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WP6 EU-CONEXUS Office for Development of Study Offers

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Executive summary/abstract:

The ODSO Activity Report provides an overview of all activities carried out by the Office during the project period. The activities are presented in accordance with the work plan set out in the GA and are organised into the following main areas: establishment and development of the Office, development of the Rulebook, labelling and accreditation of joint study offers and joint study programmes, and organisation of workshops.

The report also covers additional activities that emerged as a result of the Office's development into a fully functioning Quality Assurance Office. These activities include surveys on students' preferences regarding joint study offers and joint study programmes, QA-related surveys involving students, teachers, staff and other stakeholders, as well as the collection and analysis of data required to support the Alliance's quality assurance processes and governance.

Description:

The Office for the Development of Study Offers (ODSO) was established at the beginning of the project period. The Office is physically located at the University of Zadar and is staffed by two full-time employees: one with primary expertise in quality assurance and the other specialising in legal and regulatory aspects of study offer development.

The ODSO works in close collaboration with two university centres that provide complementary expertise and operational support. **Centre Stjepan Maticevic** contributes experts in programme design, quality assurance, and higher education policy. Together with the ODSO staff, these experts form the evaluation team responsible for assessing study offers prior to their labelling or, where applicable, future accreditation. Centre also provides consultancy on the development of study offers and study programmes and contributes to the preparation and delivery of workshops and training activities.

Centre for projects, science and technology transfer supports the ODSO in administrative matters and provides additional administrative capacity during periods of increased workload, thereby helping to prevent bottlenecks in the implementation of ODSO activities. During the implementation of the centralised quality assurance (QA) survey system and the establishment of the quality assurance function within the ODSO, a third staff member was consulted. Leveraging his academic background in psychology, he supported with advice in methodology and strengthened the Office's capacity to coordinate and manage the growing number of quality assurance activities, particularly the administration and analysis of centralised surveys, the preparation of quality assurance reports, and the ongoing development and implementation of the alliance's quality assurance framework.

During the initial months of the project, while recruitment of the ODSO staff was underway, Centre for projects, science and technology transfer coordinated the administrative activities of the Office. At the same time, experts from Centre Stjepan Maticevic collected and analysed examples of study offer development and accreditation procedures from across the European Higher Education Area, with particular attention to their alignment with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)*. Once the ODSO team was fully established, the collaborative development of the Rulebook commenced with the active involvement of representatives from all partner institutions.

1. Rulebook

The first task undertaken by the ODSO was to coordinate and lead the development of the **Rulebook on the Development of Study Offers**. Based on the data collected by the ODSO team, an initial draft of the Rulebook was prepared and submitted to a working group comprising ODSO members and representatives of all partner institutions for consultation and further development.

Following the establishment of a common terminology and shared definitions, the working group proceeded to define the different categories of study offers, together with the procedures governing their labelling and the future accreditation process. It was agreed to adopt the term **"study offer"** to refer to all courses, modules, and programmes that, upon successful completion, do not lead to the award of a full qualification at a given **European Qualifications Framework (EQF)** level. The term **"joint study programme"** was adopted to refer to programmes that lead to the award of a full qualification at the corresponding EQF level. As the alliance does not yet possess a legal entity with the authority to accredit study offers, the partners agreed to establish a labelling framework that can be seamlessly converted into an accreditation framework once the alliance acquires the necessary legal status and accreditation rights. The partners also agreed that all joint study programmes developed within the alliance will be accredited in accordance with the **European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes**, thereby ensuring compliance with the European framework for the quality assurance of joint programmes.

The development of the Rulebook was guided primarily by the ESG, while also ensuring alignment with the relevant national and regional regulatory requirements applicable to the partner institutions. The final version of the Rulebook was validated by the Academic Council (AC) on 26 September 2023.

Following the enhancement of quality assurance procedures within the Alliance and the adoption of the Quality Assurance Guidelines, it became necessary to update the Rulebook. The revisions primarily concerned the inclusion of the newly established Quality Assurance Subcommittee and the introduction of provisions governing the labelling of Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) activities, which have become an important component of the Alliance's educational offer. The updated Rulebook was approved by the Alliance Council on 19 March 2026.

2. Development and labelling of study offers

2.a Bacherlor study offers

The development of study offers commenced prior to the formal validation of the Rulebook. From the beginning of 2023, the ODSO actively contributed to the development of the **Micro-credentials (MC) Framework for Bachelor Students**, led by WP2. Its involvement included participation in the selection process for MC teaching staff and in the definition of the programme learning outcomes.

Subsequently, the ODSO contributed to the development of individual micro-credentials and was responsible for the quality verification of all proposed micro-credentials prior to their submission to the Academic Council (AC) for labelling. The verification process included an evaluation of the quality and clarity of the intended learning outcomes, the alignment between the learning outcomes and the proposed content, level and assessment, the appropriateness of the estimated student workload, and the relevance of the proposed microcredential and its learning outcomes with respect to the established MC Framework.

Where necessary, the ODSO provided recommendations for revision to ensure compliance with the agreed quality standards. Following the incorporation of the recommended modifications, the micro-credentials were submitted to the Academic Council (AC) for approval and labelling.

