

Assessment report

of the Joint Master's Degree Programme in
International Humanitarian Action
(NOHA+) offered by

- *Aix-Marseille Université / AMU France*
- *University of Malta / UoM Malta*
- *Rijksuniversiteit Groningen / RUG The Netherlands*
- *Ruhr-Universität Bochum / RUB Germany*
- *Universidad de Deusto / UD Spain*
- *University College Dublin / UCD Ireland*
- *Uniwersytet Warszawski / UW Poland*
- *Uppsala universitet / UU Sweden*

Review coordinated by Unibasq following the European Approach on
Quality Assurance for Joint Programmes

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Executive Summary

This report is issued by the panel appointed by Unibasq-the Agency for Quality of the Basque University System in the framework of the pilot procedures of the ImpEA project (Implementation of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes) to review the Joint Master's Degree Programme in International Humanitarian Action (NOHA +) submitted by the University of Deusto on behalf of the NOHA consortium:

- Aix-Marseille Université / AMU France
- University of Malta / UoM Malta
- Rijksuniversiteit Groningen / RUG The Netherlands
- Ruhr-Universität Bochum / RUB Germany
- Universidad de Deusto / UD Spain
- University College Dublin / UCD Ireland
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The application concerns a joint master programme of 120 ECTS which is offered as a full-time two-year programme. The NOHA+ programme comprises four components spread over four semesters: Foundation period; Specialisation period; Contextualisation period and Research period. It is a multidisciplinary, multilingual and multicultural postgraduate programme that provides academic education and professional competences for personnel working or intending to work in the area of humanitarian action.

The self-assessment report, the extensive programme materials previous to the site visit and on site and the conversations with highly motivated delegations have provided the panel with a comprehensive view of the programme. According to the panel, who based its assessment on the standards of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes, the NOHA + programme fulfils all standards; only one substandard is substantially fulfilled. Consequently, the panel assesses the overall quality of the programme as positive.

The panel is particularly positive about the joint procedures that make it a real joint programme, the interdisciplinary approach, the expansion from 90 (previous programme) to 120 ECTS; giving a broader choice open to students thanks to the variety of learning methods and itineraries and the additional seminars, which were praised by the students.

Furthermore, the panel considers that some of the programme strengths are due to its joint design with consortium partners being represented equally and involving staff, students and the professional field.

Without affecting its overall positive appreciation of the programme, the panel has noticed a number of issues that require further attention. It encourages NOHA+ to consider:

1. The creation of a joint career office.
2. The inclusion of at least a brief, hands-on, terrain experience, for all those students who volunteer for it.
3. The inclusion of some more content regarding the African context and broadening the geographical focus of the programme and offer the African perspective for all students, including those who are already enrolled.
4. Formalizing their cooperation in the area of examinations and students' assessment in a more systematic manner, clarifying the role of the different partners.
5. Increasing the information regarding the support services and fine-tuning the timing of the mentoring programme to better use of all its potentialities.
6. Developing joint research activities to further improve the programme contents

In addition as an enhancement option, the Consortium might consider developing a longer-term strategic vision – there is good

management, but there is a need for a more forward-looking, shared vision for the programme. Moreover, NOHA+ should try to integrate more its new and distant partners and to achieve a better balance between all partners.

1. The review process

This review process is part of the pilot procedures developed in the framework of the ImpEA (Implementation of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes) project. The Joint Master's Degree Programme in International Humanitarian Action (NOHA +) is provided by eight higher education institutions in France, Malta, The Netherlands, Germany, Spain, Ireland, Poland and Sweden and the request was submitted in November 2018 on behalf of the NOHA consortium by the University of Deusto, which coordinates the programme.

The panel of reviewers was appointed in November 2018 with the following composition:

- Dr. Cecilia Ruiz Esteban, University lecturer of Psychology of Education, University of Murcia (Spain);
- Dr. Guy Haug, Advisor to the Rector of Valencia University of Technology and international Quality Assurance expert (France);
- Dr. Miguel Díaz y García-Conlledo, Professor of Criminal Law, University of Leon (Spain);
- Katharina Rosteiuss, student Master of Health Economics, University of Cologne and University of Maastricht (Germany).

Short CV's of the panel members are provided in annex 12.1. The review process was coordinated by Eva Fernández de Labastida on behalf of Unibasq. All panel members 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) approved by the EHEA ministers in May 2015.

The panel members studied the application documentation of the proposed programme and reported on their preliminary findings. At the preparatory meeting on the 12 December 2018, the panel discussed the preliminary findings, identified the most important issues for discussion on site and prepared the sessions with the delegations.

The site visit took place on 12-14 December 2018 at the University of Deusto. The panel discussed with the management of the institution, the consortium and the programme, as well as with lecturers, students/graduates and the professional field. The schedule of the visit is available in annex 12.2. Annex 12.3 lists the materials made available by the programme either before or during the site visit.

Right after the discussions, the panel formulated its considerations and preliminary conclusions per standard. These are based on the findings of the site visit and build on the assessment of the programme documents.

The coordinator then drafted the report and circulated it to all panel members for review and feedback. The comments of the members were incorporated in a final version, which was validated by the chair on 9 may 2019.

2. Eligibility

2.1 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.

EVIDENCE

The Joint Master's Degree Programme in International Humanitarian Action (NOHA+) is the successor to the NOHA Joint Master's Degree Programme (NOHA) that was awarded the Erasmus Mundus label in 2004 and 2009 and has been selected again in 2016.

