Accreditation Report

Master's Programme

"City Management"

offered by

Alfred Nobel University Dnipro/Ukraine

Coventry University /United Kingdom

ZEvA
Zentrale Evaluations- & Akkreditierungsagentur

23nd Meeting of the ZEvA Commission on the 4th of November 2025

Agenda Item Nr. 04.04

Study Programme	Degree	Programme Duration	Type of Programme
City Management	Master	1 year 5 months (3 semesters)	Full-time

Date of online site visit: 12th of August 2025

Responsible Staff:

Alfred Nobel University Dnipro

- Prof. Dr. Vikoriia Sokolova, Vice-Rector
- Professor Dr. Volodymyr Momot, Doctor of Economics

Coventry University

- Prof. Dr. Richard Tomlins, Regional Director

Expert Panel:

- Prof. Dr. Jan Büchsenschuß; Ostfalia University of Applied Sciences; Smart City Engineering
- Prof. Dr. Jörg Rainer Noennig; Hafen City University Hamburg, Chair of Digital City Science,
- Elizabeth Calderón Lüning; Mission Lead for Democracy and Technology at Democratic Society, Brussel; Co-Founder and speaker of the Digital City Alliance, Berlin (representative of the profession)
- Mateo Adan Candia Ferreira; student at University Münster, (Politics and Economics) (student expert)

ZEvA Project Coordinator:

Dr. Barbara Haferkorn, Central Evaluation and Accreditation Agency Hanover (ZEvA)

Hanover, 10.11.2025

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1. Decision of the ZEvA Accreditation Commission (4th of November 2025)

The ZEvA Commission follows the experts' report and decides to accredit the Master's programme "City Management" without conditions for a period of six years.

This decision is based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), the Framework of Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area and the recommendations of the ECTS Users' Guide as referred to in the ZEvA Manual for the External Assessment of Study Programmes.

- ANU/CU "City Management", IP-1236-1 –

I Findings of the Expert Panel and Decision of the Accreditation Commission
2 Key Findings and Final Vote of the Expert Panel

2. Key Findings and Final Vote of the Expert Panel

2.1 Executive Summary: Key Findings

The experts are impressed by the structure and implementation of the innovative programme. Particularly noteworthy is the variety of teaching and learning methods used, which enable students to acquire modern and practical skills. The experts commend the universities on the highly modern and student-centred teaching methods applied in the programme. The chosen forms of teaching and student assessment are well-aligned with the intended learning outcomes of the programme and the goals of the individual modules. The programme shows a good balance of theory-based input and practical phases.

The study programme successfully brings together three different ways of thinking. Coming from a more business and management-oriented perspective, the programme still seems to have some room for improvement in terms of urban background knowledge (urban ecology, urban history, urban climate, socio-spatial development, social psychology, neighbourhood development, etc.). The experts recommend making some adjustments here if possible. On the other hand, the finance module appears to be very practically oriented but, in terms of content, possibly too detailed for the programme's objectives, even if it is understandable that a Master's graduate should be familiar with it.

It is also recommended that reflective elements of ethics be made more visible or further strengthened so that no uncritical view of the smart city approach is conveyed.

The teaching faculty is composed of highly experienced senior lecturers and scholars who possess all academic expertise required for the programme.

The online talks have also confirmed that communication, exchange and support between the two universities work very well, to the mutual benefit of both faculty and students.

2.2 Final Vote of the Expert Panel

2.2.1 Recommendations for Enhancement:

The study programme successfully brings together three different ways of thinking. Coming from a more business and management-oriented perspective,

- the programme still seems to have some room for improvement in terms of urban background knowledge (urban ecology, urban history, urban climate, socio-spatial development, social psychology, neighbourhood development, etc.). The experts recommend making some adjustments here if possible.
- It is also recommended that reflective elements of ethics be made more visible or further strengthened so that no uncritical view of the smart city approach is conveyed.

2.2.2   Conditions:

None.

2.2.3   Recommendation to the ZEvA Commission:

The expert group recommends the accreditation of the Master's programme "City Management" for the duration of six years without conditions.

II. Evaluation Report of the Expert Panel

1. Introduction: Purpose and General Context of the Accreditation Procedure

In April 2025, ZEvA was commissioned with the international accreditation of three Master's programmes that had been developed and launched within the framework of the EU Twinning initiative, an institution-to-institution partnership framework to support Ukrainian higher education, both through short-term aid and long-term activities that help sustain and rebuild Ukrainian universities, the economy and society.

The initiative is coordinated by Cormack Consultancy Group with the support of University UK, the President's Fund of Ukraine for Education, Science, and Sports and different private and state organisations.

Each of the three Master's programmes is jointly offered by one Ukrainian university and one partner institution in the United Kingdom. All programmes are fully taught in English and award a double degree, whereas the exact roles and responsibilities of the partners vary with each programme. At present, all programmes are primarily directed at Ukrainian students, but are, on principle, designed to be open to both international and domestic applicants.

