

M2.2

Specific requirements and guidelines towards previous education based on the countries

LEAD BENEFICIARY: UCV

TYPE: PUBLIC

31/03/2025

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INDEX

1. Introduction	3
2. General Admission Requirements.....	3
3. Country-Specific Admission Requirements.....	7
3.1. Asia.....	8
3.2. Africa.....	11
3.3. America	13
3.4. Europe.....	15

1. Introduction

This report provides a revision of the admission requirements for international students applying to European Universities, especially those involved in the EU-CONEXUS Joint Master Programme in Marine Biotechnology. All the admission criteria for the JMPMB programme have been published on the official website but some extra documentation or verification/recognition procedures may vary significantly depending on the country, institution, and field of study. Understanding these requirements is crucial for prospective students to ensure a smooth application process.

The first section of this report (general admission requirements) outlines general admission requirements applicable to most universities worldwide. The second section presents country-specific tables detailing the distinct requirements for several nations.

2. General Admission Requirements

The EU-CONEXUS JMPMB programme is open to the holders of a first cycle higher education degree (Bachelor degree) in **Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics (ISCED 05), Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction (ISCED 07), Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Veterinary (ISCED 08)** and other similar fields of study as JMPMB from all countries. The qualification must give access to Master studies and be recognized by the NARICs (National Academic Recognition Information Centres) of all Partners.

The most fitting study fields and study programmes involve Natural and Marine Sciences, Agriculture Engineering, Fisheries, Chemistry, Biochemistry and equivalent.

The minimum eligibility requirements to study joint Master programme in Marine Biotechnology are two:

- **University Bachelor's degree (min. 180 ECTS)**

The Bachelor thesis or Final Research Project as part of the study programme received is a mandatory requirement.

- **English language proficiency: at least CEFR B2, IELTS 6.5**

At least 6 in any skill overall speaking, writing, listening and reading is search on the prospective student profile when English is not a native language or language of previous Bachelor or Master studies. In highlighted candidatures the Selection Committee could invite the student for interview stage to check the English level even if the proof of English is not meeting the standards required.

An applicant to the EU-CONEXUS Joint Master programme in Marine Biotechnology shall fill the application form and upload the required documents through <https://apply.eu-conexus.eu/courses/course/11-msc-joint-master-programme-marine-biotechnology>

The documents required for a successful application are as follows:

- **Diploma of Bachelor degree**, in language of origin and an official translation into English. **Apostilled or legalized by Spanish embassy**. The Bachelor Diploma must provide access to University postgraduate programmes, showing that the applicant has a minimal background in biological sciences and is linked to the Master's field in Marine Biotechnology.

It is important to highlight that apostille, and legalization are two different procedures to verify the authenticity of official documents as academic documentation in an international context out of the issuance country.

The **apostille** is a simplify process address to the countries belonging to the 1961 Hague Convention, and it is based on a stamp (apostille) directly located on the Diploma, normally done by a governmental body.

Legalization is a more complex procedure where different organisms are involved. Through various steps, several stamps are positioned on the back of the Bachelor Diploma to confirm the authenticity of the official document submitted. In general, the steps are:

- Certification by the issuing authority, done by the University or the Notary
- Certification by a governmental body, for example the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Validation of the embassy. The Spanish embassy is responsible of this step due to Spain is the country of arrival.

Summary of differences within Apostilled and Legalization		
Aspect	Apostille	Legalization
Scope	Countries that are members of the Hague Convention	Competent authority in the issuing country (e.g., Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Procedure	A single stamp that validates authenticity	Multiple steps, usually involving different authorities
Time and complexity	Fast and simple	Slow and more bureaucratic
Where to do it	Competent authority in the issuing country (e.g., Ministry of Foreign Affairs)	Various authorities, including ministries and embassies

If the diploma is not yet received during submission of the candidature, the applicant shall indicate when it is expected to be received or provide the confirmation from university about completing Bachelor studies, expected graduation or proof of payment of Diploma issuance

Note: Translation of documents if not in English does not exempt from verification by apostille or legalisation. All documents must be translated into English if English is not the original language.

– **Diploma Supplement or Transcript of records**, in language of origin and an official translation into English, showing full details of courses studied and grades/marks obtained. The Transcript of records must be the official version. The screenshot of the student Intranet, or informative documents are not valid, only documents issued by the Universities are considered.

