

EMAP 2 / ERASMUS MUNDUS ACTIVE PARTICIPATION Vol. 2

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM THE TRAINING SEMINAR IN POLAND 27 - 30 January 2011

Q = question

EM = Erasmus Mundus

EMMC = Erasmus Mundus Master Course

EM NS = Erasmus Mundus National Structure

EACEA = Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency

General introduction on Erasmus Mundus

Q: What is the ratio of non-European (category A) and European (category B) students?

EACEA: There are 2 categories of scholarships (aim of EM is to attract best students, but focus is primarily on non-European students). Generally the ratio between non-European and European students is 3/1 (2/3 non-European, 1/3 European)

Q: Is it possible to give some students multiple diploma and some other joint diploma in the same EMMC (due to legal regulations it is not possible to award joint diploma in all participated countries)?

EM NS: Yes, it is possible, but you should describe it in the application (also the reasons for it).

Q: Should a language course be integrated into the curriculum?

EACEA: They can be, but must not – you can just give the students the possibility to attend the course outside the university (consortium pays for it).

Q: Is it compulsory to give ECTS for the language course?

EACEA: No, it is compulsory to give them the possibility to learn it for free.

From concept to project

Q: When the consortium does receive money after being accepted?

EACEA: The money comes almost one year later after the acceptance.

Q: EM is not for the development of the new curriculum, but is it possible to include new courses or should they be already existed courses?

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EM NS: The course should be ready to work. You can introduce some new elements, but everything should be developed and discussed (recognition can be a bit delayed, but the recognition process should have been started already). The course should be already accepted by the rectors. If there are only 3 partners and the recognition is still not completed, it can happen that one of the universities will not be recognized and the consortium becomes ineligible (only 2 partners left).

Q: Who pays for the courses? For example, in order to transfer the existing courses in national language into English (another system of remuneration for lecturers giving courses in English), is it possible to pay them extra?

EM NS: Assessment is made also from the view of sustainability, so you have to have the business plan with included remuneration of the professors, who read lectures in English. But very important: you have to show that your business plan is sustainable, also if the funding stops (If you hire the lecturers to read the English courses from the funding of the EM, what will happen after the funding ends? Will the course still exist, if you do not have the money for the new staff? Everything should be planned and explained beforehand in the application.).

Application procedure step by step

Q: When will the application be available?

EACEA: Next week (week from 31st January), together with 2 additional documents with instructions (for applicants - with explanations, what the questions are about). Application deadline is 29.04.2011 at 12:00 Brussels time. If you have technical problems and can not submit the application, you have to demonstrate that you have had contact to the Agency before the 12:00.

EM NS: It is recommended to send the summary sheet one month before the application deadline (by 31st March per mail) in order to allow the Agency to find the experts in advance.

Q: What shall we write in the application under „Sub-Programme“?

EACEA: Nothing, the form is created from the e-forms of the LLP programmes, where there are different sub-programmes. In EM e-form you have to fill only in „sub-action“ and „language“.

Comment: Part C, summary - there is a difference between the language of application and working language. Working language can be also some other language than EN, FR or DE. These three are languages to fill in the application and summary. You have to choose the language already at the front page of the application and then stay by that, because the experts are chosen in accordance to the languages marked at the front page and if you mark EN as the application language, the expert will not obligatory speak DE or FR, so if your application is made in other language that marked at the front page, the expert will not be able to assess the application.

EACEA: You must stay within the 25 pages and 3 MB, these are the technical requirements (The application could be more than 25 pages, but it may not be more than 3 MB – in that case it can not be submitted. But it is better to stay within 25 pages, because a longer application can have a negative impact on the assessment.).

Course integration (partnership, student selection, student facilities and support)

Q: Your consortium has 700 applications. How do you advertise the programme in India, Asia...?

Coordinator of EMMC: A lot of applications are coming from the countries, where we have already a lot of students from (word of mouth advertising); through Internet.

Course management, visibility and sustainability

Q: Coordination of EMMC is a full-time work. Is it possible to teach besides?

Coordinator of EMMC: There are such cases, but it is very a big workload then.

Q: Can the salary of the coordinator be paid from EM budget?

Coordinator of EMMC: Yes, it can.

Q: Can overheads be paid from the EM budget?

EACEA: Money is given in form of a lump sum and scholarships. You do with the money what you think is necessary to do (it is not prohibited to use it for paying overheads).

Course quality assurance and evaluation

Q: Our last year application had comments on lack of the details of internal quality assurance. What could it be?

Coordinator of EMMC: It may be accreditation and recognition- insert national legislations regulation in order to inform the evaluators.

EACEA: The institutions must describe what they would do to ensure the quality internally; what the professional sector thinks about that; does the EMMC meet the needs of the professional sector as well.

Coordinator of EMMC: External evaluation of our EMMC is done by the scientific committee (3 members) – they make report and give recommendations (very useful).

Q: Internal evaluation is relying strong on students' opinion – but how reliable is that?