The following table presents the EQF 6 level (Bachelor) micro-credentials that belongs to the Micro-credentials in Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability programme (https://www.eu-conexus.eu/en/micro-credentials/) that were verified by the ODSO prior to their approval by the AC:

"Build with Nature" techniques for sandy coasts
Advanced technologies for sustainable industries 4.0
AI and academic writing skills: never the twain shall meet?
Animal welfare in research labs
Artificial Intelligence (in a Nutshell)
Change your mind to change your health
Coastal Business Strategies and Legislation (2025.)
Cybersecurity for smart ports & shipping organizations
Durable, Sustainable, Resilient?
Engagement, Inclusion, and Social Transfer
English Communication for Sustainable Development, UCV
Entrepreneurship in Blue Economy
Environmental Literature
Environmental monitoring and indicators
Funding opportunities for young researchers
Games and Gamification
Green Competences 4 all
Information literacy
Innovations for Sustainable Urban Development
Innovative heritage resorts as sustainable ecosystems
Introduction to film literacy and filmmaking
Landscapes for exploring language and culture
Ludic Chinese language learning method with tactile HYPA keyboard
Making Sustainable Fashion Trendy
Management strategies of plant diversity for sustainable development
Marine ecosystem services and the impact of the Invasive Alien Species in the Mediterranean Sea
Neuroscience and artificial intelligence, UCV
Principles of Leadership, Teamwork and Communication
Rail at the European scale in regard with the society transitions
Research and Innovation Thinking
SDGs – The Blue Print for the Sustainable Development
Smart green cities: An introduction
Social Entrepreneurship and Commitment in SmUCS, UROS

Spatial planning for resilient coastal areas
Sustainable (municipal) waste management in urban coastal city
System thinking and system dynamic modelling
Theoretical skills for PV systems installers
Tools for data analytics
Towards a Green European Industrial Policy
Traditional timber houses carpentry in seismic and coastal areas, UTCB
UAS Principles, Data Modelling and Analysis
Underwater cultural heritage as a tourist resource
Using AI when working with very large document collections: opportunities and risks
Visual Culture
Global energy situation
Introduction to data visualization
Big dana science (Essentials of Power BI Data Visualisation and Modelling)
Internet of things (IoT Cloud for Digital Twins)
Translating Research into Action in Healthcare
How to get international experience without leaving home
Sustainable Transport and Integrated Mobility Planning
Climate adaption engineering
Introduction into the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

The micro-credential **"Climate Adaptation Engineering"** successfully completed the ODSO quality verification process. However, it was not approved for labelling by the Academic Council (AC) due to the proposed delivery mode, which relied exclusively on asynchronous online instruction and was not considered to comply with the alliance's agreed requirements for the delivery of micro-credentials. The ODSO also completed the quality verification of two courses developed as part of the bachelor minor programme prior to their submission for approval:

Fisheries Biology and Management

EU Maritime Planning and Oceans Care

2.b Masters' study offers

A similar procedure was applied within WP3 for the development of study offers at the master's level. The ODSO participated in the regular meetings of the work package and collaborated closely with the WP3 team throughout the development of the study offers.

All micro-credentials developed for master's level students underwent the same quality verification process as those developed for bachelor's level students prior to their

submission to the AC for labelling. The verification assessed the quality and alignment of the intended learning outcomes, the consistency between the learning outcomes and the proposed content, and the appropriateness of the estimated student workload. Following is the list of masters' MC verified by ODSO:

Circular Bioeconomy in Agri-Food Systems
Cities as adaptive systems: A multidimensional approach for integrated smart urban development
Compressible and Incompressible Fluid Distribution Networks
Economics of Climate Change
Energy-Efficient and Sustainable Technologies for Buildings
Environmental Sustainability in Education
Fundamentals of Climate-Neutral Cities
Global Agri-Food Systems
Green and Sustainable Pharmaceutical Production
Green Infrastructure
Innovations Strategies
Patentology and Licence Trade
Sustainable and Resilient Agri-Food Supply Chains
Theoretical Approaches to Ecological-Cultural Change
Digital stortytelling
Digital transformation of Cultural Heritage
Additive Manufacturing for Sustainable Innovation
Academic Podcasting
Emotional Sustainability & Internal Marketing: Inside Out Approaches to Work
Search Fund Entrepreneurship: Buying and Leading Small Family Businesses

3. Accreditation of study programmes

3.a Joint Master Programme in Digital Humanities

Already during the preparation of the project proposal ODSO was seen as a point of support for mainly studies generated by the bottom-up initiative. During this project period ODSO participated in development and accreditation of two joint study programmes and reaccreditation of one.

The first joint study programme in whose development the ODSO was actively involved was the **Joint Master Programme in Digital Humanities (JMPDH)**. This programme had been awarded an Erasmus+ grant for the development of joint study programmes during the first project period (https://eu-conexus.eu/en/projects/eu-conexus-joint-master-programme-in-digital-humanities/), with its preparation continuing into the second phase of the alliance. Following the establishment of the ODSO, close

collaboration was initiated with the JMPDH development team to provide quality assurance support throughout the programme design and accreditation process.

