

Ex-post evaluation of Erasmus Mundus

Case Studies

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26 August 2009

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0.0 Common contents to case study reports

0.1 Outputs

0.1.1 The course

- **Overview of syllabus and mobility paths proposed to students**
- **Brief overview of teaching approach including number of teaching staff deployed**
- **Qualifications awarded**

0.1.2 The students

0.1.3 Action 2 Scholars

0.1.4 Action 3 Partnership (if applicable)

0.2 Results

0.2.1 The course – relevant, high quality, with a European dimension?

- **Is the curriculum well structured and integrated?**
- **Is the content of the course "cutting edge" and how does it compare to other similar courses in Europe and beyond? (consider how many other similar courses exist).**
- **What Quality Assurance mechanisms are used to ensure a) the quality of the course content (ie content of individual modules / components of the course) and b) the overall coherence of the curriculum (how the different elements fit together)?**
- **Has the course been able to deploy the most appropriate teaching staff?**
- **How do students perceive the quality and organisation of the course?**
- **Has the course been able to provide suitable academic facilities (equipment / labs / libraries / computing facilities etc)? [evidence comes mainly from students]**
- **Does the course offer internships or other mechanisms to allow students to gain work experience?**
- **Has the course been able to provide suitable non-academic support after selection (visas / housing / social aspects)?**

0.2.2 Excellent students?

- **Evidence on qualifications of students accepted onto course**
- **Do course leaders and teachers believe the students attracted are of high quality? (including compared to the average standard in their department)**

0.2.3 The visiting scholars (academics)

- **Are they of high quality?**
- **What did they contribute to the EMMC during their stay?**

0.2.4 Partnerships with third countries (if applicable)

- ***What do the consortium institutions perceive to be the benefit of the partnership?***
- ***What do the third country institutions perceive to be the benefit of the partnership? (Structured cooperation?)***
- ***What do those who have participated in outgoing mobility perceive to be the benefits of their mobility periods?***

0.3 Impact – "additionality" and wider effects

0.3.1 Impacts on Higher Education institutions – supply and demand

- ***Does the course provide something new, which would not have been provided if the programme had not existed?***
- ***Has the experience of the course had wider impacts on the departments and institutions concerned (e.g. on other courses and provision, on quality procedures etc)?***
- ***Has the programme made the departments more "internationally oriented"?***

0.3.2 Impacts on students and scholars

- ***Perceived added value on future prospects of students and scholars (perceptions of students and scholars principally)***

0.3.3 Policy impact and contribution to EU strategic goals

- ***Impact, if any, on comparability and recognition of qualifications within Europe (Bologna principles)***

0.4 Implementation issues

0.4.1 Main issues linked to implementation

- ***List and analyse the main difficulties and barriers encountered which have influenced the ability of course leaders to achieve their objectives and the extent to which these have been overcome***

0.4.2 Financial support

- ***Include consideration of the adequacy of the financial support provided by the programme in relation to objectives. (funding to course, level of scholarships, funding for third country partnerships if relevant)***

0.5 Added value and perceived relevance of Erasmus Mundus

0.5.1 "Added value"

- ***What has the EMMC brought the universities involved that they would not have been available to achieve / obtain without it?***
- ***What has the EMMC offered students and scholars and to what extent has the EMMC provided something that they could not have achieved elsewhere / on another course?***
- ***What has the EMMC / Action 3 partnership combination offered the third country institutions involved?***

0.5.2 "Relevance"

- ***Has the programme overall allowed the institutions concerned to a) improve / expand the quality of their offer and b) attract additional talented students and scholars (based on findings above)***
- ***To what extent has this allowed the institutions concerned to address what they perceived as their real needs?***

1.0 MSc EF - Master of Science in European Forestry

Course title	European Forestry
Coordinating institution	University of Joensuu, Finland
Partner institutions	University of Freiburg, Germany Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden (SLU) University of Lleida, Spain (UdL) University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences, Austria (BOKU) Wageningen University, the Netherlands
Start date	November 2004
Course length	20 months (120 ECTS)
Course objectives and content	The course objectives are to focus on the international dimension of sustainable forest management issues; provide an extra dimension to existing educational markets in forestry and nature management in Europe; and respond to the increasing number of issues in forest and nature management at international as well as national level. The study programme covers a number of compulsory and elective courses, as well as an applied period (internship), field work and the Master thesis.
Target student cohort	The course is open to students with a Bachelors degree in forestry or environmental science and good knowledge of English (TOEFL test or demonstrated competence in English).
Training paths	During the first year students attend compulsory courses at the six consortium universities, as well as completing an applied period (work practice) at a forestry-related institution and a field course covering four countries. During the second year, students specialise in their field of interest by attending compulsory and elective courses and carrying out a Master thesis at one or two of the consortium universities.
Degree awarded	Double MSc degree awarded by the University of Joensuu and the partner university where the student spent the majority of their Year 2 studies.
Action 3 partnerships	The Action 3 partnership consists of the following universities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa; ○ Federal University of Parana, Brazil; ○ NorthWest A&F Forestry University, China.

1.1 Outputs

1.1.1 The course

- ***Overview of syllabus and mobility paths proposed to students***

The MSc in European Forestry (EF) was built upon a one year Masters course developed by the consortium universities over the period 1996-2002, with the first cohort of students starting in 2002. It is understood that the previous experience of a joint course was crucial to the successful establishment of the EMMC. Notably, the consortium universities are also members of the SILVA network, a standing committee of the ICA (Association of European Life Sciences Universities).

The consortium universities have recognised expertise in forestry education and research in the following fields: sustainable forestry management and climate change (University of Joensuu and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences); forest ecology and management (University of Freiburg); production, economics and technical aspects of mountain forestry (BOKU); Mediterranean forestry and non-wood products (University of Lleida); and nature conservation, forestry modelling and governance (Wageningen University).

The first academic year of the course consists of the following courses:

- Trends in European Forestry (8 ECTS) at SLU, Sweden;
- Applied Period in Forest Institutions (12 ECTS) in different European countries;
- Communication Skills (3 ECTS) at the University of Joensuu, Finland;
- Ethical Approaches to Forest Management (5 ECTS) at the University of Joensuu, Finland;
- Research Methodology in Forest Sciences (4 ECTS) at the University of Joensuu, Finland;
- Problem Oriented Course: Global Challenges in Local Context (4 ECTS) at the University of Joensuu, Finland;
- A block of other obligatory and elective courses (12 ECTS) at the University of Joensuu, Finland;
- European Forestry Field Course (8 ECTS) in Spain, France, Germany and the Netherlands;
- Multifunctional Forestry in Mountain Regions (4 ECTS) at BOKU, Austria.

During the second academic year, students specialise in their field of interest by taking compulsory and elective courses (30-36 ECTS) and carrying out their Master thesis (30-40 ECTS) at one or two of the six partner universities.

With regards to the mobility paths followed for the second year, the table below shows that the distribution of students has been relatively even across the six consortium universities.

Table 1.1: Mobility paths

Consortium university	No. of students
SLU	15
SLU/ Joensuu	17
Joensuu/ SLU	2
BOKU	18
SLU/ BOKU	1
Freiburg	19
Lleida	6
Lleida/ Freiburg	1
SLU/ Lleida	1
Lleida/ Joensuu	7
Wageningen	19
Total	106*

*Data provided by the EMMC coordinator *note that the total excludes the three registered students who dropped out of the course.*

- **Brief overview of teaching approach including number of teaching staff deployed**

According to the application form, 12-20 teachers and other staff were expected to be deployed on the course. It is understood that some 13 core staff (including two full-time administrators at the University of Joensuu) have been involved in the course, in addition to all the teaching staff, suggesting that the consortium has been successful in dedicating a sufficient number of staff to the course.