The programme is delivered by eight European universities belonging to the Network on Humanitarian Action (NOHA network):

- Aix-Marseille Université / AMU France
- University of Malta / UoM Malta
- Rijksuniversiteit Groningen / RUG The Netherlands
- Ruhr-Universität Bochum / RUB Germany
- Universidad de Deusto / UD Spain
- University College Dublin / UCD Ireland
- Uniwersytet Warszawski / UW Poland
- Uppsala Universitet / UU Sweden

The institutions that offer the joint programme are recognised as higher education institutions by the relevant authorities of their countries. Their respective national legal frameworks enable them to participate in the joint programme and where necessary the joint programme was accredited following the specific regulations of each

country, as can be seen in Annex I “NOHA network accreditation documents”.

In addition, the programme is delivered in partnership with associated partner universities and organisations in the field of humanitarian action, integrating different regional and cultural perspectives of the world of humanitarian aid as well as of the world of work (through student placements).

Each student who successfully completes the degree programme as described in the “Study and Examination Regulations” and who has fulfilled the requirements of the applicable national legislations receives a joint Master’s degree; the degree is testified by a joint diploma issued on behalf of the degree-awarding Partner Institutions involved in the delivery of the degree programme (at least 30 ECTS) to that student. Each joint degree award is accompanied by a diploma supplement presenting the details of the student’s academic programme and achievements, following the DS template developed by the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES and adapted to any further specifications in national legislation where applicable.

ASSESSMENT

The panel considers the institutions that offer the joint programme are recognised as higher education institutions by the relevant authorities of their countries. Their respective national legal frameworks enable them to participate in the joint programme. Each student who successfully completes the degree programme and who has fulfilled the requirements of the applicable national legislations receives a joint Master’s degree; the degree is testified by a joint diploma issued on behalf of the degree-awarding partner institutions involved in the delivery of the degree programme (at least 30 ECTS) to that student. The panel is aware of the difficulties regarding the awarding of a joint qualification as some national legislations are quite restrictive. Nevertheless it encourages the partners to keep trying finding a way to award a joint qualification.

The panel concludes that the standard is fulfilled.

2.2 JOINT DESIGN AND DELIVERY

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

EVIDENCE

As outlined in the SER, all consortium partners have successfully collaborated in the past, being members of the Network on Humanitarian Action (NOHA), an International Association of Universities: Aix-Marseille Université (AMU), Ruhr-Universität Bochum (RUB) and Universidad de Deusto (UD) since 1993, Uppsala universitet (UU) and University College Dublin (UCD) – since 1997, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (RUG) – since 1999, Uniwersytet Warszawski (UW) – since 2008 and L-Università ta' Malta (UM) – since 2014. The programme's curriculum has been developed jointly by the Consortium partners, based on over 20 years of cooperative experience in implementing the NOHA Master's, taking into account the different stakeholders' opinions.

There are several elements of real jointness that can be highlighted:

- A jointly designed and integrated academic curriculum with jointly agreed mobility periods.
- Joint eligibility criteria and admission procedures for candidates, including a joint appeal procedure for rejected candidates.
- Joint Study and Examination Regulations, including a joint guide and a joint assessment procedure for the Master thesis.
- Jointly developed and shared quality assurance mechanisms (Quality Handbook).
- Joint governance structure for the programme and joint administrative and financial management, including a joint office in Brussels.
- Jointly agreed participation costs and grants allocation.

There seems not be a joint job/career office.

The previous 90-ECTS programme has been extended to 120 ECTS and fully revised, taking into account students' needs and the changing humanitarian context, and adding two new partners (University of Warsaw and University of Malta) and several associated partner universities and organizations from the humanitarian labour market; these changes allow NOHA+ to offer new thematic specialisations, regional perspectives or work placements and internships to students.

ASSESSMENT

The panel considers that the programme is offered jointly, involving all cooperating institutions in the design and delivery of the programme. The panel wants to highlight the joint procedures that make this a real joint programme with an interdisciplinary approach.

The panel considers that the standard is fulfilled.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The programme might wish to consider the creation of a joint career office. While the panel acknowledges the advantages of having a permanent coordinating partner at Deusto, the programme might wish to consider a closer integration of the least-integrated partners, by assigning to each of them a specific function benefitting the whole network.

2.3 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.

EVIDENCE

The Consortium Agreement for the Establishment of a Joint Master's Degree Programme in International Humanitarian Action (Annex 2) covers, among others, the following issues:

- Legal framework, which establishes the rights and obligations of the partners' institutions.
- Programme governance, where the roles and duties of the partners are outlined.
- Degree programme (Academic programme and semester structure, including mobility paths).
- Student administration, which includes all the issues regarding students as application, selection and admission procedures, mobility, performance monitoring, degree awarding and recognition, services available and rights and responsibilities.
- Staff, including teaching and administrative staff, covering the mobility topic.
- Quality Assurance, making reference to the Internal Quality Handbook.
- Programme information (online Student Handbook).
- Publicity, awareness-raising and marketing.

- Financial management, where the financial management and the students' participation costs are outlined.

The Consortium Agreement establishes that each Partner Institution formally recognises the modules offered within the joint degree programme and the credits awarded. Regarding degree awarding, the document states that "Each student who successfully completes the degree programme as described in the Study and Examination Regulations, including the compulsory mobility programmes of at least 30 ECTS each, and who has fulfilled the requirements of the applicable national legislations shall receive a joint Master's degree testified by a joint diploma on behalf of the degree awarding Partner Institutions involved in the provision of the degree programme to that particular student."

The "Study and Exams regulations" provide the denominations of the degrees awarded in accordance with the national accreditations of the degree programme of the universities involved.

ASSESSMENT

The panel considers that the Consortium agreement covers adequately the terms and conditions to provide a joint programme. The panel considers that the standard is fulfilled.

3. Learning Outcomes

3.1 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).

