



NVAO * THE NETHERLANDS

EUROPEAN JOINT MASTER IN HEALTH ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT (EU-HEM)

Erasmus University Rotterdam, Management Center Innsbruck, University of Bologna,
University of Oslo

PANEL REPORT

26 MAY 2022



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UNIVERSITY OF BOLOGNA, UNIVERSITY OF OSLO

NVAO RE-ACCREDITATION ACCORDING TO THE EUROPEAN
APPROACH FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE OF JOINT PROGRAMMES

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1 Executive summary

This report is issued by the panel appointed by the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) and assesses the conditions for re-accreditation of the academic international joint master programme 'European Joint Master in Health Economics and Management' (Eu-HEM) as submitted by the Erasmus University Rotterdam (the Netherlands) on behalf of the Eu-HEM consortium which also features the Management Center Innsbruck (Austria), the University of Bologna (Italy) and the University of Oslo (Norway).

The application concerns a joint English-language master's degree of 120 European Credits (EC), which is offered as a full-time two-year integrated multi-university programme in Italy, Austria, Norway and the Netherlands. Given these specific features, the panel based its assessment on the standards of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes in the European Higher Education Area of October 2014, approved by the EHEA ministers in May 2015, which in turn are based on the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance.

The application documentation, programme materials and discussions with delegations from all consortium partners have provided the panel with a comprehensive view of the programme. The site visit was organised online because of the Covid-restrictions. It became clear to the panel that the programme is implemented by a group of highly motivated consortium partners with a shared ambition to prepare students to play a role as future actors for change, leaders and decision makers in the health care sector. Based on the documentation presented and the site visit on 24 March 2022, the panel concludes that the Eu-HEM programme meets almost all standards of the assessment framework. Consequently, the panel's overall assessment of the quality of the Eu-HEM programme is positive.

Eu-HEM is a programme featuring intensive cooperation between four renowned universities in four countries, whose national frameworks enable the institutions to participate in the programme. The involved partners are recognised public institutions with joint responsibility for the design and implementation of the programme. The panel applauds the strong and dedicated cooperation between the partners. The consortium agreement covers all the required components.

The Eu-HEM programme combines a strong disciplinary identity with critical thinking, a holistic perspective and intercultural competencies. The documentation shows how the intended learning outcomes (ILOs) are aligned with level 7 of the European Qualifications Framework (master's level). The ILOs have been translated into educational objectives of specialisation tracks and courses. Currently, the ILOs are not yet fully aligned with the new curriculum and with each other. The panel therefore encourages the programme to proceed with the revised formulation of ILOs and to harmonise the sets of track specific ILOs. The panel considers that the learning outcomes cover the required knowledge, skills and competencies in the relevant disciplinary fields of health economics and management, based on input and feedback from the professional field. The learning outcomes include attention to research skills, which is appropriate for an academic master's programme. The programme produces good results. The panel studied a representative sample of theses. They convincingly show that the learning outcomes are achieved. The panel notes that alumni and workfield appreciate Eu-HEM as a valuable preparation for a wide range of positions in the international healthcare sector.

The curriculum structure and contents are appropriate for an academic master's programme. The first three semesters consist of taught courses, while the fourth is devoted to the thesis. The panel appreciates that the curriculum has been designed by all partners and meets the aims of the programme, in line with the expertise of the partners involved. The programme has mechanisms to work towards coherence within the curriculum. Feedback and developments in the field have resulted in a new improved curriculum, implemented per September 2021. The panel sees three points that need to be addressed to be fully compliant for this standard. The panel strongly advises the consortium board to pay attention to the balance between health economics and health management, to include qualitative research methods in the first combined semester, and to pay more attention to specific soft skills. The panel was assured that the implementation of the new curriculum will be closely monitored and that these recommendations will be addressed together with any other issues that may arise.

The Eu-HEM programme applies the European Credit Transfer System properly. The overall workload of the programme meets the standards. The main challenge is the difference in workload per university and, therefore, per track. The panel advises the programme management to continue its efforts to harmonise the workload across the partner universities and tracks and to ensure that students know what to expect at each location academically and culturally before the start of a semester.

The admission requirements are in line with the programme's objectives and clearly stated. The selection process is well laid out and managed. The recognition of previous qualifications and prior learning is adequately provided for in the Eu-HEM programme.

The programme design corresponds with the ILOs; it truly provides the intended international, intercultural and multidisciplinary learning experience. The programme is student-centred and students feel supported and stimulated by their teachers. Teachers use different didactic methods, organising both large and small-scale classes. The variation in students' backgrounds is used effectively in the courses. The programme takes account of personal circumstances and offers assistance to students with special needs. Appropriate examination rules and regulations are in place, adequately combining an overarching assessment policy with national legislation and local policies. The local Boards of Examiners and the Joint Quality Enhancement Committee ensure consistency of application among the partners. The assessment of the learning outcomes in courses and thesis corresponds with the ILOs and meets the quality criteria of validity, reliability and transparency.

The Eu-HEM support mechanism works well. The student handbook and the local programme coordinators provide essential information, social events are organised to make students feel at home and students can turn to the local programme coordinators with all their questions or issues. To support students when they move around the different universities there is room for improvement related to information about immigration, bank account, housing etc. It is important to ensure adequate response times from administrators when students have questions.

The CVs of teaching staff show that all members of the teaching staff are specialised in the field of health economics and/or health management. They combine extensive teaching and research and can connect the theories included in the curriculum to contemporary challenges in healthcare. Their commitment is commended by students and alumni. A point of attention is the high workload of the teaching staff. This needs serious monitoring and adequate measures to prevent an overload. The facilities at the four partner universities are appropriate and adequate.

The transparency and documentation meet the expectations. Documentation is available on the partners' websites and in the student handbook. Further alignment between the universities' information is possible since information about the programme on the webpages of the partner institutions differs. The information in the student handbook is generally comprehensive, but prior to a semester students need more information on practical issues related to their new place of study.

The system of quality assessment is well-developed. The joint internal quality assurance process is applied properly, and external feedback is also considered as an instrument for improvement. Eu-HEM has good feedback mechanisms. It shows an openness to improvements and a clear will to tackle the challenges that obviously arise in a joint programme.

The panel is convinced of the quality of the European Joint Master in Health Economics and Management. Consequently, the panel advises NVAO to take a positive decision regarding the quality of the academic European Joint Master in Health Economics and Management at Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands, Management Center Innsbruck in Innsbruck, Austria, University of Bologna, Italy and University of Oslo, Norway.

The Hague, 26 May 2022

On behalf of the Accreditation panel convened to assess the academic European Joint Master in Health Economics and Management at the Erasmus University Rotterdam,

Prof. Dr. Gerda Croiset
(Chair)

Dr. Marianne van der Weiden
(Secretary)

2 Introduction

In September 2021, the NVAO received a request for an accreditation procedure regarding the master programme of academic orientation (wo-master) European Joint Master in Health Economics and Management (Eu-HEM). As this concerns a joint programme issued by four higher education institutions in the Netherlands, Austria, Italy and Norway, this request was submitted on behalf of the Eu-HEM Consortium by the Erasmus University Rotterdam.