As the programmes belong to a wide spectrum of different academic disciplines, they were assessed in three separate procedures across the year 2025. Each assessment procedure was organized as a peer review, involving an expert panel composed of two university professors in the discipline, one professional from outside academia and one student.

The quality assessment was based on the criteria laid out in the "ZEvA Manual for the External Assessment of Study Programmes". This framework is in turn fundamentally based on the "European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ESG)" (ENQA 2015), the "Framework for Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area" (2005) and the "ECTS Users' Guide" (European Communities, 2015).

For the purpose of the assessment, the universities were asked to submit a written self-report in English for each study programme. Each self-report contained detailed information on the higher education institutions and the programme and included an appendix of key documents, as e.g. the course syllabi, curricula, CVs of the teaching faculty and relevant regulatory documents (cooperation agreements, regulations for student assessment, graduation and recognition, quality assurance policies etc.). The main responsibility for the reports lies with the programme coordinators in Ukraine.

Due to the travel restrictions imposed by the ongoing war in Ukraine, the experts conducted online talks with representatives of both universities instead of on-site visits. In addition, they were provided with concrete impressions of the premises and infrastructure on campus by means of picture and/or video material.

This assessment report refers to the Master's programme City Management which is jointly offered by the Alfred Nobel University Dnipro (hereinafter: ANU) in Ukraine and Coventry University (hereinafter: CU) in the United Kingdom. The report reflects the outcomes of the experts' assessment of the written self-report and their impressions gained during the online talks with the students, the faculty and staff of both universities and the Twinning project coordinator.

The assessment report serves as a key document for the ZEvA Accreditation Commission to decide on the accreditation of the study programme with the ZEvA quality label. As ZEvA is a registered agency in Ukraine, the accreditation decision can be recognized as equivalent to Ukrainian national accreditation. In the United Kingdom, no external accreditation decision is required at programme level.

2.   Outline of the Study Programme

The study programme enrolled its first (all Ukrainian) cohort of 21 students in 2024. The newly designed study programme merges some basic educational elements (modules) from longstanding Master's programmes in the field of Management at ANU, with newly designed and tailored components both from ANU and CU. According to the self-report the mission of the study programme is to *"train executives and managers (CEOs) for the post-war recovery and development of Ukrainian cities and territories based on the Smart City concept, taking into account labour market needs. Graduates will be capable of identifying and solving complex management challenges that require research and/or innovation and are characterised by uncertainty in conditions and requirements."* (self-report, p. 18).

The full-time study programme comprises 90 ECTS and offers a double degree with CU. Graduates are to receive a Master's degree from ANU and a Master of Science from CU. Students are enrolled in both institutions and have to meet the requirements of ANU and CU for receiving both degrees.

The study programme is presently mainly taught in English, with one general module ("General Management and Finance") in the Ukrainian language. All students currently enrolled are Ukrainian nationals. The university will ensure a complete switch to teaching in English as soon as it enrols its first international students.

The study programme is open for students from a wide spectrum of academic backgrounds. Even though the first cohort consists of Ukrainian students only, the partners expect to enrol students from other countries in the future.

The programme was originally designed to be taught in a hybrid format, including on-campus lessons at ANU. However, due to the ongoing war in Ukraine and the dire safety situation there, teaching within the programme is currently taking place online only.

3.   The Partner Universities and their Framework of Collaboration

Profile of the Universities

Founded in 1993 by individuals and private legal entities, with strong organisational support from local authorities, Alfred Nobel University (ANU) is a private, multidisciplinary higher education institution established to meet the demand for professionals during Ukraine's transition to a market-based economy. Currently (2024/25) 1,585 students are enrolled in 15 Bachelor's, 15 Master's, four PhD and four postdoctoral programmes spanning subjects such as economics, finance, law, computer science, linguistics, psychology and tourism.

ANU has been accredited since 2005 and holds a termless licence for educational activities issued by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. According to the self-report ANU is renowned for its high graduate employment rate of 94–99%, thanks to its adaptive curricula that are aligned with market needs. It recently ranked sixed best private university in Ukraine (https://osvita.ua/vnz/rating/25714/).

The university is a member of several international associations, including the Magna Charta Universitatum, the European University Association and the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). It has also signed 34 Memorandums of Understanding with universities in countries such as the UK, Poland, Germany and France. Joint diploma programmes are offered with institutions in Poland, the UK and Cyprus. Some study programmes have been accredited by ZEvA (Germany) and the MBA programme by the European Council for Business Education (ECBE).

Coventry University (CU), a public university within the UK system, has a history dating back to 1843. It evolved from the Coventry School of Design to Coventry Polytechnic, achieving university status in 1992. Today, with a student population exceeding 30,000 and multiple campuses including CU London, CU Scarborough and CU Birmingham, the university offers a wide range of undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral programmes spanning disciplines such as engineering, business, health sciences, arts, computing and law.