The JMPDH consortium, La Rochelle Université (LRUniv), University of Zadar (UNIZD), Klaipeda University (KU) and University of vRostock (UROS) included a new partner, UROS, that joined the alliance during the second project phase. In the new partner's country, higher education is regulated by both national and regional legislation, and the JMPDH represented the first joint study programme to be developed within that regulatory framework. These circumstances posed significant challenges for both the design and the accreditation of the programme. Nevertheless, the solutions developed during the preparation of the JMPDH successfully addressed these challenges, establishing precedents and facilitating the subsequent development and accreditation of other joint study programmes within the alliance.

The first in-person meeting between the ODSO and the JMPDH development team was held in Zadar in June 2023. During this meeting, the ODSO presented the procedures for the accreditation of joint study programmes in accordance with the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes**.** The team also provided guidance on the different programme delivery models (face-to-face, online, and blended) and the corresponding quality assurance requirements applicable to each model.

Particular attention was given to blended delivery. The ODSO highlighted the importance of verifying the national regulatory requirements governing the proportion of online and face-to-face teaching, as these provisions may differ significantly between participating countries and therefore need to be considered during programme design and accreditation.

The JMPDH consortium initially opted to develop the programme as a blended learning programme, and the ODSO provided continuous support throughout the preparation of the proposal. Its contribution focused primarily on the design of the programme learning outcomes, the verification of course learning outcomes, the review of the overall programme structure, and the provision of guidance on quality assurance aspects in accordance with the agreed alliance framework and the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes**.**

During the presentation of the programme development progress to the AC, some partners expressed concerns regarding the proposed blended model. The AC subsequently recommended that the programme be redesigned as a predominantly face-to-face programme with a reduced proportion of online learning activities, ensuring that its structure and delivery model were fully aligned with the requirements of the **Erasmus Mundus** funding scheme. Following this recommendation, the ODSO supported the JMPDH development team in revising the programme while ensuring that the updated design continued to meet the agreed quality assurance requirements. Particular attention was given to verifying compliance with the national regulations governing the inclusion of online teaching within predominantly face-to-face programmes across the participating countries.

The JMPDH team also sought to maximise opportunities for curriculum personalisation by offering a broad range of elective courses with lower individual student workloads and corresponding ECTS credits. During the programme development process, several challenges arising from differences in national higher education systems had to be addressed. These included variations in academic calendars, examination regulations, the number of examinations per semester, and the organisation of examination periods. The issue of differing academic calendars was resolved through the adoption of a common alliance academic calendar, while the remaining issues were addressed through consultation, negotiation, and agreement among the partner institutions.

At a later stage of programme development, an additional challenge emerged concerning the allocation of ECTS credits. In one partner country, national guidance recommends that programme modules comprise 6 ECTS credits. Following consultations with the relevant ministry and the national quality assurance agency, it was confirmed that this recommendation is not mandatory and that deviations may be accepted when appropriately justified. However, subsequent discussions with the quality assurance office of the partner institution indicated that the institutional accreditation procedure involves several external stakeholders, some of whom might object to a programme structure that does not follow the recommended 6 ECTS module format.

To minimise the risk of delays or obstacles during national accreditation, the consortium agreed to organise the curriculum into 6 ECTS modules while allowing individual courses within each module to carry a lower number of ECTS credits. This solution ensured compliance with national expectations while preserving the intended flexibility and pedagogical design of the programme and was approved by AC.

The ODSO provided substantial support to the JMPDH consortium during the preparation of the Consortium Agreement (CA)**.** Its contribution included the provision of reference documentation and templates, the identification of key elements to be addressed in the agreement, and the development of quality assurance guidelines to support the drafting process. In addition, the ODSO coordinated the collection of programme cost data from all partner institutions, prepared a consolidated programme cost analysis, and proposed the annual tuition fee structure based on the aggregated financial information.

During the preparation of the Consortium Agreement, it became evident that the regional higher education legislation applicable to one of the partner institutions did not permit two arrangements that were fundamental to the implementation of the joint study programme: multiple student enrolment across partner institutions and some contents of joint admission procedure. In close cooperation with the competent regional ministry, the partner institution successfully initiated the necessary legislative amendments, thereby removing these legal obstacles and enabling the finalisation of the Consortium Agreement.

Following its completion, the Consortium Agreement was reviewed by the ODSO, subsequently examined by the Quality Assurance Subcommittee, and finally approved by the AC in February 2026.

The ODSO collected and analysed proposals from several quality assurance agencies authorised to conduct the accreditation of joint study programmes in accordance with the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes. Based on an assessment of the accreditation costs, expected duration of the accreditation process, and other relevant considerations, the ODSO submitted a recommendation to the Academic Council (AC) to select the French Quality Assurance Agency, The High Council for Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (Hcéres). Following the approval of the proposed agency by the AC, the ODSO provided continuous support to the JMPDH consortium in the preparation of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER)**.**

The ODSO contributed to the preparation of the SER by providing quality assurance guidance, reviewing the document for compliance with the European Approach, and coordinating revisions where necessary. Upon completion, the SER was reviewed by the Quality Assurance Subcommittee and subsequently approved by the Academic Council.

