with the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC).

MCI provides a variety of support services and facilities for students and faculty. Detailed guides offer essential information about the institution and its campuses. Library services, in collaboration with the University Library of Innsbruck, support students throughout their academic journey. The Career Centre bridges the gap between academia and the business world, offering career planning, seminars, and advisory sessions. The Language Centre provides courses in multiple languages, and the Entrepreneurship Centre encourages innovation among students, faculty, and alumni. MCI's Research and Transfer Centres focus on significant topics and collaborate with industry partners to produce practical research outcomes. The institution's IT infrastructure includes state-of-the-art computer rooms, accessible workstations, campus-wide wireless LAN, and digital platforms for organising studies and eLearning.

The Technical University of Košice (TUKE) offers facilities and services that promote academic activities and innovation. Comprehensive guides provide essential information about the university and its campuses. The Data Living Lab integrates real-time market data to support the development of a responsible data economy. TUKE offers extensive datasets for research and education and maintains high-performance computing platforms, including two HPC infrastructures and a central supercomputer, to support research initiatives. The TUKE Startup Centre and Incubator facilitate the development of hi-tech startups and spin-off companies.

Overall, the experts confirm that the consortium have sufficient facilities to deliver the programme at a high standard. This is based on the on-site visit, virtual demonstrations of other partners' facilities, and follow-up discussions, which revealed that teaching staff, administration, and students are very satisfied with the available equipment and facilities. It is also believed that the Innovation Hubs, each with a different focus, will be beneficial for the programme and will have deeper implications once it is fully operational.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

8. Transparency and documentation

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

According to the self-evaluation, UlysseusAI's vital information will be widely accessible. This includes the alliance's website, partner institutions' platforms, and the Finnish Studyinfo.fi portal. These sources will provide detailed insights into schedules, mandatory mobilities, potential study paths, and the process for recognizing acquired knowledge. Moreover, comprehensive course catalogues, admission criteria, and application procedures will be readily available.

Following this evaluation, applicants will receive their admission results via email, along with individual points and the minimum score required for admission. Prior to commencing their studies, admitted students will engage in orientation days and have access to an online "Ulysseus Student's Handbook," offering extensive information for the entire two-year study cycle. Designated counsellors will be on hand to assist during

orientation and mobility phases, while students will also have the opportunity to pursue complementary studies at other Ulysseus partner institutions.

In terms of data sharing, a GDPR-compliant study agreement will be established at the outset of degree studies. This agreement will facilitate the sharing of student data, encompassing contact information, passport copies, and grades, solely for the purpose of streamlining administrative processes within the joint degree program. The consortium states that it is imperative to note that no student data will be disclosed to external parties without explicit student consent, and all information will be handled with the utmost confidentiality and protection.

Experts' evaluation

The experts have analysed the documentation available in the self-evaluation report, the evidence available on the homepage and other sources, and discussed with relevant stakeholders open questions. It became evident that the programme demonstrates a strong commitment to making vital information accessible. Comprehensive course catalogues, admission criteria, and application procedures are available via the alliance's website, partner institutions' platforms, and the Finnish Studyinfo.fi portal, a centralised portal for Finnish higher education institutions. Furthermore, an application webinar was carried out and recorded, so that prospective students have a high level of information before applying. It ensures that prospective students can easily access necessary information, which is a notable strength. Additionally, applicants receive their admission results via email, which includes individual points and the minimum score required for admission, enhancing the transparency of the selection process and fostering trust.

The UlysseusAI homepage includes information on the curriculum's structure, mobility schemes, or admission criteria. However, while it is said to be comprehensive, the documentation does not specify detailed descriptions of courses, learning outcomes, teaching methods, and assessment criteria. This happens at a later stage once enrolled in the programme.