According to the self-report, the university emphasises practical education, applied research and globalisation. Its interdisciplinary research focuses on themes such as the future of transport, health and wellbeing, sustainable environments, digital futures, and peacebuilding. The Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations (CTPSR) is also based at the university. The university is a member of international associations such as the European University Association (EUA) and the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), and is fully accredited by the UK's Office for Students (OfS). Many study programmes also hold professional accreditations; for example, business programmes are accredited by the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD) (EPAS).

History and Framework of the Cooperation

The two universities signed a memorandum of agreement on the double degree programme in February 2024 following bi-weekly meetings between senior staff of the two institutions since October 2023. The agreement outlines the programme and the roles and responsibilities of each partner institution (see below).

Before the programme was finally launched, it successfully underwent the internal standard procedures of both ANU and CU for the validation and approval of study programmes. According to the information provided during the online-talks additional funding has since been granted for a further five years.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Partners

In the process of developing the double degree programme, formal and legal requirements on both sides were accounted for, especially the national educational standards applying to Master's programmes in Ukraine.

The majority (70%) of the curriculum is delivered by ANU with CU providing specialised electives (30%). Students are enrolled at both universities and the Master's thesis is supervised jointly.

The responsible faculty of both universities meet regularly to discuss issues related to the delivery of the programme. Each university is responsible for the management of the courses they deliver.

According to the self-report and the online talks, both partners share the responsibilities of the selection and sequential admission process of students (See 4.2 for further details).

4. Assessment of the Study Programme

4.1 Intended Learning Outcomes

The intended learning outcomes (ILOs) for the City Management Master's programme are described in Supplement 1.1 and are also available on the university's website regarding the City Management programme page and in the Diploma Supplement. Additionally, the ILOs for each curricular component are presented in the course descriptions, accessible via the course catalogue on the internal information server.

According to the document, the **mission** of the programme is " *to train executives and managers (CEOs) for the post-war recovery and development of Ukrainian cities and territories based on the Smart City concept, taking into account labour market needs. Graduates will be capable of identifying and solving complex management challenges that require research and/or innovation and are characterized by uncertainty in conditions and requirements.*

The programme aims to equip students with a deep understanding of innovative technologies for managing organisations and enterprises that foster city development based on the Smart City concept, strategic and innovation management in smart city development, digitalisation and AI-driven governance in smart city development, international project management and fundraising, urban and regional logistics infrastructure management, environmental and crisis management, circular economy, stakeholder and change agent engagement, and planning and forecasting for smart city development. The programme also develops leadership qualities, analytical thinking and the skills necessary for sustainable management to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)." (Supplement 1.1)

The **intended learning outcomes of the programme** (PLOs) are described as follows in the Diploma Supplement:

"4.2 Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge:

- *critically evaluate, select and apply necessary scientific, methodological and analytical tools for management in unpredictable conditions;*
- *identify organisational problems and justify methods for their resolution;*
- *develop and implement organisational and business strategies aligned with the smart city concept to enhance city or territorial branding and manage human capital effectively using management, economic, social, legal and ethical tools;*

Skills:

- *design effective management systems for organisations;*
- *justify and manage projects, generate entrepreneurial ideas;*
- *plan organisational activities strategically and tactically;*
- *apply specialised software and information systems for organisational management tasks;*

- *be able to plan and implement information, methodological, material, financial and personnel support for an organisation (unit);*
- *make effective decisions regarding change management, including in uncertain or post-war recovery conditions, identifying factors affecting changes and sustainable development goals.*

Communication:

- *organise and conduct effective communications within teams, with representatives of different professional groups, and in international contexts;*
- *communicate in professional and academic environments in the state and foreign languages;*
- *demonstrate leadership skills, work in a team, interact with people and influence behaviour to solve professional tasks;*
- *organise effective interaction among key stakeholder groups locally, nationally, and globally during Ukraine's post-war economic recovery, considering global sustainable development goals.*

Autonomy and responsibility:

- *develop skills to make, justify and ensure the implementation of managerial decisions under unpredictable conditions, considering legal, ethical and social responsibility requirements;*
- *ensure personal professional development and time management;*
- *be able to delegate authority and management of the organisation (subdivision)."*

Additional features Dual-degree program: The dual-degree program "City Management", developed collaboratively by Alfred Nobel University (Ukraine) and Coventry University (UK), aims to train specialists in managing sustainable, technology-driven cities. It integrates cutting-edge technologies like IoT, AI, and Big Data with ecological innovation and social inclusion. The program focuses on rebuilding post-war urban infrastructure through energy efficiency and circular economy principles, optimizing logistics and resource management, and addressing regional challenges such as migration, cybersecurity, and energy system recovery. Aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 4, 7, 9, 11, 17), it emphasizes international cooperation, hands-on projects, and research-driven solutions.