- **Qualifications awarded**

Students are awarded a double degree by the University of Joensuu and the partner university where the student spends the majority of their Year 2 studies. Students also receive a Diploma Supplement from all the consortium universities. Notably, the consortium universities have not yet developed a standard Diploma Supplement used by all universities. The consortium is hoping to be able to award a joint degree in future, but this is currently not possible owing to limitations imposed by national legislation in some of the participating countries.

1.1.2 The students

Table 1.2: Applications, candidates selected, students starting and graduations

		Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4	Round 5	Round 6
Applications	Non-EU	25	45	145	222	244	206
	EU	15	8	5	8	11	6
	TOTAL	40	53	150	230	255	212
<i>Admitted candidates</i>	Non-EU						
	EU						
	TOTAL						
<i>Students starting course</i>	EM scholarship	10	21	24	20	19	
	Other non-EU	0	0	0	0	0	
	EU	0	6	2	5	2	
	TOTAL	10	27	26	25	21	
<i>Students graduating</i>	EM scholarship	6	18	19			
	Other non-EU	0	0	0			
	EU	0	1	2			
	TOTAL	6	19	21			
		2 drop outs	1 drop out				

Data provided by the programme coordinator

As the table above shows, the total number of applications has grown steadily since the start of the course. The course has received over 200 applications per year over the last three years, which the consortium considers to be satisfactory and also manageable in terms of evaluation and selection.

On the basis of the application form submitted for Action 1 and 2, the target number of students was 15-20 EU students and 10-20 third country students (25-40 students in total).

With the exception of the first year of the course, the number of students registered onto the course has largely been in line with the lower estimate of the target number of students. However, the number of EU students has been significantly lower than expected, with only 15 students registering onto the course since 2004.

More than two thirds of the students on the course are male.

1.1.3 Action 2 Scholars

With the exception of the past two years, there has been no open call for applications for the Action 2 scholarship. Instead, each consortium university has encouraged scholars with connections to the consortium to apply. As a result, before 2008, very few applicants were rejected. Notably, in the last two years, the number of applications from scholars has more than doubled compared with previous years (14 applications in 2009).

In total, 11 scholars have been granted a scholarship through the European Forestry Master course. From these, two came from each of the following countries: Russia, Indonesia and USA. The rest of scholars (one per country) came from Ghana, Thailand, Brazil, Venezuela and Morocco. All eleven were male.

1.1.4 Action 3 Partnership

The Action 3 partnership includes three third country institutions (University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa; Federal University of Parana, Brazil; and NorthWest A&F Forestry University, China). The Action 3 partner universities were selected on the basis of previous collaboration and cooperation with one or more of the consortium universities, but also according to their expertise. Notably, the Action 3 partner universities were also selected to represent three different regions - Asia, Africa and Latin America, which are considered to be important and relevant in terms of aspects of international forestry sector activities.

The objectives of the Action 3 partnership are to:

- facilitate a global dimension to the Masters course and to provide students with a wider perspective of international forestry and related issues;
- strengthen the global network of forestry universities in education and research;
- develop practices in terms of recognition of studies and degrees awarded, to smooth the way to studies in Europe;
- participate in the development of Masters programmes and courses in third country partner universities towards comparable study structures;
- familiarise the students and university staff of third countries with European Master programmes, universities and teachers; and
- create global human networks in forestry.

Representatives from all partner universities have visited one or more of the consortium universities since the start of the partnership. Equally, representatives from the consortium universities have visited the Action 3 partner universities, mainly as part of the mobility action concerning outgoing scholars. Notably, in China, the university opened a separate office for interaction with the consortium universities.

The duration of the partnership is three years and it was expected that 10 student and 3 scholar grants for outgoing mobility (2-3 months) would be available for each of these three years (i.e. 30

student grants and nine scholar grants in total). In practice however, the number of students benefiting from outgoing mobility has varied between one and three students per year (six in total), largely reflecting the limited number of EU students on the course, but also differences in the academic years (particularly in South Africa and Brazil). As a result of the limited number of EU students, there has been no need for the consortium universities to develop a selection procedure. Rather, the consortium has tried to encourage students to utilise the outgoing mobility opportunity. With regard to the scholars, all the available grants have been utilised.

1.2 Results

1.2.1 The course – relevant, high quality, with a European dimension?

- ***Is the curriculum well structured and integrated?***

On the basis of the student feedback collected by the consortium, almost all students think the course is well organised and coordinated. It is, however, understood from the student focus group that there have been instances where course material has been repeated at different universities, thus suggesting that there is scope for better coordination between staff at the various institutions. There is also some evidence that there has been some repetition of material taught to students during their undergraduate studies. This is particularly true for students from the more developed countries (EU and North America).

- ***Is the content of the course "cutting edge" and how does it compare to other similar courses in Europe and beyond? (consider how many other similar courses exist).***

The consortium believes that the course is an innovative response to the needs of sustainable forest management in Europe and addresses the lack of forestry education that takes account of the broader picture. It is also aimed to respond to the needs of companies and organisations that require graduates with an international forestry background.

The course combines specialised knowledge at six universities and offers a multidimensional learning environment with a European perspective on forestry. Notably, there is a trade-off between specialisation and broad coverage, but in general students and scholars are of the opinion that the breadth of coverage is an advantage for the course.

In addition to the wide range of expertise available to students, the course is also distinguished by the opportunities for geographical mobility it offers (field work and mobility between partner universities) and work experience (applied period). On the basis of the student focus groups, these aspects of the course have been particularly appreciated, as it has allowed students to gain first hand experience of various types of forests as well as an inside view of forestry related organisations. Students also mentioned the opportunity to live and study in a number of different countries, as well as the opportunity to study at least two European languages, as important distinguishing features of the course.

- ***What Quality Assurance mechanisms are used to ensure a) the quality of the course content (ie content of individual modules / components of the course) and b) the overall coherence of the curriculum (how the different elements fit together)?***

A quality assurance (QA) evaluation of the European Forestry course was carried out during 2007/08 by ICA¹. The evaluation revealed that, whilst each consortium university worked to its own systems and practice of quality assurance, there were no written guidelines (regarding the European Forestry course) to be used by the programme management team. Instead, a pragmatic approach was used by the team - resolving issues on an ad hoc/ informal basis. The evaluation also noted that the consortium did not produce any formal annual reports, action plans and cohort analysis, although it is understood that these activities were undertaken on an informal and ad hoc basis.

Furthermore, whilst student feedback is collected both in relation to individual courses and the course as a whole, it is understood that few actions have been taken in response to feedback (the only exception being the removal of a member of the teaching staff from the course).

The QA evaluation also noted that the course did not have any consortium guidelines for thesis presentation and marking. Instead, staff at consortium universities relied on local guidelines. Notably, it is understood that common guidelines for thesis presentation and marking are somewhat restricted by differences in national legislation.

As a result of the ICA's evaluation, the consortium has implemented a range of new QA mechanisms, including:

- a requirement for students to submit a personal study plan (during the 1st semester of the second year) and mid-term report (during the 2nd semester of the second year) in response to relatively poor completion rates;
- an Alumni Survey; and
- a student representative participating in consortium meetings.

- ***Has the course been able to deploy the most appropriate teaching staff?***

The teaching staff is understood to be suitably qualified at postgraduate level and to have had articles and research published in international forestry journals. However, the consortium universities have experienced some difficulties in deploying staff to the course, as a result of its international focus; fewer teachers/ lecturers have an interest in international issues (at least at the University of Joensuu, a characteristic not necessarily shared by the other consortium universities). Accordingly, the QA evaluation noted that some students thought that the course was overly reliant on PhD students for teaching/ lecturing. Notwithstanding these difficulties and issues, evidence from the student focus group suggests that the students are generally content with the quality of the teaching staff and appreciate the personal approach adopted. It was also noted by the coordinating university that reliance on PhD students was not necessarily a negative feature, as there is nothing to suggest that these cannot deliver satisfactory lectures.