The Self-Evaluation Report was submitted to the Hcéres on 15 April 2026**,** and the external review panel site visit took place online on 2 June 2026. The final accreditation report, including the recommendation to accredit the programme, was received on 22 July 2026 (https://www.hceres.fr/en/rechercher-une-publication/joint-master-programme-digital-humanities-universite-europeenne-eu)**.**

3.b Joint Master Programme in Leadership for Sustainable Urban and Coastal Development

The development of the **Joint Maser Programme in Leadership for Sustainable Urban and Coastal Development (JMPLS)** was led by WP3, with the ODSO providing continuous quality assurance support throughout the programme development process. In this study programme all EU-CONEXUS are involved, 8 as full partners while FredU is associated partner ODSO representatives regularly participated in WP3 meetings, contributing expert advice and recommendations, particularly on quality assurance aspects related to programme design and compliance with the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes.

The ODSO contributed to the definition and verification of the programme learning outcomes and course learning outcomes, supported the preparation of the CA, and provided guidance on quality assurance requirements throughout the development process.

The ODSO collected and analysed proposals from several quality assurance agencies authorised to conduct the accreditation of joint study programmes in accordance with the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes. Based on an assessment of the accreditation costs, expected duration of the accreditation process, and other relevant considerations, the ODSO submitted a recommendation to the Academic Council (AC) to select Irish QA agency, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). Following the approval of the proposed agency by the AC, the ODSO provided continuous support to the JMPLS consortium in the preparation of the SER**.**

The SER was submitted to the QQI and the site visit, in person, was on May 11 and 12 2026 on the SETU campus in Waterford, the joint programme coordinator campus. ODSO representatives participated in the external review panel site visit as members of the institutional support team, providing clarification on the alliance's quality assurance framework and the programme development process where required. The panel report was received in July 2026 (https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2026-07/european-approach-setu-panel-report-2026.pdf).

3.c Reaccreditation of Joint Master Programme in Marine Biotechnology

The ODSO also contributed to the reaccreditation of the **Joint Master Programme in Marine Biotechnology (JMPMB)** by providing quality assurance support throughout the preparation process. Its primary responsibilities included the collection, analysis, and consolidation of data from quality assurance surveys conducted during the implementation of the programme. These data formed an important part of the evidence base required for the reaccreditation process.

In addition, the ODSO established contact with the quality assurance agency responsible for the programme's initial accreditation and organised a coordination meeting to clarify the reaccreditation procedure, timeline, and documentation requirements.

The existing CA was reviewed and assessed as generally fit for purpose. Nevertheless, several minor amendments were identified as necessary to reflect changes introduced since the initial accreditation. The ODSO assisted the consortium in preparing these amendments and supported the revision and enhancement of the quality assurance survey instruments used for the continuous monitoring and evaluation of the programme.

The external review panel site visit is scheduled for 18 September 2026**.**

4. Students preferences survey

During the first two years of the project, variations in student interest across the study offers were observed. In addition, several study offers experienced relatively high dropout rates. In response to these findings, the ODSO proposed to the Academic Council (AC) the development of a comprehensive student survey aimed at identifying students' needs, expectations, and preferences regarding the alliance's educational provision. The survey was designed to collect feedback on a broad range of aspects, including the thematic areas of study offers, preferred delivery modes, scheduling options, and other factors influencing student participation and engagement. The

objective was to provide an evidence base for the further development and continuous improvement of the alliance's study offers.

To maximise student participation and ensure the inclusiveness of the data collection process, the ODSO also proposed that the survey be administered in the national languages of all partner institutions. Following approval by the Academic Council, the ODSO prepared the initial English version of the questionnaire, which was circulated among the partners for review and consultation. The revised version was subsequently approved by the Academic Council and translated into the respective national languages.

The national language versions of the survey were finalised on 28 May 2025, after which the survey was launched across the alliance. As the survey period coincided with the end of the academic year, the data collection period was extended into the first semester of the following academic year in order to increase the response rate and ensure broader student participation.

The survey results were analysed by the ODSO and presented to the AC on 18 December 2025. The findings provided valuable evidence to support the further development of study offers and informed subsequent discussions on the alignment of the alliance's educational portfolio with student needs and expectations.

Following is the content of the **survey:**

EU-CONEXUS is a strong partnership between nine universities developing science and innovation into a hub of excellence on Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability (SmUCS). We promote European values and identity by bringing together a new generation of European citizens. We create a unique way of studying and carrying out research through institutional alignment and seamless mobility for all, shaping regional policies and promoting national cultures of the partner countries.

Thank you for taking part in our survey. Your feedback is very important as it enables us to improve our academic and support services and better tailor them to your needs and expectations. With this questionnaire, we would like to gain insights into your current academic experience, your course selection preferences and your interest in additional study opportunities including mobility programmes and EU-CONEXUS activities.

The questionnaire should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Please answer it as honestly and thoroughly as possible. Rest assured that all your responses will be kept confidential and used solely to improve student services and academic programs.

We appreciate you taking the time to help us improve the quality of your education.

Let us get started!

