

Assessment Report
on the Joint Master's Programme
Maritime Management (M.Sc.)



Submitted by: University of Zadar (Croatia), University of Ljubljana (Slovenia), Flensburg University of Applied Science (Germany)
following the
European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes

16. Meeting of the ZEV A Commission on 12 July 2022

| Study Programme | Joint Degree | ECTS | Programme Duration | Type of Programme | Annual Intake Capacity |
|---|-------------------|------|--------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| International Master in Maritime Management (I3M) | Master of Science | 120 | 2 years | full time | 25 |

Self-report submitted on: 08 February, 2022

Date of virtual site visit: 07 March, 2022

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I. Outcomes of the Review Process and Accreditation Decision

1. Accreditation Decision of the ZEvA Commission

Based on the experts' report and recommendations, and in due consideration of the written response and submitted revisions of the self-report of the Maritime Management consortium, the ZEvA Commission accredits the Joint Master's programme

"Maritime Management" (M.Sc.)

offered by the Flensburg University of Applied Sciences (Germany) in cooperation with the University of Zadar (Croatia) and the University of Ljubljana (Slovenia)

without conditions for a period of six years until September 30, 2028.

The accreditation is based on the standards and criteria stipulated in the European Approach for the Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes.

2. Central Outcomes of the Assessment and Final Vote of the Expert Panel

2.1 Summary of the Experts' Findings

The expert group finds the Master degree programme to be well designed and clearly oriented towards the requirements of the market. The three partners University of Zadar (Croatia), University of Ljubljana (Slovenia) and Flensburg University of Applied Science (Germany) have been contributed new perspectives and up-to-date ideas to the curriculum. In addition, the partners seem to complement each other well.

It is in the nature of a study programme like "Maritime Management" that a multitude of topics and methods needs to be addressed, nevertheless the programme still follows a clear joint structure, providing both a broad range of theoretical and practical perspectives, and even leaves some room for individual specialization. All participating universities are actively involved in the joint design and delivery of the programme. At all study places, it can be expected that students will be adequately supported because experiences with and structures in welcoming international students are well established and documented. The special mobility needs of the students are accounted for at all levels.

The experts found some room for optimization as regards e.g. admission and the transparency and consistency of course descriptions. The universities responded very constructively and submitted revised and improved documents that addressed all issues and recommendations made by the experts.

2.2 Recommendations for Enhancement

Most recommendations were already considered during the revision of documents. Still, the expert group recommends the following:

- The consortium is encouraged to document more transparently where and how "a sense of entrepreneurship" is conveyed.

2.3 Final Vote of the Expert Panel

The expert panel recommends the Joint Master's programme "Maritime Management" (M.Sc.) for accreditation. In accordance with the stipulations of the European Approach for the Quality Assurance of Joint Study Programmes, accreditation is recommended for a period of six years.

II. Assessment Report of the Expert Panel

1. Purpose, Design and Context of the Assessment Procedure

In August 2021, ZEvA Hannover received the mandate from the University of Applied Sciences in Flensburg to conduct an external quality assessment of the Joint Master's programme "International Master in Maritime Management" (I3M). Beforehand the different parties had been in discussions for several months. Prior to the start of the review procedure, the German Accreditation Council (*Akkreditierungsrat*) was officially notified by Flensburg University of Applied Sciences on August 19th, 2021 as stipulated in § 33 of the German "*Musterrechtsverordnung*".

The accreditation decision by the ZEvA commission (ZEKo) is expected to be taken on the 12th of July, 2022. The decision is based on a self-report including annexes drawn up by the three cooperating universities. The report contains information on the national requirements and formalities on offering master degree programmes at universities. The report was submitted at the beginning of February 2022. In fact, a first draft report was submitted to the agency several months in advance for a preliminary assessment. The agency commented the report in regard to the quality and completeness of the documents. The Universities used the comments to further improve their self-report. The self-report adequately points out the specific characteristics of a joint degree programme.

A virtual site visit took place on the 7th of March 2022. A preparatory meeting took place on the 4th of March. The prep-meeting addressed not only the schedule and procedure of the on-site assessment, the allocation of tasks among the experts and the questions on the self-report and documentation but specifically the role of the panel group and the standards and criteria to be assessed in joint programmes. Before that, all panel members had received written background information on the European Approach as well as further documents and templates for their assistance from the agency.

The consortium jointly submitted a self-evaluation report in English language, which contained extensive information about all partner institutions and their respective national frameworks, as well as an appendix of relevant documents (contracts, regulations for student assessment, selection and admission, CVs of core faculty, information material for students, course handbooks/module descriptions, etc.). The self-report was forwarded to the experts for desktop validation one month before the site visit took place.

At the end of the virtual site visit a feedback on strengths and weaknesses of the programme was provided by the panel group to the university representatives. It was jointly agreed (consortium and expert group) that some preliminary results of the site visit were provided as basis for the university consortium to further improve the programme and the self-report. The revision addressed in particular aspects of admission (level of language qualification and type of bachelor degrees to be admitted), the revision of the course/module catalogue and more generally, aspects of transparency, consistency and the correction of easy mistakes.

The self-report including the annexes was re-submitted the 24th of May 2022 and forms the basis for this accreditation report.

During the planning phase of the site-visit in autumn 2021, travel possibilities continued to be unpredictable due to Covid-19, hence a virtual site-visit was planned. This ensured from the outset that all required university representatives of the three partners as well as the international expert group could participate in the procedure without any restrictions. Among others, detailed descriptions of the existing infrastructure at the three locations compensated for the lack of a "real" on-site experience.

This resulting final report considers the requirements for joint programmes (Parts 2 and 3 of the German Study Accreditation Regulation, MRVO). It is meant to serve as a basis for the ZEvA accreditation decision and, where applicable, as a reference document for the recognition of this decision by the responsible national bodies, including the German Accreditation Council.

2. Panel of Experts

In all external quality assurance procedures, ZEvA applies the peer review principle. The expert group of this procedure includes two experts from academia, one from professional practice and one student. Accordingly, the panel of this procedure adequately represents expertise in the relevant disciplines, the labour market/world of work in the relevant field(s), and expertise in quality assurance in higher education. Experts are carefully selected based on the areas of expertise that have to be covered in the expert group. The panel includes members from all three participating countries involved in the consortium. Additional criteria to be considered are (among others) experience with quality assurance procedures and gender diversity. Upon proposal of the project officer in charge, the panel was approved by the ZEvA Commission and by the consortium.