Given the particular features of this application, the NVAO convened an international panel of experts consisting of:

Prof. Dr. Gerda Croiset (NL), *chair*, Professor of Education and Training in Health and Life Sciences, University Medical Center Groningen;

Prof. Dr. Bjørn Erik Mørk (NO), Professor in Innovation and Program Director for Healthcare Management at the Department of Strategy and Entrepreneurship, BI Norwegian Business School, Norway;

Prof. Dr. Caroline Baan (NL), Endowed Professor of Integrated Health Care, Tranzo/Tilburg University;

Prof. Dr. Judit Simon (AT), Professor of Health Economics, Head of Department of Health Economics, Deputy Head of Center for Public Health, Coordinator Doctoral Programme Public Health, Center for Public Health, Medical University of Vienna;

Davide Busato (IT), *student member*, student Medicine and Surgery University of Padua, Italy.

The composition of the panel reflects the expertise deemed necessary by NVAO for this accreditation exercise. The panel composition is also in line with the procedural requirements in the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes (C.2. Review Panel). On behalf of NVAO, ir. Lineke van Bruggen was responsible for the coordination of the assessment process. The secretary, dr. Marianne van der Weiden, drafted the panel report in close cooperation with all panel members and in agreement with the chair. All panel members and the secretary signed a statement of independence and confidentiality.

The panel based its assessment on the Standards for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), issued in October 2014 and approved by the EHEA ministers in May 2015. This European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes should be applied for quality assurance of international joint programmes if some of the cooperating higher education institutions require external quality assurance at programme level. The standards to be assessed are based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG). This procedure allows the possibility that only one procedure can lead to accreditation in several countries.

The panel members studied the application documentation of the programme and reported their preliminary findings before the site visit to the secretary. The secretary collected them and processed them for the preparatory meetings on 25 January and 11 March 2022. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the re-restrictions on physical meetings, it was decided to organise both the preparatory meetings and the site visit as online meetings. At the preparatory meetings, the panel discussed the preliminary findings, identified the most important issues for discussion, gathered points that required further information by the consortium prior to the site visit, and prepared the sessions with the delegations.

The online site visit took place on 24 March 2022. The panel discussed with delegations of the management of the consortium and the programme, as well as with lecturers, members of the examination board, students, graduates and the professional field. The schedule of the site visit is presented in annex 2. Annex 3 lists the materials made available by the programme before and during the site visit.

Immediately after the discussions with the delegations, the panel discussed the findings and formulated its considerations and preliminary conclusions separately for each standard. These are based on observations during the site visit and on the assessment of the programme documents. At the end of the site visit, the chair presented the panel's preliminary conclusions to the representatives of the programme.

Based on the findings, considerations and conclusions, the secretary wrote a draft advisory report that was first presented to the panel members. After the panel members had commented on the draft report, the chair endorsed the report.

On 19 April 2022, the advisory report was sent to the institution, which was given the opportunity to respond to any factual inaccuracies in the report. The institution replied on 22 May 2022. Subsequently, the final report was endorsed by the panel chair. The panel composed its advice fully independently and offered it to NVAO on 26 May 2022.

Description of the programme

2.1 General

Countries	The Netherlands, Austria, Italy, Norway
Institutions	Erasmus University Rotterdam (the Netherlands); Management Center Innsbruck (Austria); University of Bologna (Italy); University of Oslo (Norway).
Programme	European Joint Master in Health Economics and Management
Level	master
Orientation	academic (wo)
Specialisations	Economics & Policy Economic Evaluation Management of Healthcare Institutions Population Health Management
Degree	European Joint Master in Health Economics and Management
Locations	Rotterdam (the Netherlands), Innsbruck (Austria), Bologna (Italy) and Oslo (Norway)
Study Load	120 EC
Fields of Study	Health and Welfare (ISCED Field 900), Economics (ISCED Field 311) and Management and Administration (ISCED Field 413)

2.2 Profile of the consortium

The application is filed by a consortium of four higher education institutions in four countries: (1) Erasmus University Rotterdam in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, (2) Management Center Innsbruck in Innsbruck, Austria, (3) University of Bologna in Bologna, Italy and (4) University of Oslo in Oslo, Norway. The partners signed a first consortium agreement in 2015 and a renewed agreement in 2020.

The degree is awarded by these four academic and degree awarding partners. The Erasmus University Rotterdam has been the coordinating partner from the beginning. The European Joint Master in Health Economics and Management (Eu-HEM) had its first student cohort in 2015. The number of students has grown from 31 in 2015-2016 to 97 in 2020-2021.

Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR) is a young university (the original school started in 1913, its university status dates back to 1973) in the west of the Netherlands, with a distinct global perspective. It offers a variety of degree programmes in the areas of arts, social sciences, health and life sciences, law and economics, to more than 35,000 students. Eu-HEM is part of the Erasmus School of Health Policy & Management.

Management Center Innsbruck (MCI) is a privately organised business school in Innsbruck, Austria, founded in 1995/96. MCI offers study programmes leading to bachelor and master degrees as well as postgraduate programmes in the domains of economy & society and technology & life sciences.

University of Bologna (UoB) is considered to be the oldest university in the Western world, dating back to 1088. It offers more than 250 bachelor, master and PhD degrees in all academic domains and, in addition, a range of educational programmes such as summer and winter schools and lifelong learning programmes.

University of Oslo (UiO) is Norway's oldest institution for research and higher education, with 28,000 students and 7,000 employees. UiO celebrated its 200th anniversary in 2011. UiO has 8 faculties, 2 museums and several centers. In addition, UiO has 10 Norwegian Centres of Excellence.

2.3 Profile of the programme

Eu-HEM combines the strengths of the four partner universities in the fields of health economics and health management in a joint master's degree programme. In this programme, students acquire knowledge and insight into the disciplines that are relevant for 21st century analysts and managers in the healthcare sector. Additionally, students will develop skills to apply in an international setting and in different cultural environments.

The programme is a two-year full-time study programme and amounts to 120 European Credits (EC). Throughout the programme, the language of instruction is English. The programme consists of four semesters of 30 EC each. The first semester is a broad multidisciplinary introduction during a joint first semester taught at UoB, offering fundamental courses (health economics, healthcare management, international health law, health policy, healthcare systems and research methods). The second and third semesters are dedicated to the specialisation tracks: (1) Economics and Policy, offered by UiO and UoB, (2) Economic Evaluation, offered by EUR and UiO, (3) Management of Healthcare Institutions, offered by UiO and MCI, and (4) Population Health Management, offered by MCI and EUR. These four specialisations prepare students to play a role as future actors for change, leaders and decision makers in the health care sector. The fourth semester is dedicated to the master thesis, written at one of the track partner locations. The thesis can have a monodisciplinary or multidisciplinary nature, as long as it fits within the student's specialisation track and incorporates perspectives from adjacent disciplines. Students can choose to combine their thesis with an internship. In addition, a joint Summer School is organised at the end of the second semester and a Career Event during the fourth semester, which offer students an intensive programme with educational and social activities and some soft skills training. During courses and events in the two-year programme, special attention is paid to skills training, group bonding and connection/networking with the professional field, including alumni and external stakeholders.