Personal Information:

At which university do you study? (drop down menu)	Agricultural University of Athens
	Frederick University
	Klaipeda University
	La Rochelle Université
	Catholic University of Valencia
	South East Technological University
	Technical University of Civil Engineering Bucharest
	University of Rostock
	University of Zadar

Current Programme: _____

Field of study (drop down menu):

Teacher training and education science
Arts
Humanities (except languages)
Languages
Social and behavioural sciences
Journalism and information
Economics, business and administration
Law
Life sciences
Physical sciences
Mathematics and statistics
Computing
Engineering and engineering trades
Manufacturing and processing
Architecture and construction
Agriculture, forestry and fisheries
Veterinary
Health
Social services
Personal services
Transport services
Environmental protection
Security services

Sports

Level of programme:

Bachelor
Master
Integrated studies

Please indicate how many hours of classes you have per week?

less than 10
between 10 and 20
between 20 and 30
more than 30 hours

Do you know that your university is a part of EU-CONEXUS alliance?

Yes (If this answer then going to next question)
No (If this answer then going to question about course selection)

How did you learn of EU-CONEXUS?

University website
A promotional event at the university
E-mail
From a teacher/university's employee
From colleagues
University social media
I don't remember/other
Other

Are you familiar with EU-CONEXUS activities/offers for students?

Yes
I heard something
No

Do you participate in EU-CONEXUS activities?

Yes (If this answer then going to next question)

No (If this answer then going to question about course selection)

In which EU-CONEXUS activities have you participated or are currently participating in?

short courses
micro-credentials
research activities
sport activities
cultural activities
I participated but could not remember
other (indicate which one)

EU-CONEXUS study offers provide a unique academic experience that differs from the traditional courses typically offered in regular university curricula. These courses are designed with an emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches, international collaboration and innovative teaching methods that allow students to engage with topics from a European and global perspective. In contrast to standard programmes, EU-CONEXUS subjects are tailored to promote cross-border knowledge exchange and address current societal challenges. They provide students with skills that go beyond the local context and prepare them for careers in an increasingly interconnected world.

Are you interested in participation in some of EU-CONEXUS study offers?

Yes
No

Who gave you guidance or advice when making your study offers selection decisions?

Family/Friends
Academic Counselors
Teachers/professors
I didn’t seek out advice
I sought out advice/instructions, but couldn´t find it
I sought out advice, but didn’t receive any

On a scale of 1-5 (1-Least Important, 5- Most Important), please rank what factors you consider important when choosing a course not offered at your main university.

The course is offered online only in a synchronous way	1	2	3	4	5

The course is offered online in a synchronous and asynchronous ways (possibility to watch registered lessons)	1	2	3	4	5
The course is offered in-person/on-campus	1	2	3	4	5
Schedules of the classes	1	2	3	4	5
The teacher giving the course	1	2	3	4	5
The ECTS of the course are recognised	1	2	3	4	5
The course is free of charge	1	2	3	4	5
Language of the course	1	2	3	4	5
Number of ECTS is adequate	1	2	3	4	5

On a scale of 1-5 (1-Least Important, 5- Most Important), please rank what would prevent you from choosing a course of your interest.

The course is in English	1	2	3	4	5
The course is scheduled late in the evening	1	2	3	4	5
The attendance to the course is obligatory	1	2	3	4	5
The course is scheduled few times a week	1	2	3	4	5
The course has an obligatory short student mobility	1	2	3	4	5
The course is online	1	2	3	4	5

Study Preferences:

Are you interested in pursuing short courses or micro-credentials alongside your main study programme?

Yes
No
I'm not sure

What kind of short course or micro-credential would you enrol in:

Related to my study programme
Related to my personal interest
Related to transversal and soft skills

How many hours per week would you be willing/having a possibility to dedicate to EU-CONEXUS classes?

Less that 3 hrs per week
Up to 3 hrs once per week
Up to 3 hrs twice a week
Up to 5 hrs twice a week
I don´t have any free time

Rate from 1 to 5 (1 - the least, 5 - the most) how likely you would enrol in a course with these characteristics:

Early morning course (7.30 am-9.30 am)	1	2	3	4	5
Late afternoon (4.30 pm-6.30 pm)	1	2	3	4	5

Evening (6.30 pm-9.00 pm)	1	2	3	4	5
Course held on Saturdays	1	2	3	4	5
Asynchronous (No set lecture times)	1	2	3	4	5
In person summer/winter course of 1 week					
In person summer/winter course of 2 weeks	1	2	3	4	5
In person summer/winter course of 3 weeks	1	2	3	4	5
Hybrid (part online, part in person) course with 1 week of mobility during summer holidays	1	2	3	4	5

Are you interested in the possibility of mobility programmes (e.g., exchange programmes, blended programmes, virtual programmes, **internships abroad)?**

Yes
No
Depends on the type of mobility

How long would you be willing to participate in a mobility programme? (Select one)

1-2 weeks
1-2 months
1 semester
More than 6 months

Academic Interests:

How interested are you in the following topics? (Scale: 1 - Not interested at all, 5 - Very interested)

Sustainability	1	2	3	4	5
Entrepreneurship	1	2	3	4	5
Information literacy	1	2	3	4	5
Artificial intelligence	1	2	3	4	5
Communication skills	1	2	3	4	5
Green and digital skills					
Modern technologies	1	2	3	4	5
General soft skills	1	2	3	4	5
Intercultural communication					

Would you be interested to enrol in a joint master programme? Joint study programmes are typically performed by several partner universities and includes physical mobility.