¹ Association of European Life Sciences Universities

- ***How do students perceive the quality and organisation of the course?***

Student feedback collected by the consortium universities has generally been good, particularly in relation to the quality and relevance of the content. As mentioned above, the students have particularly appreciated the applied period and the field course. During the student focus group, the students also mentioned that the introduction at SLU, Garpenberg, Sweden (which all must attend irrespective of mobility path), was an important part of the course, since it helped to improve group dynamics, which in turn may have improved study results, particularly given the diversity of the students.

- ***Has the course been able to provide suitable academic facilities (equipment / labs / libraries / computing facilities etc)? [evidence comes mainly from students]***

Again, student feedback suggests that academic facilities are of satisfactory quality. Students have benefited fully from facilities available to other students at the consortium universities (for example access to libraries, computer rooms with Internet connection, students cards and benefits).

- ***Does the course offer internships or other mechanisms to allow students to gain work experience?***

The course explicitly includes an Applied Period during which students have work experience at forestry-related institutions. Notably, the consortium universities and the course is closely linked to a number of relevant bodies, including the SILVA network, the European Forest Institute, the Forest Technology Centre in Catalonia and the Swedish National Board of Forestry.

At the start of the course in 2004 the opportunities for work experience outside Finland and/ or the consortium universities were limited. However, over the years all universities have developed strong links with a larger number of forestry-related institutions, which means that there are now more opportunities for students. It should be noted however that opportunities for internships remain more pronounced in northern Europe, partly reflecting the concentration of forestry-related organisations in this part of Europe. The opportunities for internship are strongly appreciated by the students, although it is understood that some language barriers exist, since some internships can only be provided in the national language. Notably, some students have subsequently been employed by the organisation where they undertook their internship.

- ***Has the course been able to provide suitable non-academic support after selection (visas / housing / social aspects)?***

The consortium universities provide student support in relation to residence permits, visas and accommodation. During the short courses at the various consortium universities, group accommodation and transportation have also been facilitated. Additional assistance has also been provided, in particular for third country students, in terms of renting furniture. Notably, accommodation and travelling costs during the field work and travelling between the partner universities have been funded by the consortium. Students have also benefited from support from international relations and student support services at the various universities.

The arrival of all students in Finland before the start of the course is understood to have allowed for better coordination of students, particularly in relation to securing visas. The coordinating university

also assisted students to open a bank account so that the first instalment of the scholarship could be paid upon arrival. Importantly, this process was started before the arrival of students so that there would not be a significant delay in receiving the scholarship.

On the basis of the student focus group, it is understood that the orientation programme before the start of the course has helped the students acclimatise.

It is understood that the consortium has improved the information available to students upon arrival at each of the consortium universities, on the basis of feedback from previous rounds of students.

During the first year, a free Finnish language course (20 hours) is offered to students. Language courses are also available at the other consortium universities and if these are not free the consortium assists the student in funding the course.

1.2.2 Excellent students?

- ***Evidence on qualifications of students accepted onto course***

The course is open to students with a Bachelors degree in forestry or environmental science and good knowledge of the English language (via a TOEFL test or demonstrated competence in English). The selection of students is achieved collectively and based on six weighted criteria.

The European Forestry course was approved by the Commission on the 3rd September 2004, with the course planned to start on 1st September 2004. As a result of the relatively late approval, the course could not start until November 2004 and this had implications in terms of the number and the quality of students that registered onto the course in 2004. The consortium believes however that the quality of students has improved every year since the start of the course.

Generally, the consortium has found it challenging to assess the quality of applicants' qualifications. So, in order to ensure the authenticity of the qualifications of students applying, the consortium has concentrated on assessing those students that have a degree from a university that is linked or known to the consortium. In some cases, it has also used previous students to advise them on the quality of qualifications. Importantly, the Action 3 partnership has allowed the consortium universities to develop conversion tables for some countries.

- ***Do course leaders and teachers believe the students attracted are of high quality? (including compared to the average standard in their department)***

Academic and administrative staff report comparatively high levels of motivation among the students on the European Forestry Master course, in particular third country students. Notably, the quality has improved over the years, which may be linked to an increasing number of applicants.

As a consequence of the difficulties experienced in assessing the qualifications of the students, there is some variability in the background experience gained from previous studies (there is less variability on national courses). However, it is still understood that the EM students are of high quality, with some students performing exceptionally well.

It is also understood that the visiting scholars have been very impressed with the quality of the students. In addition to the quality of the students, visiting scholars also mentioned the diversity of the students (in terms of nationality) as an important stimulus for discussion. Indeed, because of the significant variations in backgrounds, students have different perspectives on forestry issues.

1.2.3 The visiting scholars (academics)

- ***Are they of high quality?***

With the exception of the past two years, there has been no open call for scholars to apply for the Action 2 scholarship. Instead, each consortium university has encouraged scholars with connections to the consortium to apply. As a result, very few applicants were rejected before 2008. Notably, in the last two years, the number of applications from scholars has more than doubled, although it is not clear to what extent this has improved the quality of the scholars selected.

The scholars have been selected by the consortium board on the basis of four criteria: academic merits; motivation; workplan for mobility period; and contribution to the development of MSc EF Global Partnership. It is understood that the requirement to include a written work plan in the application may have reduced the total number of applications.

- ***What did they contribute to the EMMC during their stay?***

Visiting scholars have been directly involved in delivering parts of the course, as well as delivering a number of seminars and presentations (attended by both the students on the course and other students at the institutions). Notably, in some cases it has been difficult to integrate the scholars, as result of the sequencing of the course. Indeed, because the students are very mobile it has been difficult to match the availability of the scholars with the presence of the students.

Notwithstanding this, the visiting scholars have been able to provide additional insights and experience of environments that could not be covered by the consortium staff members to the same extent. Visiting scholars have also interacted with students, by assisting them to identify research topics, as well as advising them on research methodologies. It is understood that interaction with the visiting scholars has been much appreciated by the students.

On the basis of discussions with some of the teaching staff, it is understood that the visiting scholars have also been beneficial for the academic staff, particularly young staff, by helping them to establish links for future research projects, as well as allowing direct interaction with scholars with first hand experience of forestry in a different part of the world.

In those cases where it has been difficult to integrate the visiting scholars, they have normally been involved in collaborative research projects. Notably, both scholars and the consortium universities have valued the experience more in those incidences where the scholars have been integrated into the course.

1.2.4 Partnerships with third countries

- ***What do the consortium institutions perceive to be the benefit of the partnership?***

The consortium considers the Action 3 partners to have the most potential when considering future co-operation and collaboration. Moreover, they have expertise in such areas as tropical forestry, plantation forestry, forest ethics and tourism, which complements the MSc EF course. Importantly, the consortium universities can offer European expertise in forestry education in fields such as multiple-goal forest planning, inventory, wood bioenergy and environmental protection.

The Action 3 partnership appears to have been a challenging but rewarding form of cooperation. For example, whilst the links with the Action 3 partners remain largely bilateral, the partnership is understood to have been a good tool to enhance existing cooperation with the Action 3 partners and allow the other consortium universities to familiarise themselves with the partners. The partnership has also encouraged students from the partner universities to apply to the European Forestry course, resulting in several good applications from the partner universities, of which some were subsequently admitted to the course.

Importantly, the partner universities have been able to provide outgoing students with a certificate where the local system is converted into the ECTS system. As a result, students have been able to participate in courses and/ or carry out part of their research or applied period assignment in one of the third country partner universities.

Furthermore, the partnership has allowed the partners to start work in terms of recognising entire degrees to “smooth the way” to studies in Europe for those who have graduated from any of the partner universities.

