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FINAL REPORT

SUPERDIVERSITY IN EDUCATION, ORGANISATIONS AND SOCIETY (MASTER OF ARTS)

OFFERED BY

RUHR-UNIVERSITY BOCHUM, GERMANY

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK, NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF
IRELAND

UNIVERSITY OF DEUSTO, BILBAO, SPAIN

ERASMUS UNIVERSITY ROTTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS

KOÇ UNIVERSITY, ISTANBUL, TURKEY,

UNIVERSITY OF LIÈGE, BELGIUM

UNIVERSITY OF OULU, FINLAND

UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB, CROATIA

June, 2024

Assessment following the European Approach
for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes



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DECISION OF THE AQAS STANDING COMMISSION**ON THE STUDY PROGRAMME****“SUPERDIVERSITY IN EDUCATION, ORGANISATIONS AND SOCIETY”****(MASTER OF ARTS)****OFFERED BY**

- **RUHR-UNIVERSITY BOCHUM, GERMANY**
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- **UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB, CROATIA**

Based on the report of the expert panel, the comments by the universities and the discussions of the AQAS Standing Commission in its 21st meeting on 27 May 2024, the AQAS Standing Commission decides:

1. The study programme “**Superdiversity in Education, Organisations and Society**” (Master of Arts) jointly offered by the **Erasmus University Rotterdam (The Netherlands), Koç University (Turkey), Ruhr-University Bochum (Germany), University of Liège (Belgium), University College Cork (Ireland), University of Deusto (Spain), University of Oulu (Finland), and University of Zagreb (Croatia)** is accredited according to the Standards defined in the European Approach for Quality Assurance for Joint Programmes.

The accreditation is conditional.

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

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

Condition:

That different topics of (super)diversity such as racism, intersectionality, and decolonization are regarded in the content of the programme, must be central in the curriculum and be made prominently visible in the module handbook.

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

1. A concept should be developed on how the diversity of the student population will be supported by means of support and counselling, especially regarding the tuition fees, e. g., by acquiring scholarship donors for specific student groups (e.g., from the Global South, with disabilities, from low-income families), funding UNIC scholarships, and systematically informing students about available opportunities from other institutions.
2. It is recommended to critically reflect on the use of the concept of “intercultural competence” including reflecting on current critical, postcolonial informed approaches to this concept in Cultural, Social and Educational Sciences.
3. Intersectional aspects of diversity and various axes of inequality should consistently be incorporated in the programme (such as sexuality, religion, disability, etc.).
4. It does not yet become clear what the number of courses is that will be specifically offered for the SEOS programme, and which are already existing and taken from other study programmes by opening them for SEOS students; this should be made clear in the module handbook.
5. Implementing robust mechanisms/questions in the admission process is recommended that assist the achievement of the ambition of a broad student pool with good candidates from an array of ages, employment, backgrounds, and/or experiences.
6. Creating rooms for open discussions, understanding their own bias, skills to deal with trauma, valuing different points of view, religious values, etc. will be a challenge. Offering (UNIC wide) specific training for teaching staff is thus recommended.
7. It is highly recommended to develop and coordinate a code of conduct between all partner institutions to secure well-being and safety of students to have the classroom as a safe space, including adaptive teaching formats, and also develop a consortium-wide anti-discrimination policy.
8. The information in the Student Handbook and on the website should be checked for providing extensive information regarding possible visa problems and residence regulations.
9. To represent a wider range of diversity among the teaching staff, it should be broadened, e.g., by regularly inviting different guest lecturers from other universities, the labour market, etc.
10. By including guest lecturers, the topics, methods, and approaches addressed in the programme should represent a wider range and be less Eurocentric.

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

EXPERTS' REPORT**ON THE STUDY PROGRAMME****“SUPERDIVERSITY IN EDUCATION, ORGANISATIONS AND SOCIETY”****(MASTER OF ARTS)****OFFERED BY**

- **RUHR-UNIVERSITY BOCHUM, GERMANY**
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- **UNIVERSITY OF LIÈGE, BELGIUM**
- **UNIVERSITY OF OULU, FINLAND**
- **UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB, CROATIA**

Visit to the university: 6 and 7 March, 2024

Panel of experts:

Prof. Dr. Yasemin Karakaşoğlu	University of Bremen, Germany, Head of the Department of Education in the Migration Society/Intercultural Education
Prof. Dr. Elif Keskiner	Free University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands, Assistant Professor for Identities, Diversity and Inclusion
Geraldine Moodley	inclusion culture leadership advisory & training, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (representative of the labour market)
Belinda von Freymann	University of Basel, Switzerland (student expert)

Coordinator:

Ninja Fischer

AQAS, Cologne, Germany

I. Preamble

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

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

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

II. Accreditation procedure

This report results from the external review of the study programme “Superdiversity in Education, Organisations and Society” (SEOS) (M.A.) offered jointly by the UNIC European University which is formed by Erasmus University Rotterdam (The Netherlands), Koç University (Turkey), Ruhr-University Bochum (Germany), Université de Liège (Belgium), University College Cork (Ireland), University of Deusto (Spain), University of Oulu (Finland), and University of Zagreb (Croatia).

1. Criteria

The programme is assessed against the criteria defined by the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes. The criteria are based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) 2015.

2. Approach and methodology

Initialisation

The university consortium mandated AQAS to perform the accreditation procedure in May 2023. The university consortium produced a Self-Evaluation Report (SER). In May 2023, the consortium handed in a draft of the SER together with the relevant documentation on the programme and an appendix. The SER and appendix included, e.g.:

- documents supporting the legal status of the partner institutions,
- documents supporting each partner's legal basis for participating in the joint programme, and (joint) degree awarding rights,
- the cooperation agreement,
- a list of intended learning outcomes, including a matrix of alignment with the Framework for Qualifications in the European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA), and a matrix of alignment with applicable national qualifications framework,
- the Programme and Student Handbook including syllabi of all partners and a study plan,

- the Quality and Process Handbook for Academic and Administrative staff, including regulations on the quality assurance system, the admission requirements and selection procedure, and the procedure for recognition and selection,
- the CVs of the key academic teaching staff,
- a sample of the Joint Diploma,
- as well as the Examination Regulations.

AQAS checked the SER regarding completeness, comprehensibility, and transparency. The accreditation procedure was officially initialised by a decision of the AQAS Standing Commission on 14 June 2023. The final version of the SER was handed in in January 2024.

Nomination of the expert panel

The composition of the panel of experts follows the stakeholder principle. Consequently, representatives from the respective disciplines, the labour market, and students are involved. Furthermore, AQAS follows the principles for the selection of experts defined by the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA). The Standing Commission nominated the aforementioned expert panel in November 2023. AQAS informed the university consortium about the members of the expert panel and the university consortium did not raise any concerns against the composition of the panel.

Preparation of the site visit

Prior to the site visit, the experts reviewed the SER and submitted a short preliminary statement including open questions and potential needs for additional information. AQAS forwarded these preliminary statements to the university consortium and to all panel members in order to increase transparency in the process and the upcoming discussions during the site visit.

Site visit

After a review of the SER, a site visit to the university took place on 6 and 7 March 2024. The experts interviewed different stakeholders, e.g. the management of the higher education institution, the programme management, teaching and other staff, as well as students, in separate discussion. The visit concluded by the presentation of the preliminary findings of the group of experts to the consortium's representatives.

Reporting

After the site visit had taken place, the expert group drafted the following report, assessing the fulfilment of the criteria. The report included a recommendation to the AQAS Standing Commission. The report was sent to the consortium for comments.

Decision

The report, together with the comments of the university consortium, forms the basis for the AQAS Standing Commission to take a decision regarding the accreditation of the programme. Based on these two documents, the AQAS Standing Commission took its decision on the accreditation on 27 May 2024. AQAS forwarded the decision to the university consortium. The university consortium had the right to appeal against the decision or any of the imposed conditions.

In July 2024, AQAS published the report and the result of the accreditation as well as the names of the panel of experts.

