Operational Guide for the Joint European Degree Label



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture

Directorate B — Erasmus+, Education and Skills

Unit B.3 — Transnational Cooperation in Higher Education

E-mail: EAC-UNITE-B3@*ec.europa.eu*

European Commission
B-1049 Brussels

OPERATIONAL GUIDE

FOR THE JOINT EUROPEAN DEGREE LABEL

LEGAL NOTICE

This document has been prepared for the European Commission however it reflects the views only of the authors, and the European Commission is not liable for any consequence stemming from the reuse of this publication. More information on the European Union is available on the Internet (http://www.europa.eu).

Print	ISBN 978-92-68-40125-5	doi: 10.2766/5727060	NC-01-26-123-EN-C
PDF	ISBN 978-92-68-40124-8	doi: 10.2766/7148441	NC-01-26-123-EN-N

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2026

© European Union, 2026

The reuse policy of European Commission documents is implemented by the Commission Decision 2011/833/EU of 12 December 2011 on the reuse of Commission documents (OJ L 330, 14.12.2011, p. 39). Except otherwise noted, the reuse of this document is authorised under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC-BY 4.0) licence (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). This means that reuse is allowed provided appropriate credit is given and any changes are indicated.

For any use or reproduction of elements that are not owned by the European Union, permission may need to be sought directly from the respective rightholders.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction 1

2. Assessment framework 3

2.1. When is a programme eligible to apply for the Joint European Degree Label? 4
2.2. Awarding bodies 4
2.3. Assessment process 5
2.3.1. Assessment and award by a QA agency 5
2.3.2. Assessment and award by a self-accrediting HEI 7
2.4. Post-assessment provisions 9
2.4.1. Publication, transparency, complaints, and appeals 9
2.4.2. Validity 9
2.4.3. Corrective actions and withdrawal 9
2.4.4. Usage rights 10
2.5. Synergy with the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes 10

3. Criteria for the award of the Joint European Degree Label 12

3.1. Dimension A: Programme organisation 12
A.1: Higher education institutions involved ◐ 12
A.2: Transnational joint degree delivery 13
A.2.1: Joint design and delivery ● 13
A.2.2: Joint degree ◐ 13
A.2.3: Joint Diploma Supplement ◐ 14
A.2.4: Use of ECTS Users' Guide ● 14
A.3: Joint arrangements for the joint programme ◐ 15
A.4: Quality assurance arrangements 16
A.4.1: Internal and external quality assurance ● 16
A.4.2: European approach ● 16
A.5: Graduate tracking ○ 17
A.6: Student-centred learning ● 17
A.7: Transnational campus – access to services ◐ 18
A.8: Flexible and embedded student mobility 18
A.8.1: 30 ECTS physical mobility ◐ 18
A.8.2: Six months physical mobility ◐ 19
A.9: Co-evaluation and co-supervision for dissertations ○ 20
3.2. Dimension B: European dimension criteria 21
B.1: Interdisciplinarity and research-based learning ○ 21
B.2: Opportunities for learning beyond academia and employability ◐ 21
B.3: Digitalisation ○ 22
B.4: Values ○ 23
B.5: Multilingualism ○ 24
B.6: Inclusiveness 25
B.6.1: Diversity, equality, inclusion ○ 25
B.6.2: European Charter for Researchers ○ 25
B.7: Environmental sustainability ○ 26

1. Introduction

The Joint European Degree Label is a quality label granted to joint programmes delivered through transnational cooperation between higher education institutions from different countries, including at least two European Union (EU) Member States or States party to the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA EFTA States: Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway)[1], to act as a branding tool, promoting compliance with European standards and providing visibility and prestige to the labelled joint programmes[2]. The label was established by the EU through the Council Recommendation on a European quality assurance and recognition system in higher education in May 2025[3]. This operational guide details the requirements for the award of the Joint European Degree Label, enabling quality assurance (QA) agencies, higher education institutions (HEIs), and relevant stakeholders to implement the label.

The **criteria for the Joint European Degree Label** set out the key features of the label and "*guarantee the respect of the highest standards to offer transnational programmes, and showcase the specific European nature of such a label.*"[4] These criteria were adopted in Annex II to the Council Recommendation on a European quality assurance and recognition system in higher education[5]. They **build on established tools of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)**, namely the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG)[6], the *European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes*[7]*, and the ECTS Users' Guide*[8].

The **ESG** provide the overarching framework for quality assurance in higher education. The **European Approach** applies these standards to the transnational context of joint programmes through a single review procedure. The Joint European Degree Label builds on both instruments but does not replace them or existing QA or accreditation standards or procedures. Instead, it verifies a set of criteria agreed at the EU level, assessing the "jointness", the student experience, and the broader European dimension of the programme.

This operational guide facilitates a unified understanding and application of the criteria for the Joint European Degree Label. The guide defines the **assessment framework,** detailing the assessment process and its synergies with existing QA frameworks. Then it **operationalises the criteria,** defining their objectives, providing descriptions and indicators for compliance to serve as a point of reference for QA agencies and HEIs.

---

[1] All references in this Operational Guide to EEA EFTA States are subject to the relevant provisions of the EEA Agreement, including incorporation of the Council Recommendation on a European quality assurance and recognition system in higher education of 12 May 2025 under Protocol 31.

[2] As defined in the Annex III to the Council Recommendation on a European quality assurance and recognition system in higher education of 12 May 2025, (C/2025/3006), OJ C, 28.5.2025, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32025H03006

[3] Council Recommendation on a European quality assurance and recognition system in higher education of 12 May 2025, (C/2025/3006), OJ C, 28.5.2025, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32025H03006

[4] Ibid. p.2.

[5] Ibid. pp. 10-12.

[6] *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)*. (2015). Brussels, Belgium, https://ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/2015_Yerevan/72/7/European_Standards_and_Guidelines_for_Quality_Assurance_in_the_EHEA_2015_MC_613727.pdf

[7] *European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes,* approved by the EHEA ministers in May 2015. Available under: https://www.eqar.eu/kb/joint-programmes/; European Higher Education Area, https://ehea.info

[8] European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, *ECTS Users' Guide 2015*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2015, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/87192

A separate document with annexes includes:

- Glossary explaining the terms and definitions used in the guide (Annex 1);
- Recommended template for the self-assessment report (Annex 2);
- Evidence portfolio (Annex 3);
- Templates for the Joint European Degree Label certificates (Annex 4);
- Mapping of the indicators to assess compliance with the criteria of the Joint European Degree Label (Annex 5).

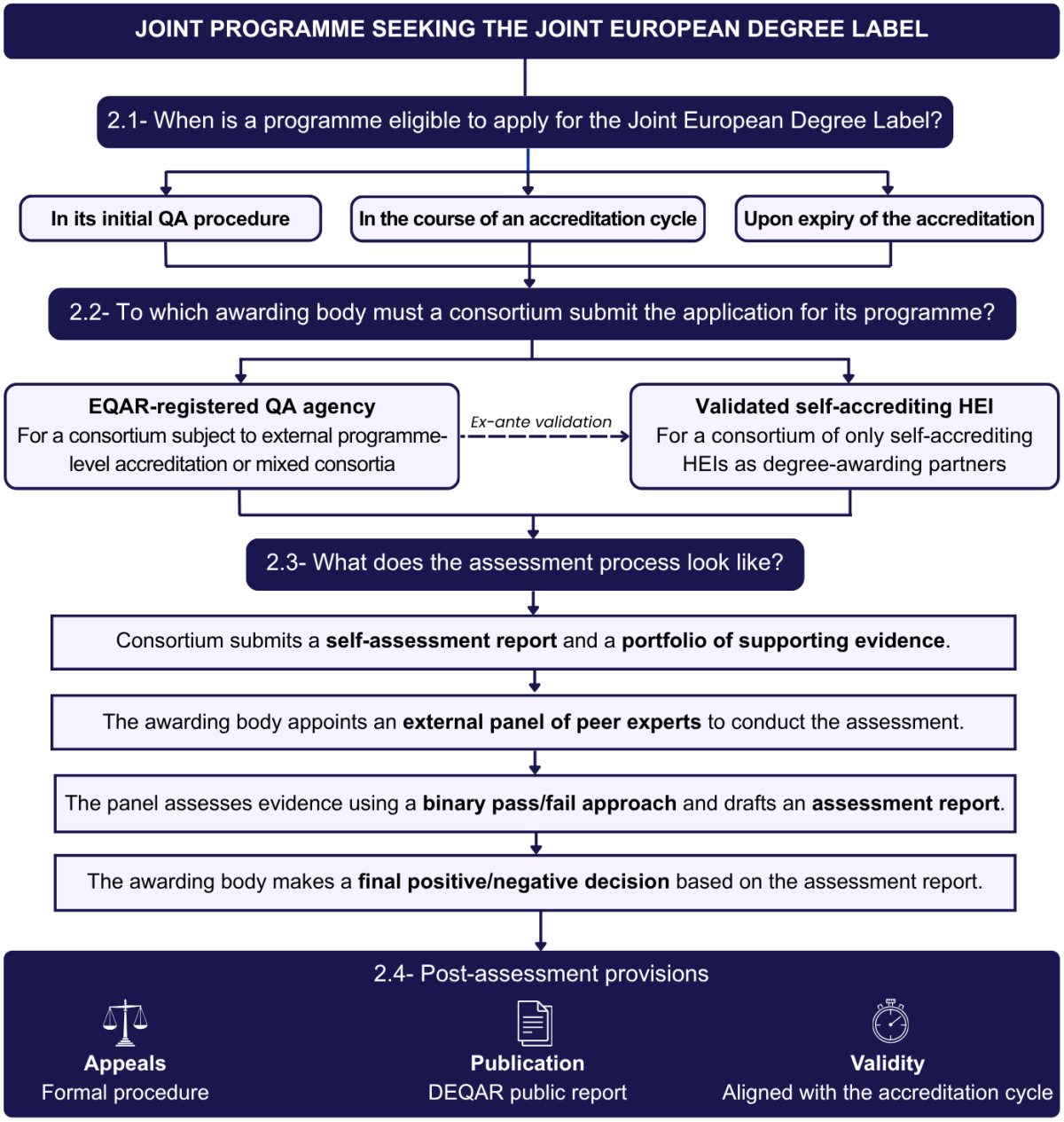
This operational guide was developed through a structured and iterative collaborative process by a Policy Lab, mandated by the Council of the European Union and established by the European Commission in October 2025 in the context of the Working Group on Higher Education of the European Education Area strategic framework. The drafting process was supported by independent experts, with the objective of ensuring technical robustness and fostering a shared understanding of the criteria and their possible application.

The European Commission may, if needed, introduce technical updates to this operational guide to ensure continued alignment with relevant EHEA tools, including the ESG, the European Approach, and the ECTS Users' Guide. Any substantive modifications affecting the criteria or the overall framework would be subject to future decisions by the Council of the European Union.

2. Assessment framework

This assessment framework provides a step-by-step guide to assessing compliance of joint programmes with the criteria for the Joint European Degree Label. It is targeted at QA agencies and HEIs, as well as other stakeholders who may be involved in the process. ***Figure 1*** maps the steps of the assessment process.

Figure 1. Simplified assessment framework for the Joint European Degree Label



The assessment for the Joint European Degree Label does not replace, reopen or duplicate the underlying accreditation procedure. It builds on an existing positive evaluation and verifies compliance only with those elements that are relevant for awarding the label. Where the programme has already been evaluated using the European Approach procedure, the assessment should rely on that evaluation as its primary reference point and only verify the additional elements required for the label.

The following subsections describe the different steps from the application stage through the assessment to the post-assessment provisions. Additionally, Section 2.5 outlines the synergies between the criteria for the Joint European Degree Label and the standards of the European Approach and explains how a European Approach evaluation can facilitate compliance assessment against those criteria.

2.1. When is a programme eligible to apply for the Joint European Degree Label?

The Joint European Degree Label is open to joint programmes[9] leading to a degree corresponding to a nationally defined higher education degree type (Bachelor, Master or Doctorate) within the legal framework of the participating countries at EQF levels 6, 7 or 8. The label is awarded to a joint programme accredited by a QA agency or by a self-accredited HEI. Eligible joint programmes are offered by consortia[10] composed of at least two degree-awarding HEIs from at least two EU Member States or EEA EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway).

Joint programmes can apply for the Joint European Degree Label at any of the following stages:

- In an integrated evaluation with initial external accreditation of a new joint programme using the European Approach procedure and a compliance assessment against the criteria of the Joint European Degree Label. The label can be awarded if both the evaluation and the compliance assessment yield positive results[11].
- Under a standalone assessment against the criteria of the Joint European Degree Label during the accreditation cycle of a joint programme. The consortium must demonstrate that the joint programme was positively evaluated against the standards of the European Approach[12] and complies with the criteria of the Joint European Degree Label.
- Upon expiry of the accreditation period, if applicable, in one integrated evaluation combining a re-evaluation using the European Approach procedure and a compliance assessment against the criteria of the Joint European Degree Label.

2.2. Awarding bodies

Consortium partners apply to the awarding body that can assess compliance with the criteria and award the Joint European Degree Label as follows:

[9] The label is awarded to a joint programme, both programmes accredited by a QA agency and self-accredited are eligible. Joint programmes leading only to double or multiple degrees are not eligible for the Joint European Degree Label, neither are joint programmes with institution-specific, non-degree or non-state-validated awards.
[10] Hereinafter, the term consortium refers to a partnership of institutions participating in the delivery of a joint programme. These may include degree-awarding HEIs, associated and mobility partners such as non-degree-awarding HEIs, research institutes, enterprises, public bodies, or others. Only the degree-awarding partners are directly participating in the assessment process. They are to ensure that any activities performed by or within associated or mobility partners comply with the relevant criteria.
[11] If the result of the evaluation is conditional and subject to fulfillment of specific criteria in an agreed timeframe, the label can be awarded together with the final positive decision.
[12] With an external evaluation using the European Approach procedure, an internal evaluation applying the standards of the European Approach or a demonstration that all of the standards of the European approach have been met to quality assure the programme.