Career opportunities: Graduates will be equipped for leadership roles in urban planning, municipal administrations, or departments overseeing logistics, energy, and infrastructure. They can pursue careers in social engineering, designing inclusive community programs, or managing humanitarian projects. Opportunities also exist in tech-driven roles, such as implementing smart city technologies, or in environmental management as advisors on renewable energy and waste reduction. Additionally, graduates may contribute to international organizations like the EU or UN, focusing on sustainable development, or launch eco-startups and digital platforms for displaced communities.

Partnerships & Future Prospects: The program leverages partnerships with green-tech companies and international grants like Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe. Graduates join a network of alumni in Ukraine and Europe, with pathways to advanced degrees such as an MPA or MBA. By blending global best practices with local realities, the program aims to produce innovators who attract investment and

position Ukraine as a hub for sustainable, tech-driven urban development. It's not just about education–it's about empowering graduates to become catalysts for rebuilding communities and fostering trust in Ukraine's future."

Experts' Appraisal

The experts comprehend the study programme's mission and find that the intended learning outcomes and competencies of the programme adequately reflect the Master's qualification level. The learning outcomes equally address academic research skills as well as specific knowledge and typical key competencies, as e.g. communication and team skills. Furthermore, the future employability of graduates is taken into account. The objectives of the study programme are clearly laid out and published.

4.2   Programme Concept and Curriculum

Student Admission: Process and Criteria

According to the self-report and the online talks, both partners share the responsibilities of the selection and admission process. Applications must be submitted to ANU, where admission is managed with CU approving final selections.

Applicants to the programme must hold at least a Bachelor's degree or equivalent academic qualification. In addition, they have to submit a motivation letter and (if they are non-native speakers) proof of a minimum English language proficiency level of B1.

The selection process also includes entrance examinations. *"Applicants with a Bachelor's degree must take the Unified Entrance Examination (UEE), which includes two parts: a Test of General Academic Competence (TGAC) and an English language test. Those applying on the basis of a second higher education are assessed differently: instead of the UEE, they must pass an English language interview, and instead of the Unified Professional Entrance Examination (UPEE), they take a professional examination." (self-report p. 21).*

Curriculum

The curriculum comprises a total of 90 ECTS credits and 3,600 academic hours (30 ECTS credits per semester). It consists of compulsory modules based on existing national standards, combined with new content specifically designed to meet the programme's objectives. 'General' modules provide the analytical and managerial foundation for specialised modules, which are tailored to the study programme.

In line with Ukrainian regulations, electives make up 25% of the programme's total capacity. Some modules serve the programme's specific goals, such as: 'Social and Environmental Impact Assessment', 'Urban Eco-Innovations and the Circular Economy', and 'Stakeholder Engagement and

Communication'. These modules draw on existing Coventry University frameworks.

The curriculum incorporates mandatory components (37 ECTS credits), electives (25 ECTS credits), internships (12 ECTS credits) and a Master's thesis (16 ECTS credits).

The study components are divided into

- Mandatory components (37 ECTS credits): "Strategies and Innovations in Smart City Management" (semester 1, 6 ECTS), "Economic Governance and Financial Management" (semester 1, 5 ECTS), "Human Resource Management in Urbanism" (sem. 1, 4 ECTS), "Management Consulting" (semester 1, 4 ECTS), "Planing and Forecasting Smart City Development" (semester 1, 4 ECTS), "Foreign Language Communication in Projects Management and Smart City Development" (semester 1-2, 6 ECTS), "Crisis Management in a smart City" (semester 2, 4 ECTS), "International Project Management and Fundraising" (semester 2, 4 ECTS),
- Elective components (25 ECTS credits)
    - "General Courses": "Design Thinking in Business", "Psychology of the Negotiation Process", "Modern Technologies in Financial Markets", "Psychological Technologies of Business Consulting", "Practical Psychology: Post Traumatic Stress Recovery Techniques", "Self-Management (Time and Stress Management"

    "Professional Courses": "Management of Logistic Infrastructure in cities and Regions", "Institutional and Legal Support for Smart City Development", "Regional Systems, Eco-Innovations and Sustainable Development", "Social and Environmental Impact Assessment", "Smart City Infrastructure", "Environmental Management and Audit", "Urban Eco-Innovation and Circular Economy", "Stakeholder Engagement and Communication", "Data Analytics for Smart Cities", "AI and IOT for Smart Cities" (Students are free to choose their electives, but have to choose from both general and professional courses, see table below)

- Internships (12 ECTS)
    - "Internship (Work Placement)" (semester 2, 6 ECTS), mandatory 2 to 4 weeks, with (6 hours practical classes and 174 hours. work at the enterprise.)
    - "Pre-Graduation Internship" (semester 3, 6 ECTS), mandatory, 3 to 4 weeks, (6 hours practical classes, 174 hours work at the enterprise)
- Master's Thesis (16 ECTS credits) "Certification" (Final Exam (3 ECTS), Master's Thesis (15 ECTS))

Some modules are serving the programme's specific goals, such as: "Social and Environmental Impact Assessment", "Urban Eco-Innovations and the Circular Economy", "Stakeholder Engagement and Communication", that draw on existing Coventry University frameworks.