III. General information on the universities

“Superdiversity in Education, Organisations and Society” (SEOS) is a joint degree Master’s programme, leading to a diploma awarded by the following eight universities: University College Cork (UCC; Ireland), Universidad de Deusto (UDEusto; Spain), Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam (EUR; the Netherlands), Koç Üniversitesi (KU; Turkey), Université de Liège (ULiège; Belgium), Oulun yliopisto (UOulu; Finland), Sveučilište u Zagrebu (UniZG; Croatia), and Ruhr-Universität Bochum (RUB; Germany).

IV. Assessment of the study programme

1. Eligibility

1.1 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.

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

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

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

Description

The consortium of the universities indicated above forms the European University Alliance UNIC (European University of Post-Industrial Cities); the alliance thus relies on the joint efforts of the universities involved. UNIC aims at fostering transformative modes of teaching, research and learning that are supposed to respond to specific challenges and characteristics of post-industrial cities and their increasingly superdiverse populations. Superdiversity is described as demanding the development of innovative, accessible and inclusive modes of research, teaching and learning which are supposed to articulate and respond to the needs of diverse populations and to changing educational landscapes. Drawing on the UNIC members’ diverse and complementary knowledge and expertise, the consortium aims at building a respective educational experience which includes the different universities of the consortium.

RUB acts as the coordinating university of the consortium, and as such bears the financial and legal responsibility for the delivery of the SEOS programme. The cooperation for the SEOS programme is part of the overarching UNIC partnership, which includes the Master’s programme in its content and administrative facets, joint research activities of the participating academics, Erasmus staff and student mobility, joint virtual lectures, and collaborative networks. Students enrol in the study programme at the eight cooperating universities at the same time. Students may attend lectures and seminars and participate in research work at different places as if they were classrooms and labs at one university.

According to the self-evaluation report (SER), all universities involved are recognized as Higher Education Institutions according to their respective national legislation and allowed to award a joint degree of which the Master's level belongs to the national higher education system.

The partnership agreement for the Master's programme includes, among others, information and regulations on the legal basis for accreditation and awarding of the joint Master's degree. It also includes information on the programme's governance, structure and mobility paths of students, student admission, administration, assessment, and performance monitoring, the awarding and certification of the joint degree, teaching staff including regulations on their mobility, quality assurance, and the financial management. The partnership agreement defines the task repartition and management procedures (joint student selection, examination, degree awarding process, quality assurance, resource allocation), the financial regulations, and the bodies to run the programme. The partnership agreement is currently in a draft version.

According to the SER, the decision to form the mutual SEOS Master's programme was based on criteria of excellent teaching, research quality, and innovation ambition. The development process is described as that it happened in an open, integrative, cross-institutional work process. Following the approach that successful programme development can be realised in cooperation between faculty, departmental administration, university management, and units for HE didactics and quality management, colleagues representing these areas at all partner universities were involved in the development process as equal partners. The participation of the partners in cross-border cooperation projects, multilateral networks, and strategic partnerships involving not only the HEIs, but also city administrations and their subsidiaries, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders, is also described as fostering the jointness between the universities and the embedding of the programme in the social surroundings.

Each partner university must appoint a SEOS Director, acting as the programme coordinator with the SEOS director of RUB. The SEOS Directors are supposed to liaise with their counterparts in the other partner universities on all matters concerning the programme and ensure that the programme at their institution is consistent with the joint understanding and the Partnership Agreement. SEOS Directors are to be supported by staff from the involved faculties/schools/departments, and service units of their institutions.

The SEOS Programme Coordinator is the SEOS Director of the Coordinating Institution (RUB) and has the overall coordination responsibility. RUB has additionally established the full-time position of a SEOS Programme Manager to assist the SEOS Programme Coordinator and to manage the implementation and operation of the programme. Furthermore, each partner university has to appoint a SEOS Local Coordinator to carry out day-to-day administrative and technical tasks concerning students, quality assurance, mobility in the programme, and general affairs at the local level.

Following the SER, the supporting governance structure of the SEOS programme includes the Academic Study Board, the Admission and Examination Committee, the Programme Advisory Board, the External Advisory Board, and the Student Management Department. The Academic Study Board is built by the academic coordinators of each of the eight partner universities and is responsible for deciding on general and strategic matters as well as supervising and approving all major processes. It is particularly in charge of content and curriculum development, quality enhancement, communication, marketing and promotion, financial management, and dealing with the academic progression of students, discipline issues not within the remit of the hosting university, and complaints by students related to the programme. The Programme Advisory Board consists of eight members, four of them SEOS enrolled students; it shall advise the Academic Studies Board in matters of teaching and academic affairs, in matters of further educational development and the evaluation of SEOS. The External Advisory Board can give recommendations on the further development of the programme, and the Student Management Department is responsible for implementation, facilitation, and management purposes on the working level and shall consist of four members per partner university (admission specialists,

counsellors, accommodation and administrative support, finance, and legal experts). Monthly academic and administrative coordination meetings by staff from all partner universities and regular jours fixes of the local key SEOS staff (e.g., module coordinators, project leaders) are planned.

Experts' evaluation

UNIC forms a good basis for offering this new Master's programme; the consortium has already developed a solid foundation of exchange and collaboration from which the programme will make profit. This was shown by the high level of estimation of the programme by the management. The talks with the teaching staff as well as the students from the different partner universities have made it clear that exchange and mobility are already realized, e.g., in CityLabs that have already taken place with students from other programmes at different sites such as Liège, Oulu, and Deusto (for information on the concept of the CityLabs, see chapter 5).

As the discussions showed, everyone involved in the new Master's programme is committed and motivated to organise and design the programme appropriately. The programme was convincingly designed by the different universities involved in the programme which focus on different aspects of diversity within their faculties. This joint design is supported by the regulations laid down in the cooperation agreement. The agreement regulates the rights and obligations of the participating universities and assigns clear roles and responsibilities. It thus covers the necessary aspects of eligibility. It also makes clear that all universities involved in the consortium make a meaningful contribution to the study programme.

It is clear from the documentation that the universities are recognised as higher education institutions in the education system of their respective country. A comprehensive overview was given on the level of the programme in each qualification framework of the respective country as well as the legal basis for accreditation and awarding of the joint Master's degree. Following this, the legal regulations allow all partners involved to award a joint degree, which is an essential foundation of the university alliance UNIC. Since the study programme is based on this alliance, there is no doubt all institutions involved are authorised to offer and implement the study programme as presented.

The documents submitted for the study programme, such as the examination regulations and other binding papers like the cooperation agreement, show that the framework conditions of the programme are legally secure and appropriately documented. They are comprehensibly regulated for students and outsiders.

The jointness of the programme was convincingly explained by the leadership and teaching staff of the respective universities and that the programme relies on this jointness is well reflected in the programme's aims and objectives (which follow in detail in the next chapter). It became obvious in the communication with the teaching staff that all made use of a continuous learning journey to create jointness in the alliance in the past and are willing to further develop the programme in the near future after it has started.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

2. Learning outcomes

- 2.1 *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).*
- 2.2 *The intended learning outcomes should comprise knowledge, skills, and competencies in the respective disciplinary field(s).*
- 2.3 *The programme should be able to demonstrate that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.*
- 2.4 *If relevant for the specific joint programme, the minimum agreed training conditions specified in the European Union Directive 2005/36/EC, or relevant common trainings frameworks established under the Directive, should be taken into account.*

Description

The study programme aims at achieving level 7 of the European Qualifications Framework and the respective level of the National Qualifications Framework in each country involved (Germany: Level 7 NQF; Croatia: Level 7.1 NQF; Turkey: Level 7 NQF; Finland: Level 7 NQF; Belgium: Level 7 NQF; Ireland: Level 9 NQF; The Netherlands: Level 7 NQF, Spain: Level 3 NQF).