Generally however, the Action 3 partnership seems to have been difficult to organise effectively and it is notable that the consortium universities will not include the Action 3 partners as full partners in the EM II application.

- ***What do the third country institutions perceive to be the benefit of the partnership? (Structured cooperation?)***

The Action 3 partners have been very motivated and dedicated to the partnership, although in South Africa the cooperation has worked less well, which is partly explained by the fact that the person that was involved in the development of Action 3 partnership became seriously ill and was forced to resign from his duties. It proved difficult to establish a new contact that could 'champion' the Action 3 partnership in South Africa. In China, on the other hand, the university opened a separate office for interaction with the consortium universities.

On the basis of an interview with one of the Action 3 partner universities, the Erasmus Mundus programme is perceived to be very much in line with the university's policy to encourage students and scholars to go abroad for Master and PhD studies. Notably, six students from the partner university have been admitted to the European Forestry course and at least three students have applied for PhDs in Europe as a result of the programme. The programme was also reported to be a good platform for communication with European higher education institutions, although it was noted that the communication between the partner universities could be strengthened further.

In terms of the contribution to the European partner universities, the Action 3 partner university interviewed felt that it allows students and scholars to experience a different educational environment as well as a different type of forest. Importantly, the different types of forests and the associated issues arising from this can be linked to new areas of research for European scholars and students.

- ***What do those who have participated in outgoing mobility perceive to be the benefits of their mobility periods?***

With regard to outgoing scholars, it is understood that the outgoing mobility opportunity has been personally gratifying, particularly as a result of the location of the partner universities and the motivation of the students being taught. It is understood that without the Erasmus Mundus programme it would have been much harder to arrange this outgoing mobility, not only for financial reasons but also owing to the fact that the programme has strengthened and extended links with these universities.

In contrast to the scholar exchange, the student exchange has faced some problems, particularly in relation to differences in the academic year (in South Africa and Brazil). As a result, the student exchange requires more planning and tailored activities for students, which in turn has made the students feel isolated at times. Indeed, a student who spent three months at the University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa, received very little supervision during his stay and was largely left to study on his own. Notwithstanding these difficulties, the students are understood to consider the Action 3 scholarship as a good opportunity to experience a different culture and study context. Moreover, in addition to the individual research mentioned above, the student also spent five weeks of his three month stay as an intern at a forestry organisation, which allowed him to obtain an in-depth view of a non-European forestry-related organisation.

1.3 Impact – "additionality" and wider effects

1.3.1 Impacts on Higher Education institutions – supply and demand

- ***Does the course provide something new, which would not have been provided if the programme had not existed?***

Whilst the MSc in European Forestry existed before the start of EM I, the EM has provided the basis for a broader and more relevant European dimension to postgraduate forestry education, including more international and intercultural experiences for the students, as well as further improved cooperation and exchange in teaching and learning skills/ tools among the partner universities.

More specifically, it is understood that the previous Master course was not able to offer the same opportunities for geographical mobility as the 'new' EMMC in European Forestry. The geographical mobility is beneficial both in terms of the wider spectrum of expertise on offer, but also in terms of the life experience gained by the students and teaching staff.

With regards to the interaction with the Action 3 partners, it is understood that the scope of cooperation with third country universities would have been much narrower without the Erasmus Mundus programme.

- ***Has the experience of the course had wider impacts on the departments and institutions concerned (e.g. on other courses and provision, on quality procedures etc)?***

The course has allowed the consortium of universities to participate as a global player and has increased the status and visibility of the universities and the course.

Teaching staff have gained perspectives from scholars and students from all over the world, as well as access to institutions in third countries, which has been important in establishing links for future research projects.

- ***Has the programme made the departments more "internationally oriented"?***

At the coordinating university, the host faculty is the most international unit at the university, largely as a result of the EF course. The other consortium universities are also understood to have experienced an increase in the international student population since the start of the MSc EF.

The Erasmus Mundus course is of strategic importance to the University of Joensuu and is mentioned explicitly in the 'Strategy for Internationalisation of the University of Joensuu for the Years 2007-2015'. For example, the Erasmus Mundus programme has been identified as an important part of expanding collaboration with North American, Asian and African universities. The Erasmus Mundus programme also forms an important part of the University's desire to develop an international curriculum. Moreover, it has been identified as a key component in achieving the goal of hosting 420 international degree students per annum (approx. 350 at Master level).

The EMMC has motivated and encouraged many more staff to be involved in international programmes. It has also led to more interaction with other European universities. It is also believed to have resulted in more international examination systems being developed and more courses provided in English.

It is understood that the scope of cooperation with third country universities would have been much narrower without the Erasmus Mundus programme.

1.3.2 Impacts on students and scholars

- **Perceived added value on future prospects of students and scholars (perceptions of students and scholars principally)**

It is understood that graduates from the course have enjoyed excellent career opportunities both from further studies (PhD) and employment in both the EU and in third countries. Indeed, many students gain employment before they have finished the course (in some cases with no requirements to complete the course), suggesting a high demand for the students. Students are also understood to be highly marketable as potential PhD students, with the course providing a strong platform for future studies.

This was also reflected in the student focus group where students expected to gain employment in forestry policy organisations, start their own business or continue studying for a PhD. Notably, some students believe that it may be difficult to secure a job in an organisation that has a domestic focus, as a result of the broad coverage of the course. However, the course is believed to be highly relevant for students who wish to be employed in international organisations (including European Commission, UN/FAO/UNEP, internationally active NGOs etc). The Applied Period has been particularly relevant in terms of helping students to become more informed about relevant employers and job options.

For those hoping to continue studying for a PhD, the course has been important in terms of establishing links and contacts for future research. Furthermore, the course has also allowed students to work in an international environment with a highly diverse team, understand European cultures (business and social) and to use English in communication, which may improve the future prospects of students.

Importantly, as the Erasmus Mundus brand has become better known, together with the quality of the course, some students expect their job prospects to improve as well.

At a personal level, the course has allowed students to adapt to new cultures/ countries in relatively short periods of time, which the students believe will benefit them in the future. Through the course, the students have also developed a network of contacts throughout the world, which may be beneficial in the future both professionally and socially.

With regards to the scholars, it is understood that the Action 2 scholarship has provided visiting scholars with an excellent opportunity to strengthen and nurture cooperation and collaboration with European scholars and institutions. It is also understood that it has led to significant knowledge exchange. Together, these are likely to yield further collaboration and follow up research. For example, one visiting scholar was able to use long-term forest research databases that were available at one of the consortium universities to undertake further research. The scholarship has also led to an extended network of researchers and scholars which has proved to be beneficial when attending international conferences (providing suitable contacts to scholars and researchers).

At a personal level, the opportunity to participate in the Master course, has allowed the visiting scholars to live and work in new communities/ environments, which is understood to have been much appreciated. It is also understood to have strengthened personal ties with people.

1.3.3 Policy impact and contribution to EU strategic goals

- ***Impact, if any, on comparability and recognition of qualifications within Europe (Bologna principles)***

All consortium institutions automatically recognise modules and exams taken at any of the participating universities. All the modules provided have been converted from the local system to ECTS.

Outside Europe, work has started in terms of recognising entire degrees in the Action 3 partner universities to smooth the way to studies in Europe for those who have graduated from any of these universities.

1.4 Implementation issues

1.4.1 Main issues linked to implementation

- ***List and analyse the main difficulties and barriers encountered which have influenced the ability of course leaders to achieve their objectives and the extent to which these have been overcome***

The geographical mobility element has been a significant challenge, on account of the restrictions on free movement within the EU. It is understood that entry to Spain has been particularly difficult for some students. The cost of travel between the partner universities has not been a problem as the consortium pay for all travel between partner universities during the course.