"In practical sessions, lecturers initiate discussions on current problematic issues, organise student work through business games and small group activities, use case-study analysis and modern facilitation methods, incorporate elements of training sessions and conduct educational quests. A common practice is involving industry professionals in workshops and masterclasses, supporting the

practice-oriented approach.

The eduScrum methodology is used to help engage students in the learning process and develop future-oriented skills and personal responsibility. In the autumn semester of the 2024/2025 academic year, eduScrum was applied in the Design Thinking in Business course. […]

Google Classroom and Zoom are used for teaching and learning. Students are supported through various channels: Google Classroom, communication with the department's management and lecturers, the Students Office's Telegram channel, and corporate e-mails.

All educational components are supported by textbooks, teaching aids, instructional materials, practical exercises and methodological guidelines, particularly those prepared by the University's lecturers. The educational and methodological materials are available on electronic resources such as Google Drive and Google Classroom. The University provides access to databases of academic periodicals in English through the official University's website, in particular to the JSTOR database and the University of Wales digital library." (self-report p.28)

According to the self-report a strong emphasis is placed on learning through research projects and the practical application of knowledge during the internships. One of the key priorities according to the self-report is integration students with research activities.

The study programme includes a variety of research-based activities:

- Students co-author research papers with their academic supervisors as an integral part of the learning process, and as preparation for the defence of their master's thesis.
- The Department of Management organises an annual scientific conference for students and young researchers, at which students present the results of their research.
- All student research and competition papers are based on practical case studies conducted using real-world company data. organisational culture analysis, business environment research, social studies and competitive and strategic analysis. Students apply strategic management tools during their work placements and pre- graduation internships at enterprises, giving them the opportunity to gain essential hands-on experience.
- The Manager Student Research Club is active within the department. Students also participate in the Formula for Success Professional Club.

All parts of the curriculum, apart from the final thesis, are described in detail in module descriptions/course syllabi. Module descriptions contain basic information on the teaching contents and the skills imparted in each unit, on the methods of teaching and assessment applied and on how the module relates to the intended learning outcomes of the programme.

Structure of the City Management Study Programme (Master's degree)

Semesters

	1	2	3

Teaching Units (Courses), 37 ECTS* Mandatory

	1	2	3
Courses of Professional Training	26	11	0
TOTAL	26	11	0

Teaching Units (Courses) 25 ECTS Elective**

	1	2	3
Courses of General Training	4	4	0
Courses of Professional Training	0	9	8
TOTAL	4	13	8

Internship 12 ECTS	-	Work Placement 6	Pre-Graduation Internship 6

Master's Thesis 16 ECTS	-		Master's Thesis 16

TOTAL	Mandatory	Elective	Internship	Master's Thesis
	37	25	12	16

*One ECTS credit = 30 academic hours.
**There are no restrictions of choice for students within each elective block. The only requirement for the student is to obtain the determined number of credits for each elective block.

Student Mobility and Recognition

According to the self-report the study programme offers several opportunities for gaining international experience abroad, apart from the online courses offered by CU with guaranteed credit transfer and the double degree awarded. The conversion of grades is conducted in accordance with the grading scale alignment system mutually agreed on by both institutions.

Cooperation agreements to promote international student mobility already exist with universities in Poland, Croatia and Turkey. In the 2024/25 academic year, the SIN-NEC ERASMUS+ project, 'Sustainability and Internationalisation Capacities to Promote the Modernisation of Newcomer Higher

is realised in the university, which provides students with the opportunity to learn more about the countries involved, providing students with the option to join virtual exchanges and COIL programmes[1]. Also, a COIL project was initiated with the School of Management at Coventry University's London branch. Both universities invite foreign lecturers to conduct classes. Auxiliary grant programmes offer students the possibility to continue their studies abroad, but due to the war situation under martial law physical mobility is presently only possible for the female students.

Recognition and transfer of credits are stipulated in the Regulation on the Recognition of Learning Outcomes Acquired Through Non-Formal and/or Informal Education by Alfred Nobel University as follows:

"3.5. Learning Outcomes acquired through non-formal and/or informal education may be credited if their content, volume and scope correspond to the educational component as a whole or to its individual part or type of academic work within the educational component (specific module, topic, individual task, test etc.), as outlined in the working curriculum (syllabus). […]"

"7.1 In the event of a negative conclusion […] the student has the right to submit an appeal […]

7.2. Based on the results of reviewing the appeal, the Appeals Commission issues a reasoned decision […]"

According to the self-report "To ensure a fair and transparent recognition process, the University has established a Transfer Commission, which operates under the Regulation on the Transfer Commission at Alfred Nobel University (https://duan.edu.ua/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/5_regulation-on-the-transfer- commission.pdf).