UNIC aims at fostering transformative modes of teaching, research and learning that are supposed to respond to the specific challenges and characteristics of post-industrial cities and their increasingly superdiverse populations. This is to be reached by drawing on the UNIC members' knowledge and expertise; thus, the programme aims at building an educational experience which is meant to recognize and respond to superdiversity in a critical, reflexive and collaborative manner by placing inclusion and mobility at the core of this European University Alliance and developing models of best practice for researching, teaching and learning in superdiverse settings; by equipping citizens with skills and knowledge the partner universities claim to be important in the 21st-century to address challenges of superdiverse societies and their transforming (educational) institutions; and by fostering learning-in-practice by engaging students with complex real-world challenges faced by European cities and their diverse stakeholders.

According to the SER, in the SEOS programme superdiversity is understood as an increasing social complexity of diversity in contemporary societies with a growing acknowledgement of intersectionalities of social categories like ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality, culture, religion, disabilities, social, economic and legal status, and many other aspects especially in a context of widening global social and economic inequality, mounting environmental crises including a diminishing biodiversity and climate change and resource shortages necessary for social and economic transitions. SEOS students are said to explore the impact superdiversity has on education, organisations, and the wider society, and they are supposed to develop capacities to reflexively and co-creatively contribute to transitions to a future of inclusive, productive, and sustainable European societies. The aim of the joint programme is not only to develop deeper knowledge on superdiversity but also engage in networking between SEOS students as well as with relevant stakeholders of the involved cities.

The programme's interdisciplinary approach is described as premised on the understanding that real-world challenges and the complexities associated with superdiversity cross traditional academic boundaries. Therefore, the consortium finds it difficult to assign the study programme to a single disciplinary field. With respect to the coding criteria of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) by the UNSECO, the SEOS programme is classified as an interdisciplinary programme including the fields of Education (01), Business and Administration (04), and Social Sciences (03).

The main aims of the joint programme are given in the SER as follows:

- (1) to introduce students to interdisciplinary approaches to the social complexity of superdiversity and its impact on different sectors of societies;

- (2) to enable students to develop new ways of intercultural understanding and productive collaboration through innovative pedagogical and participatory practices;
- (3) to contribute (innovatively) to the creation of new knowledge and the development and application of theories of superdiversity, through relevant teaching and learning approaches and by answering research questions that have societal as well as academic relevance.

The competence profile of the programme outlined in the SER covers the following Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs):

- *personal competences*: competences that allow graduates to flourish as human beings in superdiverse environments by being able to self-reflect on positionality (the capacity to reflect on one's intersectional power and privilege, the ways in which modes of disempowerment and marginalization are perpetuated or challenged);
- *professional competences*: competences that give graduates a competitive edge in a superdiverse labour market by being able to manage superdiverse teams (leadership competences to maintain healthy, productive functioning in superdiverse work teams) and being agile and adaptable (capacity to think beyond rigid protocols and harness diversity to solve problems effectively);
- *disciplinary competences*: competences that give graduates the capacity to navigate the academic fields of superdiversity by having gained disciplinary knowledge of superdiversity (have sound theoretical knowledge of superdiversity in the areas of organisations, education and society, and the capacity to apply it to real-world situations), interdisciplinary methodological skills (having the ability to integrate disciplinary knowledge in interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research and practical projects), as well as inclusive teaching practice (the ability to teach towards equitable learning outcomes for diverse student populations across the disciplines);
- *societal competences*: competences that give graduates the capacity to act as global citizens (the ability to grasp global wicked problems, take personal responsibility for change and move towards constructive action);
- *transversal competences*: competences that cross one or several competence fields by training intercultural competences (developing cultural intelligence or a multicultural personality), effective communication (capacity for sensitive, respectful, interculturally aware, productive and solution-oriented communication in superdiverse settings), inclusiveness (developing awareness of the means to include others, using inclusive language and critically using different media), having a structural and systemic knowledge (participatory research competences, engaged research, capacity to situate superdiversity within structural and system contexts), as well as sustainable development competences (demonstrate knowledge of the Sustainable Development Goals, the capacity to apply and take action on SDGs), critical thinking skills (connecting diversity and sustainability) and mainstreaming intersectionality (the ability to make intersectional superdiversity a core feature of all aspects of social and professional life).

With the aim to achieve these learning outcomes, the SEOS programme is described as comprising three successive stages of learning (fundamentals, multidisciplinary perspectives, in-depth studies & Master's thesis), which are spread over four semesters and different partner universities. According to the SER, learning in the SEOS programme is to be characterized by a strong commitment to engaged research on superdiversity and with superdiverse stakeholders in educational, organisational and societal contexts, such as the City Labs including projects, and the programme's integration of physical and virtual mobility through Blended Mobility (BM). Engaged Research is defined as different ways in which researchers are supposed to interact or collaborate with community stakeholders over any or all stages of a research process. BM is described as a

combination of physical mobility with a virtual component that is to facilitate a collaborative online learning exchange and teamwork.

As stated in the SER, so far there are no minimum agreed training conditions as specified in the European Union Directive 2005/36/EC which apply to the SEOS programme.

Experts' evaluation

The programme convincingly aims at aligning with Level 7 of the Framework for Qualifications in the European Higher Education Area. The session with the teaching staff as well as with the students the experts had was instructive to get insight into the comprehensibility of the learning objectives and thus the intended learning outcomes of the programme. This aim is likely to be achieved as all of the three mentioned main aims of the programme and the related Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO) cover highly specialized knowledge that is to be acquired, as well as encouragement for critical thinking is stressed in the interface of different disciplinary approaches. The learning objectives address either personal competences or professional competences, and in all of the three main aims of the programme and the ILOs disciplinary competence is focussed (disciplinary knowledge of superdiversity; inclusive teaching practice, interdisciplinary methodological skills). Societal skills are also addressed as the programme of superdiversity puts the focus on global wicked problems in a transnationally comparative perspective. With a specific focus on self-reflection on positionality and sensitivity on (dis-)empowerment, the ILOs are adequately defined and comprehensibly documented for this specific programme.

The experts found the transnational approach to superdiversity very attractive and mainly convincing which also reflects the jointness that is an inherent aspect of the programme. Since the respective national context in which the different partners of the consortium are located in differ, and each context influences the governmental and societal approaches to superdiversity geo- and socio-politically, this could be turned more into a subject of reflection on how theories and concepts of superdiversity relate to and are discussed in different national contexts. Also, the concept of "nations" and "nationality" could be more explicitly discussed.

Many transversal competences are addressed in the ILO that are important to be able to follow an intersectional research-oriented approach to superdiversity (like inclusiveness, sustainability, intercultural competence, effective communication, structural and systemic knowledge, and, last but not least, mainstreaming intersectionality). It can be stated that the ILO comprise knowledge, skills, and competencies well in the respective disciplinary field(s) on an adequate level. But the experts group recommends to critically reflect on the use of the concept of "intercultural competence" (**Finding 1**). The way it is referred to in the list of learning outcomes ("developing cultural intelligence or multicultural personality") seems to be adapted affirmatively from psychological theories but does not reflect current critical, postcolonial informed approaches to this concept in cultural, social and educational sciences.

Considering the evaluation given, it can be stated that the learning outcomes are described quite comprehensibly and seem to be transparent especially for applicants and students. It was impressive how engaged and convinced the students the experts could talk to were of the new programme. They were well informed about the aims and objectives so the experts do not doubt that this will be the same for the following generations of students. However, in how far also employers will be able to understand the added value of the programme could be made more transparent with concrete references to specific practical fields the graduates of the programme will be able to contribute to.

The minimum agreed training conditions specified in the European Union Directive 2005/36/EC, or relevant common trainings frameworks established under the Directive are not applicable for the study programme under review.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

3. Study programme

3.1 The structure and content of the curriculum should be fit to enable the students to achieve the in-tended learning outcomes.

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

3.3 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 doctor-ates there is no credit range specified. The workload and the average time to complete the programme should be monitored.