- Consortia of HEIs which are subject to external programme-level accreditation or mixed consortia[13], must apply to an **EU or EEA EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway)-based QA agency registered in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education** [14] (EQAR-registered) offering to carry out the compliance assessment and award the label.
- Consortia that only include self-accrediting HEIs as degree-awarding partners can choose to either apply to an EU or EEA EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway)-based EQAR-registered QA agency or to entrust one of the **EU or EEA EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway)-based degree-awarding consortium partner HEIs** to carry out the compliance assessment and award the label.

All awarding bodies must apply the compliance assessment in accordance with this operational guide, aiming for consistency, comparability, transparency, and trust in assessment outcomes. The award of the Joint European Degree Label by a QA agency is formally equivalent to the award of the label by a self-accrediting HEI.

2.3. Assessment process

2.3.1. Assessment and award by a QA agency

SCOPE AND ELIGIBILITY

This procedure applies primarily to consortia of HEIs that are subject to external programme-level evaluation or mixed consortia but can also be applied to consortia of self-accrediting HEIs wishing to receive the Joint European Degree Label for their joint programme. QA agencies eligible to assess joint programmes and award the Joint European Degree Label must be EU or EEA EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway)-based and EQAR-registered. Each QA agency determines, in accordance with its mandate and national or regional framework, whether and at what stage it offers to carry out the compliance assessment and award the Joint European Degree Label. This information should be made publicly available in a transparent manner.

Eligible QA agencies develop internal procedures for the compliance assessment and award of the Joint European Degree Label, in line with the provisions of this operational guide and building on their existing QA practices.

APPLICATION AND SELF-ASSESSMENT

The consortium selects a QA agency offering to award the Joint European Degree Label to act as the awarding body.

The consortium mandates one of the degree-awarding partners to coordinate the submission of the application and communicate with the awarding body to submit an application to obtain the Joint European Degree Label for their joint programme.

The application submitted to the awarding body includes:

- A completed self-assessment report, based on the recommended template provided in Annex 2;
- A portfolio of supporting evidence (detailed in Annex 3).

[13] Mixed consortia are consortia comprised of both HEIs which are subject to external programme-level accreditation and self-accrediting HEIs as degree-awarding partners.
[14] European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) is an official register of quality assurance agencies that have demonstrated substantial compliance with the ESG. See https://www.eqar.eu/

Joint programmes must demonstrate genuine commitment through concrete plans, actions, or policies to fulfil the label criteria relevant to their stage of implementation.

EVIDENCE

The assessment relies on existing documentation, avoiding requests for new or overlapping materials when equivalent information is already available.

Evidence may include, as relevant:

- Consortium agreements;
- External review reports (produced during the European Approach procedure);
- Internal QA documentation of the joint programme (including evaluation against the standards of the European Approach);
- Evidence drawn from HEI consortium-level frameworks (e.g., European Universities alliance-level agreements), where applicable;
- Input from designated programme representatives, coordinators, academic staff, students or other relevant stakeholders;
- Information gathered during a site visit, as appropriate. It is not mandatory for a standalone assessment.

Additional indicative sources of evidence are listed in Annex 3.

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT PANEL

To maintain independence and objectivity, the assessment is conducted by an external assessment panel of peer experts with no conflicts of interest, appointed by the awarding QA agency.

Where the assessment takes place simultaneously with a European Approach evaluation procedure, the same external assessment panel verifies compliance with the Joint European Degree Label criteria, thereby avoiding duplication of procedures.

Where the assessment is conducted as standalone, the external assessment panel comprises at least three international peer experts, including a student member, as required by the ESG[15].

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The external assessment panel reviews the application package and evaluates compliance with each criterion of the Joint European Degree Label. Criteria already positively assessed[16] through an evaluation using the European Approach procedure are automatically considered as fulfilled and are not re-assessed.

The assessment follows a **binary pass/fail approach**:

- Each criterion is determined to be either met or not met.
- All criteria must be met for the label to be awarded.

Applying objective judgement, the external assessment panel assesses whether the provided evidence sufficiently and credibly demonstrates compliance, considering the programme's nature, scope, disciplinary context, and qualification level (EQF 6, 7, or 8). This operational guide specifies the minimum requirements for meeting each criterion (see Section 3).

[15] *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)*, p. 19
[16] Regardless of the level of fulfilment, as long as they are assessed positively. See Section 2.5 for more details.

A physical or online site visit is not mandatory for assessing compliance with the criteria of the Joint European Degree Label when the assessment is conducted as a stand-alone procedure. However, the site visit conducted during QA procedures, including the European Approach evaluation procedure can be used to inform the assessment.

If needed, an online discussion with representatives of consortium partners can be organised upon request by the external assessment panel to clarify possible gaps in the application.

Upon completing the assessment, the panel drafts a report describing the assessment results for each criterion and recommending whether the programme should be awarded the Joint European Degree Label. Should there be shortcomings in the application or the evidence provided, the panel may issue suggestions to address those shortcomings.

DECISION-MAKING AND OUTCOME

The external assessment panel sends the assessment report to the coordinating consortium partner for a factual check. The revised assessment report, taking into account corrections, if any, is submitted by the external assessment panel to the awarding body.

The awarding body then has three options:

- If all the criteria are met, to award the label based on the recommendation of the external assessment panel;
- If some criteria are not met, not to award the label, as per the recommendation of the external assessment panel;
- If shortcomings are identified, to ask for clarifications and/or additional evidence, or to ask the consortium to implement the suggestions of the panel and correct the application within a set period of time.

In the case of the third option, the external assessment panel considers the additional evidence or clarifications provided by the coordinating consortium partner, revises the assessment report and re-submits it to the awarding body. The awarding body then takes the final decision on whether the label is awarded or not awarded.

The award of the label is communicated to the applicant using the template provided in Annex 4.

FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

Each QA agency determines its own pricing in accordance with its national framework and practices. Fees, if any, must be reasonable, proportionate, transparent and disclosed in advance.

Wherever possible, the costs related to the assessment of the Joint European Degree Label may be integrated with the costs of the evaluation using the European Approach procedure to minimise financial or administrative burden.

2.3.2. Assessment and award by a self-accrediting HEI

SCOPE AND ELIGIBILITY

This procedure applies to consortia of self-accrediting HEIs wishing to receive the Joint European Degree Label for their joint programme without requesting an external assessment of the programme by a QA agency.

A degree-awarding self-accrediting HEI based in the EU or EEA EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway) can act as an awarding body and assess compliance with the criteria

for the Joint European Degree Label for a joint programme offered by the consortium it is part of, if it was ex-ante externally validated to do so.

EX-ANTE EXTERNAL VALIDATION

The ex-ante external validation is carried out by an EU or EEA EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway)-based EQAR-registered QA agency to ensure that the self-accrediting HEI can assess the compliance with the criteria for the Joint European Degree Label in line with this operational guide. It may be conducted as a standalone exercise or in conjunction with an institutional accreditation or review, where compatible with national or regional arrangements. The validity corresponds to the duration for which the HEI holds self-accrediting rights.

The QA agency conducts the ex-ante external validation in line with its practices and relevant national frameworks. It must cover at least the following elements:

- The HEI's operational capacity to apply the standards of the European Approach;
- Clear and documented procedures for assessment, decision-making, and post-assessment provisions;
- Arrangements for transparency, follow-up, handling of complaints, and appeals;
- Arrangements to ensure objectivity of the Joint European Degree Label awarding process and policies against conflicts of interest.

Relevant national authorities should be informed of HEIs that have received such validation within their respective higher education system.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

The consortium prepares a self-assessment report based on the recommended template provided in Annex 2 and supplies an evidence portfolio (see Annex 3 for indicative sources of evidence) to the HEI acting as awarding body.

EVIDENCE

The assessment relies on existing resources produced within the consortium's internal QA system (aligned with the ESG and the standards of the European Approach)
This may include, as relevant:

- Consortium agreement;
- External or internal evaluation reports;
- Internal QA documentation of the joint programme;
- Evidence drawn from HEI consortium-level frameworks (e.g., European University Alliance-level agreements), where applicable;
- Input from designated programme representatives, coordinators, academic staff, students or other relevant stakeholders.

Indicative sources of evidence are listed in Annex 3.

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT PANEL

The assessment is conducted by an external assessment panel with no conflicts of interest, appointed by the awarding HEI to ensure independence and objectivity, following the same requirements and procedure as for assessments conducted by a QA agency (see the corresponding subsection under 2.3.1).

ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The procedure follows a binary pass/fail approach for each criterion, and all the criteria must be met for the label to be awarded. The same steps and principles should be followed as when

the assessment is conducted by a QA agency (as detailed in the corresponding subsection under 2.3.1).

DECISION-MAKING AND OUTCOME

The decision to award the Joint European Degree Label is made by the awarding body following the same process as described in section 2.3.1., including the submission of corrections and additional evidence to the external assessment panel.

The awarding body transmits the decision to the QA agency that carried out the ex-ante external validation of the awarding HEI for record-keeping and publication (see section 2.4.1).

2.4. Post-assessment provisions

2.4.1. Publication, transparency, complaints, and appeals

Each assessment results in an assessment report prepared by the external assessment panel and published by the awarding body alongside the final award decision.

Both positive and negative award decisions and corresponding assessment reports must be published in the Database of External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR)[17], in accordance with applicable arrangements. Relevant national authorities should also be informed of awarded Joint European Degree Labels.

In the case of a negative decision, the consortium may not submit a new application for the same joint programme to the same or to a different QA agency or self-accrediting HEI within one year of the final decision.

The awarding body is responsible for defining procedures for administering formal complaints and appeal procedures and for communicating the terms to the consortium prior to the assessment.

Complaints and appeals can be submitted by the consortium for both procedural issues and the award decision and will be handled by the awarding body according to their existing internal procedures.

2.4.2. Validity

The validity of the Joint European Degree Label is aligned with the accreditation cycle of the joint programme. The label is valid until the accreditation of the joint programme expires or a new QA evaluation is required.

2.4.3. Corrective actions and withdrawal

The Joint European Degree Label may be withdrawn in exceptional circumstances during its validity period if substantiated evidence indicates that the joint programme no longer complies with the label criteria. The QA agency that awarded the label, or, in the case of labels awarded by self-accrediting HEIs, the QA agency that carried out the ex-ante external validation may withdraw the label, respecting at least the following minimal procedural steps:

[17] DEQAR is a publicly accessible database maintained by EQAR, containing reports and decisions from external quality assurance procedures carried out on higher education institutions and programmes across the EHEA and beyond. See https://docs.deqar.eu/

1. The QA agency notifies the coordinating consortium partner of identified concerns.
2. The consortium is given the opportunity to respond to the claims by presenting evidence and to implement corrective actions within a defined and proportionate timeframe, where appropriate and in accordance with the procedure defined by the awarding body.
3. If the corrective actions are not implemented by the consortium or serious non-compliance persists, the label may be withdrawn by the QA agency.

Students currently enrolled in the programme at the point of withdrawal retain the right to have the label referenced in their graduation documents (e.g. to receive a Joint European Degree Label certificate or have the Joint European Degree Label appearing on their joint degree and/or diploma supplement).

Any withdrawal decision must be reasoned, documented and reflected in publicly available information. The QA agency carrying out the withdrawal notifies DEQAR and relevant national authorities (where applicable) of the withdrawal.

2.4.4. Usage rights

The right to use the visual identity of the Joint European Degree Label is granted exclusively to joint programmes awarded the label. HEIs should display the label on the programme website, joint degree, joint diploma supplement, or on a standalone label certificate issued to students upon graduation (see Annex 4).
Consortium partners are encouraged to promote the Joint European Degree Label and feature it on their communication channels to raise the visibility and public awareness of the achievement.

2.5. Synergy with the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes

This synergy should be understood as follows: the ESG define the overarching quality assurance framework; the European Approach operationalises this framework for joint programmes through a single review procedure; and the Joint European Degree Label assessment builds on both by testifying compliance with additional criteria relevant to the label. Some criteria, as set out in the *Council Recommendation on a European quality assurance and recognition system in higher education*[18], partially or fully overlap with the standards of the European Approach.

When the joint programme has been positively evaluated using the procedure of the European Approach by a QA agency or a self-accrediting HEI[19], several Joint European Degree Label criteria can be considered as met and do not need to be re-assessed. These criteria are marked in green/● in ***Table 1***.

Criteria marked in orange/◐ are addressed by the standards of the European Approach to some extent, but not fully. The European Approach evaluation report provides only partial evidence, an assessment remains necessary, and additional sources are needed to establish compliance with the criteria of the Joint European Degree Label. The specific evidence requirements for each partially addressed criterion are set out in the orange boxes in the criterion descriptions in Section 3.

For the criteria marked in grey/○, a full compliance assessment is necessary.

[18] Council Recommendation on a European quality assurance and recognition system in higher education of 12 May 2025.
[19] Self-accrediting HEIs must demonstrate that the standards for internal QA of the programme are aligned with the standards of the European Approach.

Table 1. Synergy of the Joint European Degree Label criteria with the standards of the European Approach

Dimension A Programme organisation criteria		
A.1. Higher education institutions involved		◐
A.2. Transnational joint degree delivery	**A.2.1.** Joint design and delivery	●
	A.2.2. Joint degree	◐
	A.2.3. Joint diploma supplement (EQF 6 & 7)	◐
	A.2.4. Use of ECTS Users' Guide (EQF 6 & 7)	●
A.3. Joint arrangements for the joint programme		◐
A.4. Quality assurance arrangements	**A.4.1.** Internal and external quality assurance	●
	A.4.2. European Approach	●
A.5. Graduate tracking		○
A.6. Student-centred learning		●
A.7. Transnational campus – access to services		◐
A.8. Flexible and embedded student mobility	**A.8.1.** 30 ECTS physical mobility (EQF 6 & 7)	◐
	A.8.2. Six Months physical mobility (EQF 8)	◐
A.9. Co-Evaluation and Co-Supervision for Dissertations (EQF 8)		○

Dimension B European dimension criteria		
B.1. Interdisciplinarity and research-based learning		○
B.2. Learning opportunities beyond academia and employability		◐
B.3. Digitalisation		○
B.4. Values		○
B.5. Multilingualism		○
B.6. Inclusiveness	**B.6.1.** Diversity, equality, and inclusion	○
	B.6.2. European Charter for Researchers (EQF 8)	○
B.7. Environmental sustainability		○

3. Criteria for the award of the Joint European Degree Label

The criteria for the award of the Joint European Degree Label are outlined in the *Council Recommendation on a European quality assurance and recognition system in higher education*[20] and organised into two dimensions. Dimension A focuses on programme organisation, and Dimension B on key European values and priorities.