Variations in the legislation of higher education institutions have also been a challenge. Indeed, particular aspects of the course may be a requirement in some countries whilst it may be illegal in others. Problems have been particularly evident in relation to the evaluation of the thesis, issuing of degrees and tuition fees.

Whilst the overall experience of multiculturalism on the course has been positive, it is understood that at times it has been quite challenging to work with students from so many cultures and countries, particularly as a result of variations in the proficiency in English.

1.4.2 Financial support

- ***Include consideration of the adequacy of the financial support provided by the programme in relation to objectives. (funding to course, level of scholarships, funding for third country partnerships if relevant)***

The coordinator considers the level of funding available for third country students has been very satisfactory (or perhaps slightly excessive). Funding for managing the course has, however, not been high enough and it is understood that the financial and administrative in-kind support from the University of Joensuu has been key to the management of the course. Notably, some countries have more open budgets than others.

The sustainability of the course without EU funding is largely dependent on the partners involved, as some partners would find it easier than others to sustain the course. Importantly though, it is understood that other sources of funding are likely to be available to ensure the sustainability of the course, particularly as industry support is relatively strong.

Whilst the funding in terms of the management and implementation of the course does not appear to be crucial for the sustainability of the course (because the coordinator considers the level of funding for this task to be too low, but nevertheless continues to participate to gain other non-

financial benefit), it is understood that the funding available for students and scholars is crucial for participation and without it the course would be considerably less attractive to third country students.

1.5 Added value and perceived relevance of Erasmus Mundus

1.5.1 "Added value"

- ***What has the EMMC brought the universities involved that they would not have been available to achieve / obtain without it?***

EM has allowed the consortium universities and the Action 3 partners to develop and strengthen international collaboration and cooperation. It has also allowed the universities to benchmark their teaching against the partners and to benefit from good practice in other countries. Finally, it is understood that the universities have gained feedback from many cultures and hence been able to develop a more global approach to teaching and research.

The scholarships have helped to attract excellence both in terms of students and scholars. It is understood that the scholars have added value to both the course and future research projects.

- ***What has the EMMC offered students and scholars and to what extent has the EMMC provided something that they could not have achieved elsewhere / on another course?***

The MSc EF offers an international approach to studying and the opportunity to study as part of a multicultural group. It also allows the students to develop a global network for future cooperation (professionally and socially). On the basis of the student focus group, the opportunity for geographical mobility (including field work) has been particularly appreciated. For third country students in particular, the course offers an opportunity to bring back experiences from a range of European countries.

For the visiting scholars, the EMMC has provided an opportunity to strengthen and further develop links with a number of third country institutions and scholars. Indeed, it is understood that the scope of cooperation with third country universities would have been much narrower without the Erasmus Mundus programme.

- ***What has the EMMC / Action 3 partnership combination offered the third country institutions involved?***

On the basis of an interview with one of the Action 3 partner universities, the Erasmus Mundus programme is very much in line with the university's policy to encourage students and scholars to go abroad for Master and PhD studies. Notably, six students from the partner university have been admitted to European Forestry course and at least three students have applied for PhD in Europe as a result of the programme. The programme has also been reported to be a good platform for communication with European higher education institutions, although it was noted that the communication between the partner universities could be strengthened further.

1.5.2 "Relevance"

- ***Has the programme overall allowed the institutions concerned to a) improve / expand the quality of their offer and b) attract additional talented students and scholars (based on findings above)***

At the European level, the Erasmus Mundus programme has allowed the consortium to further improve/ expand an existing course drawing on the collective expertise of six leading forestry universities. Rather than providing students with a single-countries perspective on forestry-related issues, the course provides students and scholars with the opportunity to gain a broader perspective of forestry, as well as first hand experience of a diverse range of forest types. Furthermore, whilst the scholarships offered through the Erasmus Mundus programme represent an important tool to attract high quality students and scholars from both Europe and third countries, it is understood that the opportunities for geographical mobility have been equally, if not more, important to attract students, particularly from Europe. The course has also played an essential role in introducing a European dimension to sustainable forestry management, particularly given the current lack of joint forest policy in Europe and beyond.

At the global level, with the increasing global interest in forestry and forest-based industrial production and European forest industries increasingly transferring some of its operations to countries outside Europe, it has become increasingly important to produce forestry experts with experience of other continents. The EMMC, particularly the Action 3 partnership, therefore provides a relevant contribution to improving the quality of the EMMC due to the additional value it creates in terms of international experience of sub-tropical and tropical natural forests and fast growing plantations. The Action 3 partnership also complements/ adds value to the MSc EF by providing suitable postgraduate (MSc) modules and research based assignments in relation to tropical forestry, plantation forestry, business culture etc for the European students and scholars that they host. Moreover, interaction with Action 3 partners has also improved the systems to recognise qualifications in these countries, which in turn has resulted in a number of high quality students being accepted onto the course from the partner universities and other universities.

- ***To what extent has this allowed the institutions concerned to address what they perceived as their real needs?***

Internationalisation is one of the cornerstones of the University of Joensuu's strategy for 2007-2015 and the Erasmus Mundus programme is understood to play an essential role in achieving this. The University of Joensuu also believes that international cooperation should be done on a global scale. The Erasmus Mundus programme has allowed the university to expand and deepen its partnership with higher education institutions in both Europe and third countries.

The University of Joensuu aims to host annually about 420 international degree students (about 350 Master level students and about 70 PhD students) and the Erasmus Mundus programme provides a useful framework for achieving this.

2.0 MEEES - Masters in Earthquake Engineering & Engineering Seismology

Course title	Masters in Earthquake Engineering and Engineering Seismology (MEEES)
Coordinating institution	University of Pavia, Italy
Partner institutions	University of Patras, Greece Joseph Fourier University, Grenoble, France Imperial College, London, UK
Start date	September 2006
Course length	12 and 18-month options
Course objectives and content	The provision within Europe of high quality training for professionals and researchers in the field of earthquake engineering and engineering seismology.
Target student cohort	The courses are designed to train engineers as specialists in the field of seismic design of new structures and strengthening of existing structures; and assessment of hazard, loss and emergency planning
Training paths	There are two tracks: Earthquake Engineering (EE) or Engineering Seismology (ES).
Degree awarded	Initially the degree awarded was a multiple degree, but from 2007 a Joint Masters is awarded by the two relevant awarding institutions.
Action 3 partnerships	Applied but not accepted

2.1 Outputs

2.1.1 The course

- **Overview of syllabus and mobility paths proposed to students**

IMESS in Pavia is delivered by the "ROSE School", a specialist (largely post-graduate) research and teaching centre established in 2000 as one of a number of such centres within the "elite" Institute for Advanced Study Pavia (or IUSS)². The ROSE School is based at the Eucentre³, which is owned by a non-profit organisation (the Eucentre Foundation) established in 2003 by the Italian Civil Protection Department, the Italian Institute of Geophysics and Vulcanology, the University of Pavia and the IUSS.

IUSS awards joint degrees with the University of Pavia and provides six masters courses including the Pavia component of MEEES. The Rose School typically has 30-40 masters students attending taught modules onsite (plus a further 20 or so working on their final dissertations), together with 6-8 PhD students.

The rationale for the course has several elements: the need and demand for specialist training of practitioners and researchers from developing countries subject to the devastating impact of earthquakes; the gap in provision of such training in Europe; and the need to bring together the breadth of expertise necessary.

Students may specialise in either or two tracks: Earthquake Engineering (EE) or Engineering Seismology (ES). The first largely concerns the design of new structures and strengthening of existing structures to minimise the impact of earthquakes; the second assessment of seismic hazard for engineering projects, estimating loss due to earthquakes and emergency planning.

Students may choose from a number of modules offered by all four institutions (some 63 were on offer for the period 09/2006 to 02/2008), subject to the approval of the consortium management team. Students must study at a minimum of two of the three degree-awarding institutions (the exception is Imperial College where credits are recognised, but no degrees awarded). All courses are taught in English.