Description

The SEOS Master's programme comprises a standard period of study of four semesters and amounts to a total workload of 120 credit points (CP) according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The workload of the modules varies between 5 and 30 CP, the majority being 15 CP. One CP corresponds with a student workload of 27 hours as it was agreed upon all partners since the hours per credit vary at the different universities. Evaluation results and the adequacy of the estimated workload are supposed to be regularly monitored by the Academic Study Board (ASB). The ASB is also in the position to take actions to modify the workload based on the results.

As explained in the SER, the programme's interdisciplinary approach is based on the idea that both the complexity of superdiversity as well as the educational, organisational, and societal challenges arising from it cross traditional academic boundaries. Therefore, lecturers from the SEOS staff, leading scholars, and invited guest lecturers from different disciplines shall participate in the programme. In addition, representatives from city administrations, their subsidiaries, companies, and NGOs are supposed to be regularly invited to present challenges they are facing and to discuss options to solve them. In the medium term, these stakeholders are to be brought together in a SEOS Practice Network. This may result in collaborative and engaged transnational research and teaching projects, especially using the format of jointly developed UNIC CityLabs which are supposed to bring students, researchers, and local stakeholders together in projects working on specific questions, and allow for co-creative practices of knowledge production and circulation. Cooperation within UNIC CityLabs also aims at serving as a starting point for impact-oriented Master's theses that are supposed to address real-world challenges. Thus, each thesis is supposed to consist of a research project that has both academic as well as societal relevance.

In the first semester, all SEOS students start their studies on site in Bochum with the aim to acquire fundamentals together by taking the modules "Basic Module Superdiversity", "Diversity-sensitive Research, Teaching and Learning Methods", and "Mobility and Exchange". These modules aim at laying the foundations and give orientation. The students are supposed to be equipped with basic knowledge not only on the (use of the) concept of superdiversity in the educational, organizational, and sociological field but also on diversity-sensitive research, teaching and learning methods. Furthermore, the programme aims at letting the students get to know the UNIC partner universities and the UNIC network and make first experiences in a (virtual) international surrounding; they are also supposed to get the opportunity to establish networks and peer working groups within their cohort as well as with other UNIC students.

In the second semester, the students are located either in Bochum, Cork, or Istanbul; they are supposed to choose their physical location according to their thematic specialisation (see below). They attend modules to gain insight into multidisciplinary perspectives and to set their first focus according to their own interests. Thus, the students take two out of three modules by their choice (“Superdiversity, Intersectionality and Social Inclusion: Social Scientific Perspectives” (UCC), “Superdiversity, Organisational Culture and Management” (KU) and/or “Educational Concepts. Superdiversity as a Part of Education” (RUB)). Each of the modules is offered by the partner university indicated either in an online or in-person-format.




The third semester aims at giving the opportunity to do in-depth studies to further specialise in one of the three fields of superdiversity research represented in the study programme (educational, organisational, and social scientific perspectives) while being physically located in Bochum, Cork, Oulu, Rotterdam, or Zagreb, according to their thematic specialisation and/or by choice. The elective modules offered in this semester are “Intersectionality and Decolonial Perspectives in a Mobile Society” (UOulu), “Managing Superdiversity in the Organisational Context” (EUR), and “Pedagogy, Competence and Literacy in the Super-Diverse Classroom” (UniZG); the choice is to be made corresponding to the modules taken in the second semester. In these modules, the students are supposed to deepen the contents of the first two semesters by conducting first small research projects and practical work, and thus prepare for their project in the Master’s thesis. Also, students do a “Practice Module” offered by ULiège which aims at enabling students to put the skills they have acquired in the previous modules into practice. In this module, the organisation of a UNIC CityLab related to a selected and timely aspect of superdiversity by the students is planned which is to be conducted in collaboration with stakeholders from different sectors from all cities represented in the consortium. In this module, all SEOS students of a cohort are supposed to be brought together again aiming at enabling them to contribute their specialised expertise in solving a problem in an interdisciplinary way.

The Master’s thesis is to be written at any SEOS partner university in the fourth semester while being located at any SEOS university. The students can choose the topic for their thesis according to their elective specialisation. They shall base it on the collaborative research and practice experiences made in the “Practice Module” with the aim to do an academic research project with both scientific and societal relevance. Accompanying the process of writing the thesis, participation in the virtual thesis colloquium offered by UDeusto is compulsory.

Thus, the curriculum and mobility scheme of the programme depicts as follows (see the following page):

MASTER Program SEOS

Superdiversity in Education, Organisations and Society

Semester 1 Fundamentals	Location	Bochum		
	Modules	A1, A2, A3		
	ECTS	30 ECTS		
	Period	September - February		
		PATH 1 	PATH 2 	PATH 3 
		Specialisation in educational perspectives	Specialisation in organisational perspectives	Specialisation in social scientific perspectives
			Option 2A Option 2B	
Semester 2 Multidisciplinary Perspectives	Location	Bochum or Cork		Bochum or Cork
	Modules	B1 + B3		B1 + B3
	ECTS	30 ECTS		30 ECTS
	Period	February - August		February - August
Semester 3 In-Depth Studies	Location	Bochum or Cork or Zagreb	Rotterdam Rotterdam	Bochum or Cork or Oulu
	Modules	C1 + D	C2 + D C2 + D	C3 + D
	ECTS	30 ECTS	30 ECTS	30 ECTS
	Period	September - February	September - February	September - February
Semester 4 Master Thesis	Location	Bilbao, Bochum, Cork, Istanbul, Liège, Oulu, Rotterdam or Zagreb		
	Modules	E		
	ECTS	30 ECTS		
	Period	February - August		

SEOS MODULES

- A1: Basic Module Superdiversity
- A2: Diversity-Sensitive Research, Teaching and Learning Methods
- A3: Mobility and Exchange

- B1: Educational Concepts. Superdiversity as a Part of Education
- B2: Superdiversity, Organisational Culture and Management
- B3: Superdiversity, Intersectionality and Social Inclusion: Social Scientific Perspectives

- C1: Pedagogy, Competence and Literacy in the Super-Diverse Classroom
- C2: Managing Superdiversity in the Organisational Context
- C3: Intersectionality and Decolonial Perspectives in a Mobile Society
- D: Practice Module

- E: Master Thesis

SEOS PARTNERS



TEACHING FORMAT  online teaching format  in-person teaching format

Within the programme, students can choose one of three thematic study and mobility paths. These are:

- (1) Specialisation in educational perspectives with a higher proportion of virtual mobility. After the joint first semester in Bochum, this path is offered mainly online but with the possibility of being on campus in Bochum, Cork, or Zagreb.
- (2) Specialisation in organisational perspectives with a higher proportion of physical mobility. After the joint first semester in Bochum, this path is offered on campus at Koç University, Istanbul, in collaboration with Erasmus University Rotterdam. Within path 2, students can choose between two options: organisational and educational perspectives (Option 2A) or organisational and social scientific perspectives (Option 2B).
- (3) Specialisation in social scientific perspectives with a higher proportion of virtual mobility. After the joint first semester in Bochum, this path is offered mainly online but with the possibility of being on campus in Bochum, Cork, or Oulu.

Experts' evaluation

In principle, the study programme is convincing in terms of its modular structure and content, which are suitable for achieving the ILOs. Adequate processes are planned to regularly review the adequacy of the study programme. From an expert's point of view, however, a few adjustments and clarifications are still necessary, and some recommendations are given for further development of the programme (see below).

The experts' group found the special teaching format of the CityLabs an elaborated tool to give students the opportunity to link their theoretic and methodological teaching and learning with practical problems in cooperation with local authorities and organisations. This possibility was highly estimated from the students the experts were able to talk to. Other teaching formats including online and hybrid learning that are planned to be used in the programme are also diverse and will support the different paths of study. But the experts advise that special importance should be given to maintain social contacts and coherence in a whole study cohort as there is a risk of falling apart while some of the students attend online, others on-site classes, some go abroad, others do not. It will be a challenge to bring the cohort(s) together in the different study paths and mobility schemes and to create a sense of community. There is also a risk that the students at the different universities will be little recognised due to the individual cases that occur at the different universities. This probably will be one of the major challenges for creating jointness in the programme "in real life". Therefore, this should be focussed on in the programme's further developments.

