

Quality assurance guidelines

FOR JOINT MASTER PROGRAMME IN MARINE BIOTECHNOLOGY

Approved by EU-CONEXUS European Education Area Working Group

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Quality assurance guidelines for the joint Master programme in Marine Biotechnology

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Article 1. General provisions

The commitment to quality by all partners of the European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability (EU-CONEXUS) is reflected in the EU-CONEXUS **Mission Statement**.

Mission:

EU-CONEXUS aims at providing the best available knowledge on Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability on a global scale. EU-CONEXUS tackles the most important current social, economic, technical and environmental challenges impacting coastlines from a global point of view, relying on an interdisciplinary, trans-sectoral and trans-national approach. Its academic offer is focused on four interdisciplinary study dimensions: (1) Environment and Biodiversity; (2) Energy and Sustainable Construction; (3) Digital Transformation and (4) Culture, Society, Organisation and Education. The study programmes are based on relevant learning outcomes and will cover all types of skills required on the labour market thus contributing to competitiveness and economic growth at large. EU-CONEXUS wants to educate a young generation of decision-makers, innovators, researchers and entrepreneurs in a way that enables them to find adequate holistic solutions to the global societal challenges that nowadays confront our environment, society and economy.

The competitive advantage of EU-CONEXUS is based on the identified thematic orientation of its educational programme and its comprehensiveness that is achieved by joining forces and assembling the complementary expertise of the partner universities and associated partners. EU-CONEXUS is represented in the main coastal areas and has the ambition to contribute to an integrated vision on coastal zone management on a global scale.

Vision:

EU-CONEXUS relies on the partnership of universities governed by mutual respect, recognition of diversities and unanimity.

EU-CONEXUS aims at creating a University model that understands 'University as a service': a university that actively helps students to succeed in their studies and allows for access to the university services at any time and from anywhere. 'Smart' and innovative pedagogies respond to divergent interests and needs of contemporary students coming from different backgrounds.

EU-CONEXUS represents a new form of the transnational higher educational institution set out to strengthen the sense of European citizenship and European identity also by issuing European degrees and European diplomas. In support of enhancing the 'Europeanness' and intercultural competences of its students and staff, tailor-made mobility programmes will be implemented that correspond to their study or professional development paths.

EU-CONEXUS is a higher education 'inter-university campus' relying on ever-closer academic and administrative integration of teaching, research and innovation activities. It will be a major actor in Europe and the world for studies and research on smart urban coastal sustainability.

EU-CONEXUS is embedded into its trans-regional socio-economic innovation system of coastal areas in nine countries. Cross-sectorial teaching and research programmes are developed in cooperation with regional actors from the political and economic and social areas including schools and the larger society.

The outlined mission and vision are translated into a set of agreed values that frame all activities in the realisation of the mentioned goals, namely:

- Solidarity and mutual respect
- Equality
- Diversity in unity
- Social responsibility

- Intercultural dialogue
- Multilingualism
- Open and responsible science and education
- Public diversity
- Cultural diversity
- Integration

As well as professional and human values, particularly:

- Excellence
- Rigour
- Commitment
- Inclusiveness
- Transparency
- Efficiency

Consequently, increasing the quality of EU-CONEXUS educational offers is one of the main aspects of the general EU-CONEXUS Quality Assurance Policy. Strategic objectives in this area should include:

1. Collaboration in creating cross-disciplinary, multidisciplinary and cross-sectorial study programmes and academic offers base on the complementarity of existing excellent in teaching and research an in close cooperation with their socio-economic partners in order to proactively respond to actual and future needs of related industries, support the regional innovation and development and foster an entrepreneurial mindset of their students.
2. Development of strong quality support, monitoring and control mechanisms of EU-CONEXUS educational offers, in all its phases: design, validation and implementation.
3. Development of a common evaluation mechanism for EU-CONEXUS educational offers.
4. Implementation of rigorous mechanisms to address and correct failures or improving EU-CONEXUS educational offers.

Article 2. Conceptual framework for the Joint Master programme in Marine Biotechnology

The joint Master programme in Marine Biotechnology (JMPMB) is a **transnationally integrated multidisciplinary** programme that provides high-quality academic education and professional competencies for professionals working or intending to work in the area of marine biotechnology.

Blue biotechnology, or marine biotechnology, is a scientific-business activity that seeks the application of biotechnological advances methodologies to marine and aquatic environments. The European Blue Growth Strategy considers blue biotechnology as one of the five sectors with the greatest potential for growth and sustainable generation of highly qualified jobs.

Universities and research institutions have a central role to play in promoting the 'Blue Economy' and 'Blue Growth' and to contribute to the skills and competences of the graduates who can work in a complex and challenging labour market. Six universities joined together to merge their strengths and know-how in an interdisciplinary joint Master programme in Marine Biotechnology and to offer the students to study at an international inter-campus European University.

The JMPMB is delivered by **six partner universities** (La Rochelle Université (France), Agricultural University of Athens (Greece), Universitatea Tehnica de Constructii Bucuresti (Romania), Klaipėdos Universitetas (Lithuania), Sveučilište u Zadru (Croatia)) in association with two Associated Partners (Waterford Institute of Technology (Ireland) and Universität Rostock

(Germany)) and in collaboration with a large number of stakeholders from companies and research centres.