- **Brief overview of teaching approach including number of teaching staff deployed**

The consortium appears well placed to provide the required teaching expertise in the relevant subject areas, with University of Grenoble being more specialist in engineering seismology than the others, and Pavia particularly strong in seismic design of buildings (earthquake engineering). Patras appears to have expertise evenly balanced across both tracks. All courses are taught in English. A notable feature of the approach employed at the coordinating institution (ROSE School)

² *Istituto Universitario di Studi Superiori Pavia*. There are four such autonomous and independent institutes in Italy, which have a special "programme agreement" with the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research. They were set up, it may be argued, to address the challenges mainstream Italian universities cannot meet effectively.

³ The European Centre for Training and Research in Earthquake Engineering

is a system whereby the majority of courses are delivered by visiting lecturers, who come and stay in Pavia for the duration of the course they are delivering (usually about two months). The intention is to give students access to the best specialists in the world, for an intense period, in particular from the countries with a traditionally strong track record in the field (the USA, Canada, New Zealand and Japan for example).

- **Qualifications awarded**

Initially the degree awarded was a multiple degree, but from 2007 a Joint Masters is awarded by the two relevant awarding institutions.

2.1.2 The students

For the academic year 2007/2008, some 22 students from third country students with EM grants were enrolled, plus one without a grant. The available data is summarised in the table below.

Table 2.1: Applications, candidates selected, students starting and graduations

		2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
Applications	Non-EU	243	322	413	637
	EU				
	TOTAL	302	465	608	
Admitted candidates	Non-EU				
	EU				
	TOTAL				
Students starting course	EM scholarship	22	25	22	
	Other non-EU		4	1	
	EU	4	9	6	
	TOTAL	32	38	29	
Students graduating	EM scholarship				
	Other non-EU				
	EU				
	TOTAL	26	20		

Data provided by the programme coordinator

In terms of the countries of origin of third country students, the largest contingents (for the post-graduate school as a whole rather than just EM students) are from Colombia, India, China, the USA, Peru, New Zealand, Pakistan, Iran, Mexico and Turkey. There is a strong presence of students and researchers from countries with an interest in developing expertise in the mitigation of earthquake risk.

The application envisaged a total of 75 students completing the MEEES over the five-year funding period. It was not stated if this refers to the total number, or only students with EM grants. However, by either measure, the target has been exceeded already or will be before the end of the five-year period.

2.1.3 Action 2 Scholars

Six scholars have visited the coordinating institution, while none have visited partner universities. Three Action 2 visiting scholars were funded in each of the academic years 2006-2007 (selected from six applicants), and 2007-2008 (selected from ten applicants). Two of them came from Argentina, and one from each of the following countries: Pakistan, New Zealand, Canada and USA.

2.2 Results

2.2.1 The course – relevant, high quality, with a European dimension?

- ***Is the curriculum well structured and integrated?***

The curriculum offered to MEEES students appears well structured and integrated. There are two main tracks which represent the two main career pathways for this field – earthquake engineering (focusing on how buildings can be designed and built to resist the impact of earthquakes) or engineering seismology (concerned more with understanding the stresses imposed by earthquakes and assessing the risks) - allowing students to choose the one appropriate to their intended (or previous) interests. Equally, students have the option of studying under both tracks (for 18 months instead of 12), to obtain 90 instead of 60 ECTS credits and a degree in both subjects. In this case students must also produce two dissertations of at least 42 credits each.

The lack of a traditional focus on earthquake engineering at Grenoble meant that in previous years those students taking the Earthquake Engineering (EE) track who studied there struggled to achieve sufficient grades in EE⁴, and those on the Engineering Seismology (ES) option had to study there in the first term (September to December). In addition, students may only study at Pavia during the Spring Term (April-July). As a result, additional courses in EE are now offered by Grenoble. Changes were also made, in conjunction with Grenoble, to introduce more ES content at Pavia to better support the students following that particular track.

- ***Is the content of the course "cutting edge" and how does it compare to other similar courses in Europe and beyond? (consider how many other similar courses exist).***

There is evidence that the ROSE School is a leading institution in the field – for example the head of the course was recently awarded the 2007 Shah Family Innovation Prize for excellence and innovation by the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute (EERI) in California⁵, the first time

⁴ See March 2008 Progress Report

⁵ <http://www.eeri.org/site/about-us>

this award has been made to a non-US scholar. The citation⁶ included the following text: "...in recognition of his exceptional leadership qualities, problem-solving capabilities, and entrepreneurship in defining and executing major programs leading to the reduction of earthquake risk. He has played a major role in the development of the Centre for Post-Graduate Training and Research in Earthquake Engineering and Engineering Seismology (the ROSE School), which is widely recognized as a leading international training centre in the field".

One of the principal "selling points" of MEEES is that advanced courses in the field of earthquake engineering and engineering seismology are particularly rare in Europe, partly because it is difficult to be able to bring together the breadth of expertise required in one place or university faculty. This gap in the market has been the focus of the ROSE School since its formation in 2000 and it has had a clear and dynamic focus on growth ever since. Participation in EM was and is a key part of this growth strategy.

- **What Quality Assurance mechanisms are used to ensure a) the quality of the course content (ie content of individual modules / components of the course) and b) the overall coherence of the curriculum (how the different elements fit together)?**

Students are asked to complete evaluation forms to rate (on a scale of 1-4) the syllabus, course content, preparation and organisation, quality of teaching. Analysis of the results from the first year of the programme showed positive results across categories: 80-90% rating contents, effectiveness of teaching, work assignments and labs, fulfilment of learning objectives, course structure and overall satisfaction as "good to excellent". Each institution is rated separately and the results fed back to the relevant member of the teaching staff. Students are also asked about the pastoral aspects of each partner institution. The main problem in this respect have concerned Patras (accommodation and transport) and Imperial College (lack of assistance offered to EM students).

- **How have quality procedures from the host institutions been adapted / integrated into the EMMC?**

The distribution of expertise between consortium members was recognised in the original application, and indeed was seen as a strong feature that would result in a reasonable distribution of students across the institutions. In practice, it would seem that was more of a weakness than a strength and the result of the curriculum developments described above has been to arrive at a more balanced distribution of track specialisms across the locations, increasing flexibility and quality for students. As the programme stands now, students may start at any of the partner institutions.

- **Has the course been able to deploy the most appropriate teaching staff?**

The independent status of IUSS/ROSE School noted above, (designed to support only the highest quality post-graduate teaching and research in an "elite" and internationally-minded setting), provides for significant institutional "self-governance", allowing a degree of flexibility and innovation not usually possible in the mainstream Italian university system. This is accompanied by

⁶ <http://www.eeri.org/site/2007shah>

substantial investment in facilities. As a result, the School is able to operate a system whereby the majority of courses are delivered by visiting lecturers, who come and stay in Pavia for the duration of the course they are delivering (usually about two months). The intention is to give students access to the best specialists in the world, for an intense period, in particular from the countries with a traditionally strong track record in the field (the USA, Canada, New Zealand and Japan for example). These visiting lecturers also benefit from being able to work collaboratively with research staff at the Rose School, reflecting the strong research links that were in place before the EM course was instituted. For example, taking the current programme of courses⁷ 12 of the 15 courses are delivered by visiting professors from: Turkey, the USA⁸, Switzerland, Canada, Australia and France. The set of introductory courses and one other are delivered by ROSE School and/or University of Pavia staff.