However, the experts believe that the overall dissemination strategy of the ULYSSEUS consortium needs a little adjustment (**Finding 6**). It should provide potential students with the graduation profile of the programme (**Finding 6a**). By providing a clear and detailed graduation profile, the programme can help potential students understand the tangible benefits and outcomes of their education, making it easier for them to make informed decisions about enrolment. In addition, clearly communicate the programme's central theme by explaining the intersection of its modules (**Finding 6b**). This means outlining how different courses and subjects within the programme are interconnected and contribute to a cohesive educational experience. Potential students should be able to grasp how various disciplines and topics within the programme align with the overall theme, enhancing their understanding of the programme's focus and objectives. Also, the programme should inform students about possible organizational challenges, such as problems with the housing situations at some partner institutions (**Finding 6c**). Housing can be a significant concern for students studying abroad or away from home and forewarning them about potential difficulties helps in their preparation and planning. Addressing these challenges upfront can also demonstrate transparency and a commitment to student welfare, which can enhance the programme's appeal and credibility. These adjustments would ensure that prospective students have a comprehensive understanding of what the programme entails and can prepare for any challenges they might face.

Once enrolled in the programme, the coordinators and all relevant stakeholders demonstrated that the programme does well in accommodating the needs of mobile students by providing a "Ulysseus Student's Handbook", orientation days, and designated counsellors to assist during orientation and mobility phases. These resources ensure mobile students are well-informed and supported, enhancing their overall experience.

Conclusion

The criterion is partially fulfilled.

9. Quality assurance

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

Description

According to the self-evaluation, UlysseusAI has established a comprehensive policy for internal quality assurance, integrated into the strategic governance and management framework outlined above. The Internal Quality Assurance Committee plays an essential role in overseeing the internal quality assurance of the joint programme and devising strategies for improvement. This committee comprises one academic representative from each partner university, two delegates from associated partners, and two current edition students of the joint program. It is tasked with implementing various internal evaluation strategies and mechanisms.

The UlysseusAI Internal QA Committee collaborates closely with the Ulysseus body for internal monitoring, known as the RADAR Observatory. This tool provides continuous and precise monitoring and risk assessment of alliance activities. It also proactively identifies emerging key skills and competencies vital for the sustainability of academic endeavours within the Ulysseus community.

In terms of joint procedures and instruments, UlysseusAI has outlined a comprehensive set of detailed measures tailored to various stakeholders involved in the Master's program, including students, alumni, faculty, administrative staff, and external partners. These procedures cover a wide array of aspects, including academic performance analysis, overall satisfaction assessments, module evaluations, mobility assessments, traineeship evaluations, Master's thesis evaluations, graduate outcomes, degree marketing, handling of suggestions and complaints, programme termination, meta-evaluation, and quality enhancement planning.

A dedicated Internal Quality Calendar will be established to ensure efficient implementation of internal quality procedures. This calendar will adhere to Plan, Do, Check, Act (PDCA) quality cycle and will include a yearly action plan for each stakeholder group. This coordinated approach will guarantee that internal quality procedures are executed consistently across the various Ulysseus universities.

Furthermore, UlysseusAI employs surveys targeting students, alumni, staff, and external stakeholders. These surveys play a critical role in identifying the programme's strengths and areas for potential improvement in programme design and teaching methods. To ensure a streamlined and coordinated approach, various survey forms will be digitized and dispatched through the Digital Platform to designated evaluators. Notably, the survey assessing graduate outcomes will align with the EUROGRADUATE survey, supported by the Erasmus + program.

At HH, a structured Feedback system for Master-level students has been established. This system encompasses various surveys, including the Applicant Survey (administered by Admission Services), Study Feedback Survey, Master Student Survey, AVOP Graduand Survey, Alumni Survey, and Career Monitoring Survey. Each survey plays a distinct role in gathering valuable insights and feedback from students at different stages of their academic journey.