EVIDENCE

The Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degree Programme in International Humanitarian Action (NOHA+) is a multidisciplinary, multilingual and multicultural postgraduate programme that provides academic education and professional competences for personnel working or intending to work in the area of humanitarian action. It is currently a 120 ECTS joint Master degree programme at level 7 of the Humanitarian Action Qualifications Framework (HAQF), level 7 of the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning and at the second cycle level of the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area, as well as their equivalents at national level of the countries of the Partner Institutions.

It must be highlighted that NOHA led the development of an EQF-based Humanitarian Action Qualifications Framework developed in the context of the EUPRHA (European Universities on Professionalization on Humanitarian Action) project coordinated by the University of Deusto and financed by the European Commission Lifelong Learning Programme (2011–2014).

The matrix with the intended learning outcomes and the Dublin descriptors was provided as Annex 4 of the SER. In addition, the panel reviewed during the site visit the matrix indicating the correspondence among the modules and the intended learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences):

- Academic research
- Humanitarian commitment

- Context analysis and reflection
- Coping and safety
- Leadership
- Collaborative relationships
- Service to crisis-affected people

ASSESSMENT

The panel considers that NOHA+ provides to students a sufficiently joint structure of learning outcomes guaranteeing consistency among graduates in all key areas (global and comprehensive vision, strategic management, integrity), while at the same time allowing students a choice between curricular units (e.g. regional training pack or work placement) and geographical / linguistic zones.

The panel considers that the standard is fulfilled.

3.2 DISCIPLINARY FIELDS

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

EVIDENCE

As explained in the SER, “Humanitarian studies” is a nascent disciplinary, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary field, as humanitarian crises caused by conflicts or natural disasters have increasingly become the subject of study within a range of disciplines. Humanitarian studies aim to enhance the alignment between knowledge, policy and practice in resolving humanitarian crises. The academic programme has been designed to integrate a variety of disciplines including anthropology, economics, demography, development studies, forced migration, geography, international law, international relations, medicine, peace and conflict research, political science, public health and psychology.

The matrix of intended learning outcomes (in terms of knowledge, skills and competencies) vs the content of each module (making reference to the different disciplines), was provided and reviewed during the site visit.

ASSESSMENT

The panel considers that the NOHA programme consists of a suitable mix of theoretic knowledge, work experience and analytical skills, with enough flexibility allowing students to customise their own learning itinerary. However, the panel has become aware of a certain level of frustration among those students who are most keen to become active on the terrain of humanitarian action when they are confronted with an internship or job requiring more routine and administrative skills. Probably more information and clarification to the students might help. Additionally, more content about Africa would be recommended. The inclusion of African professors or modules should be noted positively, but at the time of the review this part was not evident yet.

The panel considers that the standard is fulfilled.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The programme might consider including at least a brief, hands-on, terrain experience, for all those students who volunteer for it.

The programme might include some more content regarding the African context.

3.3 ACHIEVEMENT

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

EVIDENCE

To achieve the intended learning outcomes, the NOHA+ programme comprises four components spread over four semesters (see Figure 1 in 4.1 Curriculum). The joint curriculum is broken down into several modules, which together ensure that the 120 ECTS credits of the NOHA+ programme covers all learning outcomes that must be achieved. At the time of the review and the site visit, only the outcomes of the previous 90 ECTS programme were available. Some master theses from the previous programme, with different grading, were also reviewed.

ASSESSMENT

The panel is not yet in the position to establish whether the intended learning outcomes of the 120 ECTS programme are effectively achieved upon graduation. However, the outcomes of the previous programme are adequate, so the panel concludes that the approach seems adequate for the 120 ECTS programme too. The panel is confident that the extension of the programme will further guarantee the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

The panel considers that the standard is fulfilled.

3.4 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.

Not relevant as there is no regulated profession related with Humanitarian action.

4. Study Programme

4.1 CURRICULUM

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

EVIDENCE

The new 120 ECTS NOHA+ programme builds on the previous experience of the preceding 90 ECTS programme which was awarded twice the Erasmus Mundus label. The programme profile has been updated with the intention to provide students with the right skills to better match the needs of the humanitarian labour market.

The NOHA+ programme comprises four components spread over four semesters (Figure 1):

- Foundation period
- Specialisation period
- Contextualisation period
- Research period

The basis of NOHA+ (multidisciplinary structure of the first semester followed by interdisciplinary specialisations in the second semester) has been updated and expanded to include a contextualisation period in the third semester either in a specific region or at an organisation. A full fourth semester dedicated to the Master Thesis has been integrated in the programme. The first-semester modules have been revised, in particular the module on Anthropology: in response to student requests and needs analyses, Anthropology now focuses more on intercultural aspects. For the same reasons, during the second semester the specialisation has been limited to 20 ECTS, in order to free space for the compulsory joint modules on Advanced Management in Humanitarian Action.