The JMPMB is designed to ensure that students (1) get essential interdisciplinary training in key topics related to Marine Biotechnology, (2) have the opportunity to thematically specialise, (3) can tailor their study programme to their aspirations via individual professional practice (internship), individual research (Academic Research Integration and Master thesis). The JMPMB includes a **wide range of mobility opportunities** but also ensures integration in a study group and a professional network in the best possible circumstances. By using multiple innovative pedagogical teaching methods, it offers a learning environment open to a multicultural group of students.

Being a **joint programme**, its main activities are executed **jointly by the universities** of the consortium: a joint curriculum, a joint admission procedure, harmonised assessment, a joint quality assessment system and a joint diploma.

The programme follows the **student-centred learning** approach methodology whereby the degree profile is related to the appropriate learning outcomes required in order to achieve this profile. An immersive system of **project-based learning** in the 'real world' economy will allow the students to share their way of solving complex problems, developing an interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral problem-solving capacity.

The JMPMB is focussed on applications of Marine Biotechnology to the health, cosmetics and agri-food sectors, leading the students through a pipeline on marine biotechnology including:

- biochemical and genomic prospecting tools for searching new molecules from aquatic resources;
- microorganisms, microalgae and seaweed biomass production as the feedstock of new compound and,
- biochemical and biotechnology tools for extraction and functionalization of new compounds obtained from marine biomass for application to health, cosmetics and agri-food sectors.

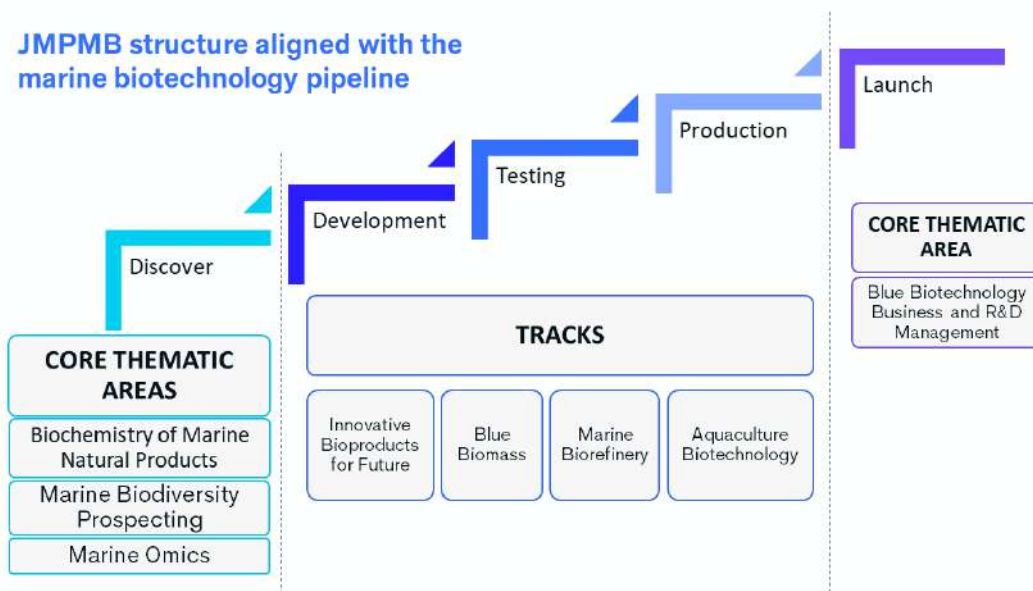


Figure 1. JMPMB structure aligned with the marine biotechnology pipeline

The 120 ECTS programme consists of:

- **Core courses** (54 ECTS) are taught throughout the 1st academic year in the areas of Marine Omics, Marine Biodiversity Prospecting, Blue Biotechnology Business & R&D Management and Bio-Chemistry of Marine Natural Products,
- **Internship** (6 ECTS; 8 weeks) is carried out at the end of the 2nd semester of the 1st academic year. The professional practice prepares students in a very practical way for future employment,
- **Optional courses** (taught virtually) of the chosen **track** (specialisation) (16 ECTS),
- Each track is completed with a course called **Academic Research Integration** (14 ECTS),
- **Master Thesis** (30 ECTS).

The programme is assessed based on **jointly agreed learning outcomes** that are providing the students with theoretical and professional knowledge and practical skills for the use of aquatic resources, applying them to the development of innovative products and services for the health, cosmetics, nutrition and aquaculture sectors, contributing to the Blue Bio-economy.

After successfully completing all programme components, students are awarded a joint diploma (Master's degree in Marine Biotechnology) and joint diploma supplement from all six universities. Language of instruction is English.

All candidates are chosen on the basis of common selection criteria, which include: the quality of their prior education, their professional and/or research background related to marine biotechnology, their motivation and their extracurricular merits (entrepreneurship, publications, conference papers, volunteer work, social activity, etc.).