Besides the criteria mentioned above, panel members must be independent and impartial. ZEvA closes contractual agreements with experts which include a code of conduct and a manual detailing their task and cooperation with the agency. Through these contracts, ZEvA ensures their impartiality. The following criteria for conflict of interest are applied throughout:

- Family ties or personal relations or conflicts.
- Teaching positions (also as external lecturer or guest professor) at the university to be assessed within the last 3 years or in the foreseeable future.
- Participation in on-going or recently completed appointment procedures at the university to be assessed.
- Participation of members of the university to be assessed in recent assessments of the experts' university.
- Personal or shared economic interest in the accreditation.
- Direct competition of the university to be assessed with the expert's projects or programmes.
- Close cooperation (e.g., conjoint research projects or other close collaboration) within the last 3 years.

- Current or recent enrolment as a student at the university to be assessed.

In all procedures, the HEI can object to the composition of the expert group but has no explicit vetoing right. Objections can be based either on conflicts of interest or in-sufficient expertise for the subject matter to be assessed. In this procedure the expert group was presented to the HEIs and no objections were raised.

The composition of the expert group is as follows:

Representation of academia:

Ms Prof. Dr. Ilknur Colmorn, Professor of Maritime Navigation and Digitalisation, Hochschule Bremen/City University of Applied Sciences, Director of International Degree Programme in Ship Management Nautical Sciences

Mr. Prof. Srdjan Vujicic (Ph.D.), Head of Maritime Department, ass. Prof. Transport and STCW (among others), University of Dubrovnik, Croatia

Representation of professional practice:

Mr. Vladimir Vladovic, Head Harbour Master's Office, Ministry of Infrastructure, Slovenian Maritime Administration

Student Representative:

Ms Sophie Skarupa, Student of Industrial Engineering (B.Sc./M.Sc.) at Karlsruher Institut für Technologie, Karlsruhe/Germany

3. Introduction: The Study Programme at a Glance

The joint programme "International Master in Maritime Management" is expected to be launched in autumn 2022. The programme has all the required features of a joint program, which are (compare consortium agreement in annex 1):

- integrated curriculum,
- a share of studies at one or more foreign higher education institutions of generally at least 25 percent,
- contractually regulated cooperation,
- coordinated admission and examination procedures, and
- joint quality assurance.

According to the information given on the website <http://i3m.unizd.hr/> the programme is designed as a continuation of undergraduate nautical and marine engineering programmes (but access is also possible for graduates of other related bachelor programmes), with the objective to prepare students for employment positions in shipping companies, maritime administration, maritime agencies, ports, maritime education institutions and other organisations which are directly or indirectly connected with maritime business.

Within a period of two years, all students enrol at all three partner universities (one semester at each institution). Students start at the University of Zadar, continue the second semester at the University of Ljubljana, move to Flensburg University of Applied Science for the 3rd semester and absolve their Master Module in the 4th semester at the university of their choice.

The total number of ECTS credits awarded is 120. The language of instruction in the degree programme shall be English, the Master of Science will be jointly awarded by the three partner universities. The participation (tuition) fee is 2,500 € per semester.

4. Quality Assessment of the Study Programme

4.1 Eligibility

4.1.1 Status

The institutions that offer a joint programme should be recognised as higher education institutions by the relevant authorities of their countries. Their respective national legal frameworks should enable them to participate in the joint programme and, if applicable, to award a joint degree. The institutions awarding the degree(s) should ensure that the degree(s) belong to the higher education degree systems of the countries in which they are based.

All the partner countries (Croatia, Germany, Slovenia) belong to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and their National Qualification Frameworks are referenced to the European Qualification Framework (EQF). In addition to that, the quality assurance agencies in all the partner countries are registered in the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) and the quality assurance procedures are fully in accordance with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA. Finally, the participating universities guaranteed beforehand that the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Studies is applicable in all partner countries.

The consortium consists of three higher education institutions active in the field of maritime studies, one in Croatia (University of Zadar), one in Germany (Flensburg University of Applied Sciences) and one in Slovenia (University of Ljubljana – Faculty of Maritime Studies and Transport in Portorož). They are all public state universities.

Each Partner Institution ensures that the Joint Programme is correctly registered and implemented as a Joint degree master programme for 120 ECTS according to their national jurisdiction. The partners have agreed to inform each other duly on any changes regarding the accreditation status of the programme. The partner institutions jointly award a “Master of Science” in maritime management (Self Report, chapter 1.1).

All awarded degrees are clearly associated with the second cycle of qualifications in the Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area (Master's level) as stipulated in the Diploma Supplement. The Diploma Supplement provides the details of the degree, also in relation to the national legislations of the three participating partner countries.

Experts' Appraisal

The experts have no doubt whatsoever that the members of the consortium and the degree they award fulfil all formal requirements of the European Approach.

The consortium members contacted their respective ministries and/or agencies at an early stage of the procedure to assure the fulfilment of formal requirements according to the European Approach as described in the self-report. The University of Applied Science Flensburg informed the German Accreditation Council by email about the accreditation of the Joint Programme „Maritime Management” according to the “European Approach” on the 19th of August 2021.

Therefore, it can be safely assumed without further proof that the degrees awarded by the partner universities are in accordance with national legislative demands and are therefore fully recognized in the respective countries in which the universities are located.

The experts regard the standard as fulfilled.

4.1.2 Joint Design and Delivery

The joint programme should be offered jointly, involving all cooperating institutions in the design and delivery of the programme.

It has become clear in the course of the assessment procedure that the Master's programme is a joint endeavour of all participating partner universities which could not be realized in this form by any of the partners on their own. The consortium has developed convincing and functional procedures for the joint management and delivery of the programme, including joint committees for management, student selection and admission as well as examination (laid down in the consortium agreement and the study regulations). Also, the student support measures are thoughtfully elaborated and distributed among the partners.

The start of the programme development was the call of the Croatian Ministry on "Internationalization of Blue Education" which resulted in the initiative of an international project at the University of Zadar (BE UNIZD) funded by the European Social Fund, Operational Programme Efficient Human Potentials. The programme development included a survey on future employers. It became clear that a master degree is of less importance for employment on ships than for employment ashore. Accordingly, one consequence drawn from the survey was to add a substantial management part to the programme to increase the range of employment opportunities.

The added value of this joint degree programme is the international experience and mobility offered to students. In addition, all three partners admitted that none of them would have been capable to offer such a master programme alone. This international programme became possible only by cumulating the resources of the three participating institutions. The joint delivery is obvious because students have to study in a consecutive manner at all three participating HEIs. Only for the fourth semester students can choose where they want to finish their studies.