Following new Ukrainian law exceptions are made for documents issued "in temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine or in a state recognised by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine as an aggressor or occupying state" (Regulation on the Recognition of Learning Outcomes Acquired Through Non-Formal and/or Informal Education by Alfred Nobel University 4.2). According to ANU *"Under this law, persons who have received a certificate of basic general education in the TOT[2] and wish to continue their studies in Ukrainian schools must first apply to a contact centre, take two exams and go through a procedure for the recognition of their learning outcomes. The law allows for the recognition of acquired knowledge, not documents. We understand the controversial nature of the situation, as this de facto allows the knowledge gained during the educational process fully controlled by the occupying state to be recognised as meeting the requirements for education in Ukraine.*

Under this law, learning outcomes at the higher education level are recognised in the scope of no more than 75% of the total study programme. That is, in order to be employed with a diploma issued in the occupied territories after 2014 (e.g. in Donetsk or Luhansk), an individual must study for at least one year at another Ukrainian higher education institution. At the second (Master's) and third (Doctoral) levels of higher education, such documents are not recognised at all, with the only exception being

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[1] COIL, i.e. Collaborative International Online Learning
[2] TOT, Temporarily Occupied Territories

Master's degrees in medical, pharmaceutical and veterinary disciplines."

Experts' Appraisal

The experts are impressed by the structure and implementation of the programme. Particularly noteworthy is the variety of teaching and learning methods used, which enable students to acquire modern and practical skills. The experts commend the universities on the highly modern and student-centred teaching methods applied in the programme. The chosen forms of teaching and student assessment are well-aligned with the intended learning outcomes of the programme and the goals of the individual modules. The programme shows a good balance of theory-based input and practical phases.

The universities manage to establish student-centred learning, giving students the opportunity to follow their interests and truly develop their own leaning trajectories while bringing their experiences and perspectives to the classroom.

With the design of the curriculum well in line with the profile reflected in the intended learning outcomes a good balance between research and application/practice-oriented elements is provided.

The overarching goal of the programme, which is to train executive managers and CEOs, is clearly evident throughout the curriculum, particularly through the consistent teaching of leadership and management skills, including the necessary soft skills.

The study programme successfully brings together three different ways of thinking. Coming from a more business and management-oriented perspective, the programme still seems to have some room for improvement in terms of urban background knowledge (urban ecology, urban history, urban climate, socio-spatial development, social psychology, neighbourhood development, etc.). The experts recommend making some adjustments here if possible. On the other hand, the finance module appears to be very practically oriented but, in terms of content, possibly too detailed for the programme's objectives, even if it is understandable that a Master's graduate should be familiar with it.

It is also recommended that reflective elements of ethics be made more visible or further strengthened so that no uncritical view of the smart city approach is conveyed.

The flexibility of entry to the programme enables the universities to recruit a well-selected, experienced group of students with a wide range of backgrounds, experiences and interests, making for a diverse and interesting group of participants. During the talks with it became apparent that students have a clear vision of their future career path.

Despite the challenging situation, students are offered mobility options and, from the experts' point of view, the regulations for credit recognition are advanced. The only limitation on recognition at ANU, which was introduced recently, is due to new Ukrainian national legislation and is beyond the university's control.

4.3   Teaching Faculty

As already explained above, the delivery of the programme is up to the teaching faculty of ANU, with continuous assistance and support from the CU staff.

According to the self-report, teaching is provided by ANU lecturers from the Departments of Management, Global Economics and International Marketing. Among them are six full professors and ten associate professors. CU provides three leading teachers from its faculty who specialise in smart city technologies, such as big data, horizon scanning, Horizon Europe research on data processing, sustainable urban development, and social inclusion. Furthermore, drawing on the expertise of its Centre for Peace and Security, Coventry University contributes insights into rebuilding trust and social cohesion in regions affected by war. This expertise is intended to shape modules on community-driven recovery, conflict-sensitive urban planning and strategies to integrate displaced populations.

The CU lecturers also participate in student preparation by delivering training on research methodology and supervising diploma papers.

CVs of the faculty members involved in the Master's programme (both at ANU and at CU) were submitted to the expert panel as part of the self-report. The self-report also describes the staff selection process and the research activities of the ANU faculty in detail.

According to the self-report, ANU lecturers are obliged to gain at least 6 ECTS credits in professional development within 5 years. ANU offers professional development programmes as well as internships, seminars, participation in exchange programmes, workshops and webinars (at ANU or other universities and institutions in Ukraine or abroad). These activities are designed to improve faculty members' professional and personal skills, enhance their teaching and pedagogical skills, combine contact and distance learning methods.