Employability: Europe is positioning itself as the largest biotechnology hub and the demand for talented individuals is increasing much higher than we have seen before. The biotechnological labour market, as an emerging sector, is demanding a creative workforce with a commercial and entrepreneurial mind-set for developing new products in the health, cosmetics and agri-food sectors. In 2016, the Blue Economy provided 3.48 million jobs in the EU and the average wage increased by 14.2%. The EU-CONEXUS countries represent more than 50% of the EU's Blue Jobs. EU-CONEXUS will prepare employable students for the current demands of the biotechnological sector. Postgraduates will work at different levels (project managers, researchers, lab managers, etc.) and in several types of organisations (from start-ups to big pharmaceutical companies).

Article 3. The conception of quality in the joint Master programme in Marine Biotechnology

The aim of the joint Master programme in Marine Biotechnology is to provide academic education and professional competencies for personnel working in the field of blue biotechnology, with a strong emphasis on practical skills via the engagement of industry partners as well as project-based research and innovation.

The specific objectives of this joint Master programme in Marine Biotechnology are:

- to combine different academic expertise in order to fulfil academic and employment needs in the field of marine biotechnology;
- to produce research and professional profiles and competences for highly qualified personnel in the field of blue biotechnology;
- to coach a team of professionals in the field of marine biotechnology able to boost European potential for innovation and, social and economic development worldwide;
- to provide a common framework of qualifications which describes them in terms of learning outcomes and competences, comparable and compatible Europe-wide;

- to contribute to the world-wide quality and visibility of European higher education while becoming the European highest quality education programme in the field of marine biotechnology.

Article 4. EU-CONEXUS and JMPMB governance and management framework

Article 4.1: EU-CONEXUS governing bodies

The **EU-CONEXUS Governing Board** ensures strategic oversight of the general management and implementation of all activities of EU-CONEXUS. It consists of rectors of the partner institutions or their representatives and the chair of the Student Board. Its decisions are taken by unanimity. After the project pilot phase for which it has been decided that the project coordinator will chair the Consortium, the Chair of the Governing Board will be elected every two years by the members of the Governing Board.

A **joint Management Board** consisting of the Executive Director validated by the Governing Board and local project coordinators nominated by the rectors of the partner institutions is responsible for the daily operational management of the current academic and administrative activities.

A **joint Academic Council** is responsible for the development of academic programmes for EU-CONEXUS and their supporting activities (curricula development, pedagogical innovation, integration of short- and long-term physical and virtual mobility, engagement of industry stakeholders, academic training offers for the industry and the society at large as well as automatic recognition of credit mobility and learning outcomes). It consists of EU-CONEXUS (1) vice-rector for academic affairs or competent teaching and research staff and (1) student per partner institution. It is chaired by the relevant project Work Package leader.

A **joint Research Council** is responsible for the development of an EU-CONEXUS Joint Research Area. It consists of (1) vice-rector for research or his/her representative per partner institution. It is chaired by the relevant project Work Package leader.

A **Financial and Administrative Council** gives advice and support on financial and administrative issues and consists of one administrative staff nominated by each partner institutions.

An **External Advisory Board** is nominated by the Governing Board and includes stakeholders from public and private entities (e.g., associated partners, international partners). It ensures evaluations and quality control of EU-CONEXUS strategies and activities.

A **Student Board** is representing student interests in the relevant Governing Bodies and develops independently student-related activities, such as a Buddy system. It consists of two students from each partner institutions and has an elected chair.

A **European Education Area (EEA) Working Group** is responsible for the planning, implementation, supervision and analysis of all internal evaluation procedures and activities in accordance with the EU-CONEXUS quality assurance policy.

Terms of reference

The terms of reference for the Governing Bodies are laid down in a Consortium Agreement and include the rights and obligations of the partners and general rules of procedure (conflict resolution, risk-management) for the project implementation.

Decision-making procedures

As a general rule, unanimity is the guiding principle of all decision-making on all governance levels.

Strategic decisions on the level of the Governing Board are taken on proposals by the Academic and Research Council or the Management Board by taking into account advice from the External Advisory Board and the Financial and Administrative Council.

Decisions on the level of the Academic and Research Council are taken on proposals by relevant committees and working groups.

Communication procedures

Regular meetings are taking place at all governance levels. The Governing Board meets at least twice a year for proceeding with strategic decision-making, as does the Academic, Research and Financial Council for preparing strategic decision-making and deciding about operational actions. The External Advisory Board meets at least once a year for responding to demands for strategic advice by the Governing Board¹. The Management Board has weekly (virtual) meetings for organising the implementation of operational actions and preparing proposals for a strategic decision on other governance levels.

Reporting procedures foresee quarterly reports by the Management Board including a SWOT Analysis (risk assessment) of institutional participation and Work package implementation, biannual progress reports from the Academic, the Research and the Financial and Administrative Council and annual reports from the External Advisory Board.

An internal share-point for documents facilitates the exchange of information and collaboration.

The consistent use of project email aliases guarantees an inclusive communication flow across all participants to the project.

Evaluation procedures

Quality control and internal and external evaluation procedures of the project (debriefings, course evaluation, EEA compatibility, etc.) include all staff, students and external stakeholders.

General internal project evaluations (auto-evaluation) are conceived and accompanied by the External Advisory Board and take place, initially, after 18 months of project duration and at the end of the project period (month 36) to coincide with the reporting periods established by the project financing authority (external evaluation). In the long-term internal evaluations of the European University will take place every two years.