Yes
No

Considering that you have found a joint Master programme of your interest, how important would be (rate from 1 to 5, where is 1 - the less important and 5 - the most important)

Innovative study programme linked to the needs of labour market	1	2	3	4	5

Study programme in the field of my bachelor's degree with the possibility of choice of courses from other scientific disciplines	1	2	3	4	5
Study programme with a considerable offer of elective courses letting me the possibility of creating my own personalised curriculum	1	2	3	4	5
Interdisciplinary joint Master programme	1	2	3	4	5

Joint study programmes are typically performed by several partner universities and includes physical mobility. Rate from 1 to 5 how likely would you enrol in a following study programmes (1 - not likely, 5 - very likely):

In person programme (all courses require presence in the campus) with at least 1 semester of physical mobility at the other university (at least 1 semester must be done in a physical mobility at other university different from the one you enrolled in)	1	2	3	4	5
In person course with at least 2 semesters of physical mobility at the other university (2 semesters must be done in a physical mobility at 2 different from the one you enrolled in)	1	2	3	4	5
In person course with 3 semesters of physical mobility at the other university (3 semesters must be done in a physical mobility at 3 different universities)	1	2	3	4	5
Hybrid (in person and online) programme with at least 1 semester of physical mobility (at least 1 semester must be done in a physical mobility at other university different from the one you enrolled in)	1	2	3	4	5
Hybrid programme with one or more short mobility periods (from 5 to 30 days) each semester	1	2	3	4	5

Using the scale below, please rate how motivated you are by the following reasons for <u>taking an online course</u>. Not Motivated (1), Somewhat Motivated (2), Neutral (3), Motivated (4), Very Motivated (5)

Time constraints due to work responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5
Time constraints due to family responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5
My courses are not scheduled at convenient times and/or locations	1	2	3	4	5
Commuting related issues such as wear and tear on car, gas, and mileage	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoy taking online courses	1	2	3	4	5
I receive better grades in online courses than in person courses	1	2	3	4	5
I am more responsible in online courses	1	2	3	4	5
I prefer online interaction with my professor and other classmates	1	2	3	4	5
I find online courses easier than in person	1	2	3	4	5

Using the scale below, please rate how motivated you are by the following reasons for <u>taking a face-to-face course</u>. Not Motivated (1), Somewhat Motivated (2), Neutral (3), Motivated (4), Very Motivated (5)

My schedule is flexible enough to attend face-to-face classes	1	2	3	4	5
I schedule classes at times and places that are convenient for me	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoy face-to-face classes	1	2	3	4	5

What do you expect from your overall academic experience?

Is there something specific you would like to see added to the study programs at your university and in EU-CONEXUS study offers?

Thank you again for your participation in this survey. Your responses are invaluable to us as we strive to improve our academic programs and services for students. Your feedback not only helps us understand your needs, but also plays a critical role in shaping the future of our educational offerings.

We encourage you to continue to engage with our community and watch for the implementation of new initiatives based on your input. Should you have any further questions or wish to discuss any specific feedback, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Your participation in this survey shows that you are committed to improving our academic community, and for that we are very grateful.

5. Quality assurance

During the initial phase of the project, the ODSO performed several functions typically associated with a Quality Assurance (QA) Office; however, its mandate did not encompass all elements required for a comprehensive alliance-level quality assurance system. As the project progressed, it became evident that the collaboration between the ODSO and the quality assurance offices of the partner institutions required further strengthening. In addition, the partners identified the need to further develop and consolidate the alliance's quality assurance framework to support the expanding portfolio of joint educational activities.

To support this process, the ODSO collected the quality assurance documentation and procedures in use across the partner institutions, while the Vice-Chair of the Academic Council conducted a comprehensive analysis of the quality assurance mechanisms established at alliance level. The findings were presented during the in-person

consortium meeting held in Carlow in October 2024. The analysis concluded that, although the alliance had already established a number of quality assurance mechanisms, these were not yet sufficiently integrated into a coherent and comprehensive quality assurance system. Consequently, further development and formalisation of the alliance's quality assurance governance and procedures were considered necessary.

The Academic Council therefore proposed that the ODSO evolve into a fully functioning alliance Quality Assurance Office and tasked the ODSO team with preparing a proposal for an enhanced quality assurance governance structure and related procedures.

The proposal included the establishment of a **Quality Assurance Subcommittee (QASc)**, comprising representatives of the quality assurance offices of all partner institutions. The Subcommittee was envisaged as a permanent coordination body to strengthen cooperation between the alliance-level Quality Assurance Office and the institutional quality assurance structures. Its responsibilities include the review of all quality assurance–related documents, procedures, and proposals prior to their consideration by the Academic Council, as well as monitoring and providing guidance on the activities of the ODSO.