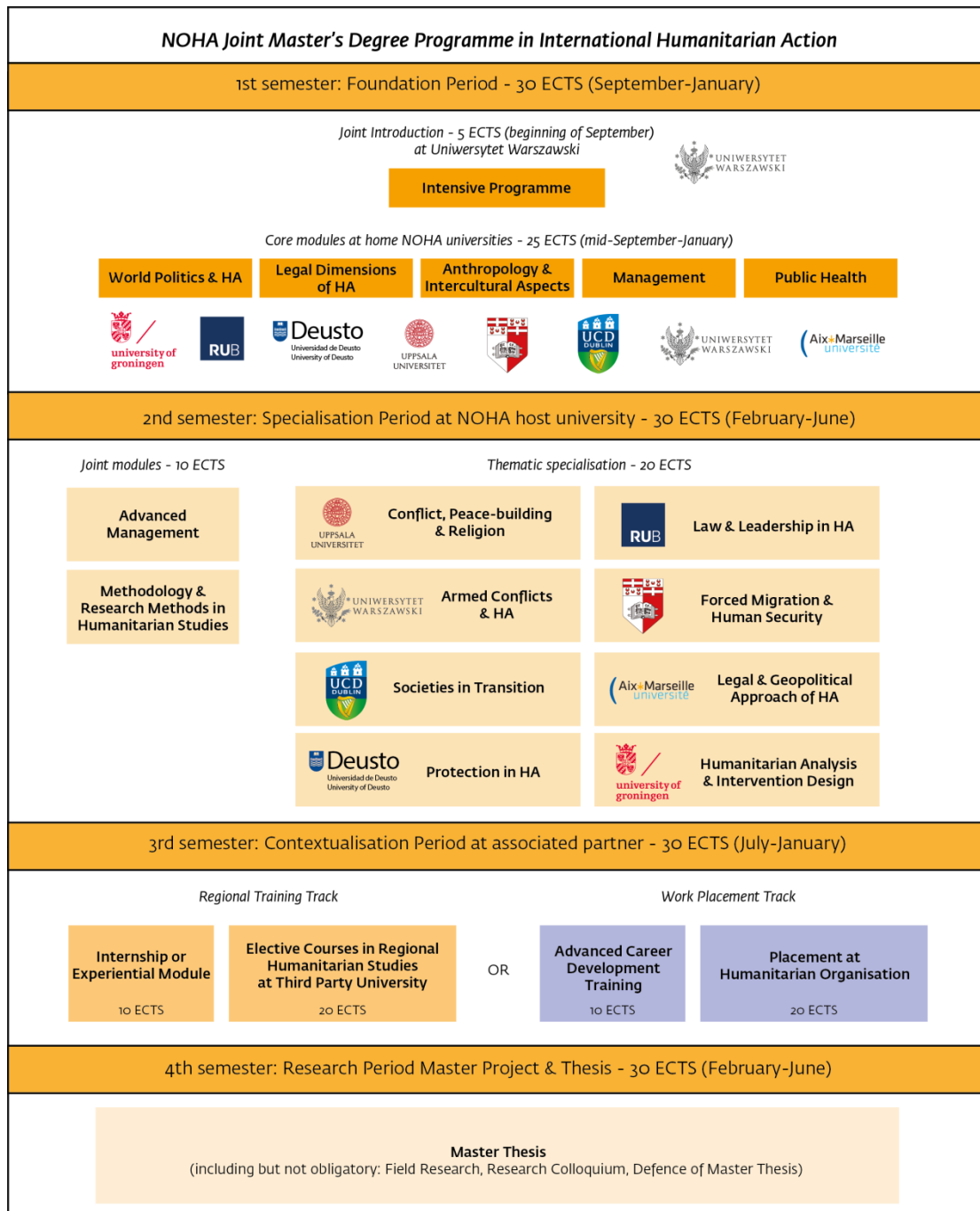


Figure 1. NOHA Master structure and module distribution. Source: NOHA Master website.

The contents of each course including information regarding main themes, learning outcomes, course material, teaching and learning methodology, programme and training activities, workload and assessment methods and criteria are provided.

During the interviews the issue of the marked European focus (or “bias”) that was already raised during the previous site visit, was discussed again. Some students commented that they expected a broader international perspective. As a response to these suggestions, the NOHA+ programme is considering including an African perspective during the 3rd semester.

ASSESSMENT

The panel considers that the proposed structure and content of the curriculum seem fit to enable the students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. Nevertheless, it seems to be a strong European focus on some of the contents and it might be advisable to broaden the perspective, including the African perspective as it is already planned. The panel concludes that the standard is substantially fulfilled.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The panel recommends that NOHA should broaden the geographical focus of the programme and offer the African perspective for all students, including those who are already enrolled; the programme leaders may however wish to consider an even broader choice of perspectives in order to make the whole programme somewhat less euro-centric.

The panel also wonders about the costs, logistical complications and benefits of the short initial concentration of all students on the same campus and invites the Partner Universities to assess them.

4.2 CREDITS

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

EVIDENCE

NOHA+ uses ECTS, awarding credits based on defined learning outcomes and their associated workload. The degree programme has a total study load of 120 ECTS (60 ECTS per year or 30 by semester), one credit is the equivalent of 25 to 30 hours of study. The distribution of credits can be seen in Figure 1, where the structure of the programme and the modules is shown. Credits are awarded for various types of learning, including courses, research and internships. There is an adequate level of flexibility in the choice of courses and credits open to students.

ASSESSMENT

The panel considers that the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is applied properly and the distribution of credits is clear.

The panel concludes that the standard is fulfilled.

4.3 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.

EVIDENCE

The master degree programme has a total study load of 120 ECTS (60 ECTS per year). The use of ECTS by all partners in Europe and

most outside Europe makes it possible to create and document learning pathways, allowing better flexibility and comparability. The allocation of the workload among modules and course units has been jointly agreed. This guarantees that the workload is about evenly distributed among all students, independently of their mobility pathways and their choice of modules available from the NOHA+ study plan (Figure 1).

ASSESSMENT

The panel considers that the workload is evenly distributed on the 120 ECTS of the new master programme. The workload and the average time to complete the programme are monitored through students' evaluations as part of the internal quality assurance system.

The panel concludes that the standard is fulfilled.

5. Admission and Recognition

5.1. ADMISSION

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

EVIDENCE

The entry requirements and admission criteria for the NOHA+ programme are common for all students. They can be found together with the joint application procedure on the NOHA+ master website (www.nohanet.org/masters) and are regulated by the "Study and Examination Regulations" (Annex 9).