Informal feedback on the project implementation by administrative and teaching staff, students and external stakeholders, is collected by using traditional social media channels (LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter) through an EU-CONEXUS social network that allows for participation in the development and decision-making of EU-CONEXUS.

¹ Under the conditions of the global pandemic all meetings have been moved online and are more frequent than foreseen under "normal" conditions.

Article 4.2: JMPMB governance and management

Specific governance bodies are foreseen for the achievement of the objectives of the Programme and the management of the tasks related to the JMPMB.

A **joint Management Board** consisting of the Executive Director validated by the Governing Board and local project coordinators nominated by the rectors of the partner institutions is responsible for the daily operational management of the current academic and administrative activities.

The **Programme Board (PB)** is composed by one academic member representing each university and voting on behalf of his/her institution, one administrative member for each institution responsible for the administrative issues and 2 students. The Programme Board will be responsible for overseeing the general working of the Master programme (financial decisions, approval of the students selected, overall organisation, quality assurance, etc.), reviewing the curriculum, the joint admission criteria, monitoring student achievement, progression and evaluation, including student feedback, reacting to the joint Master External Advisory Board's suggestions, etc. The PB is chaired by the academic member from the Programme Coordinator University, who is called Academic Coordinator. The EU-CONEXUS Academic Council shall validate strategic decisions of the PB.

The **Programme Coordinator University (PCU)** will manage the administrative, legal and financial matters of the JMPMB Consortium. It shall report to the partners all the administrative, legal and financial matters. The PCU will implement the decisions taken by the Programme Board.

The **Selection Committee (SC)** is composed of an expert belonging to each Partner institution and it is responsible for the selection of the students who apply for enrolling in the programme.

The **Joint Master External Advisory Board (JMEAB)** is composed of stakeholders, representing each Partner's country, two students and one alumni. The role of the Joint Master External Advisory Board is to provide assistance and vision to the Programme Board on the academic content of the programme, quality of the programme, promotion and public relations for the programme, professional networks related to the programme, internship and Master thesis opportunities for students in the programme.

The **EU-CONEXUS Master Officer (EMO)** will be in charge of all the administrative tasks required for the programme implementation.

The **EU-CONEXUS Faculty Staff** is the core teaching staff which includes the academics from EU-CONEXUS directly involved in the implementation of the programme. It includes highly qualified lecturers and researchers in several relevant disciplines and faculties. The EU-CONEXUS Faculty's prime responsibility is to develop ideas on curriculum matters and to agree on innovative pedagogical methods. They participate in the thematic area evaluations.

Other permanent and temporary committees may be established up to the need for efficient management and implementation of the JMPMB.

The programme will be ultimately supervised by the EU-CONEXUS Joint Academic Council.

Decision making

As a general rule, unanimity is the guiding principle of all decision-making on all governance levels of the JMPMB.

Strategic decisions on the level of the EU-CONEXUS Academic Council are taken on proposals by the Programme Board: admission procedure, change of curricula, approval of QA enhancement, taking into account advice from the Joint Master External Advisory Board. The

Governing Board will confirm the tuition fees of the JMPMB, and if necessary, other decisions of the Academic Council under the area of the responsibility.

Decisions on the level of the Programme Committee are taken on proposals by relevant committees and working groups.

Communication procedures

Regular meetings are taking place at all governance levels. The Programme Board meets at least once a month. The Selection Committee meets at least once a year. The Joint Master External Advisory Board meets at least once a year for responding to demands for strategic advice by the Programme Board.

Reporting procedures foresee annual reports by the PB including a SWOT Analysis (risk assessment) of programme implementation, QA reports.

An internal share-point for documents facilitates the exchange of information and collaboration.

The consistent use of email aliases guarantees an inclusive communication flow across all participants to the JMPMB.

Article 5. JMPMB quality assurance procedural documents

In this article, the procedures and methodologies for quality enhancement are described. For each procedure, the objective is specified together with the data collection system, the data analysis system and the enhancement system for suggesting and implementing improvements to the Master programme, as well as the available instruments for the procedure. References to the instruments (indicators or evidence) are systematically coded for easy retrieval.

For instance, **QI (01) 02**, refers to the second quality indicator from the procedure (01) in the Quality Assurance Guidelines (i.e., the procedure 'Academic performance analysis').

While **QE (01) 02**, refers to the second quality evidence from the procedure (01) (i.e., the procedure 'Academic performance analysis').

The specific actions detailed in the data collection system, the data analysis system and the enhancement system will be specified (particular dates, calendar, etc.) once the JMPMB will be accredited in all the countries of the Partners. All procedures will be implemented in a coordinated manner by the different EU-CONEXUS Partner and EU-CONEXUS governance and management bodies in their respective areas of competence from the beginning of the programme. The different procedures, listed below, have been designed according to the European Standards and Guidelines, as follows:

- **IQP 01** Academic performance analysis
- **IQP 02** Thematic area evaluations
- **IQP 03** Internationalisation assessment
- **IQP 04** Internship evaluation
- **IQP 05** Master thesis evaluations
- **IQP 06** Admission profile evaluation
- **IQP 07** Labour market integration analysis
- **IQP 08** Suggestions and complaints
- **IQP 09** Teaching staff
- **IQP 10** Satisfaction assessment

- **IQP 11** Transparency and broadcasting of the programme
- **IQP 12** Meta-evaluation of the programme
- **IQP 13** Cyclical external quality assurance

IQP 01 Academic performance analysis

Objective

To identify and analyse academic performance of the JMPMB based on objective, quantitative indicators (e.g., the efficiency rate, performance rate, graduation ratio and the dropout rate), and the overall satisfaction of the direct stakeholders involved in JMPMB (students, academics, industry partners and other EU-CONEXUS staff) for further improving the programme.