Schematic overview of the curriculum (per September 2021)

Track	Semester			
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
	Fundamentals	Specialisation		Thesis
Economics & Policy	UoB	UiO	UoB	One of track partner locations
Economic Evaluation		EUR	UiO	
Management of Healthcare Institutions		UiO	MCI	
Population Health Management		MCI	EUR	

3 Assessment per standard

In this chapter the panel assesses the Eu-HEM programme according to the standards of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes in the EHEA. The criteria for each standard are mentioned. Per standard the panel presents a brief outline of its findings, as well as the considerations that led the panel to a concluding judgement on a three-point scale: the programme either meets, partially meets or does not meet the standard. At the end of this chapter and based on its judgements on the individual standards, the panel issues an overall conclusion on the quality of the entire programme. This conclusion can be either positive, conditionally positive or negative.

3.1 Standard 1: Eligibility

3.1.1 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.

Outline of findings

All four consortium partner universities are recognised as higher education institutions in their own country and authorised to provide a joint programme and to award a joint degree to students who successfully complete all requirements. All are also affiliated with the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR). Accreditation processes are harmonised by using the European Approach Framework, whereby self-evaluation reports can be used in Austria, Norway and the Netherlands. Italy does not yet recognise the European Approach and relies on its own accreditation process.

Considerations

The panel considers that the partners who offer the Eu-HEM programme are entitled to do so and that completing the programme will lead to a recognised and accredited master's degree of academic orientation.

Conclusion

The panel assesses that the EU-HEM programme **meets** standard 1.1, status.

3.1.2 Joint design and delivery

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

Outline of findings

The Eu-HEM programme is offered jointly. The programme is the result of a long-term collaboration between the four partner universities. This collaboration started with student exchanges, followed by a multiple degree period and later evolved into developing a joint degree master's programme focussing on health economics and health management. The Consortium Board is responsible for the organisation of the Consortium, for the collaboration between the four partner universities, and for ensuring compliance with the provisions of the Joint Master Degree Programme. The Consortium Board consists of one voting representative from each of the partner universities, plus a Chairperson appointed by EUR. It meets every three weeks and additionally when needed. Local programme coordinators and local programme directors meet regularly, and any issues may be raised with the Consortium Board. A Joint Quality Enhancement Committee (JQEC), composed of a representative per partner university and appointed by the Consortium Board, monitors the quality of the programme. The Consortium Board is currently discussing how to involve student representation in their meetings.

The entire curriculum has been designed together by teaching and coordinating staff from all four partner universities. Besides the joint curriculum design, jointness is also visible in the joint delivery of the four semesters, the Summer School, Career Event and occasionally in individual courses. All partners share the best knowledge they have, and courses and tracks fit each partner's strengths and expertise. Jointness is also visible in other elements of the programme: joint recruitment and selection, welcoming event, graduation ceremony and diploma. The local programme coordinators work together closely and are always available to answer students' questions. For the sustainability of the programme the equal involvement and contribution of all partner universities is essential. The involvement in tracks and the numbers of students per country seem to differ. The panel feels that this is a point for further consideration by the consortium.

Based on an evaluation of the programme and starting with the cohort 2021-2023, Eu-HEM organises a joint first semester at UoB for all students and has reduced the number of tracks from six to four. For the students, this contributes to mutual bonding and the experience of a joint programme from the start of the programme. The joint first semester helps the students to become a cohesive group and to achieve a common knowledge level in fundamental elements of health economics and management. The panel agrees that this is an improvement: in previous cohorts students started at one of the four partner universities and only met their colleagues after the first semester. Each track is delivered by a combination of two partner universities, followed by a thesis trajectory where the supervisor and second assessor are from different partner universities, using a joint assessment procedure and form. The Erasmus School of Health Policy & Management (ESHPM) examination committee supervises the thesis assessment procedure on behalf of the Consortium Board.

In all interviews the importance of cooperation was stressed and the new first semester at UoB was considered an improvement by all involved. The main goal is to have students all meet together. Although some lecturers come in from other partners, essentially all teaching is done by UoB staff. The panel wonders if ownership of all partner universities is sufficient when they are not involved in teaching and assessment and if they develop a sufficient understanding of each other's practice to build on it in the specialisation tracks. The first semester is clearly an improvement, but to further strengthen the joint delivery more faculty from the partners could be considered. Teaching and co-teaching across institutions can also enable those involved to learn more about different ways of teaching and interacting with the students. The programme management recognises that this may be a point of attention since this is the first year of the revised programme and may require an extra coordination effort. The panel notes that the information on the webpages of the different partners can be further aligned to make the jointness clearer. To date there is some variation in the descriptions.

Considerations

The panel considers that all partners are effectively involved, both at the level of governance, organisation of the programme and the actual teaching, although this needs to remain a point of attention for the consortium. All tracks and the related thesis trajectory are organised by two partners and all partners participate in the joint events (Summer School, Career Event) and administrative procedures (such as recruitment and graduation). It could be seen throughout the discussions held during the site visit that there is a dedicated team behind the programme to design, create, deliver and update the programme. The consortium has a strong joint management team, all members declare their engagement.

Conclusion

The panel assesses that the Eu-HEM programme **meets** standard 1.2, joint design and delivery.

3.1.3 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.

Outline of findings

The panel has taken note of the Consortium Agreement. A first agreement was signed by all partners in 2015 and updated in 2018, covering the first six cohorts (2015-2017 through 2020-2022). A new Consortium Agreement, with considerable changes to the management, content, delivery and viability of the programme, was signed in January 2021 and came into force in the academic year 2021-2022. The agreement covers the denomination of the degree(s) awarded in the programme; the admissions and selection procedures for students; the mobility of students and teachers; and examination regulations, student assessment methods, recognition of credits and degree awarding procedures in the consortium. Also, the coordination and responsibilities of the partners involved regarding management and financial organisation (including funding, sharing of costs and income, etc.) are described.

The panel concludes that co-ordination and responsibilities are well-established and that admission and selection procedures are clearly laid down. The mobility of students and teachers is regulated and facilitated.

Considerations

The panel considers the consortium agreement a comprehensive document, in which the terms and conditions of the joint programme as well as each partner's responsibilities are clearly laid down. All relevant points are covered.

Conclusion

The panel assesses that the Eu-HEM programme **meets** standard 1.3, cooperation agreement.

3.2 Standard 2: Learning Outcomes

3.2.1 Level {ESG 1.2}

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

Outline of findings

The programme combines a strong disciplinary identity with critical thinking, a holistic perspective and intercultural competencies. Eu-HEM uses a three-step approach: (1) train yourself, (2) understand others, and (3) (imp)act together, and has formulated intended learning outcomes (ILOs) at programme and track level. While designing and later improving the Eu-HEM curriculum, the national requirements were applied. The ILOs have been established with input and feedback provided by stakeholders from the healthcare sector, who emphasised the importance of complementary skills, such as critical assessment, holistic thinking and digital skills, in addition to the core identity in health economics and/or management. The ILOs are operationalised in learning objectives per course. A matrix shows how the ILOs and learning objectives are linked together: the ILOs are covered in the compulsory courses and the joint components, which guarantees that all students, irrespective of their track, will be able to attain the learning outcomes. The ILOs are aligned with the master's level (level 7 of the European Qualifications Framework).

