

EMAP 2 / ERASMUS MUNDUS ACTIVE PARTICIPATION Vol. 2

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM THE TRAINING SEMINAR IN SLOVENIA 1 – 4 FEBRUARY 2012

Q = question

A = answer

EM = Erasmus Mundus

EMMC = Erasmus Mundus Master Course

EC = European Commission

HEI = higher education institution

EACEA = Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency

Q: Are there any regulations concerning the assessment of students?

A: You will receive them when you are selected. In the application form describe your approach to student selection. You need a ranking list for category A and category B students. You can choose max.2 students of the same nationality. Establish a reserve lists. A tip - ask for a copy of students' passports when they are applying.

Q: What exactly do participation costs cover?

A: Participation costs are more than just tuition fees. You should not make differences between students of the same category, no matter if they get a scholarship or they are self-funders.

Q: How do we calculate the participation costs?

A: Each of your institutions has a different system for calculating the costs, but you need to think of all costs related to the running of the master, e.g. health insurance, fees to the student association, the university library, laboratories and most importantly assistance in obtaining visa. All these costs have to be detailed in the application form.

Q: Do we have to provide a proof of recognition of the degree in the participating countries?

A: You need to state that your institutions are authorized to issue the diploma at the respective level and in the discipline. The course has to be recognized in each participating

European country by the enrolment of the first edition of students, however, it is preferable if it is already done at the application stage.

Q: Do experts assessing the applications see the assessment of the proposals from the previous year if they are re-applying?

A: Yes, after the independent assessment phase (in order to assure their objectivity and impartiality) they receive the evaluation reports from the previous selection round.

Q: What is the motivation factor for associated partners to be involved in the EM courses?

A: For HEIs there are several benefits following from the cooperation: international networking, exchange of students and teachers, enhancing quality through exchange of ideas. For enterprises the main benefit is the chance to receive highly qualified future employees bringing innovation and the possibility to test them in advance at low cost. Of course these days it is getting more and more difficult because less funds are available. However, through the EMMC consortia they have access to other world-wide projects and they can boost their internationalization.

Q: Is it reasonable to have the same subjects taught in all partner universities in the first semester?

A: The different universities can be attractive to third country students from the language point of view – they can choose the location according to their linguistic preferences. In the following semesters they change the location.

Q (to one of the project representatives): Is your Quality Assurance system certified by an external organization, e.g. ISO?

A: No. The awarded degree is accredited by national authorities. We prefer informal external evaluators who understand our field.

Q (to one of the project representatives): How many students do you have per edition?

A: 35 – 40. We do not recommend to have more than 100 students enrolled because it would cause capacity problems.

Various remarks from the Helpdesk session

- Preparation of a renewal is possible in the year when the last edition of students is being selected.
- There are no thematic priorities in EM, courses in any field or discipline can be submitted.
- Joint degree is not mandatory and not a reason for rejection. In the application form you declare that all national degrees are recognized and attach a letter proving the intention of the whole consortium to issue a joint diploma as soon as the respective national requirements enable it, list the current requirements for each participating country.
- Third country HEIs involved as full partners can but don't have to be degree-awarding institutions, this obligation relates to European HEIs only.
- In case of double or multiple degrees a joint diploma supplement is recommended.
- In order to benefit from the already running EMMC you need to evaluate it and on the basis of the evaluation highlight the strengths and explain the weaknesses of the course. In the application you propose changes. It is important to write the application as thoroughly as if it were a new proposal.
- The target group of EMMCs are mainly pre-bachelor students, specify the disciplines/study fields where the students are supposed to come from, list examples of professions/jobs for which the courses produce future employees.
- Selection of students is mainly based on their motivation letters, once they fulfill the basic requirements.
- A tip for third country students – sub-delegate a family member to be able to arrange formalities with national authorities on your behalf once you have left for Europe (e.g. in case a transcript of criminal record not older than six months is required by a European country).
- A tip for the consortium – once the students are selected, send letters to embassies in the third countries where the enrolled students come from in order to inform them of the purpose of the students' visa requests.
- For sustainability sake start reducing the number of scholarships and increasing the number of self-funders or other funding resources each edition.

- Fee waivers are one of the means for attracting self-funders.
- Contracts with enterprises can bring a couple of scholarships each year.
- There has to be a different marketing strategy towards EU and non-EU students, because EU students tend to participate without scholarships more easily.
- The key to sustainability is to attract sources of funding through: 1. offering a master programme of high quality and excellence and 2. running an efficient marketing strategy.
- In the application you need to prove the need for the master, interest of companies, NGOs and other potential employers. If they participate as associated partners, their role must be clearly defined (e.g. internships). Their active involvement promises future sustainability of the master course.
- The role of the associated partners should be precisely described in the attached letters of endorsement. These roles are later confirmed in an agreement among the full partners and the associated partners (not framework agreements between individual HEIs and associated partners).
- Examples of student agreements and consortium agreements are to be found on the website of the EACEA.
- In the participation costs breakdown you need to differentiate the needs of European and third country students (the organisation costs related to third country students are usually higher than those of European students).
- The total budget should be divided among the consortium members according to a formula agreed by all, e.g. taking into account the number of ECTS credits awarded by each HEI.
- The website of the master course needs a domain separate from the websites of the participating institutions, it ensures a better visibility, leads to a corporate identity of the programme and makes the management of the website easier.
- Academic quality of the proposal represents only 30% of the total score under the award criteria, the remaining 70% are related to practical aspects.
- Provision of at least 2 European languages can have the form of classes or theses in a language different from the main language of tuition or simply of language courses

offered to students, whereas in the latter case these courses should be integrated in the curriculum and recognized with ECTS credits.

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