Admission may be granted to applicants who meet the following entry requirements and common minimum eligibility criteria:

- All applicants must follow the joint application procedure as established by the NOHA+ consortium.
- Completed application (online application form and all requested documents) is submitted through the online application system by the established deadline.
- Candidates must have obtained, as a minimum, a university first cycle degree (Bachelor, EQF level 6) in a discipline of relevance to humanitarian action (medical sciences, food sciences, economics and management, engineering, law, social sciences, education sciences, humanities).
- Candidates are required to have a recognised qualification in the language(s) of instruction of the universities they plan to attend:
 - *English: C1 certificate or similar: L-Università ta' Malta, Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Universidad de Deusto (second semester), University College Dublin, Uniwersytet Warszawski, Uppsala universitet.*

- *Spanish: B2 certificate: Universidad de Deusto (first semester).*
- *French: C1 certificate: Aix-Marseille Université.*

Candidates are chosen based on the following selection criteria:

- type and level of academic qualifications, research experience, and professional experience, such as practical experience in humanitarian action in governmental, inter-governmental and/or non-governmental organisations and institutions;
- motivation and concern for humanitarian issues;
- multicultural sensitivity;
- level of linguistic abilities;
- recommendations;
- results of interviews (if applicable);
- nationality and gender balance.

There is a joint appeals procedure for rejected candidates.

ASSESSMENT

The panel considers that the joint admission requirements and selection procedures are appropriate in light of the programme's level and discipline.

The panel concludes that the standard is fulfilled.

5.2. 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.

EVIDENCE

According to article 6.5.1 of the NOHA Consortium Agreement, *each Partner Institution formally recognises the modules offered within the joint degree programme and the credits awarded.* For transparency and portability of learning outcomes across borders, there is recognition of acquired learning credits through mobility paths. The coordinators communicated that multiple cooperation agreements for mutual recognition and mobility exchange between the Consortium members and the associated partner universities have already been signed in result of the cooperation for the past NOHA Master programme and the new NOHA+ programme.

The recognition of qualifications and periods of study is handled by the student's home university according to its own regulations.

ASSESSMENT

The panel considers that the Consortium applies fair recognition procedures to facilitate recognition of the modules and credits awarded in the partner institutions.

The panel concludes that the standard is fulfilled.

6. Learning, Teaching and Assessment

6.1 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.

EVIDENCE

The NOHA+ programme is designed considering the alignment between learning outcomes, learning and teaching activities and the assessment procedures. Each module has a course manual, explaining the overall objective, context and themes of the course. According to the TUNING methodology, the manual also includes the intended learning outcomes, the course material, the teaching and learning methodology, programme and training activities, workload, assessment criteria and assessment methods and any other necessary information. The course manuals are approved by the Master's Board. This information is made available to students before they start their modules. The programme has a flexible structure, thus letting students develop their personal learning pathway.

Although education is full-time, there are opportunities for a flexible organisation of learning, teaching and assessment activities to accommodate students with different profiles and/or needs (e.g. people with caring responsibilities or people with disabilities). Anyway students explained that all of them were full-time and only some of them had some part-time jobs mainly on weekends.

During the interviews the students expressed the facilities given by the academic staff regarding the language of the essays to be written.

The programme provides students with an integrated research and training platform that allows students to access teaching materials in an integrated manner, regardless of their geographical location, which is implemented by means of NOHA Blackboard (noha.rug.nl) for its staff and students and by means of the NOHA Graduates Platform to keep in touch with its graduates.

ASSESSMENT

The panel considers that the NOHA+ programme is designed considering the alignment between learning outcomes, learning and teaching activities and the assessment procedures. Although education is full-time, there are opportunities for a flexible organisation of learning, teaching and assessment activities to attend to the diversity of students.

The panel concludes that the standard is fulfilled.

6.2 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.

EVIDENCE

The general examination regulations are described in Annex 9 "Study and examination regulations", the specific assessment methods are further explained in the specific course manuals and are aligned with the intended learning outcomes. As explained in the general examination regulations, within established limits,

assessment methods and criteria can vary per module and per university. It establishes also that the NOHA teaching staff shall make every effort to ensure fairness, consistency and equity in their assessment procedures.

During the site visit several proofs of assessments, including master thesis, were reviewed.

ASSESSMENT

The panel considers the examination regulations and the assessment of the achieved learning outcomes correspond with the intended learning outcomes and there are rules to be applied consistently among partner institutions. The panel is not really concerned about any particular discrepancies, but invites the NOHA+ teaching teams to formalise their cooperation in the area of examinations and students' assessment.

The panel concludes that the standard is fulfilled.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As the programme grows and diversify, NOHA+ leaders and teachers might wish to revisit this theme (formalize their cooperation in the area of examinations and students' assessment) in a more systematic manner than hitherto, clarifying the role of the various categories of partners.

7. 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.

EVIDENCE

Information on the modules and the study programme are facilitated through the online Student Handbook. Moreover, an overview of the joint modules as well as the specialisations of the different universities is presented. In addition, students have access to the joint on-line learning environment 'NOHA Blackboard' (noha.rug.nl), where partner universities offer materials for the modules and lectures of the current academic year and where students can upload their assignments. During the Intensive Programme, students receive specific information on the academic and professional profile of the NOHA Master. During this event, students can also meet their NOHA Coordinator and Director for the first time as well as lecturers and administrators from the different partner universities to discuss matters.

Upon arrival at their home university, students are invited to a general welcoming session, considering the special needs of international students and including a guided visit to the university's facilities. The third semester mobility is further supported by the Secretariat of the Consortium and contacts at the associated third semester universities and humanitarian organisations.