Experts' Appraisal

The experts were impressed by the excellent and dedicated teaching staff. The teaching faculty is composed of highly experienced senior lecturers and scholars who possess all academic expertise required for the programme. Further training for staff is well organised and up-to date.

The online talks have also confirmed that communication, exchange and support between the two universities work very well, to the mutual benefit of both faculty and students.

4.4   Infrastructure, Resources and Student Support

Financial Resources and Funding

The first intake was fully supported Twinning project funds. The new Twining grant support 2024 partially covered tuition fees charged by both partner universities. However, both partner universities

also offer extensive scholarship support. Once the funding runs out, the programme is expected to continue on a regular fee-paying basis.

Learning Infrastructure and Resources

The premises and IT infrastructure at ANU are described in detail in the self-report. Among them are 38 multimedia classrooms equipped with interactive learning tools and 12 computer labs.

UCU campus are equipped with a single computer network with free Internet access. These include auditoriums, offices, a TV and radio studio and co-working spaces. Classrooms are equipped with desktop computers and projectors and by 2025, new classrooms will be created for blended learning

According to the self-report, the University Library at ANU offers a collection of over 21,500 titles on-site, as well as approximately 1.5 million electronic documents. Additionally, access to full-text resources via the international Research4Life portal has been available since 2024.

"The classes are conducted using online technologies: Mentimeter platform for interactive discussions during classes; learningapps.org platform for performing various assignments; wordwall.net platform for performing various assignments; Miro online whiteboard for conducting classes in the courses Managing the Logistics Infrastructure of the City and Region, Design Thinking in Business, International Project Management and Fundraising; ArcGIS and CityEngine – urban process management platforms and simulation tools, and Town Hall Meeting – a city meeting for collective community participation in the Planning and Forecasting Smart City Development course; State web portal of budget for citizens (https://openbudget.gov.ua/) in the Economic Governance and Financial Management course; Canvanizer platform in the Design Thinking in Business course; Business Model Canvas to develop a circular business model for a hypothetical company within the Urban Eco-Innovation and Circular Economy course; Tableau and Power BI to create interactive dashboards within the Data Analytics for Smart Cities course; Analysis of 5G, blockchain and edge computing technologies within the AI and IoT for Smart Cities course.

The educational process incorporates standard software and specialised platforms, particularly SAS, SPSS, Canva, Meta, Power BI, the ZOOM platform and the University's automated control system (ACS). Lecturers and students actively use software tools, including interactive learning applications, gamification and artificial intelligence for lecture and practical session preparation, self- directed learning, individual assignments and research." (self-report, p. 28)

The use of Coventry's innovative social learning platform, 'Aula' (or alternative platforms), enables a seamless hybrid study experience.

Student Support Services and Equal Opportunities Policies

According to the self-report, ANU supports students' wellbeing by organising social events and providing social and psychological support services, as well as spaces for physical and mental health, creativity, and relaxation. Students' research and professional clubs offer workshops and networking

opportunities with alumni and employers.

The Department of International Activities and the Centre for International Activities and Academic Mobility support student self-government bodies, individual students, and staff in international exchanges and mobility.

According to the self-report, ANU creates equal opportunities for all students, teachers and staff. ANU provides equal access to services, facilities and resources for all students, and "ensures equal access to quality higher education for those with additional needs by organising their studies using personalised teaching methods that consider each student's needs". (See self-report, p. 11).

All of ANU's buildings are accessible to persons with disabilities and other groups with reduced mobility.

Experts' Appraisal

Based on the oral and written information provided, the experts regard the on-campus infrastructure and the electronic resources available to the students as well-suited for the purposes of the study programme. Even though the programme is currently run online, it is clear that the university's infrastructure is well equipped to switch back to hybrid or on-site learning when circumstances allow.

ANU provides a wide range of services and support measures to all its students, including those with special needs.

The experts have gained the overall impression that the programme has a promising future even without external project funding. Both partners are clearly committed to maintaining the cooperation beyond the current funding period.

4.5 Methods of Teaching and Student Assessment

According to the self-report (p. 35) *"The City Management master's programme employs an integrated didactic approach that combines theoretical education, practical application of knowledge and skills, and problem-based learning. The programme significantly emphasises critical thinking skills, analytical decision-making and leadership development."*

According to the self-report, students' knowledge and skills are assessed through:

- continuous assessment (e.g. essays, presentations, tests, case study analysis, projects, group discussions and interactive learning methods);

- final assessment (e.g. two term papers, written examinations and a Master's thesis defence);

- competency-based assessment (e.g. internships, including a work placement and a pre-graduation internship, and writing and defending reports).