If at the moment of application, the Bachelor studies (or equivalent) are not completed yet, the Transcript of records with the courses and grades to date is accepted with GPA clearly expressed.

The **Transcript of records** must be official and certified. Some European institutions may also require that these transcripts undergo an academic credential evaluation to ensure they are equivalent to the required European qualifications.

Note: It is important that GPA is clearly written on the document because the GPA is a Selection Criteria.

– A letter from the University stating that his/her Bachelor gives **access to university postgraduate programmes** is also required for enrolment.

This document must be issued by the University who awarded the Bachelor Diploma to the candidate. It must be signed and stamped by the body or person responsible inside the Institution. Check the next template.

Headline of the university

ELIGIBILITY STATEMENT for University Postgraduate Programmes

This is to confirm that Mr./Ms. <name of student> graduated from <name of university>. He / she passed final examination and is granted a Bachelor of Science degree / a degree of <name of degree>

The certificate / diploma no./ Student number <number of certificate, diploma or student number> **entitles its holder, Mr./Ms. <name of student> to continue with University Postgraduate Programmes in any country.**

<University stamp and University registrar signature>

Note: A personal letter signed by a professor or by the student won't be considered. This letter is not equivalent to the migration certificate offered by some Universities.

– **Certificate to proof of English language proficiency** (see requirements above), if English is not a native language. The certificate must be issued during the last 2 years.

The certificates recognize are TOELF (80-100 points), Cambridge (C1 level), Oxford council (B2), IELTS (overall 6.5 or more).

All test must include the grade for all skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening. Placement test, Duolingo test, EF online test and University language test are not accepted, as well as other equivalent tests.

– **Statement of purpose** completed with comments/justification about the preference for the track (specialization). In the JMPMB there are 4 specialization tracks. Statement of Purpose also call motivation letter may also include the career goals and how the program aligns with their aspirations.

Relevant experiences (e.g., research, internships, volunteer work) in marine biology, biotechnology, or related fields could be also included.

- **CV** with the emphasis on professional/research experience in the related subject and extracurricular activities ([Europass CV format](#) is highly recommended).
- **2 academic recommendation** letters (the letters must be not older than 6 months, signed. They must contain a date, and they must be on letterhead paper and include the referee's signature or official stamp.
- **Passport or ID** (ID card for EU citizens only). The passport provided must be valid and not expired.
- **Scientific articles**, if any. The articles may be listed in the CV with the link to the journal where it is published and object identifier (OID) number. The Scientific articles included must be published, and article in draft won't be considered.
- **Proof of volunteering and/or work activities** (e.g., certificate, report, membership payment slip, etc.). The volunteering or work activities must be related to the master field. Other activities that could improve the performance during the master programme could be considered but are not determinate.

3. Country-Specific Admission Requirements

The most frequent countries within the candidatures of prospective student to the EU-CONEXUS Joint Master Programme in Marine Biotechnology are Bangladesh, Colombia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tanzania. Other countries with particularities are countries from Western Balkan region (Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia & Herzegovina), USA, Spain, France, Germany, Greece.

It is important to emphasize that recognitions of previous education are assessed through the National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) of each country involved in the JMPMB and this recognition can take time. Final resolution normally is received once the student has already started the first semester.

Specific documentation required for all non-EU students:

-Visa before arrival and **residence permit (TIE card)** after arrival: 90 days visa is required to join European country and be able to obtain the resident permit.

Criminal records and Health Certificate translated into Spanish are necessary for both cases as well as proof of income or financial stability.

Note: In some countries there are not Spanish Embassy for Visa processing as the case of Sri Lanka where documents normally are issued in India. This fact is something important to consider.

Specific documentation required for all students (EU and non-EU):

-NIE (Número de identificación de extranjero – Spain). The NIE is a Foreigners' Identification Number. It's a unique number assigned to non-Spanish residents or foreigners who need to engage in legal, tax, or financial activities in Spain

-NUSS (Número de la Seguridad Social – Spain). It is linked to the Spanish Social Security system and is used for accessing healthcare and receiving social benefits, such as unemployment or pensions

- Numéro de sécurité sociale or Affiliation – France. is a unique identification number that is used to track an individual's contributions to the French social security system. It is required for accessing various public services such as health insurance, family benefits, pensions, and unemployment benefits.