There is some room for improvement in this area because knowledge, skills and general competencies are made explicit to a varying degree in some of the courses in the different tracks. The focus on knowledge seems to be stronger than on skills and general competencies. The number of learning outcomes per track also varies substantially. The panel thinks that alignment between the current ILOs and the new curriculum can be further developed. The panel was informed that, as a next step, Eu-HEM intends to use the structure of the Dublin descriptors for its ILOs. By structuring the ILO's according to the categories 'Knowledge and understanding', 'Applying knowledge and understanding', 'Making judgments', 'Communication' and 'Lifelong learning skills', it will be possible to further specify the ILOs and to make Eu-HEM's unique selling points more visible. For example, to highlight aspects such as skills

(personal, professional and academic skills) and the link with the professional field. As soon as the first cohort of students has completed the renewed programme, a curriculum evaluation will be performed and used to further improve the programme. This, in combination with the previous point of formulating ILOs along the lines of the Dublin Descriptors, will probably lead to a different (and sometimes more specific) way of presenting the overall and track-specific ILOs. The aim is to work with a set of ILOs that is as clear, consistent and aligned as possible, which serves as the basis for future-proof education and the lifelong learning of students.

Considerations

The panel considers that the learning outcomes are clearly set out and of the appropriate master's level. They have been adequately translated into educational objectives of (components of) the curriculum. Currently, the ILOs are not fully aligned with the new curriculum and each other. The panel encourages the programme to proceed with the revised formulation of ILOs and to harmonise the sets of track specific ILOs.

Conclusion

The panel assesses that the Eu-HEM programme **meets** standard 2.1, level.

3.2.2 Disciplinary Field

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

Outline of findings

Eu-HEM aims to provide the upcoming generation of leaders who will shape the international health sector, with the skills, knowledge and competencies that they need to excel in the developing health care market. Students come in with diverse educational, language and cultural backgrounds. The first semester offers fundamental courses to level the playing field and provides enabling tools, methods and concepts as required in the specialisation tracks. The students get acquainted with methods and key concepts in health economics, health management, statistics, econometrics, and international law/health systems. In the second and third semester, students develop their specialisation in one of the four tracks: (1) Economics & Policy, (2) Management of Healthcare Institutions, (3) Economic Evaluation of Healthcare, and (4) Population Health Management. Previous cohorts could choose between six tracks, but evaluation showed that some of these showed too much overlap. Students confirmed in their meeting with the panel that it is now easier to make the right choice for a specialisation. The fourth semester is devoted to the development and writing of the master thesis. This trains students to formulate a research question related to their track, perform a methodologically sound research and write a scientific text, discussing results and limitations of their research.

During the site visit the panel discussed the balance between management and economics in the programme. The programme staff emphasised that both disciplines are important elements and that, while track specialisations are focused on either management or economics, in the end students have a broad base in both, which uniquely characterises the Eu-HEM master. Looking at the curriculum, the panel thinks that economics is emphasised more strongly than management (see paragraph 4.3.1). The panel was informed that the JQEC looks at the overall programme, including alignment between tracks and any overarching issues. The panel is aware that it is not easy to harmonise between tracks in a joint programme and commends the consortium that this process has been started. The joint first semester and the reduction to four tracks have already been important steps. The panel encourages the consortium to continue along this way.

Considerations

The panel considers that the learning outcomes cover the required knowledge, skills and competencies in the relevant disciplinary fields of economics and management, based on input and feedback from the professional field. The learning outcomes include attention to research skills, which is appropriate for an academic master's programme. The balance between health economics and management is a point of attention and is addressed at programme level.

Conclusion

The panel assesses that the Eu-HEM programme **meets** standard 2.2, disciplinary field.

3.2.3 Achievement [ESG 1.2]

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

Outline of findings

Throughout the programme, students are tested for achieving the learning goals of the individual courses by appropriate types of exams (written or oral form and/or by means of a practical) and need to pass all exams with a sufficient grade to graduate from the programme. Students apply the knowledge and skills acquired during the programme to write their final thesis, of which the learning goals complement the overall programme ILOs with a focus on scientific research, analysis, and writing. The overall ILOs regarding multidisciplinary should be achieved in every thesis and are generally reflected in the discussion section. Monodisciplinary subjects must be combined with a multiperspective view, incorporating views from other disciplines.

Before the site visit, the panel studied a sample of fourteen theses, with a representative distribution of grades. The panel confirms that the theses are in line with the ILOs and show the required master level. The theses address a wide range of often highly relevant topics and are well-structured. Grade and comments are generally in line. Overall, the panel agrees with the grades awarded and the feedback provided by supervisor and second assessor. Supervisors tended to grade a bit higher than the second assessor, but the four-eyes principle apparently works, resulting in a fair grade. In their discussion with the panel, the teachers mentioned that the students' scientific skills are relatively strong and that their theses more than usual result in a publication.

The achievement of the learning outcomes is corroborated by the positive feedback from the alumni, both in surveys and during the site visit. Alumni told the panel that they appreciate the broad perspective of Eu-HEM, combined with its scientific view, technical and social skills, international character and overview of different health care systems. Some have found a job in the broad field of health care, such as in a pharmaceutical company or a national health service, while others continue their research as a PhD candidate. Eu-HEM and alumni remain in touch, informing each other about vacancies and networking opportunities.

The workfield representatives with whom the panel met during the site visit, confirmed that they want to employ the Eu-HEM graduates and consider them a great potential. They value the graduates' methodological strength and international experience and the programme's emphasis on diversity and inclusion. In their view, more attention to practical skills would be welcome, preferably in a substantial internship (see also paragraph 4.3.1).

Considerations

The panel considers that the programme produces good results. The theses convincingly show that the learning outcomes are achieved. The panel notes that alumni and workfield appreciate Eu-HEM as a valuable preparation for a wide range of positions in the international healthcare sector.

Conclusion

The panel assesses that the Eu-HEM programme **meets** standard 2.3, achievement.

3.2.4 Regulated Profession

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

Outline of findings

This standard is not relevant for the assessment of the EU-HEM programme.

Conclusion

The panel issues no conclusion as standard 2.4, regulated professions, is not applicable.

3.3 Standard 3: Study programme [ESG 1.2]

3.3.1 Curriculum

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

Outline of findings

The Eu-HEM programme is a full-time programme of 120 EC, characterised by international mobility, and is delivered over four semesters of 30 EC. The first three semesters consist of taught courses, while the fourth is devoted to the thesis. As mentioned above, in September 2021, Eu-HEM introduced a renewed curriculum. Based on recommendations from previous (local) accreditations, an interim programme evaluation, assessments with students, alumni and professionals, needs were identified and translated into specific objectives for the further development of the Eu-HEM curriculum. This has resulted in (i) offering the 1st semester at only one location, Bologna, (ii) reducing the number of specialisation tracks to four, (iii) adapting the content of the specialisation tracks to current developments in the healthcare sector, and (iv) increasing focus on skills training and employability. This is considered an improvement by all concerned, as appeared from the discussions during the site visit.