- ***How do students perceive the quality and organisation of the course?***

The consensus among the group of four students interviewed was that the quality and organisation of the course was satisfactory, supporting the evidence from the results of student feedback forms. Some differences were noted between partner institutions. The most positive views applied to the co-ordinating institution, the ROSE School in Pavia, which was regarded very positively in all aspects. Students particularly valued the quality of teaching from visiting lecturers at Pavia, giving them access to the "best in the world", the pastoral support provided and the accessibility and helpfulness of the ROSE School team.

Of the partner institutions, Patras was perceived as offering teaching of high academic quality, but in a more conventional setting and was not as highly regarded as Pavia. The experience of Grenoble was of high quality, but described as more "generic", partly as a result of the EM students mixing with local students and feeling less "special" (perhaps, like Patras, the contrast is with Pavia and does not infer any absolute or significant academic shortcomings).

Limitations are clearly imposed on mobility and academic paths by organisational needs; although it was felt that in general most students' needs can be met (i.e. the mobility path can be made to work). However it was highlighted that those starting at Grenoble were faced with a very concentrated period of study in the first term (introductory courses are provided in Pavia in the first term). Some options, such as studying at Patras and Imperial College are ruled out by timetabling constraints. In terms of academic specialisms, Grenoble was regarded as strong on seismology, Pavia on earthquake engineering (with some expertise on seismology), and Patras also more focussed on earthquake engineering, with the course there regarded as equal in quality to those offered at the other institutions.

While course staff at Pavia, Patras and Grenoble were generally described as helpful, it was observed that Imperial College staff tended not to offer any assistance to EM students. Other negative views about Imperial College's role in IMESS concerned only being permitted to take four

⁷ See http://www.roseschool.it/index.php?option=com_taughtmodules&year=2008-2009&Itemid=177

⁸ US Geological Survey, University of California Santa Barbara, University of California Berkeley, Columbia University, Washington University.

courses there, rather than the full set available to other students. While the experience of Imperial seemed fairly negative, that institutions reputation was nevertheless valued.

Students would have welcomed more information about dissertations to allow earlier development of ideas. Most were only starting to think about the topic (during the second mobility period). At Grenoble, a one-day session was arranged for consideration of potential dissertation topics, an idea that was welcomed. The requirement to complete two short dissertations for the 18-month IMESS option was not regarded as problematic.

The IMESS workload was regarded as harder than undergraduate courses and demanded more time. It was observed that whereas at Pavia the workload is evenly spread (though tests at the end of each course) in Patras for example the work was more concentrated towards the end of the mobility period.

IMESS is an elite masters course in the opinions of the students interviewed, and they consider that the EM brand is more than just a name. They valued the cultural aspect highly in that it facilitated shared experiences with students from different backgrounds and generally widened their horizons. Students were highly motivated and in general appeared to have clear career goals – most had already spent some time working in civil engineering employment before applying for IMESS. Attractions of the EM option cited included the strong reputation of the ROSE School (and again the visiting professors system), the opportunity to study in a multi-national group (this view was also held by the Italian student in the group), the specific focus of the course compared with others, and the European cultural dimension.

- ***Has the course been able to provide suitable academic facilities (equipment / labs / libraries / computing facilities etc)?***

Facilities at Pavia are well appointed, modern and of high quality, reflecting the significant investments made in the ROSE School and IUSS. Academic facilities at partner sites appear to rated satisfactory by students.

- ***Does the course offer internships or other mechanisms to allow students to gain work experience?***

The emphasis is on producing a masters thesis of technically high standards that will lead to the publication of at least one paper in an international peer-reviewed technical journal. Internships, while not discouraged, do not appear to be the norm. It is possible, via existing agreements, for students to carry out research at a number of relevant institutions including the EU's Joint Research Centre at Ispra and the Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica e Vulcanologia. In addition it is clear from the data on students' subsequent careers that there is an approximately even split between those finding employment in engineering firms and those pursuing research, which confirms that the course has strong links to industry.

- ***Has the course been able to provide suitable non-academic support after selection (visas / housing / social aspects)?***

The experience in Italy was reported as positive and it was clear from discussions with the course administrator that the ROSE School does provide a great deal of dedicated support to MEEES students while they are there. This also applies to accommodation which is available on campus as well as in the historic centre of Pavia, where the School has recently refurbished a former convent into the “CAR College”, which provides rooms , small apartments and study facilities for PhD and MSc students, ROSE teaching staff and visiting students/scholars. This capacity also allows some MEEES students to bring their families with them. Academic facilities elsewhere appear to be rated satisfactory.

Experiences from the other locations were reported as less positive. It was commented that Grenoble was less used to dealing with overseas students and there seemed to be a particular problem securing visas there. Some problems concerning accommodation were also reported from France, specifically the high cost. However, the March 2008 Progress Report did note that MEEES staff at Grenoble have organised “culture nights” to help students familiarise themselves with local French culture.

There were some problems with university accommodation in Patras and it appears that the general level of non-academic support there fell short of expectations, largely it was thought because of problems within the wider university administration rather than concerning the IMESS component per se. This appears to be being addressed through changes in personnel.

At all sites, students appear to have been offered help to access locally-provided language course as necessary.

2.2.2 Excellent students?

- ***Evidence on qualifications of students accepted onto course***

Using the online application system, candidates may upload PDF files of certificates and CVs to the system. Contacts details of three referees must be provided and the system automatically sends e-mails to ask them to complete an online reference for the applicant. It is not possible to submit an application via this system unless all the required processes have been completed and information provided. This helps to manage the large number of applications received.

- ***Do course leaders and teachers believe the students attracted are of high quality? (including compared to the average standard in their department)***

The quality of many applications is high, reflecting the high reputation of the ROSE School in particular in the field of earthquake research. The ROSE School brand appears to have worldwide visibility and is a significant factor in attracting potential students (this is also supported by evidence from the student focus group). This high profile is connected intimately to the system of visiting lecturers, who it can reasonably be argued are among leading players in the field. IUSS also has a very highly valued “elite” image within Italy, so attracting high-quality MEEES students locally is relatively easy. Before the advent of EM, the ROSE School, and the masters courses and research there, was fairly well known in the countries where traditional research partners are

located: the USA, Europe and New Zealand; but relatively unknown in Asia, the Middle East and Africa. Therefore the EM factor has had the most impact in those countries where the ROSE School was unknown. Participation in EM has therefore brought about a rapid widening of the School's horizons and, specifically, open up the new strand of work concerning capacity building of earthquake engineering practitioners in developing countries and boosting research on the particular circumstances and needs in those countries. In addition, the School's experience suggests that in the past, without EM/MEEES many of the students who now follow the EM path would have gone to the USA to study.

The School's view is that students prefer EM to the USA option for the following two main reasons: the scholarship is more generous; and the teaching staff are recognised as "the best in the world", specifically students on MEEES have access to more professors from the USA as that would if they studied there (because of the visiting lecturers system and also since the majority of the Greek professors in Patras studied at US universities).

In terms of the academic quality of MEEES students, the course leader's perspective is that while the best students from Third Countries are being attracted, inevitably the standard of these is still relatively low (compared with the "top" graduates from US and European institutions). This is a function of the quality of teaching in those countries, but EM has a role to play in increasing the quality of that capacity (through MEEES graduates returning to their countries of origin and contributing to improvements). Specifically, some aspects of basic building design are not taught well in many developing country institutions. However, MEEES students are given introductory course to "bring them up to speed" (EU students do not need to take these courses).

Students from Third Countries are typically eager to learn hard working and capable of absorbing vast amounts of knowledge. Some differences were noted: for example difficulties have been experienced with students from Indonesia and Malaysia, whereas those from Iran perform very well. The picture for the Latin American countries is mixed (Ecuadorian students have been very good, those from El Salvador less good).