The programme development phase included three meetings that took place at all three partner universities. Hence, professors from all three universities participated not only in the delivery, but already in the planning phase of the programme.

Experts' Appraisal

The joint design and (future) delivery of the programme can be confirmed by the experts. All students have to study one semester at every participating university. The added value of this joint degree programme is twofold:

- students gain international experience by studying at three different HEIs and studying in an internationally composed group. This international experience matches the requirements of the maritime industry very well.
- the HEIs can offer a Master degree programme together which they could not have offered individually due to a lack of resources that are necessary to cover the wide field of maritime management. Within the scope of the programme, the HEIs complement each other with their profiles and resources.

The study programme is well designed and covers the requirements of the maritime industry. A continuous close exchange between the partners is warranted, as was also demonstrated in the course of the virtual site visit.

The experts regard the standard as fulfilled.

4.1.3 Cooperation Agreement

The terms and conditions of the joint programme should be laid down in a cooperation agreement. The agreement should in particular cover the following issues:

- *Denomination of the degree(s) awarded in the programme*
- *Coordination and responsibilities of the partners involved regarding management and financial organisation (including funding, sharing of costs and income etc.)*
- *Admission and selection procedures for students*
- *Mobility of students and teachers*
- *Examination regulations, student assessment methods, recognition of credits and degree awarding procedures in the consortium.*

The terms and conditions of the joint Master's programme in Maritime Management are stipulated in a Consortium Agreement (see annex 1). The agreement was signed in April 2021.

The degree awarded in the study programme is already denominated in the introduction of the consortium agreement. The overall coordination and responsibilities of the partners involved regarding the management and organisation of the programme are covered under Article 5 "Programme Governance" and Article 6 "Programme". One important aspect is the establishment of a management committee that is comprised of the appointed institutional coordinators of the three partners.

Financial aspects including funding, sharing of costs and income etc. are described in Article 12 "Financial Management". The admission and selection procedures for students are regulated under Article 7 Student Administration. Further details are provided in the joint study regulations (Annex 2, article 3). Mobility of teachers is described under Article 8.2 and information on the mobility of students can be found under Article 6.2 "Semester structure and mobility paths". Further details concerning semester structure and student mobility are given in the Study Regulations (Annex 2, article 5), which also regulate the applied methods of student assessment, grading, the recognition of credits and the degree awarding procedure. The module handbook provides further information on the details of student assessment and

grading at the level of the individual educational units.

All issues regarding the master thesis are laid down under Article 8 of the Study Regulations "Master thesis research project", including supervision, assessment and grading. Nevertheless, assessment methods and criteria for the thesis research project must comply with the rules and regulations applicable at the partner institution at which the student is enrolled in the 4th semester. Also, attendance during course-related activities (e.g. classes and excursions) is compulsory unless this contradicts the local rules of partner institutions.

Progression rules are outlined under article 7.2 "Compulsory order of examinations" whereas the repetition of failed exams is regulated under 7.6 "Resits and re-assessments".

Experts' Appraisal

The experts conclude that the consortium has thoughtfully regulated all central issues regarding the joint management and coordination of the study programme in its consortium agreement and in the supplementary documents and agreements – in particular in the joint Study Regulations. The roles and responsibilities of all partners are laid out clearly, and there are binding regulations on all central formal aspects as, for example, the awarding of degrees. The experts also appreciate the possibility of including additional partners into the consortium as explained under article 14.3 of the consortium agreement.

An overview of the curriculum, the study regulations, the course catalogue as well as the student guide that includes all details on admissions can be found on the programme website (<http://i3m.unizd.hr>). All information is available in English.

From the experts' point of view, the agreements underlying the study programme in Maritime Management fully satisfy the requirements of the European Approach.

The experts regard the standard as fulfilled.

4.2 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

4.2.1 Level

The intended learning outcomes should align with the corresponding level in the Framework for Qualifications in the European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA), as well as the applicable national qualifications framework(s).

The mission and the intended learning outcomes of the programme are published on its website. They are also made transparent in the Diploma Supplement and in the Study Regulations, where they are described in Article 6.1. The following ILOs are listed at the beginning of the course descriptions:

- *be able to make informed and responsible decisions regarding environmental protection*
- *be able to understand and apply state of the art ship technology which can influence the development of a shipping company*

- *understand the factors that influence the management and selection of human resources*
- *be able to understand the ship energy systems and to optimize the ship propulsion operations*
- *be able to evaluate and use the maritime transport data as a fundament for decision making*
- *understand the IT elements and apply IT based solutions in management*
- *be able to analyse and synthesize the complexity of the port and transport systems in the light of contemporary technologies*
- *understand the implication of law in the maritime supply chain and in environmental aspects, and provide solutions*
- *be able to adjust shipping company organization structure to the surrounding conditions and the market requirements*
- *understand the economics of maritime business and interpret financial and budget statements to support managerial decisions*
- *be able to communicate effectively in a multi-cultural environment*
- *use acquired knowledge and technological skills to identify and solve problems, generating new ideas related to the field of study*
- *be able to critically discuss the mechanisms that underlie digital and industrial transformations and technical changes as well as their implications on development and society*
- *be able to evaluate theoretical and applicative concepts and current research from the field of data science and machine learning for dealing with industrial engineering and management problems*
- *be able to recognize the capabilities and challenges of data science and machine learning models and systems.*

All partners have committed themselves to the intended learning outcomes of the programme as part of the Partnership and Consortium Agreement.

It is explained in the Diploma Supplement that the qualifications and learning outcomes of the programme are mainly designed to reflect level 7 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the second cycle qualification according to the FQ-EHEA. The corresponding level of the Croatian Qualifications Framework (CQF (kvalifikacije.hr)) is level 7.1, the corresponding level of the Slovenian Qualifications Framework (Slovensko ogrodje kvalifikacij | Enotni sistem kvalifikacij v Republiki Sloveniji (nok.si)) is level 8, and the corresponding level of the German Qualifications Framework (The DQR - Deutscher Qualifikationsrahmen) is level 7.

The programme on maritime management correctly belongs to the so-called second cycle which is obtained following a first (Bachelor) degree. Having successfully completed an additional (Master) study programme with 60-120 ECTS credits students finish the 2nd cycle. In this case, after successful completion of the programme additional 120 ECTS credits are obtained.