Each semester consists of compulsory and elective courses. For their elective courses, students are given the choice from a set of two to six options. Some courses are specifically designed for Eu-HEM, such as the course on design thinking in the track Population Health Management, while others are part of a local master programme. The programme management explained that they look carefully at what courses fit in the programme. In those cases, students may be in class together with local students or the teacher organises separate classes, slightly adapting the contents to better fit the Eu-HEM student population. Teachers and students agree that the interaction between both groups of students is an advantage, providing a broader context and helping students to feel at home at the university.

Having studied the curriculum, the panel observes that health economics seems to dominate the programme and that management and leadership seem to receive relatively limited attention in the health management track even though one of the missions for the programme is the development of transformational skills. Even though there is much relevant literature in the curriculum for the healthcare management track, these publications are mostly from health management journals. Many internationally leading scholars in the domain of management and leadership conducting research in healthcare publish in top-tier journals on these topics in general, such as the Academy of Management Journals, Organization Science, Organization Studies, Human Relations, Administrative Science Quarterly, Journal of Management Studies, Social Science and Medicine and so forth. Such publications are in a too limited extent represented in the curriculum.

It also strikes the panel that qualitative research methods are not part of the first semester nor in all the different tracks. Qualitative methods can be relevant in all four tracks, and the students and alumni indicate that the training in qualitative methods is very limited and is present in only one track at the moment. Often this is compensated for by faculty who offer extra training. The panel advises the consortium board to give attention to qualitative research methods in the first combined semester.

The one-week Summer School at the end of the first year focusses on discovering individual ambitions, introduces students to the job market through workshops and guest lectures and helps students to prepare their thesis research. Students may choose their own topic and can consult a database with a variety of topics chosen by previous students. They report no difficulties regarding this process. During the Summer School students learn to generate a research question and select a conceptual framework and appropriate research method, working towards a thesis proposal. Mid of the fourth semester a Career Event will be organised. The Winter School at the end of the first semester, which was part of the old curriculum, was discontinued; the bonding between students and the development of a multidisciplinary view are now largely addressed during the joint first semester. The

panel agrees that both the Summer School and the Career Event contribute to further development of students' competencies and transformational skills.

Students and alumni feel that the programme's attention to social and employability skills is a strong point. Internships give students the chance to gain practical experience in the healthcare sector and are much appreciated. An internship can be part of a student's portfolio as an elective course during a track or be combined with the thesis research. It appears that approximately a third of the students include an internship in their studies. Since the demands of an internship and a thesis research project are not always aligned, this may create tensions. The work field representatives plead for a separate internship, in which they would like to be involved at an early stage. The programme management recognises that students want to be well-prepared for the job market and the potential conflict of interest between thesis supervisor and internship provider. They explain that the programme prepares students for a position in the healthcare sector not only through internships, but also by simulations in courses on real-life problems and cases and through the Career Event (previously through the Winter School). The panel acknowledges the positive balance between knowledge and skills in the Eu-HEM curriculum, but would like the programme committee to reconsider the importance of internships. Regarding consultancy skills, the work field representatives mentioned that such professional skills and paying attention to the perspective from others such as clients require more listening and presenting skills.

Considerations

The panel appreciates that the curriculum has been designed by all partners and meets the aims of the programme, in line with the expertise of the partners involved and the learning objectives. It is valuable that there are regular coordination meetings between partners about the structure and content of the curriculum (see also paragraph 4.1.2) and that the programme is adapted in response to feedback and developments in the field. This has resulted in the new improved curriculum.

The panel sees three points that need to be addressed to be fully compliant for this standard. The panel strongly advises the consortium board to pay attention to the balance between health economics and health management, to include qualitative research methods in the first combined semester, and to pay more attention to specific soft skills including more opportunities for internships independently from these placements. The panel was assured that the implementation of the new curriculum will be closely monitored and that these recommendations will be addressed together with any other issues that may arise.

Conclusion

The panel assesses that the Eu-HEM programme **partially meets** standard 3.1, curriculum.

3.3.2 Credits

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

Outline of findings

The Eu-HEM curriculum consists of four semesters of 30 EC each. All courses in semester one consist of 5 EC. This also applies to most courses in the specialisation tracks. Some of the courses in Oslo and Bologna are 10 EC. The distribution of credits per course and semester are determined by the Consortium Board, considering the local requirements of the different partner universities. The curriculum overview provides a detailed overview of the EC distribution.

Considerations

The panel considers that the Eu-HEM programme applies the ECTS properly with regard to the overall programme and the respective programme components.

Conclusion

The panel assesses that the Eu-HEM programme **meets** standard 3.2, credits.

3.3.3 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.

Outline of findings

The workload of the total programme amounts to 120 ECTS. Out of these 120 ECTS, 90 ECTS credits are assigned to the second cycle level, namely the credits collected during the specialisation tracks in the 2nd and 3rd semesters, and the thesis in the 4th semester. Whether the workload experienced by students conforms to the number of ECTS assigned to each course is monitored by management information, course evaluations, (informal) brown bag meetings, meetings with local programme coordinators and student representatives. Overall, the workload of the Eu-HEM programme seems appropriate. The self-evaluation report (SER) mentions that students generally evaluate the workload between 'reasonable' and 'good', and do not report spending considerably more hours on courses than what is suitable for the amount of ECTS. Also, particularly in the more recent years, a large proportion of students have graduated within two years. Students told the panel, however, that the workload within and between tracks differs substantially, partly because of cultural differences in teaching approach. The students indicate that Rotterdam is known for having the highest workload. The programme management is aware of this divergence and has already worked on harmonisation, such as by introducing the joint first semester. They add that experiencing the different approaches, including workload, first-hand per country is one of the beauties of the programme and that the job market values this international and intercultural learning experience. The panel advises to be explicit about the workload per university and track so that students know in advance what to expect, and to work on further harmonisation.

Considerations

The panel considers that the overall workload of the programme meets the standards. The workload is well-monitored by the programme's bodies, as are the average completion time and completion rates. The main challenge is the difference in workload per university. The panel advises the programme management to continue its efforts to harmonise the workload across the partner universities, although cultural difference will probably not lead to full harmonisation. It is, therefore, important that students know what to expect before the start of a semester and before choosing their specialisation track.

Conclusion

The panel assesses that the Eu-HEM programme **meets** standard 3.3, workload.

3.4 Standard 4: Admission and Recognition [ESG 1.4]

3.4.1 Admission

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

Outline of findings

Eu-HEM is an international programme, open to students from all disciplinary backgrounds. Prospective students can find all necessary information about the (pre)application, selection procedure and enrolment to the Eu-HEM programme on the Eu-HEM website. Applications from students with a GPA of 4.0 or higher are automatically placed on the list of qualified applicants. These students also get 0.5 extra points if they submitted a motivation letter. Applications of students with a GPA lower than 2.5 will be rejected. Applications of students whose GPA is between 2.5 and 4.0 will be evaluated by the Joint Admissions Board (JAB), consisting of the Consortium Board Members, the Local Programme Coordinator of UiO and the Secretary of the Consortium Board. The minutes and results of the JAB meetings are documented and available for all partner universities. Non-accepted applicants are informed in what way they did not meet the required standards.