Prior to their arrival at the different universities, students can rely on the support of the accommodation service. Nevertheless, during the interviews the students explained that sometimes their informal networks work better for finding accommodation depending on the places.

In addition, the NOHA Coordinator at each NOHA University provides guidance and assistance to the students concerning every practical aspect of the programme.

One initiative that is worth mentioning is the Mentoring Programme that started as a pilot project last year at Deusto University and is progressively being implemented in all NOHA universities for the Master's students. NOHA has a very strong network of graduates who can contribute to the career support for NOHA+ students. The programme is just starting and need to be fine-tuned in order to adapt the timeline to the support needs of the students regarding the choice of the third semester options.

ASSESSMENT

The panel considers there is enough formal support for students, but talking to them it seemed as if they didn't know about some of the possibilities. This should maybe be made clearer on the welcome days, etc. The Mentoring programme, which was on a pilot stage, could be a great initiative to further support the students.

The panel concludes that the standard is fulfilled.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Increase the information regarding the support services and fine-tune the timing of the mentoring programme to better use of all its potentialities.

8. Resources

8.1 STAFF

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

EVIDENCE

As stated in the Consortium Agreement, the partners commit to appointing sufficient and appropriately qualified staff to deliver the various elements of the degree programme. Each module has a module coordinator. NOHA teaching staff consists of highly qualified senior lecturers and researchers in several different disciplines and faculties. The NOHA Faculty is composed of the core teaching staff. It includes the academics from the NOHA European and third country institutions directly involved in the development of the programme. The NOHA Faculty draws from a variety of disciplines related to humanitarian studies including Anthropology, Economics, European Studies, Asian Studies, African Studies, Latin American Studies, Demography, Development Studies, Geography, International Law, International Relations, Medicine, Peace and Conflict Research, Political Science, Public Health, Psychology. The list of NOHA Faculty with a link to their CVs was provided as Annex 10 and can be found at <https://www.nohanet.org/faculty>.

Moreover, the programme includes several experienced lecturers and external field experts, like personnel from inter-governmental organisations (IGOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) – many of whom are responsible for research in their own organisations - that contribute to the master course. The students highlighted the additional seminars as a positive aspect and declared that they were satisfied with the academic staff as a whole.

Each Consortium partner appoints a senior academic staff member as its local NOHA Director, who is responsible for the academic

programme, liaises with the other directors at the other Consortium partners on all matters concerning the degree programme and ensures that the degree programme at his or her university is consistent with the joint agreements.

The NOHA Faculty focuses on approaches of teaching and learning, assessment and performance, and comparative analysis of student workload. Their involvement in research is crucial to achieving the highest standards possible and to serve as reference for the development of high quality research and training in the humanitarian action area. As ways of coordination, the NOHA Faculty meets at least once each year at the Intensive Programme and interacts constantly and continuously through electronic communication.

ASSESSMENT

The panel considers that the staff is sufficient and adequate, regarding its qualifications, professional and international experience, to implement the study programme. The panel appreciates the programme's efforts to coordinate the teaching and learning activities between the different disciplines and universities. The panel is also of the opinion that the development of joint research activities could receive more attention.

The panel concludes that the standard is fulfilled.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Development of joint research activities to further improve the programme contents.

8.2 FACILITIES

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

EVIDENCE

The consortium universities have all adequate facilities for students (campus card, libraries, computer facilities, sport centres, housing, discount restaurants ...). In addition, students have access to the joint on-line learning environment 'NOHA Blackboard' (noha.rug.nl). Details regarding student facilities can be found on each institution's website and on the university pages at nohanet.org/masters. During the site visit the specific facilities of the University of Deusto were visited.

ASSESSMENT

The panel considers that the facilities are sufficient and adequate. During the site visit the facilities of the University of Deusto (classrooms, library,...) were visited and access to the NOHA Blackboard was provided.

The panel concludes that the standard is fulfilled.

9. 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.

EVIDENCE

All relevant information about the programme like admission requirements and procedures, course catalogue, examination and assessment procedures etc. is available at the NOHA website nohanet.org/masters and its subsections, including the Study and Examination Regulations and the Internal Quality Handbook. In addition, as mentioned before, the students have access to all the relevant information at the NOHA blackboard.

The online publication of Master's theses is planned to be implemented for NOHA+ at network level during this year by means of the NOHA network website. Nowadays is possible to find some of them as the ones from Uppsala University (www.diva-portall.org).

ASSESSMENT

The panel considers that everything relevant can be found online at the NOHA website. The panel wants to encourage the network to go on with the publication of the master theses on the NOHA network website.

The panel concludes that the standard is fulfilled.

10. Quality Assurance

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

EVIDENCE

NOHA+ has developed its own transnational internal quality system built on the 90 ECTS NOHA Master's experience, which is laid down in the Internal Quality Handbook available on nohanet.org/masters under 'Documents'. It was the main recommendation of the External Panel report of the pilot project on the accreditation of joint programmes of the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA)'s TE@M II during 2009–2010. NOHA+ is currently working on updating the different procedures as the ones for the third and fourth semester for the new 120 ECTS programme.

The outline of the handbook is the following:

- Quality policy and governance and management structure.
- Twelve detailed procedures and several instruments addressed to the different stakeholders involved (students, alumni, lecturers and administrative staff) regarding:
 - academic performance analysis,
 - overall satisfaction assessment,
 - module, mobility, placements and Master's thesis evaluations,
 - labour market integration analysis,
 - broadcasting the degree,
 - suggestions and complaints,
 - termination of the degree,
 - meta-evaluation of the programme and quality enhancement planning.
- Internal Quality Calendar, following the methodology of Deming's quality cycle of Plan, Do, Check, Act (PDCA). It includes a yearly action plan for internal quality enhancement for each of the stakeholder groups separately as an annual "to

do"-list which helps that the procedures are implemented in a coordinated way.