Most of the criteria introduced in the subsequent sections apply to joint programmes at EQF levels 6, 7 and 8, with some exceptions indicated in the descriptions.

The following colour codes and symbols indicate synergies with the European Approach:

● - ● - Criterion is **fully** addressed by a European Approach evaluation, no additional assessment is needed under the Joint European Degree Label.

● - ◐ - Criterion is **partially** addressed by a European Approach evaluation, the evaluation report provides a basis to expand on with additional evidence.

● - ○ – Criterion is **not addressed** by a European Approach evaluation, a full compliance check is required.

The criteria are complementary and may rely on overlapping sources of evidence. A single piece of documented evidence may be used to demonstrate compliance with more than one criterion, provided that it clearly addresses the respective objectives and indicators. Annex 3 indicates what documents are needed to assess compliance with the criteria.

3.1. Dimension A: Programme organisation

A.1: Higher education institutions involved ◐

The joint programme is offered by at least two higher education institutions from at least two different Member States.

EQF 6, 7 & 8

Objective: Ensure that the joint programme is transnational and based on institutional cooperation across at least two EU Member States or EEA EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway).

Description: The programme must be jointly offered by at least two HEIs in a degree-awarding role located in two different EU Member States or EEA EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway). Additional partners, also from non-EU countries, may participate in different roles. There is no limit to the number or locations of consortium partners beyond this minimum requirement.

☑ **The criterion is met if:**

At least two HEIs from two EU Member States or EEA EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway) offer the joint programme in a degree-awarding role.

[20] Council Recommendation on a European quality assurance and recognition system in higher education of 12 May 2025.

◐ An evaluation using the European Approach procedure will provide evidence on the HEIs involved in delivering the joint programme, their recognised status, and their eligibility to participate in awarding the qualification (Standard 1.1).

It should still be checked whether at least two of those degree-awarding HEIs are based in two different EU Member States or EEA EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway), as required by the criterion.

A.2: Transnational joint degree delivery

A.2.1: Joint design and delivery ●

The joint programme is jointly designed and jointly delivered by all the HEIs involved.

EQF 6, 7 & 8

Objective: Ensure that the joint programme is founded on academic collaboration, with all participating degree-awarding HEIs sharing academic responsibility for the design and delivery of the programme, including on behalf of any non-degree awarding partner, to provide an integrated, high-quality learning experience.

Description: Consortium partners jointly design the curriculum, define learning outcomes, and deliver teaching and learning activities, each contributing academic expertise and resources to create a coherent, integrated programme. All degree-awarding partner HEIs must contribute to the programme offer.

☑ **The criterion is met if**:

● The joint programme has already undergone, or is simultaneously undergoing, a quality assurance procedure using the European Approach. This criterion is covered by that evaluation (Standard 1.2) and therefore does not need to be re-assessed.

See Annex 5 for indicators for this criterion in other cases.

A.2.2: Joint degree ◐

The joint programme leads to the award of a joint degree.

EQF 6, 7 & 8

Objective: Guarantee that each graduate receives a legally valid and mutually recognised joint degree.

Description: Each graduate of the joint programme must receive a joint degree that is legally valid within all the national or regional frameworks of the degree-awarding partners and recognised by the competent authorities in higher education. The joint degree is awarded either by all degree-awarding partners, thereby reflecting the joint programme as a whole, or

by the degree-awarding partners that have delivered the components of the joint programme forming the student's individual learning pathway[21].

☑ **The criterion is met if:**

- Each graduate of the joint programme receives a joint degree.

◐ An evaluation using the European Approach procedure will provide evidence on the qualification awarded and on the joint nature of the programme (Standard 1.3).

It should still be checked whether graduates receive a joint degree in the sense required by this criterion.

See Annex 5 for indicators for this criterion that would be covered by an evaluation using the European Approach.

A.2.3: Joint Diploma Supplement ◐

A joint Diploma Supplement is issued to students.

EQF 6 & **7**

Objective: Ensure graduates receive a joint Diploma Supplement, enhancing trust, comparability, and recognition of qualifications across Europe.

Description: Degree-awarding consortium partners jointly issue a Diploma Supplement covering the student's full learning pathway, in line with European Diploma Supplement template[22], providing an integrated record of credits, institutions, and mobility periods, with the aim to ensure transparency, coherence, and easier recognition across borders.

☑ **The criterion is met if:**

- A joint Diploma Supplement is issued to each graduate.

◐ An evaluation using the European Approach procedure will provide evidence on the recognition of qualifications and of periods of studies (Standard 4.2), as well as information on transparency and documentation about the programme (Standard 8).

It should still be checked whether a joint Diploma Supplement is issued to each graduate, as required by this criterion.

See Annex 5 for indicators for this criterion that are covered by the European Approach.

A.2.4: Use of ECTS Users' Guide ●

The joint programme describes the learning outcomes and credits in line with the ECTS Users' Guide.

EQF 6 & **7**

[21] In any case, the joint degree must always be awarded by at least two HEIs from at least two different EU Member States or EEA EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway).

[22] Template for the Diploma Supplement: https://www.enic-naric.net/fileusers/Revised_Template_for_the_Diploma_Supplement.pdf

Objective: Promote transparency, comparability, and fair recognition of learning outcomes through consistent ECTS application.

Description: All courses and learning activities within the joint programme must be described using a common framework agreed by all consortium partners, covering learning outcomes, credits, content, teaching and assessment methods, in line with the ECTS Users' Guide. ECTS must be applied consistently across all consortium partners, including non-EU partners, via an agreed equivalence table.

☑ **The criterion is met if:**

● The joint programme has already undergone, or is simultaneously undergoing, a quality assurance procedure using the European Approach. This criterion is covered by that evaluation and therefore does not need to be re-assessed (Standard 3.2).

See Annex 5 for indicators for this criterion in other cases.

A.3: Joint arrangements for the joint programme ◐

The joint programme has joint policies, procedures and/or arrangements defining curriculum planning and delivery, as well as all organisational and administrative matters. Students' representatives are part of the decision-making process to define the joint policies and procedures and/or arrangements.

EQF 6, 7 & 8

Objective: Ensure that a joint programme operates under shared governance arrangements, and that student representatives have a formal role in defining them.

Description: Consortium partners must agree on shared rules covering curriculum, delivery, organisational and administrative matters (admission and selection, progression, assessment, graduation). These must be documented at the consortium level. Student representatives must have a formal role in the decision-making processes for defining the joint policies, procedures and/or arrangements.

☑ **The criterion is met if there is evidence for <u>both of the following indicators</u>:**

- The joint programme has joint policies, procedures and/or arrangements covering curriculum planning and delivery, as well as organisational and administrative matters.
- Students' representatives are included in the decision-making process.

◐ An evaluation using the European Approach procedure will provide evidence on the existence of an agreement on policies, procedures and/or arrangements defining curriculum planning and delivery, as well as all organisational and administrative matters (Standards 1.2 and 1.3).

It should still be checked whether these arrangements were designed jointly and whether students' representatives are formally part of the decision-making process to define the underlying policies, procedures and/or arrangements, as required by this criterion.

A.4: Quality assurance arrangements

A.4.1: Internal and external quality assurance

Internal and external quality assurance is conducted in accordance with the ESG. The HEIs, the field of study or the programme are evaluated by a QA agency registered in the EQAR or an EU agency fully implementing the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes.

EQF 6, 7 & 8

Objective: Guarantee trusted, mutually recognised QA that aligns with ESG standards while respecting national and institutional diversity.

Description: The joint programme, the relevant field of study, or the degree-awarding institutions have been evaluated by an EQAR-Registered QA agency. This criterion concerns the existence of ESG-aligned internal and external quality assurance arrangements; the specific use of the European Approach as an integrated joint approach is addressed under criterion A.4.2.

☑ **The criterion is met if:**

- The joint programme has already undergone, or is simultaneously undergoing, an evaluation by an EQAR-registered QA agency or by self-accrediting HEIs evaluated at the institutional level by an EQAR-registered agency. This criterion is covered by that evaluation and therefore does not need to be re-assessed.

A.4.2: European approach

The joint programme is evaluated using the standards of the European Approach.

EQF 6, 7 & 8

Objective: Ensure that the joint programme is evaluated through a single, integrated QA procedure, promoting mutual trust, transparency, and the recognition of a single review across all participating countries, reducing administrative burden, eliminating duplication of national procedures, upholding the high-quality standards, and strengthening the European dimension of quality assurance.

Description: The joint programme has been positively evaluated, or is undergoing a simultaneous evaluation, using the standards of the European Approach. Where no external evaluation of the joint programme is required, self-accrediting HEIs should explicitly apply the standards of the European Approach within their internal QA systems.

☑ **The criterion is met if:**

- The joint programme has already undergone, or is simultaneously undergoing, an evaluation using the European Approach procedure. This criterion is covered by that evaluation and therefore does not need to be re-assessed.

  See Annex 5 for indicators for this criterion in other cases.

A.5: Graduate tracking ○

The joint programme monitors graduates through a graduate tracking system or using data collected by the European Higher Education Sector Observatory.

EQF 6, 7 & 8

Objective: Monitor career paths of the graduates to enhance the quality of the joint programme and its relevance as it pertains to the needs of the labour market.

Description: Graduate tracking may be organised at the programme or institutional level. Data on graduate career paths must be regularly collected from a representative sample of joint programme graduates, in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and used to enhance the joint programme. Joint programmes must present operational mechanisms or credible plans, depending on whether they already have graduates.

☑ **The criterion is met if:**

- The joint programme has (or plans for) a mechanism for regular graduate tracking which is used/to be used to inform the continuous enhancement of the programme.

○ This criterion is not addressed by the evaluation using the European Approach procedure. A full compliance assessment is needed.

A.6: Student-centred learning ●

The joint programme is designed and continuously enhanced and delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in the learning process. Assessment of students reflects this approach.

EQF 6, 7 & 8

Objective: Ensure that teaching, learning and assessment within the joint programme follow a student-centred approach consistent with the ESG, empowering students to take responsibility for their learning, to participate actively in their academic development, and to engage as partners in the joint programme enhancement.

Description: The joint programme must integrate pedagogical methods that encourage collaboration, reflection, and autonomy, while recognising the diversity of learning environments across consortium partners. Programme design and delivery must promote interactive, inquiry-based, or challenge-based learning and ensure that assessment methods correspond to these approaches, evaluating both process and achievement. Student feedback should be systematically collected and used to inform the continuous enhancement of the programme.

☑ **The criterion is met if:**

● The joint programme has already undergone, or is simultaneously undergoing, a quality assurance procedure using the European Approach. This criterion is covered by that evaluation (Standard 5) and therefore does not need to be re-assessed.
See Annex 5 for indicators for this criterion in other cases.

A.7: Transnational campus – access to services ◐

The programme has joint policies for students and staff to have access to relevant services in all participating higher education institutions under conditions equivalent to those for all enrolled students and local staff.

EQF 6, 7 & 8

Objective: Guarantee fair, consistent access to essential learning, teaching resources, and support services across all consortium partners, regardless of location or physical presence.

Description: Students and staff participating in the joint programme must be able to access relevant learning and teaching resources and support services across all consortium partners under equivalent conditions to those for local students and staff. Relevant services may include physical infrastructures (e.g., libraries, laboratories, workshops and study spaces), support services (e.g., academic and career counselling, wellbeing services, housing services, sports and cultural facilities) and IT services (e.g., learning platforms, online libraries, hybrid/virtual classrooms, and other digital tools). It is the responsibility of consortium partners to jointly define the "relevant services" and grant equal access to students and staff throughout the joint programme. It is not required that access to all services of all consortium partners is available to all students and staff of the joint programme at all times. This does not imply an automatic right to financial benefits such as scholarships or social security at all institutions.

☑ **The criterion is met if:**

There is evidence for **all of the following indicators:**

- Students and staff of the joint programme have equitable access to relevant physical infrastructure and facilities during their mobility periods.
- Students and staff of the joint programme have equitable access to relevant support services during their mobility periods.
- Students and staff of the joint programme have equitable access to relevant IT services for the whole duration of the programme.

◐ An evaluation using the European Approach procedure may provide evidence on the availability and accessibility of academic, administrative and support services for students (Standards 6, 7.1 and 7.2).

It should still be checked whether the programme has joint policies and ensures equivalent access to relevant services for students and staff across all participating HEIs, under the conditions required by this criterion.

A.8: Flexible and embedded student mobility

A.8.1: 30 ECTS physical mobility ◐

The joint programme offers student physical mobility of at least 30 ECTS (that can be split over several stays) at one or more partner institution(s). The joint programme has a policy offering alternatives for students who are unable to travel, such as virtual exchanges and/or blended mobility.

EQF 6 & 7

Objective: Ensure that all students of the joint programme can benefit from embedded physical mobility across consortium partners, or from alternative arrangements for students unable to travel.

Description: A period of physical mobility equivalent to a total of at least 30 ECTS undertaken at one or more consortium partner institutions located in a country different from that of the institution where the student started the joint programme, must be an integral part of the joint programme. It may be split into several shorter stays and may include mobility at more than one institution.
In addition, the joint programme must have a mobility policy setting out alternative arrangements for students who are unable to travel despite reasonable support measures[23]. Consortium partners are responsible for defining what constitutes reasonable support measures and significant barriers in their context, and for applying these arrangements consistently. In such cases, alternatives such as virtual exchanges and/or blended mobility are agreed by the consortium partners and provided on an individualised and proportionate basis, ensuring that the students achieve comparable learning outcomes. The mobility policy must specify the applicable circumstances and procedure for accessing these alternatives.

☑ **The criterion is met if:**

There is evidence for **both of the following indicators:**

- The joint programme offers an embedded physical mobility component of at least 30 ECTS.
- Joint arrangements are in place at the programme-level setting out alternatives for students unable to travel.

◐ An evaluation using the European Approach procedure may provide evidence on mobility paths foreseen within the joint programme (Standard 1.3).

It should still be checked whether the programme guarantees at least 30 ECTS of embedded physical mobility and whether it has an adequate policy offering alternatives for students who are unable to travel.