Strong features of the joint selection and admission procedure are the centralised handling of the application process (delegated to UiO), the online application portal, the four-eyes principle and the introduction of objective criteria for checking motivation letters (each motivation letter is assessed by two members based on five criteria). The programme is open to all disciplinary backgrounds and to applicants from all countries. A harmonised, minimum English language proficiency is a requirement.

Following the recommendation of the Accreditation Committee in 2013 to increase the student population, more students have been gradually invited to join the programme up to a maximum of around 80 students. In 2020, 174 applicants were offered enrolment, 97 started the programme. The difference can be explained by the fact that students regularly apply to more than one programme and that some can only register when they receive a grant. The programme management clarified that the numbers vary between years and that 80 is not a strict maximum. They feel they have become better, based on experience, to estimate how many applicants will actually register.

Considerations

The panel considers that the admission requirements are in line with the programme's objectives and clearly stated. The selection process is well laid out and managed, building on the UiO experience.

Conclusion

The panel assesses that the Eu-HEM programme **meets** standard 4.1, admission.

3.4.2 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.

Outline of findings

The selection criteria, recognition of previous education and qualifications, and the admissions procedure (as described in paragraph 4.4.1) follow Norwegian laws. These laws are in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention and its subsidiary texts.

Considerations

The panel considers that the recognition of previous qualifications and prior learning is adequately provided for in the Eu-HEM programme.

Conclusion

The panel assesses that the EU-HEM programme **meets** standard 4.2, recognition.

3.5 Standard 5: Learning, Teaching and Assessment [ESG 1.3]

3.5.1 Learning and teaching

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

Outline of findings

The joint learning and teaching environment of Eu-HEM is based on multidisciplinary curriculum design, a market-oriented teaching approach and an international curriculum. This approach is implemented across all four partner universities, but the more specific teaching approaches applied may differ, reflecting local customs and regulations. For example, at MCI, students spend most of their day in class, whereas at EUR and UiO, students spend half of the time on self-study. Students describe these differences as an integral part of their international and intercultural learning experience. In order to facilitate and stimulate sociocultural integration, especially between EU/EEA and non-EU/EEA students, a number of Eu-HEM courses are followed together with local students from other (international) master programmes. Students indicate they appreciate this approach: meeting students from other cultures and with different study experiences adds depth to the programme.

Teachers use a variety of didactic approaches, catering to the different student backgrounds, combining larger group sessions and traditional lectures with small scale groups (work groups, computer labs, negotiation game), allowing for more interaction with students. Interesting in the Eu-HEM students are their different backgrounds and skills and ways of participating in discussions. Teachers use these differences in their courses and note how students complement each other, which leads to fruitful discussions. Teachers guide their students with personal feedback and indicate that they learn a lot from their students as well.

This is confirmed by the students and alumni: they value that their teachers pay specific attention to what students want to learn and that they are very supportive. The cultural competencies of teachers are strong and they go the extra mile, organising workshops, suggesting internship opportunities and sharing their network contacts. Students recognise their teachers' enthusiasm and their efforts in delivering and improving good teaching. This was especially visible during the covid-restrictions. Much coursework was online, but teachers tried their best to deliver it properly. The programme has invested much work to design and organise the new combined first semester. The teaching approaches seem to work well. Faculty can potentially learn from each other by co-teaching and observing faculty across institutions (for instance in the first semester). Due to heavy workload this can be challenging to accomplish unless different formats for this are considered (for instance smaller digital contributions). The panel adds that, if faculty contribute in such a way, this should be registered as part of their teaching obligations rather than on top of what they already deliver (see also paragraph 4.7.1).

Students with special needs can ask for extra assistance by sending a request to the international programme coordinator, who will forward the question to the teachers involved or, for practical issues, will contact the local coordinator. All Eu-HEM students can contact the EUR student advisors, also when they study elsewhere. The Examination Board may allow special test facilities (extra time, computer, etc.).

Considerations

The programme design clearly corresponds with the intended learning outcomes; it truly provides the intended international, intercultural and multidisciplinary learning experience. The programme is student-centred and students feel supported and stimulated by their teachers. Teachers use different didactic methods, organising both large and small-scale classes. The variation in students' backgrounds is used effectively in the courses. The programme takes account of personal circumstances and offers assistance to students with special needs.

Conclusion

The panel assesses that the Eu-HEM programme **meets** standard 5.1, learning and teaching.

3.5.2 Assessment of Students

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

Outline of findings

Eu-HEM has a well-structured assessment system. Assessment is designed based on the ILOs and the education provided within the programme. Rules are included in the Teaching & Examination Regulations (TER) that are transparent for students and referred to in the Student Handbook. Teachers work with several overarching frameworks for the quality of assessments which apply to all locations. Within these frameworks, there is room for variation in shaping local assessment policies, so that these can be aligned with national legislation and regulations and university-specific policies. All consortium partners agreed on the following joint criteria for assessment: one individual exam per course, one essay/paper per semester, oral examination by exception. Assessment procedures are based on validity, reliability, transparency. The programme keeps statistics of results, completion per track and for the programme as a whole, plus drop out, translating the grading scales per country. Local Examination Boards are responsible for their parts of the teaching. The grades given by the universities are periodically compared to see if they are in line, but cultural differences will remain, such as in the frequency of granting cum laude. The JQEC is the gremium to follow up and investigate, if needed.

For the thesis track (semester 4), a joint Eu-HEM procedure has been developed that is applicable to all locations. The Consortium Board developed guidelines for the thesis, which include rules concerning supervisors, the structure of the thesis, the set-up of the thesis defence and the grading. The thesis guidelines are reviewed and updated on a yearly basis. Quality assurance of the theses regarding the content is carried out by a temporary committee of eight subject-specific experts from all four universities under supervision of the Examination Board. As mentioned above (paragraph 4.2.3) the panel considers the assessment of the theses well-organised. There seems to be some variation in grading between supervisors and second assessors, but the four-eyes principle works adequately, resulting in a fair grade.

Considerations

The panel considers that appropriate examination rules and regulations are in place, adequately combining an overarching assessment policy with national legislation and local policies. The local Boards of Examiners and the JQEC ensure consistency of application among the partner institutions. The assessment of the learning outcomes in courses and thesis corresponds with the intended learning outcomes and meets the required quality criteria of validity, reliability and transparency.

Conclusion

The panel assesses that the Eu-HEM programme **meets** standard 5.2, assessment of students.

3.6 Standard 6: Student Support [ESG 1.6]

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

Outline of findings

Eu-HEM has a central policy to assist students with the different challenges faced throughout the programme, from pre-arrival to graduation. All prospective students are informed about the programme via the Eu-HEM website. The website also offers information about the diploma, quality assurance, the universities' surroundings, and the application procedure. A detailed student handbook with practical guidance and relevant contacts regarding academic and student life on the four different university campuses is sent to admitted students before the semester starts. Moreover, several online preparatory information sessions for incoming students are organised by the local programme coordinators.

Support to students is provided through physical facilities as well as personal guidance. Funding for learning and teaching activities is part of the budget plan for each cohort of students. Erasmus Mundus scholarships used to be available and funded about 15% of the places. A new application is in preparation and will be submitted early 2023.