Experts' Appraisal

The experts assert that the intended learning outcomes of the programme are fully in line with the Master's level as described by the Framework for Qualifications in the European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA) and the respective national qualifications frameworks deriving from it. Also, they are compliant with Level 7 of the European Qualification Frame-

work (EQF).

The ILOs can be also found in the Diploma Supplement and on the programme website.

The experts regard the standard as *fulfilled*.

4.2.2 Disciplinary field

The intended learning outcomes should comprise knowledge, skills, and competencies in the respective disciplinary field(s).

The academic programme, the learning outcomes, the mandatory and optional courses and the mobility paths opened by the consortium are described in the Study Regulations.

As drawn out in the ILOs, the study programme takes a multidisciplinary approach to the central topic of maritime management, uniting topics as navigation, ship technology, environmental management, economics, transport, IT and law. Different perspectives, theories, methods and techniques are imparted. Each partner institution contributes its specific strengths to the programme, depending on its general profile in teaching and research.

Knowledge and technological skills are complemented by soft skills as negotiation skills, communication, social and civic competences as well as advanced English skills. All consortium partners have practice partners, as e.g. shipping companies. Especially the case study approach in the project conducted in the 3rd semester also involves practice partners from maritime business. Throughout the curriculum the partners ensure that the focus is both on imparting knowledge and on knowledge application – also by means of regular excursions – to comply with the practical demands of this discipline.

Experts' Appraisal

By and large, all central elements of the FQ-EHEA are clearly reflected in the ILOs of the Master's programme in Maritime Management: these include the acquisition of specialized knowledge in a complex and multidisciplinary field, as well as the enhancement of the students' analytical and problem-solving capacities, leading to an overall management competence in the maritime field.

The ILO *"being able to analyse and synthesize the complexity of the port and transport systems in the light of contemporary technologies"* is a good example how students gain the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity.

Taking the following ILO as example *"be able to understand the ship energy systems and to optimize the ship propulsion operations"* it is evident that it covers generation of knowledge and the application of skills as well.

Acquisition of communication skills, e.g. by communicating effectively in a multi-cultural environment is of special importance for the maritime labour market, and it is depicted as an integral part of the ILOs. There is no doubt that the acquired skills and competences support the learning skills of students as such and hereby enable them to continue to study in a

manner that is largely self-directed.

The experts find the ILOs also well-suited to the special profile of the study programme. The applied research orientation especially of the master module and the overall multidisciplinary approach of the programme are clearly recognizable in the ILOs and are also drawn out in the online descriptions of the programme. The programme covers a wide range of maritime topics which corresponds to the wide range of job opportunities and demands.

The experts regard the standard as *fulfilled*.

4.2.3 Achievement

The programme should be able to demonstrate that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.

The programme has not yet started; therefore, no results on the achievement can be presented.

The descriptions of the self-report focus on measuring the achievement of ILOs by monitoring primarily the thesis defenses, where students can expect general questions regarding the learning outcomes at the programme level, in addition to the specific questions related to the master thesis. In addition to that, the achievement of the Intended Learning Outcomes will be also monitored through alumni reports and feedback from the industry employing the graduates (compare chapter 4. 9 Quality Assurance).

Experts' Appraisal

The statements on how the consortium intends to measure the achievement of ILOs are plausible and sufficiently elaborated.

The experts regard the standard as *fulfilled*.

4.2.4 Regulated Professions

If relevant for the specific joint programme, the minimum agreed training conditions specified in the European Union Directive 2005/36/EC, or relevant common trainings frameworks established under the Directive, should be taken into account.

Not applicable.

4.3 Study Programme

4.3.1 Curriculum

The structure and content of the curriculum should be fit to enable the students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

The study structure is as following:



**At the end of the 3rd semester, each student will choose the Partner Institution at which he or she wants to conduct the master thesis research project. The student will then be enrolled into the 4th semester at the chosen Partner institution, which will then appoint the thesis supervisor for the student, in accordance with the regulations and procedures in place at the Partner Institution.*

The Joint Programme consists of the following courses:

| Semester 1 (University of Zadar) | |
|--|-------------|
| Course title | ECTS |
| Maritime contracting | 5 |
| Ship energy efficiency and optimization | 5 |
| Management of shipping companies | 5 |
| Management information systems | 5 |
| Data science and machine learning applications in management | 5 |
| Crisis management in shipping (optional)* | 5 |
| Introduction to confined water safety of Navigation (optional)* | 5 |

*one of the two optional modules must be chosen

| Semester 2 (Maritime Faculty Portorož) | |
|---|-------------|
| Course title | ECTS |
| Modelling and simulation | 6 |
| Maritime logistics | 6 |
| Finances and accounting in maritime business | 6 |
| Coastal engineering | 6 |
| Maritime safety and risk management | 6 |

| Semester 3 (University of Applied Sciences Flensburg) | |
|--|-------------|
| Course title | ECTS |
| Legal Conflicts in Shipping | 6 |

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| Marine engineering and environmental protection | | 6 |
| Water Management aboard Ships | | 6 |
| Optional courses (altogether 12 credits need to be obtained) | | |
| MODULE 1 | Research Project in Marketing | 12 |
| MODULE 2 | Simulation | 6 |
| | Supply chain management fundamentals | 6 |
| MODULE 3 | Advanced planning and control | 6 |
| | Business Valuation | 6 |

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Semester 4 | |
| Master thesis research project | 30 ECTS |

As all students will spend one semester in each of the partner institutions, the curricular structure is very simple. The options for the students to choose their individual learning paths are therefore limited to optional modules in semester 1 and 3 and the 4th semester, but the clear structure makes their learning progress very obvious and in addition they benefit from the international environment despite having a stable cohort composition and their exposure to diverse educational experiences.

All in all, 20 modules are offered over the 4 semesters (including optional modules). In the beginning of the course catalogue (Annex 6) a table demonstrates the alignment of ILOs and modules.

Experts' Appraisal

The experts regard the developed study structure and the study content as appropriate for a joint programme in maritime management at master level. The desire of the consortium to provide students with theoretical knowledge within the maritime area as well as in the area of management can be accomplished with the presented study structure and content of the programme. The programme consortium is bringing in its individual strengths and complement each other well. The virtual talks have shown that the partner universities and lecturers are well prepared for hosting international student cohorts and the Bachelor students who participated in the virtual talks confirmed the attractiveness of this programme for further study.