Data collection system

The EU-CONEXUS Master Officer will collect the results of all the quantitative indicators as well as the results of the overall satisfaction surveys during the three months following the end of each intake of the programme.

Data analysis system

The Programme Board, chaired by the Academic Coordinator, and the joint Master External Advisory Board analyse annually the academic performance indicators, diagnose possible causes for deviations from reference values, and send a report (QE (01) 1) with improvement recommendations. The Programme Board sends this document to the Academic Council.

Enhancement system

The monitoring of the improvement recommendations (QE (01) 2) will be performed by the Academic Council. The Academic Council will inform the Governing Board to make strategic decisions.

Instruments:

Quality indicators (QI)

- QI (01) 1 Efficiency rate (at Master level)
- QI (01) 2 Performance rate (at Master level)
- QI (01) 3 Graduate rate
- QI (01) 4 Dropout rate
- QI (10) 1 Overall satisfaction of graduated students with the programme
- QI (10) 2 Overall satisfaction of Teaching staff with the programme
- QI (10) 3 Overall satisfaction of internship partners with the programme

Quality evidence (QE)

- QE (10) 4 Graduate students survey
- QE (10) 5 Teaching staff survey
- QE (10) 7 External supervisors survey (internship supervisors)
- QE (01) 1 Analysis and improvement recommendations of the academic performance
- QE (01) 2 Template_ Monitoring of the academic improvement recommendations

IQP 02 Thematic area evaluations

Objective

To obtain performance information for further improvement and refinement of the contents of the JMPMB concerning its thematic areas.

Data collection system

Thematic area coordinators will collect the main academic results (performance rate and the efficiency rate) for each one of the courses included in a thematic area once it has been evaluated. They will collect a report of all the teaching staff involved in each course of the thematic area with a brief description of the most relevant aspects detected. Thematic area coordinators will have access to the indicator QI (10) 4, that measures the overall satisfaction of students with the course teaching of each one of the teachers.

Data analysis system

Thematic area coordinators will meet the lecturers of the courses once the thematic area has been evaluated (at the end of the semester or the end of the year) and then analyse together the results obtained (through the quantitative data as well as the qualitative reports). Thematic area coordinators prepare a joint report where they highlight the strengths and weaknesses detected, as well as the improvement recommendations.

Thematic area coordinators will send these reports to the Programme Board. Programme Board analyse the reports and can make transversal decisions. In that case, the Programme Board will send general improvement recommendations downwards to the thematic area coordinators.

Because of its special characteristics: Internship and Master thesis will be analysed separately according to the specific procedures: IQP 04 and IQP 05 respectively.

Enhancement system

The Programme Board will be responsible for supervising the improvements introduced in each thematic area and will fill in the template for monitoring the proposed improvements.

Instruments

Quality indicators (QI)

QI (02) 1 Success rate (at course level)

QI (02) 2 Performance rate (at course level)

QI (10) 4 Overall satisfaction of students with the course teaching and the Academic Research Integration supervisors

Quality evidence (QE)

QE (10) 1 Course teaching and Academic Research Integration survey

QE (02) 1 Analysis and Improvement recommendations of the thematic area

QE (02) 2 Template_ Monitoring of the thematic area improvement recommendations

Objective

To ensure the highest possible degree of internationalisation of the JMPMB, monitoring the countries of origin of the students, teachers and other staff and evaluate the level of satisfaction of the students concerning the mobility carried out during the development of the training program.

Data collection system

The EU-CONEXUS Master Officer and the EU-CONEXUS Mobility Office will collect all the information regarding the overall satisfaction with the mobility programme of students (this will be compulsory for all students), faculty staff and other staff during the whole academic year. At the end of each year, they will calculate internationalisation indicators such as (diversity by citizenship, number of visiting teaching staff, multilingualism). The information collected will be sent to the Programme Board.

Data analysis system

The Programme Board will annually perform the analysis of the information provided by the EU-CONEXUS Mobility Office and highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the mobility programme as well as a report with improvement recommendations. This report will be sent to the EU-CONEXUS Mobility Office and the EU-CONEXUS office in charge of student recruitment.

Enhancement system

The Programme Board will be responsible to monitor the implementation of the improvement recommendations proposed.