The local programme coordinators have a central role in student support during the programme: they are the first point of contact for students with questions or problems regarding their study. If needed, the local programme coordinator can refer students to other staff members. The local programme coordinators of the four partner universities have meetings together every two weeks to address student and administrative affairs.

All four Eu-HEM partner universities provide support for students in finding accommodation. Nevertheless, this is one of the most challenging parts of the programme for students. In Oslo and Innsbruck it is easier to find accommodation than in Rotterdam and Bologna. EUR has some housing facilities on campus for the first semester (in the old curriculum), but not in the second year. Bologna is the most difficult place to find student housing. Students there support each other in helping to find a place. Students also mention other difficulties in relation to the international mobility, such as visa and opening a bank account. Students acknowledge that the student handbook and the local programme coordinators provide a lot of helpful information, but they are especially enthusiastic about the buddy system: local students and second year Eu-HEM students providing practical support and students helping each other. Students appreciate the mini events and social activities such as having dinner together, to get to know each other and build relationships with other students.

Considerations

The panel considers that the support mechanism works well. The student handbook and the local programme coordinators provide essential information, social events are organised to make students feel at home and students can turn to the local programme coordinators with all their questions or issues. To support students when they move around the different universities there is room for improvement related to information about immigration, bank account, housing etc. Students also support each other in this domain when there is a need for doing so. This buddy system can be considered a best practice.

Conclusion

The panel assesses that the Eu-HEM programme **meets** standard 6, student support.

3.7 Standard 7: Resources [ESG 1.5 & 1.6]

3.7.1 Staff

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

Outline of findings

Eu-HEM staff is locally recruited and selected based on their expertise, taking into account specific requirements of the position, feedback from evaluations, their intercultural competencies, and their willingness to 'go the extra mile' as this is often required in an international programme like Eu-HEM. Additionally, all Eu-HEM staff are required to have an English language level certificate of C1 or higher. The SER and the CVs of teaching staff show that all members of the teaching staff are specialised in the field of health economics and/or health management. They combine extensive teaching and research and can connect the theories included in the curriculum to contemporary challenges in healthcare. They are all employed by renowned universities. All Eu-HEM management staff meet the required standards as posed by the university at which they are employed and possess the relevant knowledge and education. The Consortium Board members and the Track Committee members also have subject-specific knowledge and skills in educational development and programme design. An extensive range of teacher professionalisation courses is available. The moments during which a large part of the staff is together, such as the annual Summer School (and previously also the Winter School), offer good opportunities to exchange information and experiences and to discuss improvements and strategic goals that are relevant for Eu-HEM.

It was clear from the site visit that students and alumni applaud the strong commitment and enthusiasm of their teachers and that the teachers are strongly committed and positive about their role in Eu-HEM, even though it is a demanding programme. An international joint programme such as Eu-HEM requires extra efforts to align the teaching with other partners, and it appears that extra activities such as participation in the summer school, are not always registered as teaching time in a teacher's home university, which means teachers do much in their own free time. The discrepancy between semester timings of the partner universities adds to the already high workload, in particular related to supervision of master thesis around the summer. Formally, each partner university contributes the required number of staff, but when colleagues are away on sabbaticals or externally funded projects, the teaching load rests heavily on the remaining teaching staff, so the panel heard. This not only increases the workload, but also limits the substantive support that can be given to students, such as supervision for certain thesis topics.

Considerations

The panel considers that both the academic and coordinating staff are well-qualified and experienced. Their commitment is commended by students and alumni. A point of attention is the high workload of staff. This needs serious monitoring and adequate measures to prevent an overload.

Conclusion

The panel assesses that the Eu-HEM programme **meets** standard 7.1, staff.

3.7.2 Facilities

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

Outline of findings

The SER lists the different types of facilities that are made available to EU-HEM students. Teaching facilities at the four partner universities provide the required materials and equipment for the courses provided. Lectures and workgroups are held in halls that are equipped with state-of-the-art audio-visual and IT-systems. When extra facilities are required, such as collaboration rooms/breakout rooms for group work, arrangements are made with the local facilities and services. At all partner universities Eu-HEM students may use the general facilities such as library, online learning environment, general university services and university sport centres. The panel heard from the students that all facilities are available. Place for students to study together in groups is suboptimal at UoB, while the facilities at the EUR for doing group work and having discussions are described as particularly good by the students.

Considerations

The panel considers that the facilities are appropriate and adequate.

Conclusion

The panel assesses that the Eu-HEM programme **meets** standard 7.2, facilities.

3.8 Standard 8: Transparency and Documentation [ESG 1.8]

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

Outline of findings

The main source of information for applicants, students and external partners is the Eu-HEM website (<http://eu-hem.eu>). It provides all the necessary information regarding the application and admissions procedure and the programme in its entirety (curriculum, content, design and specialisation tracks). The website also presents each consortium partner university (faculty) and its research activities, services, facilities, etc. As mentioned above (paragraph 4.1.2), the panel notes that the information on the webpages of the different partners can be further aligned to make the jointness clearer. To date there is some variation in the descriptions. As mentioned in paragraph 4.4.1, non-accepted applicants are informed in what way they did not meet the required standards. They also receive information on how they can appeal to the Consortium Board. Enrolled students and the Chair of the Consortium Board sign a student agreement upon starting the programme. This agreement confirms the type of degree to be awarded, conditions for graduating, payment and privacy rules.

Key to the transparency of the programme for students is the Student Handbook, which contains all the essential information for students, including the courses, examinations, and references to location specific information, rules, and regulations. The procedures regarding the master thesis and thesis assessment are described separately in the Master Thesis Guidelines. For students to move around the different universities more timely information about immigration, bank account, housing etc. would be welcome before the start of the semester. The level of description of course information differs per university, which is a consequence of using local courses. Aligning this information in the student handbook would be useful.

Considerations

The panel considers that the transparency and documentation meet the expectations. Documentation is available on the partners' websites and in the student handbook. Further alignment between the universities' information is possible. The information in the student handbook is generally comprehensive, but prior to a semester students need more information on practical issues related to their new place of study.

Conclusion

The panel assesses that the Eu-HEM programme **meets** standard 8, transparency and documentation.

3.9 Standard 9: Quality Assurance [ESG 1.1 & part 1]

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

Outline of findings

The SER describes that all consortium partners have regular external and internal evaluation cycles of the programme. The responsibility for the quality assurance system at course level lies with the partner universities, since most Eu-HEM courses intentionally are also part of local master's programmes. All partners are compliant with the ESG and have regular external and internal evaluation cycles of the programme, making use of course evaluations, student panels, course files (containing all important management information), grading overviews and information on the quality of testing.

The cross-curricular/Eu-HEM-wide quality assurance (specialisation tracks, thesis trajectory, activities and the entire curriculum) is the responsibility of the Eu-HEM Consortium Board which has installed the JQEC. This committee consists of senior academic staff, (at least) one member from each of the partner universities and is responsible for the quality enhancement of the Eu-HEM programme. The JQEC has access to all regular evaluations of courses, semesters, tracks and the programme as a whole, and may request additional input from student representatives, teachers and external advisors. The panel appreciates that the JQEC mandate covers cross-track issues, as was mentioned during the site visit. The JQEC will report to the Board (at least) twice a year, following the current higher frequency in its starting phase. The programme maintains active contact with alumni. The professional field has a formal position in the form of an External Advisory Board.