It can be concluded that the variety of modules and topics defined in the curriculum support well the achievement of the ILOs mentioned under chapter 4.2. E.g. the ILO "...*understand the implication of law in the maritime supply chain and in environmental aspects, and provide solutions*" is directly supported by the modules "Maritime Contracting" in semester one and "Legal Conflicts in Shipping" in semester three. Another example is provided by several modules as "Maritime Contracting", "Ship energy efficiency and optimization", "Mathematical modelling and simulations", "Maritime logistics", "Marine engineering and environmental protection" and "Water Management aboard Ships" that all contribute to achieving the ILO "*being able to make informed and responsible decisions regarding environmental protection*".

The experts have come to the overall conclusion that the curricular structure is well-aligned with the intended learning outcomes, encompassing theory, applied knowledge and methods training to increasing disciplinary specialization. Whereas at the beginning discussions arose on topics as why e.g. a module on “Water Management aboard Ships” is taught as compulsory module, the explanations given during the virtual talks were satisfying. In this case this module has to be seen in the context of the curriculum development which was funded as project within the scope of the programme “Internationalization of the Blue Education” at the University of Zadar (BE UNIZD) funded by the European Social Fund, Operational Programme Efficient Human Potentials. Here, special emphasis was also on environmental issues. Overall, the offered content of the curriculum is fit to enable the students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

From the experts' point of view, the curriculum is well-balanced, covering a broad range of perspectives while still imparting in-depth knowledge and research skills as appropriate for a Master's programme. It is appreciated that the 3rd semester offers the possibility of elective modules that students can develop their personal profile to a certain extent. The expert group appreciates that the consortium picked up the recommendation of an additional possibility to choose among two optional modules in the first semester.

In the course of the two years of study, particular attention is given to the Master's thesis, which is in line with research-practise-orientation reflected in the ILOs. Based on the thesis research project, the student is required to write the master thesis, which will be assessed by a panel consisting of at least three members, appointed by the relevant body of the Partner Institution at which the student is enrolled in the 4th semester. The panel will include the thesis research project supervisor and at least one member from another Partner Institution. This joint supervision of the final thesis is highly appreciated. After the thesis is approved by the panel, the student will give an oral presentation to the same panel, defending the thesis. The panel will assess the presentation and award a grade for the thesis and the presentation. Appointment of the thesis supervisor, supervision, assessment and defence of the thesis will be conducted in line with the master thesis regulations of the Partner Institution at which the student is enrolled in the 4th semester, as described in the Study Regulations.

Due to these different requirements and guidelines for the thesis the consortium refrained from integrating additional teaching content on academic writing. The consortium argued that the general requirements of academic writing will be considered and further trained already in all modules that e.g. request seminar papers as type of examination.

The expert group identified only one aspect that could be controversially discussed. As “Entrepreneurship” is mentioned as resulting key skill in several modules (e.g. Ship energy efficiency and Optimization, Management of Shipping, Data science and machine learning applications in Management) it would be desirable to better document in the curriculum where and how “a sense of entrepreneurship” is conveyed.

The experts are overall in no doubt that the students also acquire advanced soft skills throughout the programme, both in the context of group work during seminars and projects but also because of high organisational demands to organise the mobility, communicate and study in a foreign and international environment and get along in foreign countries.

The experts regard the standard as *fulfilled*.

Recommendations for further development:

- The consortium is encouraged to better document where and how “a sense of entrepreneurship” is conveyed.

4.3.2 Credits

The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) should be applied properly and the distribution of credits should be clear.

As already described above, the consortium has created a basic structure or “standard curriculum” for the programme to which all degree-awarding partners adhere. The ECTS is applied throughout the programme. Each partner university awards 30 ECTS credits per semester. All compulsory and elective classes offered within this structure are fully credited, provided the intended learning outcomes are achieved. The workload per credit differs between the partners, but always remains in between 25 to 30 hours per credit.

The programme is broken down into educational components which consist at every partner university of several modules. Learning outcomes and their forms of assessment are defined for each educational component including the Master Module in semester four which is composed of the thesis research project, the master thesis itself and the oral presentation (defence). Altogether 30 ECTS are provided for the components of the master module. The size of the other modules ranges between 5 to 12 ECTS.

The distribution of credits at all universities is made transparent by means of a survey table and in the course handbooks of the partner universities. In addition to the ILOs the course descriptions also outline the thematic contents of each curricular component, as well as the applied methods of teaching and assessment and the estimated average student workload.

The study regulations contain a grade conversion table which increases transparency because students get their grades in percentages and according to the national legislation. Discussions have shown that for correct conversion of German grades the so-called “Bavarian Formula” is used which is more detailed than the conversion depicted in the conversion table (see chapter 4.5). No ECTS are awarded for components for which the student has obtained a grade below a pass mark.

Experts' Appraisal

The experts find that the ECTS is applied consistently throughout the study programme. The distribution of credits across the four semesters is clear. No module is smaller than five credits and in each semester 30 credits will be gained. Therefore, a good studiability and an adequate examination load seem to be guaranteed.

The expert group acknowledges the efforts of the consortium to agree on a common hourly basis for providing an ECTS. Intended learning outcomes have been defined for each educational component. Credits are awarded if students can demonstrate that they have achieved

the ILOs. The course descriptions provided are in line with the recommendations of the ECTS Users' Guide and it is obvious that they underwent a common editing which is highly appreciated.

The experts regard the standard as fulfilled.

4.3.3 Workload

A joint bachelor programme will typically amount to a total student workload of 180-240 ECTS-credits; a joint master programme will typically amount to 90-120 ECTS-credits and should not be less than 60 ECTS-credits at second cycle level (credit ranges according to the FQ-EHEA); for joint doctorates there is no credit range specified.

The workload and the average time to complete the programme should be monitored.

As outlined above, the joint Master's programme in Maritime Management awards a total of 120 ECTS credits (60 ECTS credits per year). 1 ECTS point is provided on the basis of an average workload of 25 to 30 hours which equals a maximum average annual student workload of 1.800 hours.

The student workload will be continuously monitored. Draft evaluation sheets for course evaluation can be found in annex 9 of the self-report. Course evaluations are carried out by the partner universities. Students may also directly approach the local institutional coordinators about problems concerning workload.

Evaluation results and possible measures for improvement are supposed to be regularly discussed in the Programme Committee which will be responsible for the evaluation and quality assurance of the curriculum. The Programme Committee will be composed of one staff member from each of the three partner institutions and the same number of students (see consortium agreement 5.5). The Programme Committee is collecting feedback and will be formulating recommendations for the Management Committee. Ultimately, the responsibility lies with the institutional coordinators to implement measures at the respective partner universities.