Experts' evaluation

The quality assurance processes for the programme encompass the UlysseusAI Internal Quality Assurance Handbook and various surveys. Additionally, the consortium participates in external quality assurance activities. Based on the discussions, it became clear that UlysseusAI has established a comprehensive internal

quality assurance policy, integrated into its strategic governance and management framework. The Internal Quality Assurance Committee (IQAC) plays an important role in overseeing and enhancing the joint programme's quality assurance. This committee includes one academic representative from each partner university, two delegates from associated partners, and two current students of the joint programme. The experts believe that participation of strategic industry partners in relevant committees is essential to enable the academic steering committee to act upon further developments in the discipline (**Finding 7**). This involvement will ensure that the programme remains aligned with industry trends and demands, which is crucial for a joint programme as it combines diverse expertise and resources from various institutions and sectors. The committee is responsible for implementing various internal evaluation strategies and mechanisms.

Furthermore, the IQAC works closely with the Ulyseus monitoring body, known as the RADAR Observatory. This tool provides continuous and precise monitoring and risk assessment of alliance activities. It also identifies emerging key skills and competencies critical for the sustainability of academic endeavours within the Ulyseus community. UlyseusAI has developed a detailed set of procedures tailored for various stakeholders involved in the master's programme, including students, alumni, faculty, administrative staff, and external partners. These procedures cover a wide array of aspects, such as academic performance analysis, satisfaction assessments, module evaluations, mobility assessments, traineeship evaluations, master's thesis evaluations, graduate outcomes, degree marketing, handling of suggestions and complaints, programme termination, meta-evaluation, and quality enhancement planning.

To ensure efficient implementation of internal quality procedures, a dedicated Internal Quality Calendar will be established. This calendar will follow a PDCA quality cycle and include a yearly action plan for each stakeholder group. This coordinated approach will ensure the consistent execution of internal quality procedures across various Ulyseus universities. UlyseusAI employs comprehensive surveys targeting students, alumni, staff, and external stakeholders. These surveys are crucial in identifying the programme's strengths and areas for potential improvement in programme design and teaching methods. To streamline the process, various survey forms will be digitised and distributed through the Digital Platform to designated evaluators. Notably, the survey assessing graduate outcomes will align with the EUROGRADUATE survey, supported by the Erasmus+ programme.

Lastly, a structured feedback system for master-level students has been established. This system encompasses various surveys, including the Applicant Survey (administered by Admission Services), Study Feedback Survey, Master Student Survey, AVOP Graduand Survey, Alumni Survey, and Career Monitoring Survey. Each survey plays a distinct role in gathering valuable insights and feedback from students at different stages of their academic journey. Based on the results of data collection and analysis, partners will agree on an enhancement system for suggesting and implementing improvements. It emphasises the involvement of students, academic, and administrative staff in providing and analysing information and planning follow-up activities. This comprehensive approach ensures that quality assurance processes are robust, systematic, and inclusive, fostering continuous improvement and excellence in the UlyseusAI programme.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

10. Findings

3. It is recommended to create a higher visibility between the intended learning outcomes on the programme level and ULYSSEUS alliances' key goals.
4. Legislative implications on artificial intelligence (e.g., the AI Act) must be adequately represented in the course on digital ethics.
5. To allow students to have a joint understanding at an earlier stage, it is recommended placing the course on digital ethics earlier in the sequence of the programme.
6. Generative AI as the main topic in the upcoming years of the discipline should be structurally implemented in the curriculum. It is suggested starting as an elective and then embedding the topic as a compulsory element.
7. It is recommended to carry out a careful monitoring of the first cohorts' background and the results of the entry exams to align with the admission requirements, if needed.
8. The dissemination strategy of the ULYSSEUS consortium has to be adjusted to provide potential students with the following information on:
 - a. the graduation profile of the programme,
 - b. the central theme of the programme by explaining transparently the intersection of the modules, and
 - c. possible organizational challenges that students might face, e.g., housing situation at some partners in the consortium.
9. It is recommended that strategic industry participation in relevant committees should be integrated to enable the academic steering committee to act upon further developments in the discipline.