Coordinator of EMMC: There are open questions in the evaluation questionnaire as well and as a lot of students answer, the possibility is not as large that all of them will answer negatively/inappropriate.

EM NS: Cooperation at all levels is required. If the student is not satisfied, you have to look for the reason and try to solve that.

EM NS: How do you provide scientific evaluation of the programme?

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Coordinator of EMMC: The teachers/lecturers should be qualified – they send us CV with a list of their publications, they must have appropriate experiences.

Q: How do you implement the requirement of 2 languages?

Coordinator of EMMC: English is the language of instruction. Local language courses are offered for free to the students (3 hours a week, but without ECTS). But the reality is not as positive: A lot of students drop out of the course after 4-5 weeks. At the best, only 50% of the students stay.

EACEA: Partner search tool is not a way how to compose a good consortium. Successful courses are based on the long lasting cooperation between the partners. You should trust and know your partners well. Making a successful application is not the most difficult part of the application process. Everything what comes after accepting the course will be much harder. Your work should start already in September (informing of the potential students, promotion, selection procedures etc.).

Comment: Joint degree is a question of trust. If joint degree is delivered by all partner institutions and the student was only in 2 of them, you have just trust the partner that their teaching quality is the same as at your university.

Coordinator of EMMC: You have to make sure that the teaching quality is more or less the same in all partner institutions. You must know each other, trust each other. It is the structure that must grow during some time in order to be successful and trustful. It is better to start with multiple degrees and after some time to come to the joint degrees (after better getting know each other). Sometimes the students themselves prefer to get multiple degrees.

General questions / comments

Q: Course recognition within the organization – what is meant with that? A general recognition of the master courses in the institution or the specific recognition of the EM we proposed?

EM NS: It is not the European recognition; you have to be sure that the EM NS will accept the degree you offer.

Q: What kind of documents/plan/strategy should we have?

EM NS: There should be one single document for your country (Germany – recognition certificate that the course exists or has been even already accredited). It must be a proof that the modules you take from the national course are accredited. In the case of absolutely new courses you have to be sure that you are able to give a degree.

EM NS: You have to meet the national requirements, in every country there can be another document that confirms that the course meet the requirements of the particular country.

EACEA: You have to confirm that there will be an official recognized degree, you must be sure you can issue an officially recognized degree/diploma (joint or double or multiple) not

only at the institutional level, but also at the level of the national authorities. The diploma should be recognized in all consortium countries.

Q: Does the delivered degree have to be officially recognized by the deadline of the application?

EM NS: It should be done by the moment the first students will be enrolled into the course. By the application deadline the course should be finalized (completely – EM does not mean a curriculum development!) and the process of recognition has already been started.

Comment: 8.2.2 Accreditation – it is good to show that there are efforts undertaken to introduce and recognize officially the joint degrees and these efforts are really active (put some points from the national legislations into the application, show that you are dealing with that).

Comment: EU pushes the use and recognition of joint degrees, but national legislations do not always allow that. That's a big problem. The EU uses the universities to push the national authorities of the particular countries to accept the joint degrees (when the EU pushes the use of joint degrees).

Q: How many European countries do accept the JD?

EACEA: When you look Bologna graphs – all member states accept them, but when you look at their national legislations – not all countries have already changed their legislation in order to make the use of JD possible. But they work on it.

Q: How are the certificate/joint degrees used/accepted outside the Europe?

EACEA: Students themselves prefer to have double/multiple degrees, it is easier also for the employees to handle them. There are advantages and disadvantages, but the EU's objective to push the use of JD.

Comment from Polish consortium: The foreign partners (non-EU) often ask, what joint degree is, if it is Polish or national degree. They are asking, if JD is a legal degree.

EACEA general comments: Narrative part and structure of the EMMC – pay attention that every single part (its content) is in coherence with the content of the other parts. Otherwise it can have a negative affect on the assessment. Also pay attention to the endorsement letters (show what the partner will bring into the project, not only that they are willing to join the project). Also added value of the course should be shown in the application. The beginning of the application is important, as well as the summary („first impression“). Expert is not obliged to see/check the annexes, so put the important information into the application. The annexes are used only as the additional information (e.g. put there a proof that the degree is officially recognized – but that should be already mentioned in the application)

Q: Who are the evaluators and how the process looks like?

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EACEA: At the Agency's webpage you can find the call for the experts and the manual for the assessment. All academics, researchers, administrative staff of the HEIs can apply for being the experts. There will be 60 experts in this Call. Structure of valuation process: 2 experts, who do not know each other, assess each application. If their notes are coherent – it is ok, if not – the Agency looks, why they are not coherent. If the experts can not get to the coherent notes, 3rd expert will assess the application.

EM NS: Somebody should read your application before you submit it

EACEA: The quality of the proposal is crucial and not the topic of the proposal. There are no preferences regarding the topic, there are only subject area, where the projects will be grouped in.

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