Students that participated in the virtual site visit represented maritime and nautical Bachelor degree programmes of the three partner institutions. They reported that generally online-evaluations take place and measures are discussed. Workload as a topic can be raised if it is an issue.

Experts' Appraisal

As regards the average student workload and the number of credits awarded, the Master's programme in Maritime Management is in accordance with the Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area. The provided ECTS and the underlying (estimated) workload seem to be plausible. According to the self-report and the formal documents student workload will continuously monitored especially at the level of the educational compo-

nents. The student handbook refers to conducting student surveys and to the fact that feedback from former students will be gathered but it is advisable – already at this stage of implementing the programme – to elaborate a joint survey e.g. focussing on the first three semesters and in addition developing an alumni questionnaire.

Nevertheless, due to discussions with Bachelor students and the documentation provided by the consortium, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that the programme workload will be feasible for the large majority of students.

The experts regard the standard as fulfilled.

4.4 Admission and Recognition

4.4.1 Admission

The admission requirements and selection procedures should be appropriate in light of the programme's level and discipline.

Admission may be granted to applicants who meet the following minimum joint admission criteria (Consortium Agreement Article 7.1 and Study Regulations Article 3):

- A Bachelor degree in marine engineering or nautical sciences, or similar as: transport technology, logistics, management, law, machine engineering, electrical engineering and information technology.
- Proficiency in English is required, attested by means of an internationally recognised test. Proficiency in English is required at CEFR level B2, proven by means of internationally recognized tests and corresponding test scores (e.g. IELTS, TOEFL, Cambridge Certificate of Advanced English, etc.).

Native English speakers and those that pursued and completed secondary education and/or undergraduate education in an anglophone country are exempted from proving proficiency in English.

Evaluation, selection, and admission of all students to the Joint Programme will be carried out by the Admission Committee, assisted by the Joint Programme Secretary and under the supervision of the Management Committee. The Admission Committee will consist of one representative from each of the Partner Institutions, and will act on mandate from the faculties/departments of the Partner Institutions.

Application to the master programme in Maritime Management is submitted online to the International Master in Maritime Management joint website, and it must include the documents listed:

- Copy of a valid passport
- Certified copy of Diploma or proof of enrolment with expected graduation date
- Curriculum Vitae in English
- Official proof of English language proficiency.

The admissions will be first processed in Zadar where the Programme Secretary, who will be paid through tuition fees, will handle the applications. In cooperation with the Partner Institutions, the Consortium/Programme Secretary will assess the application to check whether it is complete and meets the minimum set of requirements to render the candidate eligible. Eligible applicants will be evaluated according to a weighted assessment using the following criteria, listed here in order of importance:

- Grades in relevant subjects 60%
- Research (incl. degree projects) and relevant job experience 20%
- Motivation letter 10%
- Recommendation letters 10%

This evaluation results in a relative ranking of eligible candidates. Evaluations of application files will be discussed during the selection meeting where the complete admission board will be present. Said evaluations and discussions will result in a ranking of interviewed students. The Admission Committee may decide to conduct certain interviews at the beginning of the selection meeting with all members present simultaneously. Admitted students register and enrol at their First Semester Institution in agreement with the regulations of that Institution and national legal requirements.

The consortium expects especially at the beginning the majority of students from their "own" countries Slovenia, Croatia and Germany. After having started they hope to attract also students from other countries from EU and also non-EU countries especially from Eastern Europe and Turkey.

Experts' Appraisal

The experts regard the admission and selection criteria for the programme as appropriate, both from a formal perspective and in light of the programme's content, intended learning outcomes and the subject disciplines involved. The joint admission and selection procedure seem to be well-described and established. Originally the consortium intended to ask for a C1 level for English as entrance requirement. The expert group convinced the consortium that a B2 level should be sufficient as the English skills itself will increase during study anyway. In addition, a C1 level would have limited the number of potential candidates for the programme even further. Also, the range of Bachelor Degrees which are considered for admission has increased after discussions with the expert group. It became clear that an inter- or multidisciplinary Master programme can be consecutive to a larger number of Bachelor Degrees. Nevertheless, during the course of study it should be closely monitored if admission requirements match the expectations of lecturers and if they are sufficient to achieve the ILOs.

The experts regard the standard as *fulfilled*.

4.4.2 Recognition

Recognition of qualifications and of periods of studies (including recognition of prior learning) should be applied in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention and subsidiary documents.

At a general level the recognition of prior learning is ruled under Article 3.7 of the study regulations:

- a) Should there be a need for the recognition of learning outcomes previously obtained by a candidate through formal, non-formal or informal learning, it will be carried out as a part of the admission procedure. Therefore, the decision will be made by the Admission Committee.*
- b) In the case of the learning outcomes obtained through formal learning, or through non-formal learning based on the STCW convention and followed by the certificates under the provisions of the STCW convention, there will be no need for assessment and the recognition will be based on the certificates issued by the education providers or other authorized bodies.*
- c) In the case of the learning outcomes obtained through any other non-formal learning, or through informal learning, the Admission Committee may require and organize an assessment procedure for the purpose of recognition. The recognition of prior learning is a part of the admission procedure, so the decisions will be made by the Admission Committee and the joint principles are explained in the Study Regulations.*

For recognition between Partner Institutions the study regulations state that “*examinations passed at one of the Partner Institutions as part of the degree programme are fully and automatically recognised by the other Partner Institutions the student attends as part of the I3M programme. Repeat examinations and exemptions as provided for by Partner Institutions will be adhered to. To obtain the degree a student needs to at pass all four semesters and complete ECTS as described in Article 6.2., including the defence of the master thesis*”.

Recognition within the programme is facilitated by the Programme Secretary who is not only in charge for processing admission but also responsible for collecting module grades based on the student ID from each Partner Institution.

Experts' Appraisal

The experts assert that the procedure and regulations for the recognition of qualifications and prior learning are in line with the central principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention. During the site visit it was discussed in how far during the admission process the recognition of prior learning will be part of the process. The Consortium partners convincingly explained the procedure they intend to apply; a recommendation of the expert group was followed up by integrating details of the recognition of prior learning into Article 3.7.b of the Study Regulations. It is now part of the admission procedure and it will be dealt with before the student is enrolled into the programme.

The experts regard the standard as *fulfilled*.