The surveys among students, staff and partner organisations allow for the identification of strengths and needs for improvements in the programme design and in the teaching methods. The different forms are digitalised and sent through the Blackboard system.

ASSESSMENT

The panel considers positively the development of a joint internal quality system as an answer to a recommendation from a previous review. It encourages the Consortium to update it considering the new reality (120 ECTS programme) and the new ESG 2015.

The panel concludes that the standard is fulfilled.

11. Summary and Recommendation

11.1 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. The programme might wish to consider the creation of a joint career office. While the panel acknowledges the advantages of having a permanent coordinating partner at Deusto, the programme might wish to consider a closer integration of the least-integrated partners, by assigning to each of them a specific function benefitting the whole network.*
- 2. The programme might consider including at least a brief, hands-on, terrain experience, for all those students who volunteer for it.*
- 3. The programme might include some more content regarding the African context.*
- 4. The panel recommends that NOHA should broaden the geographical focus of the programme and offer the African perspective for all students, including those who are already enrolled; the programme leaders may however wish to consider an even broader choice of perspectives in order to make the whole programme somewhat less euro-centric.*
- 5. The panel also wonders about the costs, logistical complications and benefits of the short initial concentration of all students on the same campus and invites the Partner Universities to assess them.*
- 6. As the programme grows and diversify, NOHA+ leaders and teachers might wish to revisit this theme (formalize their cooperation in the area of examinations and students' assessment) in a more systematic manner than hitherto, clarifying the role of the various categories of partners.*
- 7. Increase the information regarding the support services and fine-tune the timing of the mentoring programme to better use of all its potentialities.*
- 8. Development of joint research activities to further improve the programme contents...*

Enhancement options:

Development of a longer-term strategic vision – there is good management, but there is a need for a more forward-looking, shared vision for the programme. NOHA+ should try to integrate more its new and distant partners and to achieve a better balance between all partners.

11.2 RECOMMENDATION OF THE PANEL OF EXPERTS

The panel concludes that the standards are fulfilled. In the following table an overview of the assessments is shown:

Standard	Assessment
ELIGIBILITY	
- <i>Status</i>	Fulfilled
- <i>Joint design and delivery</i>	Fulfilled
- <i>Cooperation agreement</i>	Fulfilled
LEARNING OUTCOMES	
- <i>Level</i>	Fulfilled
- <i>Disciplinary fields</i>	Fulfilled
- <i>Achievement</i>	Fulfilled
- <i>Regulated professions</i>	Not applicable
STUDY PROGRAMME	
- <i>Curriculum</i>	Substantially fulfilled
- <i>Credits</i>	Fulfilled
- <i>Workload</i>	Fulfilled
ADMISSION AND RECOGNITION	
- <i>Admission</i>	Fulfilled
- <i>Recognition</i>	Fulfilled
LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT	
- <i>Learning and teaching</i>	Fulfilled
- <i>Assessment of students</i>	Fulfilled
STUDENT SUPPORT	Fulfilled
RESOURCES	
- <i>Staff</i>	Fulfilled
- <i>Facilities</i>	Fulfilled
TRANSPARENCY AND DOCUMENTATION	Fulfilled
QUALITY ASSURANCE	Fulfilled

The panel considers that this is a truly joint study programme, the recommendations as stated in 11.1 are minor problems.

The panel would like to highlight:

1. The positive additional seminars.
2. The joint procedures that make a real joint programme.
3. The interdisciplinary approach.
4. The expansion from 90 to 120 ECTS; giving a broader choice open to students thanks to the variety of learning methods and itineraries.

12 ANNEXES

12.1 PANEL OF EXPERTS

Dr. Cecilia Ruiz Esteban (chair)

BA in Education (University Complutense of Madrid), MA of Science in Education (Bucknell University, USA) and PhD in Psychology (University of Murcia). University lecturer on Psychology of Education since 1989 at University of Murcia (Faculties of Psychology, Education and Social Work). Research activity on psychological factors of learning and social interaction, family educational styles and quality and teaching activity at university. Management positions at university like Head of the university teaching section of the Education Institute, Quality, Innovation and European convergence Vice dean and Secretary of the quality committee of the senate. Participated in the following assessment activities: Socrates programme (Comenius and Grundtvig actions), PNCU, ANECA institutional evaluation programme, Spanish quality assurance regional agencies (AQUIB) and UCUA. Since 2009, ANECA Secretary of several ex-ante Masters accreditation committees. International collaboration in EU funded projects like: E-TRAIN (training of international review experts), JOQAR (quality assurance and recognition of joint programmes), TEAM I and II (mutual recognition of accreditation decisions and information sharing regarding accredited programmes) and ALFA PUENTES (improvement of higher education systems in Latin America and enhancement of the relationships between Latin America and Europe).

Dr. Guy Haug, member

Internationally recognised expert in the development, evaluation and internationalisation of higher education systems, policies and institutions. He has extensive, hands-on experience with Quality Assurance/Accreditation, as a member of several national agencies,

and as a chair, secretary or member of panels for the evaluation of universities, study programmes and QA agencies. He was also centrally involved in the design and development of Europe's biggest multilateral, double-degree joint programme. He was previously one of main architects and promoters of the ERASMUS programme and of the European Higher Education Area. He is currently Advisor to the Rector of the Valencia University of Technology and cooperates with European and international organisations, governments and higher education institutions across the world. He graduated from the universities of Strasbourg (Master in Law) and Ottawa (Master in Management Science), did his PhD at Tübingen and has a Doctorate Honoris Causa from Ireland.