Instruments*Quality indicators (QI)*

- QI (03) 1 Diversity by citizenship
- QI (03) 2 Number of visiting teaching staff
- QI (03) 3 Multilingualism: number of students enrolled in foreign languages courses
- QI (10) 5 Overall satisfaction of students with the mobility programme
- QI (10) 6 Overall satisfaction of teaching staff with the mobility programme
- QI (10) 7 Overall satisfaction of other staff with the mobility programme

Quality evidence (QE)

- QE (10) 2 General student survey
- QE (10) 5 Teaching staff survey
- QE (10) 6 Administrative staff survey
- QE (03) 1 Mobility analysis and improvement recommendations
- QE (03) 2 Template_ Monitoring of the mobility improvement recommendations

IQP 04 Internship evaluations

Objective

To ensure the quality of external internships in the JMPMB.

Data collection system

The internship coordinator (or the internship commission) will be in charge of:

- the establishment of agreements with the companies where the internships will be developed;
- the assignment of an internal supervisor (a university professor) and an external supervisor (a company tutor in charge of the student's training) to each student;
- the establishment of agreements of the tasks to be carried out by each student in each company, indicating the dates of their internships, who are the internal and external supervisors, etc.;
- the collection of information regarding the assessment of students (evaluation of both internal and external supervisors);
- passing on the satisfaction surveys to external supervisors;
- the participation in annual meetings to analyse the information collected and provide feedback from the companies.

Data analysis system

The internship coordinator will have a meeting, once the thematic area has been evaluated, with the internal supervisors, at least two external supervisors and at least two students. This internship committee will analyse the quantitative results obtained (performance rate of the thematic area, satisfaction of students and internal-external supervisors) and send a report to the Academic Coordinator. The Academic Coordinator will report the strengths and weaknesses detected including the improvement recommendations. This report will be sent to the Programme Board.

Enhancement system

Programme Board will be responsible to monitor the implementation of the improvement recommendations.

Instruments

Quality indicators (QI)

- QI (04) 1 Performance rate (only for internship)
- QI (10) 8 Overall satisfaction of students with the internship programme
- QI (10) 11 Overall satisfaction of internship supervisors

Quality evidence (QE)

- QE (10) 3 Internship students survey
- QE (10) 7 External supervisors survey (internship supervisors)
- QE (04) 1 EU-CONEXUS internship plan
- QE (04) 2 EU-CONEXUS internship agreement template
- QE (04) 3 Analysis and improvement recommendations report
- QE (04) 4 Template_ Monitoring of the internship improvement recommendations

IQP 05 Master thesis evaluations

Objective

To ensure the quality of the Master thesis in the JMPMB.

Data collection system

Master thesis guidelines will be available for students when they enrol in the programme. Each student will develop his/her Master thesis guided by a supervisor and/or a co-supervisor. The Academic Coordinator will be in charge of the organisation of this process (he/she will assign the most suitable supervisor/s for each student according to the thematic area of the thesis chosen by the student). The Academic Coordinator will collect, at the end of the Master thesis, the academic results (performance rate of the thematic area) as well as the results regarding the satisfaction of students and supervisors with the Master thesis thematic area.

Data analysis system

The Academic Coordinator will have a meeting, once the thematic area has been evaluated, with the supervisors of the theses and at least two students, to analyse the quantitative results obtained (performance rate of the thematic area, satisfaction of students and supervisors with the MSc thesis). The Academic Coordinator will report the strengths and weaknesses detected including the improvement recommendations. This report will be sent to the Programme Board.

Enhancement system

Programme Board will be responsible to monitor the implementation of the improvement recommendations.

Instruments

Quality indicators (QI)

QI (05) 1 Performance rate (only for Master thesis)

QI (10) 9 Overall satisfaction of students with the Master thesis

QI (10) 10 Overall satisfaction of supervisors

Quality evidence (QE)

QE (10) 2 General student survey

QE (10) 8 Master thesis supervisors survey

QE (05) 1 Analysis and improvement recommendations report

QE (05) 4 Template_ Monitoring of the Master thesis improvement recommendations

IQP 06 Admission profile evaluation

Objective

To ensure that the admission procedure is performed adequately and enables satisfactory academic progress of the student.

Data collection system

The EU-CONEXUS Master Officer collects all the information corresponding to the admission requirements and sends the information to the Selection Committee. The Selection Committee decides on the list of candidates to be admitted and calculates the enrolment rate. Once this information is complete, the Selection Committee sends a report to the Programme Board.

Data analysis system

At the end of the academic year, the Programme Board analyses the enrolment rate and the relationship between the admission profile and the academic results for each thematic area (QE (02) 1, from procedure IQP 02). The Programme Board will issue a report on the progression of students concerning the admission profile requirements. In case that new requirements must be added, the Programme Board will perform an improvement recommendation report to be sent to the Selection Committee. This will be communicated to the Academic Council as well.

Enhancement system

The Programme Board will, for the following intake, review admission requirements in order to ensure a better adjustment of the enrolment rate (admission profile) and the progression (academic results) of students. The EU-CONEXUS Academic Council will validate new admission procedure, if necessary.

Instruments

Quality indicators (QI)

QI (06) 1 Enrolment rate

Quality evidence (QE)

QE (02) 1 Analysis and Improvement recommendations of the thematic area

QE (06) 1 Report of the admission profile

QE (06) 2 Analysis and improvement recommendations report

QE (06) 3 Template_ Monitoring of the admission improvement recommendations

IQP 07 Labour market integration analysis

Objective

To measure and analyse the extent to which postgraduates of the JMPMB integrate successfully into the marine biotechnology labour market and their satisfaction with the training received in the programme, based on their experiences after the graduation.