4.5 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

4.5.1 Learning and Teaching

The programme should be designed to correspond with the intended learning outcomes, and the learning and teaching approaches applied should be adequate to achieve those. The diversity of students and their needs should be respected and attended to, especially in view of potential different cultural backgrounds of the students.

Teaching methods in the courses include lectures, tutorials, seminars, exercises, project proposal writing, excursions/field trips, colloquia, placements, research projects and other forms, provided they are aligned with the intended learning outcomes for the respective module. In addition to that, courses may contain one or more practical exercises as part of the teaching and learning process. These exercises are generally assessed by an oral or written assignment, according to the practices and rules applied by the university involved. The course descriptions offer a wide range of teaching forms and as well a good variety of assessment forms. During discussion it became clear that the consortium focuses well a practical approach to teaching which means that in some modules more (shorter) field trips are planned than in the course descriptions mentioned. Especially learning in small groups will help students to get along with the different study conditions. As the size of the cohort is only planned for a maximum of 25 it can be envisaged that a certain group identity will develop especially because they will move together from one place to the other.

Experts' Appraisal

The selected teaching formats are fit to help students achieve the intended learning outcomes, offering a good mixture of traditional and innovative approaches, and sufficient opportunities for theory-based and project-based learning, practise-oriented learning as simulator training and group work. Good conditions are provided for students to significantly enhance both their research skills especially in the 4th semester and during the group project and other working groups the development of their social skills will be supported.

During discussions it was mentioned that originally online teaching elements were not planned. Due to the positive experiences made already before and during the pandemic the consortium considers to integrate online learning elements. The experts encourage to add these elements in favour of a blended learning experience under the condition that the programme profile remains being clearly dominated by physical presence in classes. The experts recommend these blended learning elements in particular to connect students and lecturers at all study places and also for joint supervision of the master thesis.

The discussions with lecturers and the support staff have shown that all processes to welcome international students are already well established because all three universities welcome international student on a regular basis (especially in the context of Erasmus+). This means that also from a didactical viewpoint it is mostly not new for lecturers to teach a diverse student body. It must be also mentioned that the maritime business is "per se" a very international business. Many of the lecturer have been seafarers and probably all of them have international experiences somehow that it can be well assumed that the diversity of

students and their needs will be adequately respected and attended to.

The experts regard the standard as *fulfilled*.

4.5.2 Assessment of Students

The examination regulations and the assessment of the achieved learning outcomes should correspond with the intended learning outcomes. They should be applied consistently among partner institutions.

To ease the use of the syllabus for students and also to provide information and consistency for teachers the joint syllabus commences with an overview and a definition of the teaching and assessment methods used. Following types of assessments can be used: seminar papers, group projects, written exams, oral exams, project reports and presentations. Portfolio assessments may be comprised of several of the assessment types mentioned before. The necessary weighing to obtain an overall module grade is provided in the module descriptions.

The joint study regulations and the course descriptions are the core of the examination regulations. In addition to these regulations, local rules and regulations with regard to assessment methods and criteria may apply for courses followed at a given Partner Institution. These general examination regulations in English form part of the welcome package which students receive at each partner institution. Assessment methods and criteria for the thesis research project are also based on local rules and regulations applicable at the Partner Institution at which the student is enrolled in the 4th semester. Nevertheless, the following assessment methods and criteria should be considered in any case:

- the quality of the written project description and application for the master project;
- the development/progress trajectory of the project during its course (considering the extent to which guidance from the supervisors was required);
- the quality of the presentation of the thesis research project;
- the ethical and societal impact of the thesis research project;
- the quality of the written thesis (main emphasis).
- the critical review of other student's work and the literature used.

All supervisors will use the shared Research Project assessment form in addition to applying local rules and regulations. Upon completion of the thesis research project, the student is required to write the master thesis, which will be assessed by a panel consisting of at least three members, appointed by the relevant body of the Partner Institution at which the student is enrolled in the 4th semester. The panel will include the thesis research project supervisor and at least one member from another Partner Institution. After the thesis is approved by the panel, the student will give an oral presentation to the same panel, defending the thesis. The panel will assess the presentation and award a grade for the thesis and the presentation.

The grading systems in Germany, Slovenia and Croatia are different. The grading systems in Germany and Croatia consist of four passing grades. In Germany, the passing grades are 1 – 4, where 1 is the best and 4 is the worst, while in Croatia it is the other way around, the

passing grades are 2 – 5, where 5 is the best and 2 is the worst. On the other hand, the grading system in Slovenia consists 5 passing grades, 6 – 10, where 10 is the best and 6 is the worst.

In addition to that, the Slovenian and Croatian systems use only integer final grades, i.e. grades of some assessment components can be expressed as decimal numbers of percentages, but the final grade is always an integer. On the other hand, in Germany even the final grades can be decimal numbers. Based on the so-called modified Bavarian formula, the consortium designed a conversion table that is included in the study regulations and covers all possible conversion directions between the countries (annex 2, article 7.4).

This table is necessary for administrative purposes to define and calculate the overall grade at the end of study but by the means of this table students can always adequately judge their personal performance too.

Experts' Appraisal

The experts have gained the overall impression that there is a good mixture of different forms of assessment applied across the programme. As far as the experts can see, the chosen types of assessment are well-aligned with the intended learning outcomes of the programme and of the individual course units/modules, equally addressing knowledge acquisition, research capacity and key skills. The experts consider the explanation of the consortium that the writing of seminar papers and the final thesis will ensure that standards of academic writing will be achieved (compare 4.3.1).

The experts like to point out that to a certain extent it should be taken care of not overloading modules with small assessments or portfolio assessments because it may lead to a reduced studiability as work load may become too much resulting in a prolonged study duration or even drop outs.

The experts regard the standard as *fulfilled*.

4.6 Student Support

The student support services should contribute to the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. They should take into account specific challenges of mobile students.

The Partner Institutions ensure that students participating in the Joint Programme will benefit from all services offered by the Partner Institution to the regular students enrolled in its own programmes, which should include access to appropriate library, ICT and learning facilities, and other student and administrative support services. In addition, each Partner Institution offers free language courses in the local language.

The programme secretary, located at the university of Zadar, will be responsible for the enrolment issues and administrative support. Also, each partner institution will have a local coordinator responsible for providing support on academic matters. The Student Handbook of

the Joint Programme will provide further information on such services and the applicable conditions.

The consortium explains that it is expected that in future student scholarships are provided coming directly from companies in maritime business.