A.8.2: Six months physical mobility ◐

The joint programme offers at least six months of physical mobility at one or more partner institution(s). The joint programme has a policy offering alternatives for students who are unable to travel.

EQF 8

Objective: Ensure that all doctoral candidates of the joint programme can benefit from physical mobility of at least six months across consortium partners, or from alternative arrangements for doctoral candidates unable to travel.

Description: A period of physical mobility of at least six months at a different consortium partner from the institution where the doctoral candidate started the joint programme must be an integral part of the joint programme at EQF level 8. The mobility period can be split into several stays at different institutions.

In addition, the joint programme must establish a mobility policy setting out alternative arrangements for doctoral candidates who are unable to travel despite reasonable support measures[24]. Consortium partners are responsible for defining what constitutes reasonable

[23] Students who, despite reasonable support measures, are unable to undertake physical mobility due to significant barriers (economic, social, health, disability, caring responsibilities, visa or legal constraints, etc.). This includes unforeseen and exceptional circumstances or events beyond their control which, despite all due diligence, make travel legally impossible, life-threatening, or physically prevented. In such cases, alternatives (virtual exchange or blended mobility) will be provided on an individualised and proportionate basis. (see Glossary in Annex 1).

[24] See previous footnote or glossary in Annex 1 for a definition.

support measures and significant barriers in their context, and for applying these arrangements consistently. In such cases, consortium partners must adopt proportionate and personalised alternatives, adapted to the nature of doctoral training and supervision. The mobility policy must specify the applicable circumstances and procedure for accessing these alternatives.

☑ **The criterion is met if:**

There is evidence for **both of the following indicators:**

- The joint programme offers mobility opportunities among consortium partners with a total duration of at least six months
- Alternative arrangements are set out in a policy for doctoral candidates unable to travel.

◐ An evaluation under the European Approach may provide evidence on the mobility arrangements available to doctoral candidates within the joint programme (Standard 1.3).

It should still be checked whether the programme guarantees at least six months of physical mobility and whether it has an adequate policy offering alternatives for doctoral candidates who are unable to travel.

A.9: Co-evaluation and co-supervision for dissertations ○

Dissertations are supervised by at least 2 supervisors and co-evaluated by co-supervisors or a committee with members from at least 2 different institutions located in 2 different countries.

EQF 8

Objective: Ensure that doctoral candidates benefit from genuine joint supervision and evaluation across at least two consortium partners in different countries, providing diverse academic perspectives, enhancing research quality, and fostering trust in the joint award through fair and transparent assessment practices.

Description: Doctoral dissertations (or other deliverables formally leading to the award of a doctoral degree) in joint programmes must be supervised and evaluated through a collaborative international process. Each doctoral candidate is supervised by at least two supervisors from two different consortium partners located in different countries, with flexible arrangements in terms of co-supervision approaches (co-supervisors, main and secondary supervisor, main supervisor and supervision committee, etc.). Evaluation of the dissertation (or equivalent) must also follow a joint procedure. At minimum, the defence or assessment committee should include members nominated by at least two different consortium partners in different countries. These members may come from institutions other than the consortium partners. The joint arrangements must be documented in consortium agreement, cotutelle agreements (if one of the supervisors or committee members is affiliated with an entity external to the consortium), or programme regulations.

☑ **The criterion is met if:**

There is evidence for **both of the following indicators:**

- Each doctoral candidate is supervised by at least two supervisors from two different degree-awarding institutions located in different countries.

- The evaluation committee, nominated by two different consortium partners, includes members from at least two different institutions in two different countries.

○ This criterion is not addressed by the evaluation using the European Approach procedure. A full compliance assessment is needed.

3.2. Dimension B: European dimension criteria

B.1: Interdisciplinarity and research-based learning ○

The joint programme's arrangements include embedded interdisciplinarity and/or research-based learning components, tailored to the nature and circumstances of the joint programme.

EQF 6, 7 & 8

Objective: Foster creativity, critical thinking, analytical skills, adaptability, and innovation, preparing students to navigate dynamic academic and professional contexts.

Description: The joint programme must embed interdisciplinarity and/or research-based learning in the curriculum. The joint programme does not have to be formally structured across multiple disciplinary fields throughout the entire curriculum but interdisciplinarity and/or research-based learning must be designed as an integral part of students' learning pathways and demonstrated through the alignment of intended learning outcomes, assessment methods, and curriculum design. These components may take different forms, such as interdisciplinary courses, challenge-based activities, collaborative projects, or research-based learning components. Their depth and scope should be defined by consortium partners, be appropriate to the level of study, and evidenced in programme documentation and delivery.

☑ **The criterion is met if:**

- There are documented interdisciplinary components and/or research-based learning activities described in the joint programme documentation.

○ This criterion is not addressed by the evaluation using the European Approach procedure. A full compliance assessment is needed.

B.2: Opportunities for learning beyond academia and employability ◐

The joint programme's arrangements foresee opportunities to broaden the learning experience of students beyond the academic context, tailored to the nature and circumstances of the joint programme, including labour market requirements incorporating inter-sectoral components or activities and development of transversal skills.

EQF 6, 7 & 8

Objective: Prepare students for diverse career opportunities by equipping them with transversal skills relevant for employment across sectors and lifelong learning.

Description: The joint programme must include opportunities for students to engage with professional practice or other non-academic societal actors in ways that support the programme's intended learning outcomes and the qualification. These opportunities should include collaboration with external stakeholders such as employers and professional bodies, public services, cultural and heritage institutions, NGOs and civil society organisations, research infrastructures, start-ups, social economy actors and alumni networks. The form and depth of engagement should be proportionate and appropriate to the level of studies, the type of qualification (academic or professional) and the discipline. Students may be involved in internships, research projects, industry collaborations, secondments, volunteering or other work-related experiences outside the classroom. Alternatively, collaboration with professionals from outside academia may be embedded in the teaching and learning activities inside the classroom, such as work-based learning, research-based learning, service learning, challenge-based learning and others, offering practical insights to students, going beyond a one-off ad hoc contribution.

☑ **The criterion is met if:**

There is evidence for **at least one of the following indicators:**

- Work experience, internships, volunteering, research collaborations, projects with industry partners, or other engagement with relevant external stakeholders are embedded in the curriculum of the joint programme.
- Relevant professionals are involved in recurring educational roles within the joint programme.

◐ An evaluation using the European Approach procedure may provide evidence on the structure and content of the curriculum to enable the students to achieve the intended learning outcomes (Standard 3.1).

It should still be checked whether the programme includes structured opportunities to broaden students' learning experience beyond academia in the sense required by this criterion.

B.3: Digitalisation ○

The joint programme's arrangements include opportunities for students to develop adequate digital skills and competence, tailored to the nature and circumstances of the joint programme.

EQF 6, 7 & 8

Objective: Ensure that the joint programme offers students possibilities to develop digital competences required for their academic and professional development, while also fostering the digital literacy necessary for active participation in society.

Description: The joint programme must provide opportunities to develop adequate and relevant digital competences, referring to digital learning components that correspond to the joint programme's EQF level, goals and intended learning outcomes, scholarly field and overall setting (including cohort size, delivery model and, where relevant, requirements linked to regulated professions). The type and depth of digital competences should be determined by the consortium partners.

Digital competences may be developed through curriculum-embedded learning and assessment, or through centrally provided opportunities (extracurricular training, workshops, or services offered by institutional bodies such as the library or technical departments,

projects, certifications, use of learning management systems, collaborative online platforms and web services, virtual labs, simulation software, etc.) offered by the consortium partners to joint programme students. These may range from discipline-integrated digital methods and tools (e.g., in STEM) to elective or complementary components, depending on the field.

☑ **The criterion is met if:**

There is evidence for **at least one of the following indicators:**

- Development of relevant digital skills is integrated into the joint programme's curriculum.
- Consortium partners provide students with opportunities to enhance their digital skills outside of the joint programme's curriculum.

○ This criterion is not addressed by the evaluation using the European Approach procedure. A full compliance assessment is needed.

B.4: Values ○

The joint programme's arrangements adhere to the values of the EHEA (academic freedom, academic integrity, institutional autonomy, student and staff participation in higher education governance, public responsibility for higher education, and public responsibility of higher education) and include a commitment to promote common European values and democratic citizenship.

EQF 6, 7 & 8

Objective: Ensure that the joint programme and the consortium partners operate within governance, legal and policy frameworks that uphold the fundamental values of the EHEA[25], while demonstrating a proportionate and credible commitment to promoting common European values[26] and democratic citizenship[27].

Description: Adherence to the values of the EHEA must be embedded in consortium partners' legal status, governance structures and established policies, while the promotion of common European values and democratic citizenship is reflected in institutional missions, strategies or educational commitments. Compliance is demonstrated through a declaration submitted as part of the application. Assessment of the practical implementation of each value individually within the joint programme is not required.

[25] The values include academic freedom, academic integrity, institutional autonomy, student and staff participation in higher education governance, public responsibility for higher education, and public responsibility of higher education, as listed in BFUG, *EHEA Statement on Fundamental Values of the European Higher Education Area*, 2024, https://ehea.info/Immagini/BFUG_BE_VA_88_9_4_2_WG_FV_Statements1.pdf

[26] Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union [2016] OJ C 202/13, art 2, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:9e8d52e1-2c70-11e6-b497-01aa75ed71a1.0006.01/DOC_2&format=PDF; Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union [2012] OJ C 326/391, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:C2012/326/02

[27] Council of Europe, Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, art 2a, https://search.coe.int/cm?i=09000016805cf01f

☑ **The criterion is met if:**

The joint programme is covered by a declaration that reflects its commitment **to the core values of the EHEA** [28] and to promoting common European values and democratic citizenship.

○ This criterion is not addressed by the evaluation using the European Approach procedure. A full compliance assessment is needed.

B.5: Multilingualism ○

The joint programme's arrangements offer opportunities to equip each student with language skills through exposure to at least 2 different EU languages during learning activities or mobility.

EQF 6, 7 & 8

Objective: Actively foster multilingualism as a feature of the joint programme.

Description: The joint programme must ensure exposure to two EU languages[29] through flexible and proportionate means. No fixed proficiency level is required. Instead, students should get meaningful opportunities to engage with foreign language(s) through teaching, learning or extracurricular activities, such as different language of instruction, language courses, or similar face-to-face or online activities.

Where the language of instruction adopted by the joint programme is the same as the official language spoken in the countries where the students study, the programme must provide additional structured opportunities for students to engage with another EU language, including through mobility in a different-language environment or curriculum-linked language learning.

☑ **The criterion is met if:**

There is evidence for **at least one of the following indicators:**

- At least two EU languages are used in curricular components and/or extracurricular activities of the joint programme.
- Structured opportunities for language learning are defined and offered by the consortium partners, including courses and/or mobility opportunities to countries where a different EU language is spoken.

○ This criterion is not addressed by the evaluation using the European Approach procedure. A full compliance assessment is needed.

[28] The extent to which a programme or institution can commit to the values originally formulated at system level varies. For example, public responsibility for higher education is a system-level value that refers to public authorities' responsibility to further the main objectives of higher education. This is not something that is expected to be endorsed by individual institutions.
[29] Languages holding an official or co-official status in a European Union Member State or EEA EFTA State and used in the higher education system of that country (see glossary in Annex 1)

B.6: Inclusiveness

B.6.1: Diversity, equality, inclusion ○

The joint programme's arrangements include a commitment to wide participation by fostering diversity, equality, and inclusion and by adopting tailored measures to support students and staff with fewer opportunities.

EQF 6, 7 & 8

Objective: Ensure that the joint programme fosters inclusion, offering opportunities to students and staff from diverse backgrounds in order to promote diversity, mutual understanding and fair treatment, in an "internationalisation for all" spirit.

Description: The joint programme must actively promote inclusion by adopting measures that widen participation for students and staff with fewer opportunities. Partners select the most appropriate measures for their context. The commitment to inclusion must be embedded in governance, admissions, and support systems of the joint programme. It should be formally documented, and resourced through dedicated actions, processes and, where relevant, funding or staff time, and monitored. Consortium partners may implement tailored measures across admissions and recruitment, financial and mobility support, accessibility and support measures, inclusive pedagogy and curriculum development, governance and data.

☑ **The criterion is met if:**

- The joint programme has a documented inclusion policy.

AND there is evidence supporting **at least one of the following indicators:**

- Specific interventions or support programmes designed for students with fewer opportunities are in place at programme-level, institutional level or cross-institutional level and are applicable to the joint programme.
- Mechanisms to monitor and assess the inclusiveness of the joint programme are in place at programme-level, institutional level or cross-institutional level and are applicable to the joint programme.
- Funding mechanisms and procedures are assigned specifically to inclusion measures.

○ This criterion is not addressed by the evaluation using the European Approach procedure. A full compliance assessment is needed.

B.6.2: European Charter for Researchers ○

The joint programme's arrangements include a commitment to respect the principles of the European Charter for Researchers.

EQF 8

Objective: Ensure fair treatment of doctoral candidates and contribute to a thriving European Research Area (ERA).

Description: All consortium partners must demonstrate compliance with the European Charter for Researchers[30], covering the professional relationship between doctoral candidates and their institutions or funders. Commitment must be formally documented, for example, through institutional endorsement of the Charter or its integration into the consortium agreement, and must apply to all consortium partners.

☑ **The criterion is met if:**

- Consortium partners demonstrate documented commitment to the principles of the European Charter for Researchers.

○ This criterion is not addressed by the evaluation using the European Approach procedure. A full compliance assessment is needed.

B.7: Environmental sustainability ○

The joint programme's arrangements include policies and actions related to environmental sustainability and implement measures to minimise the environmental footprint of its activities and foresee opportunities for students to develop adequate green skills and competences, tailored to the nature and circumstances of the joint programme.

EQF 6, 7 & 8

Objective: Ensure that the joint programme is committed to sustainability, minimises its direct and indirect environmental footprint and equips students with relevant green knowledge and skills.

Description: Environmental sustainability must be integrated into the joint programme through two complementary components: sustainable programme delivery and the development of green knowledge and skills, in a manner proportionate to the joint programme's disciplinary profile, EQF level and delivery model. The joint programme must address the environmental footprint of its mobility and related joint activities through documented and feasible measures that do not undermine academic objectives or inclusiveness. In parallel, students must be provided with meaningful opportunities to develop green knowledge and skills aligned with the joint programme's goals, intended learning outcomes and graduate profile. Where sustainability is not a natural curricular focus, these may be offered through transversal options such as institution-wide modules, micro-credentials, or seminars.