Data collection system

EU-CONEXUS is creating a Virtual Campus including, among others, a University-Industry platform and a Mentoring platform.

The University-Industry platform will be an interactive online tool, accessible for students, researchers, and companies regarding the following areas of interest: work placements, job offers, project development, etc., while the Mentoring Platform's main goal is to develop the students' entrepreneurial thinking by exchanging with external stakeholders and give orientation on choosing their studies and educational paths. It will also facilitate the students' involvement in entrepreneurial and/or research projects. The platform will also be used to create an alumni network that will allow for keeping track of the professional paths of graduates from the MSc programme. Annual graduate student surveys will provide relevant information on their labour market integration.

The information of the activity on these platforms and the surveys will be sent by the Platform Moderator to the Programme Board annually.

Data analysis system

The Programme Board, together with the joint Master External Advisory Board, will analyse (two years after the students' graduation) the labour market integration data taking into account the professional and socio-economic context. The PB will perform a report highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the results obtained including improvement recommendations related to the learning outcomes that are needed in the society.

Enhancement system

Programme Board incorporates the necessary improvements in the programme according to the desired graduation profile defined by JMEAB. It supervises the implementation of the recommendations and informs the Academic Council.

Instruments

Quality indicators (QI)

QI (10) 1 Overall satisfaction of graduated students with the programme

Quality evidence (QE)

QE (10) 4 Graduate student survey

QE (07) 1 Report of the labour market integration of the JMPMB

QE (07) 2 Analysis and improvement recommendations report

QE (07) 3 Template_ Monitoring of the graduate profile improvement recommendations

IQP 08 Suggestions and complaints

Objective

To address justified complaints and suggestions from individuals about the JMPMB within the limits of the consortium agreements.

Data collection system

All stakeholders (students, teachers, external supervisors, etc.) wishing to make a suggestion or comment about the programme policies or services, either academic or non-academic, can do so through the formal 'suggestions mailbox' that will be available on the website of the programme.

The suggestions mailbox will record the complaints and suggestions as well as the moment they are answered.

Another non-formal way to inform about suggestions or complaints is the different committees where the different stakeholders are represented. For individual matters, the students can contact directly the person in charge.

All complaints received will be notified to the Programme Board.

Data analysis system

The Programme Board will analyse the number of suggestions and complaints received and the time spent solving them. The Programme Board will perform a report with the results of this analysis including improvement recommendations (if necessary).

Enhancement system

An initial response to any complaint can be expected within 3 days of receipt, and considered response to the complaint should be received within a further three weeks, with any subsequent remedy implemented with the minimum of delay.

Instruments

Quality indicators (QI)

QI (08) 1 Number of suggestions received

QI (08) 2 Number of complaints received

QI (08) 3 Time spent attending the suggestion/complaint

Quality evidence (QE)

QE (08) 1 Analysis and improvement recommendations report

IQP 09 Teaching staff

Objective

To guarantee the quality of the teaching staff, to be adequate and trained in new innovative and pedagogical teaching tools and methods.

Data collection system

The consortium will regularly offer training courses for teachers. The Academic Coordinator will be informed annually of the participation in these training programs (as well as other merits) of the teachers in the JMPMB.

Data analysis system

The Academic Coordinator will review the information on teacher training and the satisfaction of students with the teaching of each course. The Academic Coordinator will detect possible problems or needs to improve teaching, which will be reflected in a report that will be sent individually to the teachers involved. The global report of the teachers' results will be sent to the Programme Board.

Enhancement system

The Programme Board will analyse the satisfaction results after the adoption of these improvements. Likewise, it may propose transversal continuous training actions to all the universities of the consortium.

Instruments

Quality indicators (QI)

QI (10) 4 Overall satisfaction of students with the course teaching and the Academic Research Integration Supervisors

Quality evidence (QE)

QE (10) 1 Course teaching and Academic Research survey

IQP 10 Satisfaction assessment

Objective

To understand the overall satisfaction of the direct stakeholders involved in the JMPMB (students, Faculty staff and other EU-CONEXUS staff) for further improving the programme.

Data collection system

There will be different surveys for the different stakeholders in order to get information about the overall satisfaction with the programme, procedures, academic coordination, resources, etc.

The surveys will be different depending on the stakeholders addressed as well as on the best timing for collecting the information.

- Two surveys for students:
 - Course teaching survey (there will be one survey for each lecturer, surveys will be collected at the end of each semester).
 - General student survey (there will be one survey to be fulfilled at the end of the 3rd semester)
- Internship survey for students (at the end of the internship)
- One survey for postgraduate students (at the end of the programme)
- One survey for teaching staff (at the end of each academic year)
- One survey for administrative staff (at the end of each academic year)
- One survey for external supervisors (internship supervisors) (at the end of the 2nd semester).
- One survey for the Academic Research Integration supervisors (at the end of the 3rd semester).
- One survey for Master thesis supervisors (at the end of the 4th semester).

The results of all surveys will be published on the website.