Dr. Miguel Díaz y García-Conlledo, member

Degree in Law in Universidad Autónoma of Madrid (1982), Doctorate in Universidad de León (1989), having prepared his doctoral thesis at this university and at the University of Munich (Germany). Professor of Criminal Law at the University of León (since 1997). Before that, Professor of Criminal Law at the Public University of Navarre (since 1994) and before Assistant and Lecturer (Profesor Titular) at the University of León.

Extensive research experience (five recognised research six year periods), teaching experience (seven five years periods), university management experience (among other positions, Dean and Department Director), research evaluation experience (CNEAI, AEI and many Spanish and foreign agencies) and university degrees evaluation experience (especially for DEVA and Unibasq).

Two honorary doctorates and various international honorary recognitions.

Katharina Rosteius, student-member

Katharina Rosteius is currently studying the Master in Health Economics by the University of Cologne (Germany) and the University of Maastricht (The Netherlands). Her focus is on the strategic management of hospitals and she is currently working part-time for a consultancy firm. She has experience with student-related matters as member of the board of studies and as a student representative.

The panel was assisted by Eva Fernández de Labastida, Internationalisation and projects manager at Unibasq who acted as coordinator of the review process.

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

12.2 SCHEDULE OF SITE VISIT

IMPEA- Reunión de expertos

12,13 y 14 de diciembre

Día 12 de diciembre

- *13:00 a 14:00 Comida*
 - *Persona encargada:*
 - *Lugar: Lunch*
- *14:00-14:30 Reunión del comité de evaluación en el aula*
 - *Lugar: Aula: Aula 202*
- *14:30- 15:30 Reunión interna de Panel*
 - *Lugar: Aula: Aula 202*
- *15:30- 16:30 Entrevista institucional*
 - *Lugar: Sala 202*
 - *Asisten: Director IDH y Directora Programa NOHA*
- *16:30 – 17:30 Visita a las Instalaciones de la UD*
 - *Biblioteca*
 - *Aula postgrados*
 - *Relaciones Internacionales*
 - *Deusto Campus*
 - *Persona encargada: Coordinadora NOHA*

Día 13 de diciembre Reuniones con grupos de interés

- *9:00 -10:00 PAS*
 - *Lugar: Aula 202*
 - *Asisten:*
 - *Master Secretariat Manager*
 - *IDH Finantial Manager*
 - *International Relations Office*
 - *NOHA Coordinador, Universidad de Uppsala*
- *10:00-11:00 Alumnos:*
 - *Persona encargada*
 - *Sala de reunión. Aula 202*
 - *Asisten:*

- *Representantes de alumnos UD*
- *alumni*
- *Student from other university to be confirmed*

11:00 -12:00 Profesores

- *Persona encargada*
- *Sala de reunión: Aula 202*
- *Asisten:*
 - *International Law 1 and 2 semester*
 - *Programming Protection, 2 semester,*
 - *Ethical management of humanitarian organizations, 2 semester*
 - *NOHA Faculty GRoningen*

- *12:00-13:00 ONG'S*
 - *Persona encargad*
 - *Sala de reunión: Aula 202*
 - *Asisten:*
 - *MSF*
 - *UNRWA Euskadi*
 - *ALBOAN*

- *13: 00: 13:30 Institucional:*
 - *Persona encargada:*
 - *Sala de reunión: Vicerrectorado – Vicerrectorado SS*
 - *Asisten:*
 - *Vicerrector de Relaciones Internacionales*
 - *Decano de la Facultad de Ciencias Sociales y Humanas*
 - *Vicedecana de Ordenación Académica, Facultad de CC. Sociales y Humanas*

- *13:30 -14:00 Comida*
 - *Persona encargada:*
 - *Lugar:*

- *14:30 -16:00 Reunión con el Consejo de directores del Máster NOHA (NOHA Master Board*

- *Lugar: Aula de Videoconferencias 015*
- *Asistentes:*
 - *Aix-Marseille Université*
 - *Rijksuniversiteit Groningen*
Herman, NOHA President
 - *Ruhr-Universität Bochum*
 - *Universidad de Deusto*
 - *University College Dublin*
 - *L-Università ta'Malta*
 - *Uniwersytet Warszawski*
 - *Uppsala universitet*

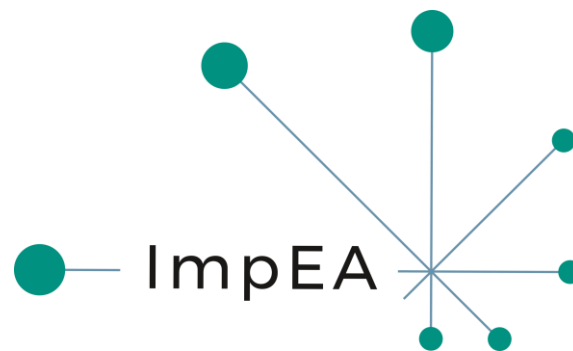
Día 14 de diciembre Reunión interna Aula 202
Aclaraciones con coordinadora

12.3 LIST OF REVIEWED EVIDENCE ANNEXES

- 1) NOHA network accreditation documents
- 2) NOHA consortium agreement
- 3) Intended learning outcomes
- 4) Structure of the curriculum
- 5) NOHA Study and Examination regulations
- 6) Key Staff Expertise and CVs
- 7) NOHA Internal Quality Handbook
- 8) Template Joint EM NOHA Diploma Supplement
- 9) Mentorship programme
- 10) Course syllabi (NOHA network website)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- *Access to the Blackboard- NOHA Blackboard policy*
- *Master thesis samples*



Facilitating implementation of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes



Project leader



Project partners