-OIB (Osobni Identifikacijski Broj - Croatia) is a personal identification number in Croatia, similar to a social security number or tax identification number in other countries. It is a unique number assigned to every Croatian citizen and resident, and it is used for various administrative, legal, and financial purposes.

Other documents could be required by the Partners countries.

The tables below outline the specific requirements or particularities for university admission for candidates of the mentioned countries classified by regions:

3.1. Asia

BANGLADESH
Academic Qualification
<p>Duration: Bachelor's degree of four years (e.g.: BSc in Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering or BSc in Applied Biotechnology).</p> <p>Two years Bachelors are not admitted. Two years serves as associate degrees or diplomas rather than the full bachelor's qualifications*</p>
<p>Type: Bachelor of Science mainly, Bachelor of Engineering (BEng) / Bachelor of Science in Engineering (BSc Eng)</p>
<p>Curriculum structure: Should include laboratory work, and training sessions. Final research project is mandatory. Is expected a strong foundation in Molecular Biology, Genetics, Microbiology, and Biochemistry.</p>
<p>Language of instruction: Preferably English as language of instruction.</p>

***Associate degree in science:**

In some countries as Bangladesh, India, Pakistan or USA are offered **Associate of Science** degrees that take **two years** to complete. These degrees are often considered equivalent to the first two years of a Bachelor's degree and can serve as a foundation for transferring to a four-year university to complete a full **Bachelor of Science (BS)**. This two years degree typically covers general education courses and introductory courses in specific science fields (e.g., biology, chemistry, physics). The two years Bachelor are not enough to fulfil the requirements for a complete first cycle degree.

-Verification throughout Apostille get into force last May 2024 which simplifies the verification process.

INDIA AND INDONESIA	
Academic Qualification	
<p>Duration: Four years bachelor's degree is mandatory which include specialized study or honors degrees.</p> <p>Three years Bachelor are not accepted because is considered that first cycle of studies is not yet finished. Pre-master course or bridging courses may be completed by the student before applying to</p>	
JMPMB	Master Programme.
<p>Type: Preferably Bachelor of Science in Marine Biotechnology. Other bachelor's degrees suitable are BSc in Biotechnology, BSc in Marine Biology, BSc in Microbiology, BSc in Environmental Sciences, BTech in Biotechnology or BSc in Zoology.</p> <p>Bachelor coming for autonomous colleges must be carefully reviewed*</p>	
<p>Curriculum structure: The study plan must cover both theoretical and practical aspects. The final Thesis or research project is mandatory. Prior research experience or internships is required. Some universities may not have strong connections to global research projects or industry partnerships, which could limit the student's chances of gaining relevant experience.</p>	
<p>Language of instruction: Preferably English as language of instruction. If it is not the case, a proof of English proficiency will be required</p>	

*** Autonomous colleges:**

Autonomous colleges in India are institutions that are granted autonomy by the University Grants Commission (UGC) or respective state governments. These colleges have the freedom to design their own curricula, conduct examinations, and set their own academic schedules, for that reason is required to verify the equivalence of their study plan with European Universities systems. The autonomous colleges are affiliated with a larger university but have a greater degree of independence in academic and administrative matters.

PAKISTAN
Academic Qualification
Duration: Four years bachelor's degree. Three years Bachelor may not fulfil the requirement for a full first cycle degree.
Type: Bachelor of Science in Marine Biotechnology. The Bachelor of Sciences can be diverse as BSc in Chemistry, Physics, in Biology with specializations such as Microbiology, Genetics, Botany, Zoology, Biotechnology. BSc in Mathematics, BSc in Computer Science, BSc in Environmental Science.
The email address of Registrar Office must be provided to apply for directly verification of previous education.
Curriculum structure: Students who wish to pursue Marine Biotechnology would need a background in Biological Sciences or Biotechnology with some emphasis on biochemistry and molecular genetics-related topics.
Language of instruction: Preferably English as language of instruction. If it is not the case, a proof of English proficiency will be required

SRI LANKA
Academic Qualification
Duration: Bachelor's degrees in marine biotechnology often take three years without specialized courses. Preferable 4-year BSc programs which often include specialized study or honors. The honors programs generally include a research project or thesis in the final year and this is a must for the JMPMB programme.
Type: Bachelor of Science e.g. BSc (Hons) in Biotechnology, Marine Biology, or Environmental Science.
Curriculum structure: The most suitable curriculum structure is those of BSc in Biological Sciences (Specializations in Botany, Zoology, Microbiology, Biotechnology, Biochemistry), BSc in Physical Sciences, especially chemistry or BSc in Biotechnology.
Language of instruction: Preferably English as language of instruction. A document from the University stating that Bachelor was taught in English will be enough as English proficiency proof.