☑ **The criterion is met if:**

There is evidence for **both of the following indicators:**

- Arrangements on sustainability and reducing environmental impact are in place at programme level, institutional level or cross-institutional level and are applicable to the joint programme.

[30] European Commission: Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, *The European Charter for Researchers – The code of conduct for the recruitment of researchers*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2005, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/a46424c7-962a-11e9-9369-01aa75ed71a1

- Students of the joint programme are provided with curricular or transversal opportunities to develop skills and expertise regarding environmental sustainability, ecological preservation, and neutral resource management.

○ This criterion is not addressed by the evaluation using the European Approach procedure. A full compliance assessment is needed.

Annexes to the

Operational Guide for the Joint European Degree Label

Annex 1: Glossary 30

Annex 2: Recommended template for the self-assessment report 40

Purpose of the self-assessment report 40
3.1.1. Principles for preparation of the report: 40
3.1.2. About the self-assessment report template: 40
3.1.3. 40
3.1.4. Support materials: 40
Introduction 41
Assessment of the criteria for the Joint European Degree Label 41
Self-Assessment endorsement declaration 44
Signature of the consortium coordinator 45

Annex 3: Evidence portfolio 46

Submission Requirements 46
I- Stakeholder input to the self-assessment 48
II- Template for the Declaration on Adherence to EHEA Fundamental Values 49
3.1.5. Purpose 49
III- Signatures of consortium partners 50

Annex 4: Templates for the Joint European Degree Label certificates 51

Template for certificates issued by awarding bodies to successful applicants 51
Template for certificates issued by higher education institutions to graduates of labelled joint programmes 52

Annex 5: Mapping of indicators to assess compliance with the criteria of the Joint European Degree Label 53

Annex 1: Glossary

Accreditation: "A formal decision by a recognised authority which has verified whether the institution and/or the programme meets the predefined minimum quality standards. Accreditation is usually a voluntary process and is granted for a specified number of years, after which the institution or programme has to request re-accreditation. The differences in the way accreditation is applied in different countries may include government involvement and the extent to which the procedure is really voluntary."[31] For the purposes of this Guide, accreditation is used as a general descriptor encompassing any successful external quality assurance process, including evaluations, reviews, or audits.

Assessment (of compliance): The process whereby an awarding body verifies that a joint programme fulfils the criteria of the Joint European Degree Label. It involves a targeted, criteria-based compliance check. This does not constitute a QA procedure, nor does it replace or reopen the original accreditation or QA process. The assessment relies on existing evidence, including a self-assessment by the consortium and a portfolio of evidence supporting the programme's compliance with the label's standards.

Award of credits: "The act of formally granting students and other learners the credits that are assigned to the qualification and/or its components if they achieve the defined learning outcomes. National authorities should indicate which institutions have the right to award ECTS credits. Credits are awarded to individual students after they have completed the required learning activities and achieved the defined learning outcomes, as evidenced by appropriate assessment. If students and other learners have achieved learning outcomes in other formal, non-formal, or informal learning contexts or timeframes, credits may be awarded through assessment and recognition of these learning outcomes."[32]

Awarding body: The organisation responsible for assessing compliance with the Joint European Degree Label criteria and formally awarding the label to qualifying joint programmes. There are two types of awarding bodies: (1) EU or EEA EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway)-based EQAR-registered QA agencies that offer assessments for the Joint European Degree Label, and (2) self-accrediting HEIs that have been ex-ante externally validated by an EU or EEA EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway)-based EQAR-registered QA agency to self-award the label. All awarding bodies apply the same assessment criteria as set out in the operational guide, ensuring consistency, comparability, and mutual trust in assessment outcomes.

Blended mobility: "A mobility activity that combines physical mobility and a virtual component, facilitating collaborative online learning exchange/teamwork." [33] The format supports inclusive participation by addressing barriers to physical mobility while maintaining international and intercultural learning outcomes.

Challenge-based learning: "A multidisciplinary approach in higher education that engages students with real-world issues through collaboration with peers, educators, and external stakeholders. This process involves three iterative phases: engage, investigate, and act. Challenge-based learning benefits students by enhancing motivation, skill development, and understanding of their professional fields. For educators, it offers valuable opportunities for

[31] ENIC-NARIC, *Quality in Higher Education: Accreditation, Recognition and Quality Assurance*, https://www.enic-naric.net/page-accreditation-recognition-quality-assurance

[32] *ECTS Users' Guide 2015*, p. 66, https://education.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document-library-docs/ects-users-guide_en.pdf

[33] Erasmus+ Programme Guide, *Glossary of terms - Common terms*, https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-d/common-terms

professional growth. Finally, universities strengthen their integration with local social actors, contributing to urgent societal matters[34].

Co-evaluation of dissertations: The joint assessment of a doctoral dissertation (or equivalent) by supervisors and/or a committee, ensuring multiple perspectives, academic fairness, and transparency. In this context, co-evaluation requires the active involvement of evaluators from at least two institutions in different countries.

Co-supervision of dissertations: A structured arrangement in which at least two supervisors from different institutions (in this context, also countries) share responsibility for supervising a doctoral candidate. Co-supervision involves regular consultation, shared feedback, and joint responsibility for academic guidance.

Collaborative project: A structured activity where learners from different disciplinary or institutional backgrounds work jointly on shared research or learning tasks, producing outcomes that reflect multiple perspectives.

Conflict of interest: A situation in which a member of the external assessment panel has a personal, professional, financial, or institutional interest that could compromise their impartiality when assessing a joint programme's compliance with the Joint European Degree Label criteria. In line with ESG Standard 2.4 and the European Approach (Part C, Section 2), the following constitute conflicts of interest:

- **Direct institutional links:** Current employment, a contractual relationship, or a formal advisory role at any institution within the consortium, or at an institution that has a direct partnership with the consortium.
- **Programme involvement:** Direct participation in the design, delivery, or governance of the joint programme under assessment, regardless of institutional affiliation.
- **Financial interest:** Receipt of payments, grants, or other benefits from any consortium partner beyond the standard assessment fee.
- **Personal relationships:** Close personal relationships, including those with a spouse, partner, or immediate family member employed by or materially connected to a consortium institution.

Past links do not constitute a conflict of interest but must be declared and assessed on a case-by-case basis by the awarding body.

Consortium: A partnership of institutions bound by a consortium agreement to participate in the delivery of a joint programme. For the purposes of the Joint European Degree Label, the consortium must include at least two HEIs from at least two different EU Member States or EEA EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway), each holding a degree-awarding role. Only the degree-awarding partners are required to comply with the criteria of the Joint European Degree label process. The consortium as a whole is responsible for the academic quality, governance, and compliance of the joint programme with the label criteria. While the consortium agreement defines internal cooperation, the legal form and liability of the consortium are governed by the national legal frameworks of the participating HEIs.

Consortium agreement: A binding document in which consortium partners set out the terms and conditions governing a joint programme. This agreement may be denominated as a cooperation agreement, memorandum of understanding, or joint programme regulations. The agreement covers at least the following aspects:

- **Denomination:** The specific degree(s) awarded in the joint programme.

[34] Arruti, A., et al, *Challenge-Based Learning: UNIC teaching guide for university educators*, UNIC European University, 2025, p. 1, https://unic.eu/storage/app/media/ctl/TeachingGuides/UNIC%20Teaching%20Guide%20CBL.pdf

- **Governance:** Coordination and responsibilities of the partners regarding management and financial organisation (including funding and sharing of costs/income).
- **Student lifecycle:** Admission and selection procedures, as well as mobility arrangements for students and staff.
- **Academic standards:** Examination regulations, student assessment methods, recognition of credits, and degree-awarding procedures.

Consortium partner: Institutions or organisations that are members of the consortium delivering the joint programme and signatories to the consortium agreement. For the purpose of the Joint European Degree Label, consortium partners are categorised as follows:

- **Degree-awarding partners:** Institutions that co-award joint degrees to graduates of the joint programme.
- **Non-degree awarding partners:** Organisations such as research institutes, enterprises, public bodies, or non-degree-awarding HEIs that contribute to the delivery of the programme (e.g., through teaching, providing internship or mobility placements, or research facilities).

Continuous enhancement: A systematic, ongoing process of improving the quality and relevance of study programmes through regular evaluation of courses and learning outcomes; incorporating student feedback and performance data; updating content to reflect new research, industry trends, and societal needs; improving teaching methods, assessment strategies, and learning support; and aligning programmes with accreditation standards and institutional goals.

Cotutelle agreement: A formal agreement between a doctoral student and two HEIs in different countries, under which the doctoral candidate completes a doctoral research project under the joint supervision of both institutions.

Digital competences: The knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to use digital technologies effectively, critically, and responsibly in academic, professional, and civic life. In the context of the Joint European Degree Label, digital competences are understood broadly and contextually: their type and depth are determined by the consortium partners in relation to the joint programme's EQF level, intended learning outcomes, scholarly field, and overall setting. Reference frameworks such as DigComp (Digital Competence Framework for Citizens)[35] may be used as guidance.

Diploma Supplement: "A document attached to a higher education diploma issued by the competent authorities or bodies, in order to make it easier for third persons – particularly in another country – to understand the learning outcomes acquired by the holder of the qualification, as well as the nature, level, context, content and status of the education and training completed and skills acquired".[36] The Diploma Supplement is also part of the Europass framework transparency tools.[37]

Diversity, equality and inclusion measures: Policies, actions and practices designed to promote inclusive practices for learners and staff from all backgrounds. These measures ensure equal opportunities regardless of socioeconomic status, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, political views, religion, or other protected characteristics, aligning with EU non-

[35] Joint Research Centre, *Digital Competence Framework (DigComp),* https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/projects-and-activities/education-and-training/digital-transformation-education/digital-competence-framework-digcomp_en

[36] Decision (EU) of the European Parliament and of the Council on a common framework for the provision of better services for skills and qualifications (Europass) and repealing Decision No 2241/2004/EC, 2018/646, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32018D0646

[37] Europass, *The Diploma Supplement*, https://europass.europa.eu/en/learn-europe/diploma-supplement

discrimination directives and the Bologna Process goals for equitable access to quality education.

Double/multiple degrees *(for distinction only)*: Separate degrees awarded by several HEIs offering a joint programme attesting the successful completion of this programme (if two separate degrees are awarded by two institutions, this is a 'double degree'). This is different from a joint degree, where a single document is awarded by the HEIs offering the joint programme. Double/multiple degrees are not eligible for the Joint European Degree Label.

Education for democratic citizenship: Equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding, and developing their attitudes and behaviour, to empower them to exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities in society, to value diversity and to play an active part in democratic life, with a view to the promotion and protection of democracy and the rule of law, as expressed in the Recommendation of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education.[38]

Environmental sustainability: In this context, measures and policies aimed at promoting relevant green knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and minimising the direct and indirect environmental impact and consumer footprint[39] of educational operations, such as reducing waste or energy consumption in learning spaces, developing sustainable campus activities, and proposing sustainable travel practices, among others.

EU or EEA EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway)-based EQAR-registered quality assurance agency: A QA agency that is both registered in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)[40] and legally established in an EU Member State or in an EEA EFTA State (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway). Registration in EQAR confirms that the agency has demonstrated substantial compliance with the ESG. For the purposes of the Joint European Degree Label, only EU or EEA EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway)-based EQAR-registered agencies are eligible to act as awarding bodies or to conduct the ex-ante external validation of self-accrediting HEIs.

EU languages: For the purposes of the Joint European Degree Label, Languages holding an official or co-official status in a European Union Member State or EEA EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway) and used in the higher education system of that country.

European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes (European Approach)[41]: An approach approved in May 2015 by European Ministers responsible for higher education that was developed to ease external quality assurance of these programmes: it defines standards that are based on the agreed tools of the EHEA, without applying additional national criteria. The approach is expected to facilitate integrated approaches to quality assurance for joint programmes that genuinely reflect and mirror their joint character.

European Charter for Researchers[42]: A document outlining the rights and responsibilities of researchers in Europe, promoting fair working conditions. It consists of a set of principles underpinning the development of attractive research careers to support excellence in research

[38] Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 11 May 2010 at the 120th Session), CM/Rec(2010)7, https://search.coe.int/cm?i=09000016805cf01f

[39] European Commission, *Consumer Footprint Calculator | EPLCA*, https://eplca.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ConsumerFootprint.html

[40] European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), *Registered Agencies*, https://www.eqar.eu/register/agencies/

[41] European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes, approved by EHEA ministers in May 2015, https://www.eqar.eu/assets/uploads/2018/04/02_European_Approach_QA_of_Joint_Programmes_v1_0.pdf

[42] European Commission: Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, *The European Charter for Researchers – The code of conduct for the recruitment of researchers*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2005, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/a46424c7-962a-11e9-9369-01aa75ed71a1

and innovation across Europe. The focus of the European Charter for Researchers is the rights and responsibilities of researchers, employers, funders and policy/makers.

European Higher Education Area (EHEA) values: The EHEA's fundamental values of higher education, namely academic freedom, academic integrity, institutional autonomy, participation of students and staff in higher education governance, as determined by each institution's governance framework, and public responsibility for and of higher education.[43] EHEA values are ministerially endorsed Bologna Process commitments that underpin quality in higher education and democratic societies.

European Higher Education Sector Observatory (EHESO)[44]: A user-centred data and information platform on the higher education sector in Europe. EHESO enables the comparison, analysis, and showcasing of the performance of the higher education sectors and institutions across multiple themes. EHESO data can be used to contextualise graduate tracking data, but it should not replace a graduate tracking system.

European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)[45]: A register of QA agencies that have demonstrated their substantial compliance with the ESG standards.

European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) / ECTS credits: "A learner-centred system for credit accumulation and transfer, based on the principle of transparency of learning, teaching and assessment processes. Its objective is to facilitate planning, delivery and evaluation of study programmes and student mobility by recognising learning achievements and qualifications and periods of learning."[46] "ECTS credits express the volume of learning based on defined learning outcomes and their associated workload. 60 ECTS credits are allocated to the learning outcomes and workload of a full-time academic year or its equivalent, which normally comprises several educational components to which credits are allocated."[47]

European values: Values enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU)[48] and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,[49] and promoted in the Council recommendation of 22 May 2018 on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching.[50]

External assessment panel: A group of independent assessors appointed by the awarding body (EQAR-registered EU-based QA agency or a self-accrediting HEI) to assess a joint programme's compliance with the Joint European Degree Label criteria.

