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.