The proposal was endorsed by the AC, and the QASc was formally established. The QASc is chaired by the Chair of the AC. ODSO supports the Chair in preparing the agenda for each meeting and participates in all QASc meetings. In addition, ODSO prepares and provides all relevant documentation and supporting materials for the Subcommittee's review before they are submitted to the AC for approval. In parallel, it was agreed to develop comprehensive Alliance Quality Assurance Guidelines to provide a clear description of the alliance's quality assurance framework, governance arrangements, and operational procedures, thereby ensuring a transparent and consistent implementation of quality assurance activities across all partner institutions.

One of the tasks assigned to the ODSO was the centralisation of QA surveys for the alliance's educational offers. It was agreed that the initial implementation would focus on bachelor's and master's level study offers. Given the specific characteristics of doctoral education and the broader range of quality dimensions that need to be considered when evaluating PhD programmes, it was decided to postpone the inclusion of doctoral-level surveys until the second implementation phase, after the centralised system had been validated and its effectiveness demonstrated.

WP2, which had the largest portfolio of active study offers and an operational joint study programme, was selected as the pilot work package for the implementation of the centralised survey process. To support this activity, the ODSO team conducted a working visit to the WP2 team in Valencia in February 2025. During the meeting, the existing quality assurance procedures, survey instruments, and data collection processes in accordance with GDPR were reviewed, and a roadmap for the centralisation process was jointly agreed.

It was decided to pilot the new approach using the JMPMB and micro-credentials. Based on the analysis of the existing survey instruments, the ODSO proposed some

improvements aimed at harmonising the survey templates and making them applicable across the alliance's different study offers. The revised survey templates were subsequently adopted for the quality assurance surveys conducted during the summer semester of the 2024–2025 academic year.

The results of the pilot implementation were used to further refine and optimise the centralised quality assurance survey system. Based on the positive outcomes of the pilot phase, the system was fully implemented for all study offers coordinated by WP2 at the beginning of the 2025–2026 academic year, in September 2025.

Following the successful implementation within WP2, the scope of the centralised survey system was further expanded. From the second semester of the 2025–2026 academic year (February 2026), all study offers coordinated by WP3 were also incorporated into the alliance's centralised quality assurance survey system. This phased implementation approach enabled the ODSO to validate and improve the procedures before progressively extending the system across the alliance, thereby ensuring a consistent and harmonised approach to the collection, analysis, and reporting of quality assurance data.

Alliance decided to issue digital certificates for the bachelor's-level micro-credentials (MCs) using the Europass European Digital Credentials (EDC) platform (https://europa.eu/europass/digital-credentials/issuer/#/home). To support this initiative, ODSO, in collaboration with the WP2 team, developed a new syllabus template tailored to the requirements of the EDC system.

The template consists of two complementary parts. The first part is intended for students and contains the standard course information, including learning outcomes, teaching and assessment methods, workload, and other relevant details. The second part includes the additional metadata required for the issuance of European Digital Credentials, ensuring that all necessary information is available for the generation and recognition of the digital certificates.

Under the centralised model, the ODSO assumes responsibility for the administration of the surveys by distributing survey links to students, teachers, administrative staff, and external stakeholders. The ODSO also performs the analysis and consolidation of the collected data and prepares summary reports for the relevant Programme Board or study offer coordination team. This centralised approach ensures a consistent methodology for data collection and analysis across the alliance while providing programme management teams with comparable evidence to support continuous quality enhancement.

5.a Quality assurance guidelines for preparation of joint study programmes and joint study offers.

The continuous expansion of the alliance's portfolio of joint study offers and joint study programmes, together with the increasing need to establish a coherent alliance-wide quality assurance culture, highlighted the need for comprehensive **Alliance Quality Assurance Guidelines**. The ODSO was entrusted with the preparation of these Guidelines.

The initial draft was developed using the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) as the primary reference framework. In addition, existing alliance documentation, including the quality assurance framework developed for the JMPMB, was analysed to ensure consistency with established practices and to build upon the experience gained during the development of the alliance's first joint study programmes.

The Guidelines define the alliance's quality assurance framework for both joint study programmes and joint study offers. They describe the quality assurance governance structure, the procedures governing the design, implementation, monitoring, periodic review, and continuous enhancement of educational provision, as well as the quality assurance measures, instruments, performance indicators, and responsibilities of the bodies involved in the quality assurance system.

The draft Alliance Quality Assurance Guidelines were reviewed by the QASc. Following the incorporation of the Subcommittee's recommendations, the revised version was validated by the AC on 24 February 2026**.**

6. Workshops for development of study offers

As part of the project, the ODSO was tasked with organising a series of capacity-building workshops addressing topics related to the development of joint study programmes and study offers. The original plan envisaged identifying workshop topics through surveys of academic staff. However, during the initial phase of the project, the review of study offer syllabi revealed recurring issues related to the formulation of intended learning outcomes and their alignment with course content. Consequently, it was considered appropriate to prioritise this topic without conducting a preliminary survey.

The first workshop, entitled "Learning Outcomes", focused on the formulation of high-quality intended learning outcomes and their constructive alignment with teaching, learning, and assessment. To maximise participation, the workshop was delivered on two separate occasions, on 21 and 22 October 2024, for different groups of participants. The workshops had 34 participants in total.