External quality assurance: An evaluation, review, accreditation or audit of a HEI or programme carried out by a QA agency according to applicable law. For the purposes of this guide, external quality assurance refers specifically to evaluations conducted by EU-based QA agencies registered in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).

---

[43] EHEA Fundamental Values Working Group, *Fundamental Values Working Group 2020-2024 Report*, https://ehea.info/Upload/BFUG_ES_GA_86_6_3_WG_FV_Report_1_.pdf

[44] EHESO, Benchmarking Tool for Higher Education Institutions, https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/eheso

[45] European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education - EQAR, https://www.eqar.eu/

[46] ECTS Users' Guide, 2015, p. 69.

[47] ECTS Users' Guide, 2015, p. 10.

[48] Treaty on European Union, Art. 2, 26.10.2012, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A12012M002

[49] Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, 2012/C 326/02, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A12012P%2FTXT

[50] Council Recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching, OJ C 195, 7.6.2018, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018H0607%2801%29

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)[51]: This Regulation lays down rules relating to the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data, as well as rules on the free movement of personal data.

Graduate tracking system: Graduate tracking refers to gathering information from and about graduates' career paths, further studies, and employability after they complete their studies in line with the Council Recommendation on tracking graduates.[52] Graduate tracking enables longitudinal analysis and covers a wide range of outcomes, including educational pathways, employment and career outcomes, international mobility experiences, and the relevance of skills and competencies. Graduate tracking can be done using anonymised regular surveys of graduates or administrative data from public authorities. The data can be analysed qualitatively or quantitatively.

Green skills[53]: "This term refers to the knowledge, abilities, values, and attitudes needed to live in, develop, and support a society that reduces the impact of human activity on the environment."[54] In the European Sustainability Competence Framework (GreenComp)[55], these skills and competences comprise twelve competences, including systems thinking, critical thinking, futures literacy, adaptability, political action, and collective action; they are intended as non-prescriptive references for lifelong learning.

Higher education institution (HEI): An institution which, in accordance with national law or practice, offers recognised degrees or other recognised tertiary-level qualifications at EQF levels 6, 7, and 8, regardless of what such an establishment is called.[56]

Inclusiveness: A deliberate, sustained commitment by HEIs and joint programmes to ensure equitable access and full participation for all students and staff, by removing barriers, valuing diversity, and supporting those with fewer opportunities, in line with the Bologna Process social dimension goals and EU non-discrimination principles.[57]

Inclusiveness measures: The policies, actions and resources through which the commitment to inclusiveness is operationalised. In the context of the Joint European Degree Label (criterion B.6.1), inclusiveness measures span admissions (e.g. flexible entry pathways, accessible information), financial and mobility support (such as targeted scholarships and funds), programme accessibility (accommodation arrangements, virtual or hybrid participation options, etc.), and governance (e.g. inclusion policies embedded in the consortium agreement, equality data collection, staff training).

Interdisciplinarity: The integration of knowledge, methodologies, and perspectives combining diverse academic disciplines to address a shared question, problem, or learning goal in ways that exceed what any single discipline could achieve in isolation. In the context

[51] Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation) [2016] OJ L 119/1, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:02016R0679-20160504

[52] Recommendations Council of 20 November 2017 on tracking graduates, (2017/C 423/01), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32017H1209(01)

[53] For consistency, the guide and annexes use 'competences' to refer to a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes. While the Council-approved criteria use the term 'skills', it is interpreted across the guide in the broader sense.

[54] Cedefop, *Green skills and environmental awareness in vocational education and training - Synthesis report*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2012, p. 20, https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications/5524

[55] Bianchi, G., Pisiotis, U., Cabrera Giraldez, M., *GreenComp – The European sustainability competence framework*, Bacigalupo, M., Punie, Y. (editors), Publications Office of the European Union, https://dx.doi.org/10.2760/13286

[56] Adapted from Regulation (EU) 2021/817 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing Erasmus+: the Union Programme for education, training, youth and sport and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013, Article 2, §19. OJ L 189, 28.5.2021, p. 1, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021R0817

[57] Adapted from Making our systems more inclusive, Yerevan Communiqué of the EHEA Ministerial Conference, Yerevan, 14-15 May 2015, https://ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/2015_Yerevan/70/7/YerevanCommuniqueFinal_613707.pdf

of the Joint European Degree Label (criterion B.1), interdisciplinarity is evidenced through documented programme components, such as interdisciplinary courses, joint projects, or mixed-discipline teams, which are reflected in the intended learning outcomes and curriculum design.

Internal quality assurance: Processes within HEIs/consortia of HEIs that ensure the quality and continuous enhancement of teaching, learning and assessment, in line with ESG Part 1. For self-accrediting consortia, internal quality assurance, in the context of the Joint European Degree Label, specifically includes applying the standards and methodology of the European Approach.

Joint degree: A single document awarded by higher education institutions offering the joint programme and nationally acknowledged as the recognised award of the joint programme.[58]

Joint European Degree Label: A quality label granted to joint programmes delivered through transnational cooperation between higher education institutions from different countries, including at least two EU Member States, to act as a branding tool, promoting compliance with European standards and providing visibility and prestige to the labelled joint programmes. The label is granted based on common European criteria following an assessment by competent accreditation or quality assurance authorities, such as self-accrediting universities, accreditation agencies, or quality assurance bodies.[59]

Joint policies, procedures and/or arrangements: Agreed-upon rules and procedures governing a joint programme across all consortium partners. Unless indicated otherwise in this document, these policies can be adopted at the level of the joint programme itself (accreditation and its annexes, such as consortium agreement), of the institutions (internal regulations and policies specific to transnational studies and joint programmes) or in the context of a cross-institutional governance structure (policies of alliances of HEIs or similar).

Joint programme: "An integrated curriculum coordinated and offered jointly by different HEIs from different countries and leading to double/multiple degrees or a joint degree."[60] In the context of the Joint European Degree Label, only joint programmes leading to a joint degree are eligible for the label.

Learning outcomes: "Statements regarding what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and responsibility and autonomy".[61] Their achievement must be verified through transparent assessment procedures based on clear criteria. Learning outcomes are used to describe both individual educational components and entire programmes, providing the basis for European and national qualifications frameworks to define the specific level of a qualification.

Learning pathway: "Learning pathway is a route taken by a learner allowing him/her to build knowledge progressively and acquire the desired set of competences. The learning pathway may be 'signposted' through institution guidance and regulations (including the recognition of prior learning and experience) and different learning pathways may lead to the award of the same qualification. In essence the concept of a 'learning pathway' emphasises the choice of the student in reaching the desired educational goals."[62] In the context of joint programmes, a

[58] EQAR, Definitions, https://www.eqar.eu/kb/joint-programmes/definitions/

[59] Council Recommendation of 12 May 2025 on a European quality assurance and recognition system in higher education, C/2025/3006, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/C/2025/3006/oj#anx_II

[60] EQAR, Definitions, https://www.eqar.eu/kb/joint-programmes/definitions/

[61] Council Recommendation on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and repealing the recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning, (2017/C 189/03), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32017H0615(01)&from=EN

[62] ECTS Users' Guide, 2015, p. 73.

learning pathway reflects the specific set of curriculum components, including mobility periods across consortium partners that a student completes, as recorded in the joint Diploma Supplement.

Mixed consortium: A consortium in which the degree awarding partners include HEIs subject to external programme-level accreditation and self-accrediting HEIs.

Peer experts: Independent individuals with relevant academic and/or professional expertise and no conflicts of interest with the programme or institutions under assessment, appointed by the awarding body to conduct the assessment of a joint programme's compliance with the Joint European Degree Label criteria as part of the external assessment panel.

Physical mobility: A period of study at a consortium partner other than the one where the student began the joint programme, which is an integral part of the curriculum. Physical presence at the consortium partner is necessary. It may include mobility at more than one consortium partner.

Positive external evaluation: A final quality assurance decision confirming that a joint programme complies with the applicable standards, or a conditional decision whose conditions have been fully satisfied.

Quality assurance policy: A document, included in or annexed to the consortium agreement, that sets out the shared quality assurance arrangements applicable to the joint programme. It defines the coordination and responsibilities of consortium partners regarding internal quality assurance and must be aligned with the ESG. It covers how the consortium monitors, reviews, and continuously enhances the joint programme across all partner institutions.

Recognition of credits: The process through which an institution certifies that learning outcomes achieved in and assessed by another institution satisfy (some or all) requirements of a particular programme, its components or qualification.[63]

Research-based learning: A student-centred approach that actively engages learners in inquiry, investigation, and problem-solving, linking teaching with research by involving students and other learners in research activities (such as collaborative projects, laboratory work, or thesis preparation), and emphasising the development of analytical and critical thinking skills.

Self-accrediting HEIs: HEIs that have been granted the legal authority to approve and internally quality-assure their own programmes by a competent national or regional body. This legal authority may be subject to periodic external institutional review or, in some systems, established as a permanent statutory right, with oversight maintained through institutional-level evaluations rather than individual programme-level accreditation.

Service learning: A form of teaching and learning that combines the social engagement of learners with learning related to different disciplines. Learners can undertake actions for the common good across various social, political, environmental, and cultural spheres.

Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)[64]: A set of standards and guidelines for internal and external quality assurance in higher education. The ESG are not standards for quality, nor do they prescribe how the quality assurance processes are implemented, but they provide guidance, covering the areas which are vital for successful quality provision and learning environments in higher education. The

[63] ECTS Users' Guide, 2015, p. 75.

[64] EAHEA, *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*, https://ehea.info/page-standards-and-guidelines-for-quality-assurance

ESG should be considered in a broader context that also includes qualifications frameworks, ECTS and the Diploma Supplement that also contribute to promoting the transparency and mutual trust in higher education in the EHEA.[65]

Student-centred learning: Educational approach ensuring that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.[66]

Students unable to travel: Students who, despite reasonable support measures, are unable to undertake physical mobility due to significant barriers (economic, social, health, disability, caring responsibilities, visa or legal constraints, etc.). This includes unforeseen and exceptional circumstances or events beyond their control which, despite all due diligence, make travel legally impossible, life-threatening, or physically prevented.

Students with fewer opportunities: Students who, for economic, social, cultural, geographical or health reasons, due to their migrant background, or for reasons such as disability or educational difficulties, face obstacles that prevent them from having effective access to higher education opportunities, including participation in joint programmes and their mobility components.[67]

Students' representatives: Students who are formally mandated, through democratic or otherwise legitimate selection procedures recognised within the higher education system or institution, to represent the interests and views of students in decision-making, consultative or advisory bodies. These bodies can be at the level of a joint programme, the HEIs or the cross-institutional governance structure.

Support services: Learning and teaching resources and facilities, including IT infrastructure, libraries, laboratories, workshops and student and staff support, including housing, career, well-being or other services, that are necessary to achieve the programme's learning outcomes and safeguard the well-being of students and staff across all consortium partners.

Transnational campus: The learning and service environment of a joint programme, formed by the collective physical and digital infrastructure, facilities, and support services of all consortium partners. Its defining feature is that students and staff of the joint programme have equitable access to relevant services, regardless of which institution they attend in person or whether they participate remotely. This does not imply the establishment of a legal entity.

Transversal skills and competences: Ability to apply knowledge and know-how across a broad range of occupations, sectors, and learning situations. While skills mean "the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems", competences represent the "proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development". [68] These are not specific to a single profession or subject and include communication, digital competence, critical thinking, and self-management. They are often

[65] Council Recommendation of 12 May 2025 on a European quality assurance and recognition system in higher education, C/2025/3006, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/C/2025/3006/oj#anx_II

[66] Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, 2015, p. 25, https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf

[67] Adapted from Regulation (EU) 2021/817 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing Erasmus+: the Union Programme for education, training, youth and sport and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013, Article 2, §24. OJ L 189, 28.5.2021, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021R0817

[68] Council Recommendation on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and repealing the recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning, (2017/C 189/03), https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32017H0615(01)&from=EN

referred to interchangeably as ‘soft’ or ‘core’ skills, but in formal frameworks, they are defined by their wide applicability and the autonomy with which they are exercised.

Validation (ex-ante validation of self-accrediting HEIs): The procedure by which an EU-based EQAR-registered QA agency authorises a self-accrediting HEI to award the Joint European Degree Label. It aims to ensure that the self-accrediting HEI applies the standards of the European Approach and assesses its own joint programmes for label compliance in accordance with this operational guide.

Virtual exchange: A structured, technology-enabled collaborative activity ensuring transfer of credits connecting students and/or academic staff from at least two geographically separated institutions. Virtual exchanges involve sustained interaction, such as facilitated discussions, collaborative projects, or joint seminars, and are designed to generate intercultural and international learning outcomes comparable to those of physical mobility.[69]

Work-based learning: Learning method delivered in real or simulated work environments designed to help individuals achieve specific knowledge, skills, and responsibility and autonomy. By combining practical experience with classroom instruction, common forms such as apprenticeships and traineeships enable learners to apply theoretical knowledge in professional contexts to meet defined learning outcomes.

Workload: An estimation of the time learners typically need to complete all learning activities such as lectures, seminars, projects practical work, work placements, individual study required to achieve the defined learning outcomes in formal learning environments. The correspondence of the fulltime workload of an academic year to 60 credits is often formalised by national legal provisions. In most cases, student workload ranges from 1,500 to 1,800 hours for an academic year, which means that one credit corresponds to 25 to 30 hours of work. It should be recognised that this represents the normal workload and that for individual learners the actual time to achieve the learning outcomes will vary.[70]

[69] Adapted from the European Commission, *Erasmus+ virtual exchanges*, https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-b/key-action-1/virtual-exchanges

[70] ECTS Users’ Guide, 2015, p. 77.

Annex 2: Recommended template for the self-assessment report

Purpose of the self-assessment report

The self-assessment report is the core document in the application for the Joint European Degree Label. Written in English, it is accompanied by an evidence portfolio that demonstrates compliance with the criteria for the Joint European Degree Label.