A significant critique concerns the invisibility of critical perspectives in the experts' analysis of the study programme's content, particularly the lack of emphasis on (post)colonialism, racism, and nation-state politics. This lack of emphasis captured the attention of all reviewers involved. During the discussions with various stakeholders, the students also expressed concerns about this issue. Educators from Ireland and Finland acknowledged this critique and confirmed that these topics are indeed covered in the curriculum but agreed to the need to enhance their visibility and centrality. Therefore, a major revision point is to make critical perspectives on superdiversity more central and visible within the study programme (also see chapter 8) (**Finding 2**). This seems an important point to attract students who want to learn about this topic.

While intersectionality is referenced in various parts of the programme, the experts believe that an integrated intersectional approach should be adopted (also see chapter 2). Thus, the teaching staff of the programme should consistently incorporate intersectional aspects of diversity and various axes of inequality (such as sexuality, religion, disability, etc.) (**Finding 3**). Also, striving for a higher diversity among the teaching staff is strongly encouraged by the experts so that the programme can better foster a safe space for co-existence and ensuring that students from different backgrounds feel heard and respected (also see chapter 7, Findings 6 and 7).

Regarding the structure of the study programme, it remains unclear how many of the courses are developed exclusively for the programme and how many are existing courses from other programme of the partner universities which are open to SEOS students. This should be made clearer from the module handbook once the programme has started and is somehow settled (**Finding 4**).

As explained above, the study programme offers various specializations which in general is to be valued and highlighted. However, the experts' concern is whether students experience a comparable loading when they are required to travel between different locations, and others do not when they decide not to change locations physically (every semester). This necessitates rigorous monitoring. However, the coordination between universities, facilitated by the UNIC alliance and its associated committees, appears effective and should foster good communication in monitoring students' progress as well as problems that might occur from the challenges of very mobile and less mobile students. It also ensures that the ECTS is applied adequately throughout the whole programme. It is noticeable that all partners agreed on a consistent and coherent amount of hours for one credit point due to differing workload calculations of the partner institutions.

Conclusion

The criterion is partially fulfilled.

4. Admission and recognition

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

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

Description

According to the SER, SEOS is open to candidates from diverse backgrounds, having acquired a qualified Bachelor's degree (Level 6 EQF) or an equivalent degree that gives them access to a Master's programme, and having demonstrable experience in topics related to superdiversity in educational, organisational and societal contexts, including, but not limited to, Diversity Studies, and scientific disciplines related to a specific dimension of diversity (e.g., Gender Studies, Migration Studies, Disability Studies, Religion), Educational Science, Continuing/Adult Education, Social Work, Psychology, Organization Studies, Management and Administration, Non-Profit-Management, Urban Studies, Sociology, Social Sciences, Political Sciences, Social and Cultural Anthropology, Cultural Studies, Media Studies, Linguistics, Communication Science, Intercultural Communication, and other related fields of study.

Following the SER, the consortium plans to establish a Joint Admission and Examination Committee (AEC) to organise examinations, admission to the programme, and to handle duties allocated as a result of these examination regulations (cf. § 14 of the Study and Examination Regulations).

The examination committee consists of the chair, their deputy and further six members entitled to vote from all eight partners. As a rule, the chair, the deputy chair and three further members as a minimum are elected from the group of professors, at least one member should be elected from the group of research associates. Eight deputies are elected for the members of the examination committee, thus each partner is supposed to be represented by one full and one deputy member. The term of mandate is three years.

The AEC is supposed to function as a coordinating, monitoring, and reviewing institution. It is responsible for assessment standards, study, and assessment regulations, may issue the thesis topics and control supervision

quality, fraud, and plagiarism cases, exmatriculation, as well as other matters related to the aforementioned, but is bound by the Partnership Agreement, the SEOS Study and Examination Regulations, and the rules and regulations in force at the partner universities. The AEC must report to the Academic Study Board and the deans of the respective faculties of all partner universities regularly, at least annually, on the development of the examinations and the study periods. This report is to be published. It shall provide suggestions for reform of the examination regulations and the study plan and shall give details about the distribution of the modules' and the overall grades.

The application, admission and enrolment procedure for SEOS takes place on a yearly basis and will be jointly organised and implemented by the AEC under the lead of Ruhr-University Bochum. AEC is also responsible for setting and reviewing the admission criteria in the Study and Examination Regulations according to national law and regulations, and for coordinating the correct levying of student participation costs.

For application via the SEOS website, candidates must:

- submit all necessary application documents by the established deadline, including a motivation letter and a recognised qualification in English at level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference;
- have acquired a qualified Bachelor's degree (Level 6 EQF) with a dissertation, or an equivalent degree that gives them access to a Master's programme with a total grade above average indicated in a Transcript of Records;
- have acquired demonstrable experience in topics related to diversity and inclusion in their Bachelor studies;
- have basic knowledge in research methodology.

The selection process is supposed to identify eligible and well-qualified candidates in five steps:

- Collection of applications through a central gateway website
- Rejection of ineligible candidates
- Set-up of a list with eligible candidates
- Proof of eligibility for admission (according to national laws and regulations)
- Finalisation selection in a joint selection meeting

The application, admission, and enrolment procedure for SEOS shall take place on a yearly basis for up to 40–50 students per cohort. Candidates fulfilling the entry requirements shall be ranked by the Admission Committee according to the following selection criteria:

- type and level of academic qualification according to grades;
- type and level of documented research experience;
- type and level of prior knowledge and professional experience in the field;
- persuasive power of the motivation letter;
- results of admission interviews (if applicable).

The terms of recognition are defined in the Examination Regulations in § 13. The regulations cover the recognition of examination results obtained at other higher education institutions and of competences acquired outside higher education, e.g., in non-formal education; the recognition of the latter is limited to a maximum of 50%. The Joint Admission and Examination Committee is responsible for the recognition. It is stated in the SER that recognition is done based on the Lisbon Convention.

Experts' evaluation

The application process is well laid out and demonstrates a comprehensive and inclusive approach to the programme's admission requirements and selection procedures, ensuring that they are aligned with the programme's level and discipline. Furthermore, the admission requirements are clearly defined, ensuring that

applicants possess a relevant first-cycle degree (Bachelor, EQF level 6) with at least 30 CP in a relevant topic as mentioned above which is suitable for the programme's focus on diversity.

The programme's commitment to diversity is thus evident in its invitation to candidates from a wide range of study backgrounds, adhering to inclusive practices that are crucial for the field of diversity. Acknowledging that the admission requirements and selection procedures are designed to attract a diverse pool of applicants with relevant academic backgrounds and experience, and since this is a study programme on superdiversity, diversity in the cohort is essential for the programme. The experts therefore advise robust mechanisms/questions in this process that assist the ambition of a broad student pool so good candidates from an array of ages, employment backgrounds, and/or experiences will not be excluded (**Finding 5**). Representation in the student pool is considered essential both in interest and reflection of our societies. For criticism on the limited diversity of the student population due to financial challenges, see chapter 6.

A good level of English is stipulated as a previous degree requirement, which is adequate for the language of instruction being English, but consideration should also be made if candidates have acquired English skills through work or otherwise ever since. This could be made more explicit and be gaged in the motivation letter because there might be ten or more years since the first degree was achieved.

The admission process is transparent and adequate in terms of the admission and examination committee. Though, as mentioned above, additional qualitative selection criteria may ensure that applicants who are most likely to benefit from and contribute to the programme can enter the study programme.

Recognition is regulated in the Examination Regulations including information on the responsible committee. This also includes non-formal and prior learning. The experts believe that in these regulations the Lisbon Convention has been observed.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

5. Learning, teaching and assessment

5.1 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.