3.2. Africa

EGYPT
Academic Qualification
Duration: Bachelor's degree of 4 years. The four year is for specialized topics, and often a research project or thesis.
Type: Bachelor of Science (BSc) in Marine Biotechnology or similar
Curriculum structure: Curriculum should include courses such as Marine microbiology and microbiome; Genetic engineering applied to marine organisms; Marine biotechnology applications in aquaculture, Biochemistry; molecular biology. Students from Egypt should have demonstrated experience in lab courses and research projects. Final Research project or Thesis is mandatory.
Language of instruction: Proof of English is required

ETHIOPIA AND GHANA
Academic Qualification
Duration: Four years bachelor's degree. Exist also three years Degree.
Type: Bachelor most suitable is the Bachelor of Science in Marine Biotechnology, Marine and Fisheries Science, Biological Sciences, Agriculture, Environmental Science, Chemistry and Biochemistry.
Curriculum structure: Laboratory work, providing hands-on experience in marine biotechnology or biotechnology, molecular biology or biochemistry is beneficial.
Language of instruction: Normally English is the language of instruction. If it is not the case, a proof of English proficiency will be required.

Note: The documents from countries French speaking are not accepted in French even if France is one of the programme partners.

NIGERIA
Academic Qualification
Duration: Four years bachelor's degree is suitable.
Type: BSc in Marine Biology, Biotechnology, Biochemistry, Environmental Science (upper second-class or above).
Curriculum structure: The curriculum structure for prospective students should include microbiology, molecular biology, ecology, genetics, and biochemistry. The GPA is expressed in scale out of 5* The TOR must be sent to Coordinating University (Catholic University of Valencia for the JMPMB) in hard copy directly from prospective student university once the study offer is accepted.
Language of instruction: The official language of the country is English, consequently a proof of the medium of instruction from their Ethiopian institution might suffice.

TANZANIA
Academic Qualification
Duration: Bachelor's degrees in marine biotechnology often take three years, suitable four if it includes research project
Type: Bachelor of Science (BSc)
Curriculum structure: should include foundational studies in biology, chemistry, and related subjects during the first year. In the second year, students focus on specialized subjects like marine biology, biotechnology, and ecology. The third year includes advanced courses and culminates in a research project or dissertation. The email address of Registrar Office must be provided to apply for directly verification of previous education.
Language of instruction: The official language of the country is English, consequently a proof of the medium of instruction from their Ethiopian institution might suffice

3.3. America

COLOMBIA
Academic Qualification
Duration: Bachelor's degree about 4 years (at least 8 semesters)
Type: Bachelor in Biologist, Marine Biologist or Biologist with specialization in Biotechnology, bachelor's degree in biotechnology.
Curriculum structure: A strong grasp of fundamental subjects like Chemistry, Biology, and Physics is expected. Important to contain laboratory work and internships in the biotechnology industry. Thesis or/and professional practice.
Language of instruction: As main language of instruction is Spanish; a proof of English proficiency is required.

Note: The documents from countries Spanish-speaking are not accepted in Spanish even if Spain is one of the programme partners.

USA
Academic Qualification
Duration: Four-year bachelor's degrees in sciences is more suitable than Bachelor of Arts but BA are also acceptable if its specialization is related to the master fields.*
Type: Bachelor of Sciences and Bachelor of Arts in fields like Marine Biology, Environmental Science, or Biotechnology are acceptable.
Curriculum structure: For BA, after completing general education requirements, students move into the core scientific courses of their chosen field. These courses must be related to the fields such as marine biology, biotechnology, molecular biology, biochemistry and ecology.
Language of instruction: No English proof required if native English-speaking student.

***Differences within BA and BS in Science:**

While both **BA** and **BS** can lead to similar career paths in fields like **Marine Biology** or **Environmental Science**, the **BA** typically has a more **interdisciplinary** approach. Here are some key differences between the two degrees:

Aspect	Bachelor of Arts (BA)	Bachelor of Science (BS)
General Education	More emphasis on liberal arts , humanities, and social sciences.	More focused on science and technical courses , with fewer liberal arts courses.
Science Coursework	Includes foundational science courses but typically fewer advanced technical courses.	More in-depth science courses, with additional focus on lab work and research.