The self-assessment report serves three purposes:

- **Self-reflection tool:** It allows a consortium to review its joint programme thoroughly, demonstrate compliance with the Joint European Degree Label criteria, and compile the necessary supporting evidence.
- **Basis for assessment:** It provides the foundation for the assessment panel's evaluation of the programme's compliance with the established criteria.
- **Decision-making document:** It serves as essential context for the awarding body when they review the panel's findings to determine whether to grant the Joint European Degree Label.

3.1.1. Principles for preparation of the report:

The self-assessment report should be prepared according to the following principles:

1. **Collaborative approach:** The process must involve all degree-awarding consortium partners; it shall include input from staff, students, alumni, and stakeholders gathered through surveys, focus groups, or governance meetings, as documented in the Stakeholder Input table. Degree-awarding partners are responsible for assessing the curriculum components offered by non-degree-awarding partners. One consortium partner should act as the coordinating institution for submission and correspondence. The report is submitted under the signature of the coordinating institution on behalf of all degree-awarding consortium partners.
2. **Evidence-based:** Every claim and description should be supported by direct references to the documents contained in the Evidence portfolio.
3. **Clear and concise:** The report should be comprehensive while remaining focused and succinct.

3.1.2. About the self-assessment report template:

The template guides the consortia through the self-assessment process with section-by-section instructions based on the Joint European Degree Label criteria.

3.1.3.

3.1.4. Support materials:

- **Operational guide for the Joint European Degree Label:** Provides a detailed explanation of each criterion, including objectives, indicators, and compliance elements.
- **Glossary** (Annex 1): Defines key terminology used throughout the process.
- **Evidence portfolio checklist** (Annex 3): Lists all required supporting documentation.

Introduction

Provide the official programme details in the following table:

Joint programme descriptor	Description
Official programme name	
EQF level:	☐ EQF 6 (Bachelor) ☐ EQF 7 (Master) ☐ EQF 8 (Doctorate)
Degree type	*(e.g., Bachelor of Arts, Master of Science, Doctor of Philosophy, etc.)*
Programme discipline(s):	
Language(s) of instruction	
Year of establishment:	
Current accreditation status:	
European Approach evaluation:	☐ Yes (attach report) ☐ No ☐ Pending
Lead institution:	
Consortium partners involved:	

Assessment of the criteria for the Joint European Degree Label

This section is the core of the self-assessment report and organises the criteria into two dimensions:

- **Dimension A - Programme organisation criteria:** Operational and quality assurance aspects.
- **Dimension B - European dimension criteria:** European values and priorities of the joint programme.

Instructions for completion of the self-assessment report:

- **Compliance requirement:** All criteria must be met for the label to be awarded. Ensure responses clearly demonstrate how each criterion is met.
- **Justification and evidence:** For each criterion, provide a concise justification (max. 350 words) and refer to specific documents in the Evidence Portfolio (Annex 3).
- **Programme Status:** Programmes should demonstrate compliance in a manner appropriate to their stage of implementation: where a criterion cannot yet be evidenced in practice, applicants should provide credible implementation plans; where the programme is already in operation, applicants should demonstrate how the criterion is met in practice.
- **Alignment with the European Approach:** Use the following symbols to determine the level of additional evidence required:

- ● Fully Addressed: The European Approach report covers the criterion; no additional assessment is needed. Provide only a reference to the relevant report section.
- ◐ Partially Addressed: The European Approach report provides a foundation. Supplement the report reference with additional evidence.
- O Not Addressed: A full compliance demonstration is required.
- For any criteria found to be non-compliant or partially compliant under a previous European Approach evaluation, you must provide updated evidence to demonstrate the current state of play and how the issues have been addressed.

Table 2. Dimension A: Programme organisation criteria

A.1 ◐ Higher Education Institutions Involved	Compliance: No | Yes
Justification: (Max. 350 words)	
Source of evidence:	
A.2- Transnational Joint Degree Delivery **A.2.1 ● Joint design and delivery**	Compliance: No | Yes
Justification: (Max. 350 words)	
Source of evidence:	
A.2- Transnational Joint Degree Delivery **A.2.2 ◐ Joint degree**	Compliance: No | Yes
Justification: (Max. 350 words)	
Source of evidence:	
A.2- Transnational Joint Degree Delivery **A.2.3 ◐ Joint diploma supplement (EQF 6 & 7)**	Compliance: No | Yes
Justification: (Max. 350 words)	
Source of evidence:	
A.2- Transnational Joint Degree Delivery **A.2.4 ● Use of ECTS Users' Guide (EQF 6 & 7)**	Compliance: No | Yes
Justification: (Max. 350 words)	
Source of evidence:	
A.3 ◐ Joint Arrangements for the Programme	Compliance: No | Yes
Justification: (Max. 350 words)	
Source of evidence:	
A.4- Quality assurance arrangements **A.4.1 ● Internal and external quality assurance**	Compliance: No | Yes
Justification: (Max. 350 words)	

Source of evidence:	
A.4- Quality assurance arrangements **A.4.2 ● European Approach**	Compliance: No | Yes
Justification: (Max. 350 words)	
Source of evidence:	
A.5 ○ Graduate tracking	Compliance: No | Yes
Justification: (Max. 350 words)	
Source of evidence:	
A.6 ● Student-centred learning	Compliance: No | Yes
Justification: (Max. 350 words)	
Source of evidence:	
A.7 ◐ Transnational campus – Access to services	Compliance: No | Yes
Justification: (Max. 350 words)	
Source of evidence:	
A.8- Flexible and Embedded Student Mobility **A.8.1 ◐ 30 ECTS physical mobility (EQF 6 & 7)**	Compliance: No | Yes
Justification: (Max. 350 words)	
Source of evidence:	
A.8- Flexible and Embedded Student Mobility **A.8.2 ◐ Six months physical mobility (EQF 8)**	Compliance: No | Yes
Justification: (Max. 350 words)	
Source of evidence:	
A.9 ○ Co-Evaluation and co-supervision for dissertations (EQF 8)	Compliance: No | Yes
Justification: (Max. 350 words)	
Source of evidence:	

Table 3. Dimension B: European dimension criteria

B.1 ○ Interdisciplinarity and research-based learning	Compliance: No | Yes
Justification: (Max. 350 words)	
Source of evidence:	

B.2 ◐ Opportunities for Learning Beyond Academia and Employability	Compliance: No | Yes
Justification: (Max. 350 words)	
Source of evidence:	
B.3 ○ Digitalisation	Compliance: No | Yes
Justification: (Max. 350 words)	
Source of evidence:	
B.4 ○ Values	Compliance: No | Yes
Justification: (Max. 350 words)	
Source of evidence:	
B.5 ○ Multilingualism	Compliance: No | Yes
Justification: (Max. 350 words)	
Source of evidence:	
B.6- Inclusiveness **B.6.1 ○ Diversity, Equality and Inclusion**	Compliance: No | Yes
Justification: (Max. 350 words)	
Source of evidence:	
B.6- Inclusiveness **B.6.2 ○ European Charter for Researchers**	Compliance: No | Yes
Justification: (Max. 350 words)	
Source of evidence:	
B.7 ○ Environmental sustainability	Compliance: No | Yes
Justification: (Max. 350 words)	
Source of evidence:	

Self-Assessment endorsement declaration

We, the undersigned, hereby declare that:

- The information provided in this self-assessment report is accurate and complete to the best of our knowledge.

- All degree-awarding partners have been consulted in the preparation of this report and endorse its contents.
- We are willing to answer all questions the awarding body may have as part of the assessment process and to share additional documents if needed.
- We commit to notifying the awarding body of any substantial changes to the joint programme that could affect compliance with the criteria.

We understand that the Joint European Degree Label may be withdrawn if the programme no longer complies with the criteria.

Signature of the consortium coordinator

The self-assessment report requires the signature of the HEI selected on behalf of the consortium to coordinate the application, acting on behalf of all partners.

Annex 3: Evidence portfolio

The Evidence portfolio is a set of documentation that supports the Self-Assessment Report and demonstrates compliance with the Joint European Degree Label criteria. The portfolio should be interpreted as a flexible menu of evidence sources. Not all documents listed will be required in every case; applicants should provide the documents most relevant to the criterion and the programme's context.

The portfolio distinguishes between two categories of evidence:

- **Main evidence sources** are binding documents that form the primary evidence base: the consortium agreement (or cooperation agreement, memorandum of understanding, joint programme regulations, or equivalent), programme quality assurance or accreditation reports (external or internal) confirming the validity of the joint programme. These documents establish the regulatory framework and formal commitments of the joint programme.
- **Complementary evidence** provides additional context, detail, or verification where the main documents do not fully address specific criteria. These supporting documents strengthen claims and demonstrate implementation.

Submission Requirements

- **Format:** PDFs and/or shared links.
- **Language:** Translations may be required.
- **Note:** Joint programmes already evaluated or undergoing evaluation under the European Approach may use that evaluation as the main evidence base, complemented by information specific to the Joint European Degree Label criteria.

Source category	Document title / description	Related criteria	Available (✓/✗)	Language	Reference / Link
MAIN EVIDENCE SOURCES					
Consortium agreement / programme regulations	Consortium agreement or equivalent	A.1, A.2.2, A.2.3, A.3, A.5, A.7, A.8.1, A.8.2, A.9, B.1, B.2, B.3, B.4, B.5, B.6.1, B.6.2, B.7			
	Joint programme regulations	A.1, A.2.2, A.2.3, A.3, A.5, A.7, A.8.1, A.8.2, A.9, B.1, B.2, B.3, B.4, B.5, B.6.1, B.6.2, B.7			
QA / accreditation reports	Programme quality assurance documents (e.g. programme review reports, annual monitoring, self-evaluations)	A.1, A.2.2, A.2.3, A.3, A.4.1, A.4.2, A.8.1, A.8.2, B.1, B.3, B.4, B.5, B.7			
	Legal documents confirming the	A.1, A.2.2, A.2.3, A.3, A.8.1, A.8.2,			

Source category	Document title / description	Related criteria	Available (✓/✗)	Language	Reference / Link
	validity of the joint programme (EQAR-registered agencies, and self-accrediting institutions using the European Approach).	B.1, B.3, B.4, B.5, B.7			
COMPLEMENTARY EVIDENCE					
Programme documentation	Joint programme handbook / Programme description	A.3, A.6, A.7, A.8.1, A.8.2, A.9, B.1, B.2, B.3, B.4, B.5, B.6.1, B.6.2, B.7			
	Syllabi / Course catalogue / Module descriptions	A.2.4, A.3, A.6, B.1, B.2, B.6.1, B.6.2, B.7			
	Student agreement	A.2.2, B.6.1			
	Learning outcomes documentation	A.6, B.4, B.7			
	Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE)	A.2, A.7, A.8.1, A.8.2			
Sample diplomas / supplements	Sample of Joint Diploma	A.2.2, A.3			
	Sample of Diploma Supplement	A.2.3, B.5			
Monitoring & feedback evidence	Graduate tracking reports	A.5, B.2			
	Feedback surveys (student, stakeholder feedback)	A.5, B.2			
	Evidence of student support services	A.7, B.2, B.3, B.5			
Institutional statutes	Institutional internal statutes (codes, regulations, manuals)	A.5, A.7, B.3, B.4, B.5, B.6.1, B.6.2, B.7			
	Institutional strategy	B.3, B.4, B.5, B.6.1, B.6.2, B.7			
Declarations	Institutional Code of Conduct	B.4, B.6.1			
	Documents on institutional compliance	B.4, B.6.1, B.6.2, B.7			

Source category	Document title / description	Related criteria	Available (✓/✗)	Language	Reference / Link
	Equity and Diversity Policy documents	B.4, B.6.1, B.6.2			
	European Charter for Researchers	B.6.2			
	Sustainability reports	B.7			

I- Stakeholder input to the self-assessment

This table records the individuals and groups whose input informed the self-assessment. It serves as a reference for assessors to understand whose perspectives were taken into account and how. Stakeholders' involvement may take any appropriate form suited to the programme's context and governance structures.

Examples of relevant stakeholder groups:

- Academic and administrative staff involved in the design, delivery or governance of the joint programme.
- Students enrolled in the joint programme.
- Recent alumni.
- Student representatives formally involved in governance bodies.
- External partners where relevant (e.g. employers, professional bodies, industry representatives).

Examples of relevant types of involvement:

- Interview or focus group.
- Survey or written feedback.
- Input through existing governance or programme committee meetings.
- Feedback collected as part of regular programme monitoring or review processes.
- Contributions from student or staff representative bodies.

Institution	Stakeholder groups and number of stakeholders	Positions/role of the stakeholders	Type of involvement	Summary of key areas addressed
[To be completed by consortium]	*[To be completed by consortium]*	*[To be completed by consortium]*	*[To be completed by consortium]*	*[To be completed by consortium]*
[To be completed by consortium]	*[To be completed by consortium]*	*[To be completed by consortium]*	*[To be completed by consortium]*	*[To be completed by consortium]*
[To be completed by consortium]	*[To be completed by consortium]*	*[To be completed by consortium]*	*[To be completed by consortium]*	*[To be completed by consortium]*
[To be completed by consortium]	*[To be completed by consortium]*	*[To be completed by consortium]*	*[To be completed by consortium]*	*[To be completed by consortium]*

Add rows as needed to cover all degree-awarding consortium partners and stakeholder groups.

II- Template for the Declaration on Adherence to EHEA Fundamental Values

3.1.5. Purpose

This template provides a standardised declaration for joint programme consortia applying for the Joint European Degree Label, as evidence for criterion B.4 (Values). Criterion B.4 requires that the joint programme's arrangements adhere to the fundamental EHEA values[71] and include a commitment to promote common European values[72] and democratic citizenship.[73] Compliance is demonstrated through a declaration submitted with the application.

By completing and signing this declaration, consortium partners formally attest that their institutions operate within governance, legal, and policy frameworks that uphold the EHEA values, and that the joint programme aligns with these institutional commitments.