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

Description

In the SER, inquiry-based and problem-based learning are emphasized as the most important didactic methods, e.g., in the CityLabs. The CityLabs approach is supposed to enable students to put the knowledge acquired in previous courses into practice. Students shall be involved and accompanied in the preparation and animation of a CityLab. Their aim is to accumulate, confront and produce knowledge about city-specific challenges by involving stakeholders from research, education, and civil society into local or virtual encounters. In the framework of the SEOS Master's programme, the organisation of a CityLab is described as a process (1) starting with the identification of relevant challenges connected with superdiversity and inclusion in the cities of the UNIC partners, (2) which is then to be followed by the establishment of methodological approaches and tools to analyse the identified challenges, and (3) is supposed to lead to the proposition of concrete solutions. Throughout this process, students shall involve stakeholders with expertise to help them confront their approaches with actual

situations. The CityLab itself is to be organized via the Virtual Meeting Platform; this shall enable students to investigate on issues together but being situated in different geographical places.

SEOS students are supposed to experience a hybrid learning architecture with different types of mobility (virtual and physical mobility options/blended mobility) and different types of specialisations on a thematic level according to their interests, disciplinary background and prior experience. On the didactical level, the student's experience with Engaged Research (ER) is to be achieved through different methods of inquiry-based and challenge-based learning such as CityLabs. According to the SER, teaching consists of a mix of face-to-face and online delivery. Teaching methods are thus supposed to comprise traditional methods such as lectures, readings, discussions, and also more student-activating focused methods such as design-based learning, system thinking, peer learning, learning by doing, challenge-based learning, co-design methods, workshops, ateliers, studios with interdisciplinary collaboration, face-to-face and virtual team teaching of lecturers from different partner universities.

According to the SER, specially tailored local language courses are offered to the students. The courses shall deal with daily life topics, introduce each university, city, and give access to the official university language (incl. Gaelic and Basque) or enhance existing competencies.

To meet challenges of physical mobility due to temporal and spatial limits, the concept of Blended Mobility was developed. Even if students decide to physically move to a specific partner university and city, they at the same time shall remain connected to all the other partner universities through different blended mobility formats, such as MOOCs with virtual guest lectures. Also, staff mobility is supposed to facilitate the establishment of courses in team-teaching mode and exchange between the SEOS academics.

For information about the Joint Admission and Examination Committee (AEC), see the chapter on admission and recognition.

In the programme, different types of assessment are to be used such as written examinations, oral examinations, seminar contributions, presentations, essays, student projects, practical examinations, or colloquium lectures. Where there are alternative options given for the assessment of a module in the Module Handbook, the final form of the examination performance and the resources permitted are supposed to be announced at the start of the semester during which the module takes place. A module is passed when the associated module examination has been passed; the examination can be graded or ungraded. Failed module examinations or those that are deemed to have been failed can be retaken at least two times per study year. Any additional retake requires the renewed registration and participation in the module.

Regulations on maternity protection, family and care obligations as well as disadvantage equalisation for students with a physical or mental disability or a chronic illness can be found in the examination regulations (§ 11). Service centres for students with disabilities at the partner universities aim at providing support in advising affected students. The illness of a child or a close relative is generally treated the same as one's own illness. According to the SER, childcare facilities and on-demand childcare during vacation are available at some of the partner universities.

The Master's thesis is to be assessed by a jury of a minimum of three examiners independently of each other, and it shall follow the regulations for the Master Thesis Module as specified in § 18 of the Examination Regulations. At the end of the programme, a final oral examination is also to be held.

The grades gained in each module are converted to the SEOS Master's grading system. In the Joint Transcript of Records, the final grades of a student are to be converted to the different national grade systems.

Experts' evaluation

The diverse teaching formats with a variety of inquiry- and problem-based learning methods and tools that are planned to be used correspond well with the learning objectives in which critical reflection and self-positioning

play an important role. The complex transnational hybrid learning architecture with its digital and analogue formats addresses a contemporary international student body that is highly familiar with them. The programme gives many chances to experience mobility which is attractive. Also, having the option to be physically mobile and have online opportunities at the same time is attractive. Online meetings can be a good alternative but are not necessarily inclusive; this should be kept in mind, as also stated before, to foster a broad diversity of students.

Having students with a diverse academic background, bringing them together and resuming these backgrounds can be a challenge. The student group in this programme will be heterogenous, and this is one of the challenges of doing an interdisciplinary programme in general (the threat of repeating topics is always there) but can also be an advantage. Some aspects might be repeated for some students but when it comes to superdiversity, this gives the opportunity to experience discussions in heterogenous groups.

It will also be a challenge for the programme coordinator and the representatives of the student counselling institutions at the consortium universities to explain the complexity of the programme and the options to prospective students in a way that is easy to understand and to help them make the right choice for them within the programme's options. The experts' group thus advises to further elaborate on how to meet this challenge appropriately once the programme has started.

Furthermore, the different paths of the programme with varying forms of mobility as well as including a broad range of students and discussion aspects of superdiversity need special teaching formats as well as didactic methods and skills by the teaching staff involved. As already mentioned in chapter 3, the special teaching format of the CityLabs is an elaborated tool to give students the opportunity to link their theoretic and methodological teaching and learning with practical problems in cooperation with local authorities and organisations. However, creating rooms for open discussions by the teaching staff, understanding their own biases, having skills to deal with trauma, value different points of view and religious values, etc., will be a challenge. Offering a (UNIC wide) specific training which covers diversity sensitivity as well as mutual understanding for different teaching cultures and the plea for finding compromises for teaching staff is thus highly recommended (**Finding 6**). Additionally, as the multidimensional diversity of students can be expected to be big, it is highly recommended to develop and coordinate a code of conduct between all partner institutions to secure well-being and safety of students to have the classroom as a safe space including adaptive teaching formats, and also develop a consortium-wide anti-discrimination policy (**Finding 7**); this should include an anti-harassment/discrimination policy and a central contact point for student's issues. An accompanying guide could contain a procedure for handling complaints, giving guidelines on social safety and shared values. UNIC should take the lead and the students cohorts should also benefit from a session on social safety and a code of conduct. It should be kept in mind and not be underestimated how public relations issues could arise from negative experiences not dealt with in a mediatory or legal compliance in a subject like this.

In general, the examination and assessment methods planned to be used in the programme seem adequate; to be highlighted are the project-based approached in teaching, learning and also assessment, as stated above. From the experts' point of view, the regulations and documentation of the programme that is necessary to have the legal situation clear are in place. The Student Handbook and the Examination Regulations give all information needed on the different aspects of the student life cycle.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

6. Student support

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

Description

The SEOS programme aims at offering student support based on a combination of existing student support services at each partner university, e. g., for individual counselling, and new support offers created exclusively for SEOS students. The programme's website is supposed to provide all necessary information on the programme as a whole, possible module choices, as well as corresponding mobility schemes. Additionally, a pre-entry guidance pack is mentioned which is supposed to cover information on the academic partners and the SEOS programme; it is to be sent to the applicants including programme support information, e. g., induction arrangements and contact details of their programme representatives.

Students receive digital copies of the Programme and Module Handbook, the student guidebook, and the Joint Study & Examination Regulations with the aim of safeguarding a smooth registration process and a timely arrival at Ruhr-University Bochum. Students shall also be informed about the SEOS programme manager's study support offers and language courses. The SEOS Coordinator at each partner university is supposed to provide guidance and assistance to students concerning the contents of the programme, and to direct them to other local student support services, if necessary, e. g., for subject-related counselling, counselling for social and financial matters, or psychological counselling.

An online welcome event is planned to be held six weeks before the start of the semester to meet the SEOS Coordinator and Directors, lecturers and administrators from the different partner universities. Prior to starting their studies in Bochum, students are invited to attend a study counselling consultation in-situ. As explained in the SER, the SEOS staff additionally organizes a joint welcome session at the beginning of each taught semester, and particularly at the start of Semester 1. RUB's staff is supposed to provide the incoming students with information on the entire programme as well as about the courses offered specifically in the first semester in Bochum. The Institute for Educational Research plans to organise specific formats for socializing and networking with fellow (senior) students and lecturers, e. g., get-togethers or Master tutorials offered as part of the "Basic Module on Superdiversity". Additionally, the RUBiss team (RUB international student services) plans to organise orientation days for new students before the beginning of the semester. Support and guidance of international students at RUB and the first semester shall also be provided by local students, the so-called "Campus Guides". Furthermore, the implementation of a programme-specific buddy system is planned, in which selected advanced SEOS students of the 3rd semester shall advise first-year SEOS students to complement official offers in a non-formal way.