The panel gathered from the materials – and the students confirmed during the visit – that students have a say on the quality of the individual courses through course evaluations and through student representatives. Elections are held for student representatives. The Consortium Board invites two students to join the JQEC; students can apply to this position.

The Eu-HEM programme has already gone through several accreditation processes, including an Intermediate Programme Evaluation (IPE) conducted halfway through the six-year cycle, and is now using the European Approach Framework. Specific aspects of quality assurance at programme, track, semester and course levels are implemented. The panel recognises that several improvement steps have taken place, such as the new curriculum with track-level coordination of courses and improved bonding between students.

Considerations

The panel considers that the system of quality assessment is well-developed. The joint internal quality assurance process is applied properly and external feedback is also considered as an instrument for improvement. Eu-HEM has good feedback mechanisms. It shows an openness to improvements and a clear will to tackle the challenges that obviously arise in a joint programme. The panel observes that feedback is the norm in all aspects of the programme.

Conclusion

The panel assesses that the Eu-HEM programme **meets** standard 9, quality assurance.

3.10 Conclusion

Overall, the panel concludes that Eu-HEM is a commendable programme given the complexity of organising an international programme by four renowned universities on the intersection of health economics and health management. The panel is impressed by its sustainability, financially, and in the way it was able to deal with the Covid-pandemic. Eu-HEM is truly a joint international programme viewing healthcare economics and management from the perspectives of different countries in Europe. Since 2021, the joint first semester at the University of Bologna is a significant improvement for

students and teachers. For students, it gives the chance to bond, living together for half a year, joining social events and looking after each other related to practical issues like problems with housing, building a network that will probably continue in their professional life after graduation. For the programme, the joint first semester allows teachers to work on the differences in students' educational and cultural backgrounds and to build a common ground for the specialisation tracks. The panel recognises that it has been a challenge to adapt grading, rules and regulations, fees etc., because many of them are determined by the national ministries of education and differ between countries. Staff who is in charge of this have been able to overcome these differences, exchanging knowledge and expertise and learning with and from each other. The admission process is one of the examples where different universities learn from each other: this is a thorough selection process, based on prior experience of the University of Oslo. The collaboration between the four universities works well at the different levels: teachers, staff from educational support, quality assurance and the examination boards. This is of key importance for the success of the programme. Although the extra investment in coordination is considerable in an international programme like this, the teachers are strongly committed and positive. The students and the alumni are all very enthusiastic about the programme. The teachers admire their students' science skills and more than usual a thesis results in a publication. Graduates are successful on the job market. Evaluation and reflection on the programme are strong and lead to improvements: based on the evaluations the slightly overlapping six former tracks are now replaced by four tracks with a clear focus. Additional improvements suggested by the panel relate to the balance between health economics and management, the need for more teaching in qualitative research methods, a stronger position for internships and consultancy skills, harmonisation of the students' workload between and within tracks, recognising and monitoring the high workload for teachers, and timely information for students about immigration, bank account, housing, cultural expectations, etc. These suggestions are intended to further strengthen the Eu-HEM programme and do not detract in any way from the panel's positive assessment of this relevant and ambitious programme.

4 Overview of the assessments

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

Annex 1: Composition of the panel

Prof. Dr. Gerda Croiset (NL), *chair*, Professor of Education and Training in Health and Life Sciences, University Medical Center Groningen;

Prof. Dr. Bjørn Erik Mørk (NO), Professor in Innovation and Program Director for Healthcare Management at the Department of Strategy and Entrepreneurship, BI Norwegian Business School, Norway;

Prof. Dr. Caroline Baan (NL), Endowed Professor of Integrated Health Care, Tranzo/Tilburg University;

Prof. Dr. Judit Simon (ATS), Professor of Health Economics, Head of Department of Health Economics, Deputy Head of Center for Public Health, Coordinator Doctoral Programme Public Health, Center for Public Health, Medical University of Vienna;

Davide Busato (IT), *student member*, student Medicine and Surgery University of Padua, Italy.

The panel was assisted by ir. Lineke van Bruggen, policy advisor at NVAO, and by dr. Marianne van der Weiden, secretary.

All members and the secretary of the panel completed and signed a declaration of independence and confidentiality.

Annex 2: Schedule of the site visit

On 24 March 2022, the panel organised an online site visit as part of the external assessment procedure of the European Joint Master in Health Economics and Management (Eu-HEM). The schedule of the visit was as follows:

24 March 2022

8:30 - 9:00	Kick-of committee (closed session)
9:00 - 9:15	Welcome
9:15 - 10:00	Consortium Board
10:00 - 10:15	Break
10:15 - 11:00	Educational support, Quality assurance & Examination Board
11:00 - 11:15	Break
11:15 - 12:00	Students
12:00 - 12:45	Lunch break
12:45 - 13:45	Teachers
13:45 - 14:00	Break
14:00 - 14:45	Alumni & work field representatives
14:45 - 15:45	Committee (closed session)
15:45 - 16:15	Consortium Board - pending issues
16:15 - 17:45	Committee (closed session)
17:45 - 18:00	Preliminary findings committee

Annex 3: Documents reviewed

Programme documents presented by the institution

Self Evaluation Report

Appendices:

- Consortium agreement Eu-HEM
- Eu-HEM new curriculum matrix
- Course syllabi new curriculum
- Student handbook
- Master thesis guidelines
- Rules and regulations EUR
- Rules and regulations MCI
- Rules and regulations Oslo
- Rules and regulations Bologna
- Staff CV EUR
- Staff CV MCI
- Staff CV Oslo
- Staff CV Bologna
- Interim programme evaluation report
- Report of the evaluators panel 2013
- EUR alumni survey
- MCI alumni survey

Sample of theses

Additional information:

- Course evaluations
- Course material
- Planning testing committee
- The rationale behind the change from six to four tracks
- Information regarding the Eu-HEM student population (Students and tracks started 2015-2021)
- Information regarding the eligible applications (Students and nationalities applications 2015-2021)
- The rationale behind adjusting the ILOs
- Welcome weekend in Bologna
- Eu-HEM website

Annex 4 : List of abbreviations

EC	European Credit
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
Eu-HEM	European Joint Master in Health Economics and Management
EUR	Erasmus University Rotterdam
ESG	European Standards and Guidelines
ESHPM	Erasmus School of Health Policy & Management
EU	European Union
ILOs	Intended Learning Outcomes
JQEC	Joint Quality Enhancement Committee
ma	master
MCI	Management Center Innsbruck
NVAO	Dutch Flemish Accreditation Body
SER	Self Evaluation Report
TER	Teaching & Examination Regulations
UiO	University of Oslo
UoB	University of Bologna
wo	wetenschappelijk onderwijs (academically oriented higher education)

The panel report has been ordered by NVAO for the re-accreditation of the European Joint Master in Health Economics and Management of Erasmus University Rotterdam.

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