I. Programme Identification

Joint Programme: [Full official name of the joint programme]

EQF Level: ☐ 6 (Bachelor) ☐ 7 (Master) ☐ 8 (Doctorate)

II. Declaration

The undersigned higher education institutions, as consortium partners offering the above-named joint programme, hereby declare their commitment to upholding and promoting the **fundamental values of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)[74]:**

1. **Academic freedom** — "Freedom of academic staff and students to engage in research, teaching, learning and communication in and with society without interference nor fear of reprisal."
2. **Academic integrity** — "Set of behaviours and attitudes in the academic community internalising and furthering compliance with ethical and professional principles and standards in learning, teaching, research, governance, outreach and any other tasks related to the missions of higher education."
3. **Institutional autonomy** — "The will and ability of higher education institutions to fulfil their missions without undue interference and to set and implement their own priorities and policies as concerns organisation, finance, staffing and academic affairs."
4. **Staff and student participation in higher education governance** — "The participation of students and staff in higher education governance encompasses their right to organise autonomously, in accordance with the

[71] European Higher Education Area (EHEA), *EHEA Statements on Fundamental Values*, https://ehea.info/Immagini/BFUG_BE_VA_88_9_4_2_WG_FV_Statements1.pdf

[72] Treaty on the European Union, Art 2, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:2bf140bf-a3f8-4ab2-b506-fd71826e6da6.0023.02/DOC_1&format=PDF; Charter of Fundamental Rights; https://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_en.pdf

[73] Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, CM//REC(2010)7, art 2, https://search.coe.int/cm?i=09000016805cf01f

[74] European Higher Education Area (EHEA), *EHEA Statements on Fundamental Values*, https://ehea.info/Immagini/BFUG_BE_VA_88_9_4_2_WG_FV_Statements1.pdf

principle of partnership and collegiality, without pressure or undue interference; elect and be elected in open, free and fair elections; have their views represented and taken into account; initiate and participate in all debates in all governing bodies; and through their representative organisations, be duly consulted on issues concerning the governance and further development of the relevant higher education institutions and system."

5. **Public responsibility for higher education** — "A set of duties that public authorities must fulfil as part of their overall responsibility for the education sector and society as a whole."

6. **Public responsibility of higher education** — "The obligations of the higher education community to the broader society of which the higher education community is a part."

Furthermore, the consortium partners commit to promoting **common European values** as enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, and to fostering **democratic citizenship** through the joint programme.

III- Signatures of consortium partners

Institution	Country	Authorised representative	Signature	Date
[Full legal name]	[Country]	[Name and title]		[DD/MM/YYYY]
[Full legal name]	[Country]	[Name and title]		[DD/MM/YYYY]
[Full legal name]	[Country]	[Name and title]		[DD/MM/YYYY]
[Full legal name]	[Country]	[Name and title]		[DD/MM/YYYY]

Add rows as needed for all degree-awarding consortium partners.

Annex 4: Templates for the Joint European Degree Label certificates

Template for certificates issued by awarding bodies to successful applicants

JOINT
EUROPEAN
DEGREE

This is to certify that the following joint programme:

Full official name of joint programme

EQF Level: 6, 7 or 8

Jointly offered by:

Full official name of HEI	*Country*
Full official name of HEI	*Country*
Full official name of HEI	*Country*

Has been awarded the Joint European Degree Label

Awarded by:

Name of Awarding Body

Date of award: *DD/MM/YYYY* Valid until: *DD/MM/YYYY*

The label is awarded for a period consistent with the validity of the quality assurance decision on which it is based.

Replace with Your Awarding Body Seal

Signature & Date

Template for certificates issued by higher education institutions to graduates of labelled joint programmes



Annex 5: Mapping of indicators to assess compliance with the criteria of the Joint European Degree Label

This annex provides a complete list of indicators that guide the assessment for the award of the Joint European Degree Label. It serves as a tool to help consortia and assessors identify and verify compliance of a joint programme with each criterion in different cases.

To avoid duplication of effort, this annex also maps the synergies with the European Approach for quality assurance within each criterion, where they exist. This allows for a streamlined assessment process by identifying where an existing European Approach evaluation already provides sufficient evidence.

The level of synergy with the European Approach is indicated by the following symbols:

🟢 - ● - Criteria **fully** addressed by a European Approach evaluation, no additional assessment is needed under the Joint European Degree Label.
🟡 - ◐ - Criteria **partially** addressed, the European Approach evaluation report provides a basis to expand on with additional evidence.

⚪ - ○ - Criteria **not addressed** by the European Approach, a full compliance check is required.

Dimension A: Programme Organisation Criteria	
Criterion	**Indicators**
◐ **A.1** Higher education institutions involved *EQF 6, 7 & 8*	**A European Approach evaluation provides evidence on:** • Number of HEIs involved in delivering the joint programme (Standard 1.1). • HEIs' recognised status and eligibility to participate in awarding the qualification (Standard 1.1). **It should still be checked**: • At least two HEIs from two EU Member States or EEA EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway) offer the joint programme in a degree-awarding role.
● **A.2** Transnational joint degree delivery **A.2.1** Joint design and delivery *EQF 6, 7 & 8*	**A European Approach evaluation provides evidence on:** • The joint programme is offered jointly, involving all cooperating institutions in its design and delivery (Standard 1.2).

◐ **A.2** Transnational joint degree delivery **A.2.2** Joint degree *EQF 6, 7 & 8*	**A European Approach evaluation provides evidence on:** • The type of qualification awarded by the joint programme (Standard 1.3). • The joint nature of the programme and its degree-awarding arrangements (Standard 1.3). **It should still be checked:** • Each graduate of the joint programme receives a joint degree.
◐ **A.2** Transnational joint degree delivery **A.2.3** Joint Diploma Supplement *EQF 6 & 7*	**A European Approach evaluation provides evidence on:** • Recognition of qualifications and of periods of studies (including recognition of prior learning) (Standard 4.2). • Transparency and documentation about the programme (Standard 8). **It should still be checked:** • A joint Diploma Supplement is issued to each graduate.
● **A.2** Transnational joint degree delivery **A.2.4** Use of ECTS Users' Guide *EQF 6 & 7*	**A European Approach evaluation provides evidence on:** • The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is applied properly, and the distribution of credits is clear (Standard 3.2).
◐ **A.3** Joint arrangements for the joint programme *EQF 6, 7 & 8*	**A European Approach evaluation provides evidence on:** • The joint programme should be offered jointly, involving all consortium partners in the design and delivery of the programme (Standard 1.2) • Denomination of the degree awarded in the programme (Standard 1.3). • Coordination and responsibilities of the partners involved regarding management and financial organisation (including funding, sharing of costs and income, etc.) (Standard 1.3). • Admission and selection procedures for students (Standards 1.3). • Mobility of students and teachers (Standard 1.3). • Examination regulations, student assessment methods, recognition of credits and degree awarding procedures in the consortium (Standard 1.3). **Both of the following two indicators should still be checked:** • The joint programme has joint policies, procedures and/or arrangements covering curriculum planning and delivery, as well as organisation and administrative matters. • Students' representatives are included in the decision-making process.

● **A.4** Quality assurance arrangements **A.4.1** Internal and external quality assurance *EQF 6, 7 & 8*	• **A European Approach evaluation provides evidence on:** Compliance of the joint programme with the ESG.
● **A.4** Quality assurance arrangements **A.4.2** European Approach *EQF 6, 7 & 8*	• **A European Approach evaluation provides evidence on:** Compliance of the joint programme with the Standards of the European approach. • If all degree awarding partners are subject to external quality assurance at the institutional level only and have 'self-accrediting' status, they may use the European Approach in setting up joint internal approval and monitoring processes for their joint programmes (according to ESG 1.2 & 1.9), if they deem it useful in their context. • Degree awarding partners can demonstrate to an EU or EEA EFTA States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway)-based EQAR registered agency that all standards of the European Approach have been used and assessed in other quality assurance procedure(s) conducted by EQAR registered agencies for the purpose of receiving the joint European degree label.
○ **A.5** Graduate tracking *EQF 6, 7 & 8*	**This criterion is met if:** • The joint programme has (plans for) a mechanism for regular graduate tracking which is used/to be used to inform the continuous enhancement of the programme.
● **A.6** Student-centred learning *EQF 6, 7 & 8*	**A European Approach evaluation provides evidence on:** • The learning and teaching approaches, ensuring they are designed to achieve the intended learning outcomes while respecting student diversity (Standard 5.1). • The student assessment, verifying that examination regulations and methods correspond with intended learning outcomes across all partner institutions (Standard 5.2).

◐ **A.7** Transnational campus — access to services *EQF 6, 7 & 8*	**A European Approach evaluation provides evidence on:** • The student support services contributing to the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. They should take into account specific challenges of mobile students (Standard 6) • The staff should be sufficient and adequate (qualifications, professional and international experience) to implement the study programme, and the facilities provided should be sufficient and adequate in view of the intended learning outcomes (Standard 7). **It should still be checked:** • Students and staff of the joint programme have equitable access to relevant physical infrastructure and facilities during their mobility periods. • Students and staff of the joint programme have equitable access to relevant support services during their mobility periods. • Students and staff of the joint programme have equitable access to relevant IT services for the whole duration of the programme.
◐ **A.8** Flexible and embedded student mobility **A.8.1** 30 ECTS physical mobility *EQF 6 & 7*	**A European Approach evaluation provides evidence on:** • Mobility paths foreseen within the joint programme (Standard 1.3). **It should still be checked:**: • The joint programme offers an embedded physical mobility component of at least 30 ECTS. • Joint arrangements are in place at the programme-level setting out alternatives for students unable to travel.
◐ **A.8** Flexible and embedded student mobility **A.8.2** Six months physical mobility *EQF 8*	**A European Approach evaluation provides evidence on:** • Mobility arrangements available to doctoral candidates within the joint programme (Standard 1.3). **It should still be checked**: • The joint programme offers mobility opportunities among consortium partners with a total duration of at least six months • Alternative arrangements are set out in a policy for doctoral candidates unable to travel.
○ **A.9** Co-evaluation and co-supervision for dissertations *EQF 8*	**This criterion is met if there is evidence for both indicators:** • Each doctoral candidate is supervised by at least two supervisors from two different degree-awarding institutions located in different countries. • The evaluation committee, nominated by two different consortium partners, includes members from at least two different institutions in two different countries.
DIMENSION B: European Dimension Criteria	
Criterion	**Indicators**
○ **B.1** Interdisciplinarity and research-based learning *EQF 6, 7 & 8*	**This criterion is met if:** • There are documented interdisciplinary components and/or research-based learning activities described in the joint programme documentation.

◐ **B.2** Opportunities for learning beyond academia and employability *EQF 6, 7 & 8*	**A European Approach evaluation provides evidence on:** • The structure and content of the curriculum should be fit to enable the students to achieve the intended learning outcomes (Standard 3.1). **<u>It should still be checked</u>:** • Work experience, internships, volunteering, research collaborations, projects with industry partners, or other engagement with relevant external stakeholders are embedded in the curriculum of the joint programme. • Relevant professionals are involved in recurring educational roles within the joint programme.
○ **B.3** Digitalisation *EQF 6, 7 & 8*	**This criterion is met if there is evidence for <u>at least one</u> of these indicators:** • Development of relevant digital skills is integrated into the joint programme's curriculum. • Consortium partners provide students with opportunities to enhance their digital skills outside of the joint programme's curriculum.
○ **B.4** Values *EQF 6, 7 & 8*	**This criterion is met if:** • The joint programme is covered by a declaration that reflects its commitment to the core values of the EHEA[75] and to promoting common European values and democratic citizenship.
○ **B.5** Multilingualism *EQF 6, 7 & 8*	**This criterion is met if there is evidence for <u>at least one</u> of these indicators:** • At least two EU languages are used in curricular components and/or extracurricular activities of the joint programme. • Structured opportunities for language learning are defined and offered by the consortium partners, including courses and/or mobility opportunities to countries where a different EU language is spoken.
○ **B.6** Inclusiveness **B.6.1** Diversity, equality and inclusion *EQF 6, 7 & 8*	**This criterion is met if:** • The joint programme has a documented inclusion policy. **AND there is evidence for <u>at least one</u> of the following indicators:** • Specific interventions or support programmes designed for students with fewer opportunities are in place at programme-level, institutional level or cross-institutional level and are applicable to the joint programme. • Mechanisms to monitor and assess the inclusiveness of the joint programme are in place at programme-level, institutional level or cross-institutional level and are applicable to the joint programme. • Funding mechanisms and procedures are assigned specifically to inclusion measures.

[75] The extent to which a programme or institution can commit to the values originally formulated at the system level varies. e.g., public responsibility for higher education is a system-level value that refers to public authorities' responsibility to further the main objectives of higher education. This is not something that is expected to be endorsed by individual institutions.

○ **B.6** Inclusiveness **B.6.2** European Charter for Researchers *EQF 8*	**This criterion is met if:** • Consortium partners demonstrate documented commitment to the principles of the European Charter for Researchers.
○ **B.7** Environmental sustainability *EQF 6, 7 & 8*	**This criterion is met if there is evidence for <u>both indicators</u>:** • Arrangements on sustainability and reducing environmental impact are in place at programme level, institutional level or cross-institutional level and are applicable to the joint programme. • Students of the joint programme are provided with curricular or transversal opportunities to develop skills and expertise regarding environmental sustainability, ecological preservation, and neutral resource management.

GETTING IN TOUCH WITH THE EU

In person

All over the European Union there are hundreds of Europe Direct information centres. You can find the address of the centre nearest you at: https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en

On the phone or by email

Europe Direct is a service that answers your questions about the European Union. You can contact this service:

– by freephone: 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 (certain operators may charge for these calls),

– at the following standard number: +32 22999696, or

– by email via: https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en

FINDING INFORMATION ABOUT THE EU

Online

Information about the European Union in all the official languages of the EU is available on the Europa website at: https://europa.eu/european-union/index_en

EU publications

You can download or order free and priced EU publications from: https://op.europa.eu/en/publications. Multiple copies of free publications may be obtained by contacting Europe Direct or your local information centre (see https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en).

EU law and related documents

For access to legal information from the EU, including all EU law since 1952 in all the official language versions, go to EUR-Lex at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu

Open data from the EU

The EU Open Data Portal (http://data.europa.eu/euodp/en) provides access to datasets from the EU. Data can be downloaded and reused for free, for both commercial and non-commercial purposes.

NC-01-26-123-EN-N



ISBN 978-92-68-40124-8