Between the first and second semester, a virtual meeting is organized to inform about most important things to prepare before physically or virtually changing study locations in the course of the chosen study path. When physically moving, accommodation services and other services at the hosting university shall support the students, e. g., with visa applications, introduction sessions, language courses, university guidance service, social assistance service, support in contracting private health insurance, funding opportunities, sports and cultural activities, etc. Prior to physical mobility, students with special needs shall receive counselling with the service unit dedicated to these questions at the correspondent partner university.

At each partner university, student and alumni support services or career centres are supposed to offer guidance with regard to the students' transfer into employment. The UNIC CityLab in the 3rd semester shall also give students the opportunity to get in contact with possible future employers in public, private and non-profit sectors.

After graduation, all students are to be encouraged to link via social media, mailing lists as well as annual graduation ceremonies combined with alumni forums.

Experts' evaluation

The SEOS Master's programme demonstrates a comprehensive and well-structured approach to student support, integrating both existing resources at partner universities and new services specifically designed for SEOS students. This approach is commendable for its depth and range, addressing the various needs of mobile students and contributing significantly to the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. The programme's student support services are particularly noteworthy for their attention to the challenges faced by mobile students, ensuring that all students, regardless of their backgrounds or specific needs, are well-supported throughout their studies.

The provision of intensive counselling by the full-time SEOS Programme Manager covering individual study plans, mobility options and personal or academic concerns, demonstrates a strong commitment to addressing the specific challenges of mobile students. This tailored support is crucial for helping students make informed decisions about their studies and future careers.

The proactive approach to career planning and employability, facilitated through connections with potential employers and the UNIC CityLab, provides students with valuable opportunities to engage with the job market and establish professional networks. The strong alumni community and the involvement of alumni in the programme further enrich the student experience, offering insights into the practical application of their studies in the field of diversity.

In assessing the SEOS programme against the criteria, it becomes evident that the programme demonstrates a robust commitment to student support, which is a vital component for the achievement of intended learning outcomes, especially in the context of joint programmes with a significant focus on student mobility.

However, since the programme has not started yet, it is still a concept that leaves aspects unclear which will surely be clarified as soon as the programme is running. This has made it somehow hard to get a concrete idea of the programme. One of these is the impression of a certain lack of awareness of the teaching staff and coordinators for financial problems which interested persons, applicants, and students might face. To open the possibility to apply for a programme with comparably high tuition fees and to attract a (super)diverse group of people, solutions must be found for those who cannot afford these. Thus, a concept must be developed on how the diversity of the student population will be supported and counselled, especially regarding the tuition fees, e. g., by acquiring scholarship donors for specific student groups (e.g., from the Global South, with disabilities, from low-income families), funding UNIC scholarships, and systematically informing students about available opportunities from other institutions (**Finding 8**). This will be mainly (but not only) an issue for students from countries outside of Europe because these students will pay tuition fees that are double as high. Counselling and support in finding scholarships, organise funding for stipends, and/or tuition waver possibilities should be found and made transparent, especially on the website. Such options would be fruitful to ensure equity is a tangible reality.

Besides the financial aspects, the SEOS programme's structure and organization show a clear orientation towards supporting the feasibility of the programme and ensuring that learning outcomes can be achieved effectively. This is evidenced by the programme's integrated approach which combines existing support services at partner universities with new, SEOS-specific offerings. The provision of digital resources, including the Programme and Module Handbook, alongside the pre-entry guidance pack, ensures that students are well-prepared and informed before their arrival at Ruhr-University Bochum, facilitating a smooth transition into the programme. The introduction of the SEOS Coordinator role at each partner university serves a key resource for students, guiding them through the programme's content and directing them to additional support services,

if necessary. This structure supports the feasibility of the programme by ensuring that students have continuous access to guidance and support which is crucial for achieving the intended learning outcomes.

With regard to the specific challenges of mobile students, the SEOS programme has demonstrated a conscientious effort to address these by various means. The coordination between the universities in handling visa applications and immigration issues, as seen with the experiences from the other programme the UNIC consortium already offers (RePIC), shows an established framework that can thoroughly support the mobility phases of the SEOS students. Furthermore, the collaborative effort in negotiating with local authorities to receive special permits illustrates a proactive approach in overcoming regulatory hurdles, thus facilitating student mobility.

The programme's coordinator's effort to create a mutual understanding of regulations concerning attendance and participation in online courses and to overcome issues that might be caused by different jurisdictions is another commendable aspect. This flexibility is crucial for mobile students who may face varying restrictions and requirements in different countries. However, the programme's website and further publications such as the Student Handbook could be checked for giving clear information, such as how issues related to visa and residence permits, especially for non-EU students, can be obtained.

Conclusion

The criterion is partially fulfilled.

7. Resources

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

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

Description

The consortium explains that each of the eight universities provides up to four academics who will teach in the SEOS programme and jointly act as supervisors and co-supervisors for thesis work. Moreover, each university shall appoint one SEOS Director, who is responsible for the academic programme and communicating with the other directors on the execution of the programme. In addition to the SEOS teaching staff, leading scholars and guest lecturers are supposed to be invited on a regular basis to deliver talks, lectures, seminars, or organize round table discussions with students. With the aim to conduct the UNIC CityLabs, non-academic stakeholders and actors from the public, private and civil society spheres will also be involved. For this, each partner university's network with their respective city and surrounding region are supposed to be used to involve representatives from city administrations, companies, NGOs as well as from regional and transnational associations.

Administrative staff of the partner universities are said to be responsible for programme planning, quality management and assurance, and international relations. In addition, each university appoints a Local Coordinator who shall assist the academic coordinator, carry out day-to-day administrative and technical tasks concerning the students, admission, reception and induction, quality assurance, mobility and general matters concerning the study programme. It is explained in the SER that RUB provides a full post-doc position for coordination and management tasks.

The Board of Directors of the programme is responsible for the programme's strategic project management. It has the function of a steering group for the programme and shall exchange regularly with the members of SEOS's External Advisory Board. The Board of Directors is chaired by the SEOS Programme Coordinator.

Since the SEOS students are enrolled at the eight partner universities at the same time, they have access to all resources available to local students including learning facilities like seminar rooms and lecture halls, libraries, workstations, and research lab facilities, as well as WIFI on each campus. As stated in the SER, a joint online-learning environment is also planned to be installed for giving access to supporting material of the modules, including recorded lectures, primary source material, assessment guidance, reading lists and digitized articles, chapters, audio recordings, streamed videos, additional practical exercises and other materials. This will also include access to Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Students are also able to attend specially tailored local language courses free of charge. Special instruments or services for physically or mentally challenged students are also supposed to be provided by the partner universities on their campuses (also see chapter “student support”).

Experts’ evaluation

The experts acknowledge the composition of the group of teaching staff in terms of number, varied fields, international experience, didactic skills, and interdisciplinary knowledge. However, one aspect the experts find important in a study programme dealing with superdiversity is the representation of a broad range of diversity characteristics in the teaching staff which could be increased (**Finding 10**). This could be done, e.g., by regularly inviting different guest lecturers from other universities, the labour market, within the CityLabs exercises, so that mentoring and in-depth learning about multicultural experiences and real-world issues/application of knowledge in practice can be fostered on a higher level. This could also help to broaden topics, methods and approaches addressed in the programme to be less Eurocentric (**Finding 11**). Additionally, the teaching staff could engage in professional development on a broad range of diversity characteristics possibly headed by West Cork – on teacher exchange, learning and development on practices and issues raised which could form a compendium of material for practitioners in the education system reflecting on associated topics. This could focus on didactic elements of diversity of teaching style, formats for engagement and facilitating techniques harnessing and showcasing the variety of engagement modes for enquiry and delivery. These should focus on the fact that it is very likely that in a group that would speak about diversity knowledge on the political nature of the European landscape would entail skills such as trauma informed practice and other skills to ensure safety and engagement in the Master’s programme to achieve the goals to entry the labour market (also see chapter 5) – and to be able to reflect and represent and reflect diversity of societies in the broadest sense of diversity that is possible. This includes not only gender, but all other axes reflected in the Master’s programme (also see chapter 3, Finding 3).