Data analysis system

The results obtained from the different surveys will be analysed by the appropriate committees as it is described in the procedures. For example, the results obtained from the course teaching surveys will be analysed by the Thematic Area Coordinators (IQP 02). The graduate students survey will be analysed by the Programme Board together with the Joint Master External Advisory Board (IQP 07), etc.

The surveys can be adapted according to the suggestions of the different stakeholders. In that case, the Programme Board will be responsible to adapt the surveys as suggested by the stakeholders.

Enhancement system

The Programme Board will be in charge of ensuring high participation in the surveys.

Instruments

Quality indicators (QI)

QI (10) 1 Overall satisfaction of graduated students with the programme

QI (10) 2 Overall satisfaction of Teaching staff with the programme

QI (10) 3 Overall satisfaction of internship partners with the programme

QI (10) 4 Overall satisfaction of students with the course teaching and the Academic Research Integration supervisors

QI (10) 5 Overall satisfaction of students with the mobility programme

- QI (10) 6 Overall satisfaction of Teaching staff with the mobility programme
- QI (10) 7 Overall satisfaction of other staff with the mobility programme
- QI (10) 8 Overall satisfaction of students with the internship programme
- QI (10) 9 Overall satisfaction of students with the Master thesis
- QI (10) 10 Overall satisfaction of supervisors
- QI (10) 11 Overall satisfaction of internship supervisors
- QI (10) 12 Overall satisfaction of the administrative staff

Quality evidence (QE)

- QE (10) 1 Course teaching and Academic Research Integration survey
- QE (10) 2 General student survey
- QE (10) 3 Internship students survey
- QE (10) 4 Postgraduate students survey
- QE (10) 5 Teaching staff survey
- QE (10) 6 Administrative staff survey
- QE (10) 7 External supervisors survey (internship supervisors)
- QE (10) 8 Master thesis supervisors survey

IQP 11 Transparency and dissemination of the programme

Objective

To inform all involved or interested in the JMPMB about its curriculum, development and results.

Policies and channels

The Partners commit entirely to the transparency of all processes that affect the students (admission, progress, results, job placement, etc.). The most relevant information will be transmitted both, internally (on the Virtual Campus) and externally, through the EU-CONEXUS website.

Contents

For the **external** dissemination of the programme and its curriculum, important sources of information are but not limited to:

- EU-CONEXUS website (submenu of the programme)
- Partners' websites
- Social media (Facebook, LinkedIn)
- Relevant national and international student information and registration platforms

For the **internal** dissemination of the programme, its curriculum and thematic areas, important information sources are:

- the Virtual Campus
- the internal share-point
- EU-CONEXUS manuals (e.g. ECTS course catalogue, Students' assessment guidelines, Master thesis guidelines)

Enhancement system

The EU-CONEXUS Joint Communication Unit together with the EU-CONEXUS Master Officer and the Programme Coordinator University, is responsible for the content's publication on the external EU-CONEXUS website.

Instruments

Quality indicators (QI)

QI (11) 1 % of published information on time

Quality evidence (QE)

QE (11) 1 EU-CONEXUS general information of the JMPMB (Curriculum, Learning outcomes, Mobility plan, Admission procedure, Internship organisation, ARI projects, Master thesis topics)

IQP 12 Meta-evaluation of the programme and quality enhancement planning

Objective

To review the purpose, the acquisition of the programme learning outcomes as well as the graduate profile of the JMPMB in order to stay at the forefront of developments in marine biotechnology field and education at Master level and to ensure the implementation of recommendations for the improvement of the programme.

Data analysis system

The Programme Board meets annually to globally review the results obtained from all the quality procedures: the academic results, the labour market integration, the global satisfaction of all stakeholders, contributions from students and external personnel, etc. Besides, in the meta-evaluation, the Programme Board will take into account the progress of the results with respect to previous editions and will establish the reference values for the quality indicators. With the global vision of all results, the Programme Board prepares a final report (JMPMB meta-evaluation report) and an improvement plan for the programme (Global improvement report). These documents will be sent to the EU-CONEXUS Academic Council and the Governing Board. These documents will also be accessible on the website.

The Academic Council will meet every two years to make strategic proposals according to the Programme Board final reports and present them for a decision to the Governing Board.

Enhancement system

The Programme Board adopts the recommendations of the Academic Council and the Governing Board and delegates its implementation to the Programme Coordinator University unless decided otherwise.

Instruments

Quality indicators (QI)

All the indicators mentioned in the procedures

Quality evidence (QE)

All the shreds of evidence mentioned in the procedures, including the complete satisfaction surveys. (not only the indicators extracted from surveys)

QE (12) 1 MSc meta-evaluation report

QE (12) 2 Global improvement report

IQP 13 Cyclical external quality assurance

Objective

To ensure that the quality assurance system guarantees the success of the whole programme life cycle (from accreditation until its external evaluation).

Procedure

The whole programme will be evaluated by an external quality agency every 6 years, according to the European standards for the joint programmes.

Apart from the external assessment of the programme, the joint quality assurance system implementation of the programme will be integrated into the global auto-evaluation of EU-CONEXUS, which is foreseen initially after 18 months and 36 month of operation and every four years in the longer term.

Article 6. Date of commencement

These regulations shall take effect from the accreditation of the JMPMB as decreed by the EU-CONEXUS EEA WG.