A similar approach was adopted for the second workshop. As micro-credentials became an increasingly important component of the alliance's educational portfolio, the ODSO organised a workshop entitled "Micro-credentials: what they are and how to develop them", addressing the principles of microcredentials and providing practical guidance on their design and implementation. Owing to the anticipated level of interest, the workshop was also delivered twice for two different participant cohorts on 26 and 27 November 2025.The workshops had 33 participants participans in total.

The topic of the third workshop originated directly from requests made by academic staff rather than through a formal survey. The workshop focused on Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL)**,** reflecting the growing interest in innovative

approaches to international collaboration and virtual mobility. This workshop was delivered in a single session on 13 January 2026 with 28 participants.

The fourth workshop addressed another topic originally foreseen in the project work plan: the development of micro-credentials and study programmes in collaboration with external stakeholders**.** The workshop “Bridging the Gap: Designing Industry Aligned Study Programmes while Preserving Academic Mobility” explored approaches for involving employers and other stakeholders in the design and development of study programmes to strengthen their relevance, responsiveness to labour market needs, and societal impact. The workshop was planned in two different occasions, but due to the lower interest of the staff it was delivered in a single session on 6 May 2026 for 9 participants.

The European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes was presented to the working groups responsible for developing the joint study programmes. The JMPDH working group was introduced to the key principles and requirements of the European Approach during project meetings. Following the appointment of the programme coordinator, ODSO continued to provide targeted guidance and consultations directly to the coordinator throughout the programme development process.

At the initiative of the UNIZD Vice-Rector, ODSO also delivered a series of short workshops for the UNIZD staff involved in the development of JMPLS. These workshops focused on the quality assurance requirements, the application of the European Approach, and the practical aspects of preparing the programme for accreditation.

In addition, meetings were organised with the QA agency selected for the accreditation process to provide the programme teams with detailed information on the applicable requirements and procedures. Two meetings were held with the same QA agency: one addressing the accreditation of JMPDH and the other focusing on the reaccreditation of JMPMB. During these meetings, an expert from the QA agency explained the accreditation requirements, highlighted the key aspects evaluated in relation to the "jointness" of the programmes, and outlined the accreditation and reaccreditation procedures. The meeting for reaccreditation was on 16 September 2025, while the meeting for accreditation was on 16 December 2025.

Meetings dedicated to JMPLS were organised by the WP3 team, as the selected accrediting agency was from the same country. Those meetings were conducted both online and in-person participation, and covered the specific requirements and procedures applicable to the accreditation of JMPLUCS.

The presentations from the four workshops have been published on the ODSO website (https://www.eu-conexus.eu/en/eu-conexus-office-for-development-of-study-offers/) and are publicly available to all interested stakeholders. In addition, the workshop materials have been compiled into a single brochure, which will be published on the Alliance website to ensure wider dissemination and easier access to the resources.

7. Other functions of ODSO

The transformation of ODSO into a fully functioning QA Office has also brought new responsibilities. ODSO is now responsible for collecting and analysing data required by the Alliance's governing bodies to support informed decision-making and strategic planning.

As part of these responsibilities, the Alliance initiated the development of the **Alliance Policy Paper on the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)**. ODSO was tasked with collecting the existing AI-related policy documents from the partner institutions and preparing the first draft of the Alliance policy based on the identified good practices and existing institutional frameworks. This draft serves as the basis for discussion by the Alliance's governance bodies and will support the development of the final version of the policy document. The first draft was submitted on 20 May 2026**.**

Discussion/content:

In the GA it was stated that our target values are 4 joint study programmes ant the indicator is 30 joint programmes. This second was an error, we intended 30 joint study offers. We stated that and ask for correction, but the pannelist of the midterm evaluation considered that as a lowering of our ambition. It was not really the case, it was really an error and from very beginning it was intended to develop 30 new joint study offers. The budget of EU-CONEXUS+ project confirms that only 4 accreditations according to the European Approach were foreseen. From the outset, the aim was to develop 4 joint study programmes (full qualification at EQF level 6, 7 or 8), and this is also provided for in the budget. Other joint educational activities that do not require accreditation according to the European approach and do not award a full EQF qualification have been classified as joint study offers in the Rulebook. The number of "joint study programmes" already referred in the proposal mainly refers to minors, micro-credentials, lifelong learning and others that should be considered as educational offers.

Already during the preparation of EUCONEXUS+ it was decided that the term "joint study programme" would be used for programmes that award a full EQF qualification (and should be accredited according to the European approach), while other joint offers such as minors, micro-credentials, lifelong learning, summer schools and others would be considered as joint study offers. Hence the name of the EUCONEXUS+ Office is the Office for the Development of Study Offers. It is explained in the Rulebook in which it is clearly stated that joint study programmes are only those that undergo accreditation according to the European approach. Joint study offers are accredited by one of the

partner universities, as EUCONEXUS+ does not have a legal status allowing the accreditation of educational programmes, and labelled by EUCONEXUS+ as joint study offer according to the procedures described in the Rulebook. The budget included 4 accreditations for joint programmes, which means that we wanted to create and accredit 4 new joint programmes. The 30 joint programmes, as they are called in the proposal and GA, were intended from the beginning to be 30 study offers, mainly micro-credentials as the Alliance has decided to focus on these, but not only. It is not a question of lowering ambitions, but of correcting the notion of joint educational offer.