All three partners seem to be well prepared to provide logistic support for incomings and out-comings. Support includes services to obtain residential permits and visa, internet service, Wi-Fi, student IDs, accommodation, banking, library cards, and tickets/passes for public transport and even discounts for meals. The three partners offer tutor or buddy systems that more experienced students help the "beginner students" to get around. Additional activities cover social events especially welcome meetings and welcome dinners but also other social events that increase contacts in the group but also open up contacts to other (local) students.

Experts' Appraisal

It is expected that the clear and consecutive study structure facilitates the process of getting the programme going and reduces difficulties of mobility. All partner universities seem to be sufficiently experienced in welcoming international students. All necessary infrastructure and administrative procedures are in place.

4.7 Resources

4.7.1 Staff

The staff should be sufficient and adequate (qualifications, professional and international experience) to implement the study programme.

The consortium has submitted the full academic CVs of all core teaching faculty at all study places as part of the self-evaluation report. CVs fully describe work experience, international experiences as well as research and publications. 25 lecturers are named as being in charge of teaching in the first three semesters.

The CVs and the websites show significant research activities that up-to-date knowledge can be integrated into teaching. All partner universities have established rules and regulations to appoint only adequate lecturers for the programme. In addition, the experts had an opportunity to conduct interviews with representatives of all European partner universities in the context of the virtual site visit.

Experts' Appraisal

Based on the talks and the written documentation provided, the experts are convinced that the Master's programme profits from excellent and highly committed teaching faculty at all study places. It seems that there is a core team that guarantees an effective joint management and sustainable development of the programme. The experts had the chance to discuss with a large group of future lecturers of the programme and became convinced that the

staff capacity in terms of quality and quantity to implement the programme is with no doubts available. Students will highly benefit from the extensive international experience of their lecturers and may also get involved in their various (applied) research activities. The expert group appreciates the plan of the Consortium to further engage and closely cooperate with actors from the private sector in the maritime sector

The experts regard the standard as fulfilled.

4.7.2 Facilities

The facilities provided should be sufficient and adequate in view of the intended learning outcomes.

The consortium has provided core information on the general profile of all degree-awarding universities, as well as the profile, facilities and research foci of the departments and institutes involved in the Master's programme. The self-report contains detailed information on the facilities of all partners, as e.g. on library facilities, room situation and on the financial resources of the programme. Also, technical infrastructure can be sufficiently provided that e.g. training in ship simulators can be offered.

All partner universities offer support to find accommodation in student dormitories/residence halls or from private landlords.

A joint financial analysis was submitted. The prime funding sources of the programme are the tuition fees. The joint management committee establishes and approves the annual budget which is administered by the joint secretary.

Experts' Appraisal

It is expected to start with a student cohort of 20 which is expected to increase to 25. This estimate seems to be very positive especially for the beginning.

As far as the experts can judge, the infrastructure and facilities at all partner universities are fully sufficient and adequate in view of the intended learning outcomes of the programme. All universities are long-established and renowned public institutions which provide a stimulating and lively research and learning environment. All relevant infrastructure is well described and students representing the three universities did not mention anything lacking for a successful study. The same applies to issues of housing and accommodation.

The financial planning is transparent. Still the assumption to start already the first two years with cohorts of 20, may not be realised. As the financial planning is based on these tuition fees it must be taken into consideration that the revenue may be smaller than planned.

The experts regard the standard as fulfilled.

Recommendations for further development:

- The partner institutions should be (financially) prepared for the situation that especially for the first cohorts the number of participants will be below expectations.

4.8 Transparency and Documentation

Relevant information about the programme like admission requirements and procedures, course catalogue, examination and assessment procedures etc. should be well documented and published by taking into account specific needs of mobile students.

The most important documents as study regulation, student handbook including admission requirements and procedure and the course descriptions are published on the website: <http://i3m.unizd.hr/>. The examination and assessment procedures are included in the study regulations. Even the staff of all three partners are presented together on the website (including information on scientific achievements): <http://i3m.unizd.hr/Portals/75/Teachers.pdf?ver=oLBQjvLakxo-JMwa6OxwWA%3d%3d>.

Experts' Appraisal

The experts have found that both students, applicants and the general public are provided with all necessary information concerning the programme. The consortium was very willing to continuously improve aspects regarding documentation and transparency of information which was very much appreciated; e.g. after request the tuition fees per semester were added on the website. Some details of examination procedures will be ruled by local regulations and the study regulations refer to it. For increasing transparency, it is desirable to create access to the more general examination regulations of the 3 partner institutions. The English versions will be made available on the website of the programme and in addition a link will be provided to the legally binding version (in original language).

The experts regard the standard as *fulfilled*.

4.9 Quality Assurance

The cooperating institutions should apply joint internal quality assurance processes in accordance with part one of the ESG.

The joint quality assurance is carried out by the management committee which includes all partners and a student representative. Quality Assurance is described in Article 9 of the consortium agreement.

The Management Committee is responsible for the overall quality and standard of the Joint Programme. It will monitor the compliance of Partner Institutions with the Consortium Agreement. The Programme Committee assists the Management Committee in its Quality Assurance tasks and responsibilities, including, but not limited to, the carrying out of evaluations and the collecting of feedback from both staff and students. It carries out tasks and functions as advisory body.

The ultimate responsibility for academic standards in each Partner Institution rests with the Institutional Coordinators. Quality assurance will be based on both internal and external assessment measures, involving the relevant stakeholders to the Joint Programme. External quality assurance will comprise at least the required national accreditation procedures, but

also any other external assessments agreed upon by the Management Committee to undertake.

Course evaluation takes place at all partner universities, mostly by means of online surveys but also as direct feedback rounds.

Experts' Appraisal

The experts find that the Maritime Management consortium has set up an effective and comprehensive system for the joint quality assurance and enhancement of the degree programme which is fully in accordance with Part 1 of the ESG. Regular quality surveys are planned both at course level and at programme level and will be made accessible to all partners of the consortium by means of transparent and detailed reports which are supposed to lead to agreed actions.

In addition, it would be desirable that the consortium establishes especially at the beginning a direct feedback system for the students to swiftly respond in case of problems. Anyhow, it is appreciated that the programme committee which functions as advisory body and which carries out evaluations, is composed of three members of the three partners and the same number of students. This will hopefully sufficiently include the students' perspective in programme revision and development.

The experts regard the standard as *fulfilled*.

III. Appendix

1. Response of the Consortium to the Expert Report

The consortium waives the opportunity to make further comments.