These assessment methods are designed to align with the programme's competencies and demonstrate the achievement of the intended learning outcomes for each educational component. Knowledge is assessed through written examinations including creative and calculation tasks, while

competencies are assessed through internships, analytical research, case studies, and problem-solving exercises.

Students' knowledge is assessed using a 100-point grading scale. For courses that require a final examination, the grading structure is as follows: 60 points for continuous assessment (CAS) and 40 points for final assessment (FAS). For courses that do not require a final examination, all 100 points come from CAS. (see self-report, and Supplement 7).

Experts' Appraisal

The experts consider the teaching methods and examination formats used to be well suited to assessing the achievement of learning objectives. A wide variety of teaching and examination formats are available.

Overall, the universities have succeeded in creating a modern learning environment that is very well suited to the subject matter.

The regulations governing examination procedures have been presented and appear transparent and appropriate.

4.6   Quality Assurance

Based on the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) and the Law of Ukraine "On Higher Education", the ANU has developed an internal quality assurance system involving a number of surveys.

SUPPLEMENT 13

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES

ANU SURVEYS
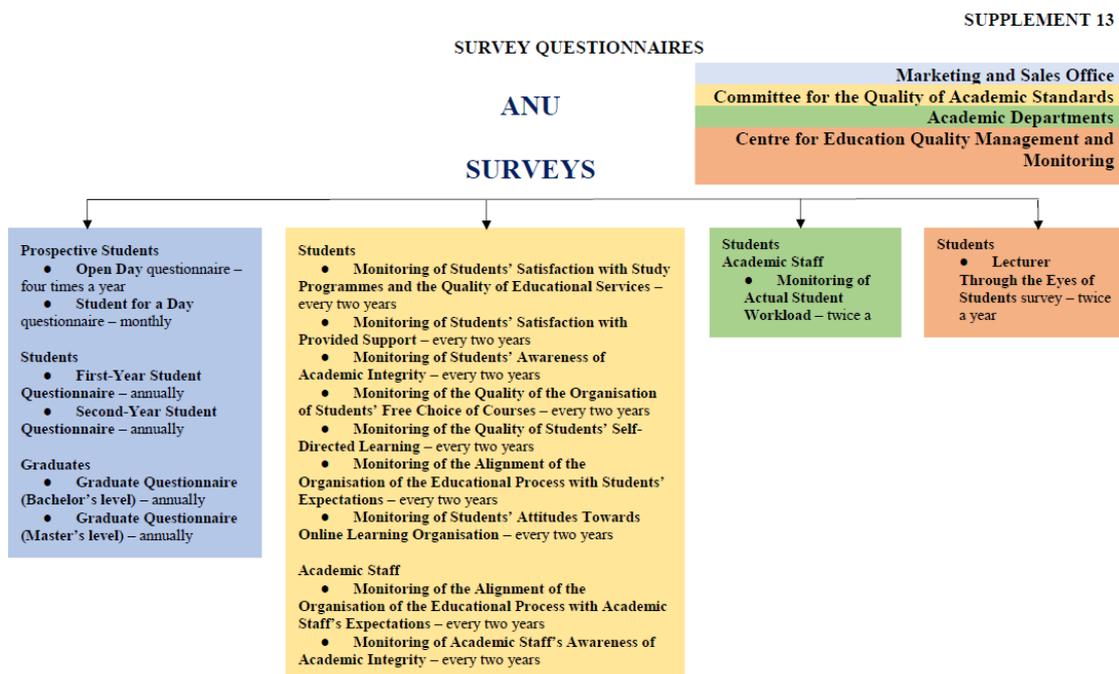
In accordance with the Ukrainian Law on Higher Education, ANU monitors the content, organisation and quality of the educational process, as well as the quality of study programmes. Faculty members

are evaluated using electronic student questionnaires ("Lecturers through the Eyes of Students"), which result in a lecturer ranking.

The rectorate and departments regularly meet to discuss the results of the questionnaires, addressing low ratings and students' suggestions.

Experts' Appraisal

It has become apparent to the experts in the course of the assessment procedure that the two universities are already taking joint efforts to assure the quality of the Master's programme. There is regular and close communication between the partners about quality issues, and there are several instruments of quality assurance in place, as e.g. course evaluation and annual monitoring reports. The experts were impressed by the close cooperation of the partner universities and the strong connection between students, lecturers and partners of both universities. Students feel that their problems are addressed and their voices are heard.

4.7　　Transparency, Documentation and Public Information

Students can retrieve all information relevant to them on the websites and the virtual learning platforms of the two partner universities. This includes the module descriptions, assessment requirements, deadlines and all other general academic policies and regulations that apply.

A dual-language Diploma Supplement (Ukrainian-English) is issued upon graduation. A sample of this document was included in the self-report.

Information on the programme is available to the general public via the university websites.

Experts' Appraisal

The experts confirm that students, potential applicants and the general public have full access to all necessary information and documentation regarding the study programme.