



Workshop 3
Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes

The experience of Master CoDe

The European Dimension of Quality Assurance

Bologna Seminar
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Topics

1. Working out and implementing joint programmes
2. Quality assurance
3. Accreditation process & experience
4. Lessons learned and conclusions



1. Working out and implementing a joint programme

- Finding the proper partners, getting acquainted and working together
- Institutional convergence and compatibility
- Streamlining teaching and research
- Institutional, organisational and financial sustainability
- Horizontal and vertical networking
- Continuous assessment and upgrading



2. Quality Assurance: the basic elements

- Academic:
 - **standard and integrity** of partner universities
 - scientific profile of **teachers**
 - **planning and coordination** of activities
 - attention given to **research**
- Approach:
 - interactive teaching and **direct experience**
 - **critical issues** (plagiarism)



2. Quality Assurance: feedback and assessment

- Internal/external evaluation:
- Internal evaluation:
 - Lecturers' feed-backs: jointly and individually after each lecture
 - Students' feed-back: meetings, students' representative in AC, evaluation of each lecturer
 - Administrative staff feed-back
 - AC meetings
 - Improvement of students' career



2. Quality Assurance : feedback and assessment

- External:
 - Evaluation Units of each Partner
 - International Scientific Committee
 - EM Agency
 - Visiting scholars
 - Ad-hoc evaluations (EU accreditation, EM best practices, ...)



2. Vulnerability & Difficulties of Joint Programmes

- Joint programmes tend to be **outside the mainstream** of programmes at universities;
- **Complexities** of a consortium governance and management;
- Need for **external financial support**
- Employers may be **hesitant** to accept joint degrees easily;
- **Different national regulation** on degrees, tuition fees, and registration.



3. Strengths of the Accreditation Process

- **Codified vs. tacit** knowledge of accreditation;
- Detailed knowledge of **national academic systems** thanks to national agencies;
- **Shared goals** and approach of participating actors;
- National accreditation agencies working to make **national criteria converging**;
- **Unified benchmark** for self-evaluation;
- **Flexibility** in streamlining national regulations;
- Study visit providing a neutral space for **helpful interaction**;
- **Involvement** of representatives from student and employers' network.



3. Challenges

- Bumpy convergence of national regulations towards a **common European track** for joint programmes;
- In specific areas, **national regulations** contrast each-other:
 - **Ratio hours/ECTS**
 - **Difference** of required didactic organisation
 - Presence of **additional national specific** requirements
 - **Moral hazard** in overregulated frameworks



3. Weaknesses

- **Questions/definitions** not always **clear** in the self-evaluation report;
- **Differences** of national meanings & concepts leading to misinterpretation;
- Lack of an **Italian Accreditation Body**;
- **National bias** may lead to unclear or missing procedures;
- Lack of **evidence** of positive conclusion.



3. What can be improved

- Introducing a **specific track** for joint programmes in national regulation;
- Further **convergence** of the national agencies approach and work style;
- Inclusion of a **glossary** on definitions of technical terminology used;
- Work out and adopt standardised approaches for **employability**;
- Support to and reward of **jointness of programmes**;
- Greater attention to **spillovers and networks** (both vertical and horizontal)



4. Conclusions: critical issues

- Summing up **national requirements** vs. **core issues**;
- Support **shared understanding** among accreditation actors;
- Foster **common will** to converge through clearly defined aims and goals;
- Encourage **learning by doing** also through repeated pilot accreditation exercises and the **evaluation** of European accreditation processes;
- Compare with different **academic quality standards**;



4. Conclusions : critical issues

- Assess the consideration for **scientific progress**.
- **Best practices vs. jointness**: no unique academic system is up to the challenge;
- Fostering the **bottom-up emergence** of a European academic system;
- **Formal vs. substantial** issues.