Besides the teaching staff, facilities and equipment are also crucial for achieving the intended learning outcomes. All universities involved make contributions for resident students, and the programme is well equipped with online resources for alternative teaching formats. Access to literature and databases for students is provided by the universities that form the UNIC alliance.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

8. Transparency and documentation

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

Description

Information about the programme is to be published via the SEOS website and its subsection on documents, including the Programme and Module Handbook as well as the Study and Examination Regulations. According to the SER, information given includes the documents mentioned in the report before, such as information about the different study paths and mobility schemes.

It is explained in the SER that the implementation of a joint document management and student data exchange system is supposed to grant the local coordinators access to relevant documents and information for the management of the programme.

Experts' evaluation

As it might already have become clear in previous chapters, transparency and documentation of the programme in general is adequate. However, some aspects are not yet fully transparent such as information on the internet and the module handbook on which courses are offered exclusively for the programme and which are imported from other programmes, on fees and scholarship options, possible visa and residents permits issues, etc. Also, how topics such as racism, intersectionality, decolonization, etc. are addressed in the different (basic) modules and the respective courses does not become clear from the documentation such as the module handbook. That these topics are addressed in a programme that is labelled focussing on "superdiversity" therefore needs to be made transparent (see Findings 3, 4, and 9).

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

9. Quality assurance

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

Description

Institutional quality assurance for learning and teaching is described in the SER as a shared responsibility of all participating universities. The joint quality management of the programme is supposed to combine and use well-proven quality management instruments of the partner universities and new joint instruments such as the External Advisory Board to integrate external stakeholders as "critical friend input". Feedback loops with selected stakeholders every two years are supposed to generate ideas and input for programme enhancement.

Internal quality assurance is planned to involve students through questionnaire-based feedback on all modules in each semester. Also, a survey on service quality and regular graduate surveys shall be conducted with the aim of comparing student experience across academic partners and identifying areas of concern. Teaching Analysis Polls (a moderated interview technique for qualitative evaluation) are planned to be used for formative evaluation of the three study paths.

The responsibility for the joint quality management lies with the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC). An internal SEOS Quality Handbook is to be developed based on the experience and findings with the first cohort. The Joint Admission and Examination Committee is supposed to report annually on the number of examinations taken and passed, and possible recommendations resulting from the analysis of the examination data. In addition to these data, the QAC is supposed to be provided with further evaluation results that the partner universities collect as part of their university's internal quality management.

The SEOS faculty, i.e., all academics teaching in the programme, plans to convene once per year to discuss ways to enhance content and cohesion of the curriculum. This review is supposed to be overseen by the SEOS Board of Directors and the External Advisory Board. The results and conclusions to improve the quality of the curriculum and the quality of student services shall be reflected with the members of the Student Committee and measures are to be mutually agreed upon. Each measure or change is to be checked for effectiveness in the next evaluation cycle and modified again, if necessary.

Experts' evaluation

The SEOS programme has an established and adequate joint quality management framework that leverages both the proven quality management instruments of the partner universities and introduces new instruments tailored to the programme's unique needs. Notably, the creation of the External Advisory Board, which includes external stakeholders to provide critical and constructive feedback, exemplifies the programme's commitment to integrating external perspectives into its continuous improvement process. This mechanism, alongside the planned biennial feedback loops with selected stakeholders, facilitates a dynamic and responsive approach to programme enhancement.

The development of an internal SEOS Quality Handbook, which will be based on the insights gained from the first cohort, demonstrates a structured approach to capturing lessons learned and best practices for ongoing quality improvement.

The SEOS programme has established clear governance structure to ensure that student feedback is systematically collected and integrated into the QA processes. The involvement of students and their representation by half of the members of the advisory board in evaluating class evaluations is a commendable practice that empowers students to directly influence the programme's development. The decision to utilize existing QA systems and tools across the partner universities, while ensuring comparability and coherence, reflects a pragmatic and efficient approach to quality assurance.

The annual convening of the SEOS faculty to discuss the curriculum and teaching strategies, with oversight from the SEOS Board of Directors and the External Advisory Board, ensures that academic content remains relevant, cohesive and of high quality.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

V. Recommendation of the panel of experts

The panel of experts recommends accrediting the study programme “Superdiversity in Education, Organisations and Society” (M.A.) offered by the UNIC European University Alliance with conditions.

Commendation:

UNIC forms a good basis for offering this new Master’s programme; the consortium has already developed a solid foundation of exchange and collaboration from which the programme will make profit. This was shown by the high level of estimation of the programme by the management. The talks with the teaching staff as well as the students from the different partner universities have made it clear that exchange and mobility are already realized., e.g., in CityLabs that have already taken place with students from other programmes at different sites such as Liège, Oulu, and Deusto. The teaching staff and management have gone through a learning journey how to create jointness in the alliance in the past and all persons involved have shown willingness to further develop the programme once it has started.

The special teaching format of the CityLabs is an elaborated tool to give students the opportunity to link their theoretic and methodological teaching and learning with practical problems in cooperation with local authorities and organisations. This possibility was highly estimated from the students the experts were able to talk to. Other teaching formats including online and hybrid learning that are planned to be used in the programme are also diverse and will support the different paths of study.

Another positive aspect to be mentioned at this point is the detailed process of quality assurance that is already in place because of the collaborations on UNIC level and the experiences from the other Master’s programme of the consortium. The new programme will profit from the established procedures and processes.

Findings:

1. It is recommended to critically reflect on the use of the concept of “intercultural competence” including reflecting on current critical, postcolonial informed approaches to this concept in Cultural, Social and Educational Sciences.
2. That different topics of (super)diversity such as racism, intersectionality, and decolonization are regarded in the content of the programme, must be more central in the curriculum and be made more prominently visible in the module handbook.
3. Intersectional aspects of diversity and various axes of inequality should consistently be incorporated in the programme (such as sexuality, religion, disability, etc.).
4. It does not yet become clear what the number of courses is that will be specifically offered for the SEOS programme, and which are already existing and taken from other study programmes by opening them for SEOS students; this should be made clear in the module handbook.
5. Implementing robust mechanisms in the admission process is recommended that assist the achievement of the ambition of a broad student pool with good candidates from an array of ages, employment, backgrounds, and/or experiences.
6. For the teaching staff, creating rooms for open discussions, understanding their own bias, skills to deal with trauma, valuing different points of view, religious values, etc. will be a challenge. Offering (UNIC wide) specific training for teaching staff on related topics is thus recommended.

7. It is highly recommended to develop and coordinate a code of conduct between all partner institutions to secure well-being and safety of students to have the classroom as a safe space, including adaptive teaching formats, and also develop a consortium-wide anti-discrimination policy.
8. A concept must be developed on how the diversity of the student population will be supported by means of support and counselling, especially regarding the tuition fees, e. g., by acquiring scholarship donors for specific student groups (e.g., from the Global South, with disabilities, from low-income families), funding UNIC scholarships, and systematically informing students about available opportunities from other institutions.
9. The information in the Student Handbook and on the website should be checked for providing extensive information regarding possible visa problems and residence regulations.
10. To represent a wider range of diversity among the teaching staff, it should be broadened, e.g., by regularly inviting different guest lecturers from other universities, the labour market, etc.
11. By including guest lecturers, the topics, methods, and approaches addressed in the programme should represent a wider range and be less Eurocentric.