Flexibility	More electives outside of the major, allowing for broader exploration in various disciplines.	Less flexibility in electives; more focused on specialized science subjects.
Career Paths	May include roles in research, environmental education, policy, communication, or advocacy, but may require graduate studies for technical research roles.	More technical roles in research, laboratories, or industries related to marine biology, environmental consulting, or biotechnology.

3.4. Europe

FRANCE
Academic Qualification
Duration: Three-year bachelor's degree (Licence)
Type: The most common are the Licence in Life Sciences, Biotechnology, or Marine Biology.
Curriculum structure: The Bachelor's degree focuses on general knowledge in the scientific field, with a strong emphasis on practical work in laboratories and research projects. The curriculum includes core subjects in biology, chemistry, and physics. GPA scale from 0 to 20.
Language of instruction: French consequently, a valid English test is required.

Note: The documents from countries French speaking are not accepted in French even if France is one of the programme partners.

GERMANY
Academic Qualification
Duration: Bachelor's degree in Germany usually takes 3 years (6 semesters) to complete
Type: The bachelor's degree (B.A., B.Sc., or BEng) in a related field like Biotechnology, Marine Biology, Environmental Science, or Life Sciences are the most suitable.
Curriculum structure: Normally the curriculum structure is well-structured with theoretical courses and practical laboratory work. GPA scale from 1 to 5.
Language of instruction: A proof of English proficiency is required.

GREECE
Academic Qualification
Duration: Four-years bachelor's degree (8 semesters)
Type: The Πτυχίο (Ptychio) is the undergraduate degree, equivalent to a bachelor's degree. To apply for a master's program in Marine Biotechnology, a student needs to hold a Ptychio in a relevant field (e.g., Biology, Biotechnology, or Environmental Science). Diploma Supplement doesn't exist in Greece system in Master level.
Curriculum structure: The focus on Marine Biology or Biotechnology is often seen in elective courses or during the final year.
Language of instruction: A proof of English proficiency is required.

SPAIN
Academic Qualification
Duration: A bachelor's degree in Spain (Grado) typically lasts 4 years (240 ECTS credits).
Type: Bachelors in marine sciences, Marine Biology or Biology, Biochemistry, Biotechnology Oceanography, Environmental Biology, in Biological Engineering are preferably.
Curriculum structure: Spanish Bachelor's programs typically have a mix of theoretical courses in subjects like biology, chemistry, and genetics, alongside practical training and internships.
Language of instruction: A proof of English proficiency is required.

Note: The documents from countries Spanish-speaking are not accepted in Spanish even if Spain is one of the programme partners.

WESTERN BALKAN REGION
Academic Qualification
Duration: Suitable Bachelor's degrees typically take 3 to 4 years to complete. For 4-year programs, the final year typically focuses on independent research, internships, and completing a thesis.
Type: Bachelor of Science (BSc) or Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Biotechnology, Marine Biology, Environmental Science, Biology, or Aquatic Sciences
Curriculum structure: Practical laboratory work is required. This includes genetics labs, microbiology techniques, and biotechnology labs.
Language of instruction: Preferably English as language of instruction. If it is not the case, a proof of English proficiency will be required

**It is important to consider the different GPA scale depending on the country. See the summary table of the countries study in this document.*

Country	Typical GPA Scale
Bangladesh	4.0 or 5.0 scale (variable by institution)
Colombia	0–5 scale
Egypt	4.0 or 5.0 scale
Ethiopia	4.0 or 5.0 scale (variable by institution)
France	0 - 20 scale
Germany	1 – 5 scale (1 best grade – 5 fail)
Ghana	4.0 or 5.0 scale (variable)
Greece	0 - 10
India	10-point scale (but some use 5.0 scale)
Indonesia	4.0 or 5.0 scale (variable by institution)
Nigeria	5.0 scale
Pakistan	4.0 or 5.0 scale (variable by institution)
Spain	0 - 10
Sri Lanka	4.0 scale (or 5.0 scale in some cases)
Tanzania	4.0 scale (or 5.0 scale in some cases)
USA	4.0 GPA scale
Western Balkan Region	10-point scale (rare use of GPA)