2.2.3 The visiting scholars (academics)

- ***Are they of high quality? (what were they doing before (teaching, research, publishing)?, how were they identified and selected?)***

Three Action 2 visiting scholars have been funded in each of the academic years 2006-2007 and 2007-2008. Six applications were received for 2006-2007 and ten for 2007-2008. It was noted in the Progress Report for the period 2007-2008 that the visiting scholars chosen are "recognised experts in the field of earthquake engineering".

- ***What did they contribute to the EMMC during their stay?***

Of these scholars, one taught an advanced course on seismic analysis of gravity dams and tanks, gave a number of lectures and supervised one of the students' masters dissertation. Another taught a course on seismic response of soil structures and foundations and worked on establishing collaborations between Europe and New Zealand. The remaining scholar carried out research

work with staff and students at Pavia and individual lectures to MEEES students. Scholars also contributed to the course to the extent of giving a course on structural dynamics, carrying out collaborative research with researchers at Pavia, and giving seminars to MEEES students.

2.3 Impact – “additionality” and wider effects

2.3.1 Impacts on Higher Education institutions – supply and demand

- ***Does the course provide something new, which would not have been provided if the programme had not existed?***

The evidence suggests strongly that MEEES in its present form would not exist outside of the EM programme. While the prime mover in the masters course, the ROSE School in Pavia, had strong pre-existing collaborative links with researchers and institutions in some countries (the USA, Canada, New Zealand for example, where expertise has historically been concentrated), the development of strong connections with countries without any expertise in depth (in many cases which are subject to the devastating consequences of earthquakes) was made possible through participation in EM. There was a pre-existing strategy for growth, to widen and deepen internationalisation, which has been made stronger than it would have been without EM. In addition EM has helped realise the vision of a distinctly European centre of excellence in earthquake engineering and engineering seismology.

A central and essential pillar of innovation within the ROSE School and MEES is the system of visiting lecturers - 12 of the 15 courses that constitute the current programme at Pavia are delivered by visiting professors from: Turkey, the USA, Switzerland, Canada, Australia and France. This has the effect of creating a European centre of expertise, which also benefits from international expertise. This not only benefits researchers, lecturers and students at Pavia and on the MEEES course, but provides access to this world-class expertise for students from Third Countries. A key rationale for the MEEES course is to contribute towards increasing research and professional practitioner capacity in countries where the greatest need lies (e.g. Pakistan, China, Iran, South America). Participation in EM has therefore allowed the ROSE School, but also the other members of the consortium to expand their geographical coverage.

- ***Has the experience of the course had wider impacts on the departments and institutions concerned (e.g. on other courses and provision, on quality procedures etc)?***

Students and staff alike welcome the opportunity to work alongside people from different countries and share different approaches to common problems, describing it as an enriching experience. Interaction with students from Africa and Asia in particular has made researchers aware of the situation in those regions in terms of expertise, professional practice and traditions. Building traditions are different in different regions of the world so it is important to take this into account. For example, in many places adobe is the preferred type of construction rather than concrete and steel. More research is needed on these types of buildings in terms of earthquake engineering. Local construction types have a significant influence on earthquake responses – for example, in Iran, buildings tend to have very thick roofs (to ameliorate high temperatures), but the seismic

responses of these features is very poor. Iranian designers therefore need assistance to find ways to change designs. Overt eh longer term ex-MEEES students can have an influence in this respect (e.g. on developing new building regulations).

- ***Has the programme made the departments more "internationally oriented"?***

Participation in EM has complemented strongly the existing propensity of the ROSE School/IUSS towards internationalisation (earthquake research is by definition an international field in any case and fostering an international outlook is a key part of the *raison d'être* of all such institutes in Italy).

2.3.2 Impacts on students and scholars

- ***Perceived added value on future prospects of students and scholars (perceptions of students and scholars principally)***

Students valued both the reputation of the ROSE School and the association with the EM programme highly, so these factors had a major influence on their decision to apply for MEEES. The MEEES degree is viewed as a significant asset in terms of future carer prospects. Data concerning the destinations of MEEES alumni supports this; and also indicate a balance of those moving on to engineering-type employment and working on research in the field (both making a contribution to building capacity in developing countries in particular). Where nationals of developing countries have joined engineering practices or are conducting research in more advanced countries, they may well ultimately return to their country of origin and play a part in building local capacity.

The majority of the members of the student focus group interviewed had previously been in employment in the field of civil engineering, and took the course to strengthen their expertise in the specialist field of earthquake engineering and seismology, primarily in order to enhance their career options. Data concerning MEEES alumni provided by the course coordinator shows:

- For 2005-2006, 12 of the 23 students whose destination are known were employed in industry (mainly design offices) and the remaining 11 had positions in university/research institutions;
- For 2006-2007, six of the 16 students whose destination are known were employed in industry (again mainly design offices), eight had positions in university/research institutions and two were embarked on military service.

The detailed breakdown of destinations shows ex-MEEES students working in universities around the world, (e.g. in the USA, UK, Italy, Argentina, Iceland, France, China, Switzerland, Malaysia and Turkey); and for engineering companies in the USA, UK, India, China, Canada, Ecuador France, Greece, Italy, Turkey and New Zealand. For graduates of the courses for the two relevant years, six had research positions at the ROSE School/IUSS in Pavia.

2.3.3 Policy impact and contributions to EU strategic goals

- ***Impact, if any, on comparability and recognition of qualifications within Europe (Bologna principles)***

The status of the coordinating institution within the IUSS Pavia has undoubtedly been beneficial in allowing the ROSE School in general and MEEES in particular to exercise a degree of innovation and flexibility, and to make significant investments, which are unlikely to have been achieved within the mainstream higher education system in Italy.

2.4 Implementation issues

2.4.1 Main issues linked to implementation

- ***List and analyse the main difficulties and barriers encountered which have influenced the ability of course leaders to achieve their objectives and the extent to which these have been overcome***

Over the period that the course has operated, changes have been made to the curriculum to address problems that emerged at the start concerning the impact of the balance of expertise within the four partner institutions on the ability of students to choose curriculum pathways to meet their needs. This largely concerned the focus on engineering seismology on the one hand in Grenoble, and the emphasis on earthquake engineering at Pavia. Steps have been taken to ensure all institutions can meet students' needs in whichever track specialism that they choose.

Academically, the evidence suggests that the standard in all partner institutions is high, but that the ROSE School in Pavia stands out for its innovation and provision of both academic and pastoral support. Compared against the ROSE School the other institutions may appear more typical of mainstream experiences, but it is likely that this is more a result of Pavia's "over performance" than the others "under performance".

In terms of non-academic aspects, problems have been encountered in Patras in particular, and to extent difficulties in obtaining visas to stay in France. The most significant failings seem to have been concerning accommodation in Patras, which appear to have been the result of internal personnel problems in that institution, but which have since been resolved.

The involvement of Imperial College (IC) has proved challenging, because it has proved impossible to reach agreement on that institution participating in awarding a multiple MEEES degree. This means that IC remains a non-awarding partner, where credits only are awarded. It appears that despite discussions the obstacle is Imperial's position overall on awarding joint degrees *per se*, which it certainly seems to be set against in principle. MEEES students spending a mobility rotation at IC have also reported a lack of support from IC, although the institutions academic reputation remains valued.

2.4.2 Financial support

- ***Include consideration of the adequacy of the financial support provided by the programme in relation to objectives. (funding to course, level of scholarships, funding for third country partnerships if relevant)***

Tuition fees are charged at a flat-rate of €8,000 for the 12-month degree and €12,000 for the 18-month degree, with the proceeds divided amongst the degree-awarding institutions according to the mobility pattern. Fees are the same for third-country and EU students. In 2007/2008 six EU students were enrolled and the consortium offers a scholarship of €14,000 for the 12-month programme to support these.

The six EU students enrolled for the period 2007-2008 comprised four from Greece, and one each from Italy and Turkey. A consortium scholarship of €14,000 for the 12-month programme and €21,000 for the 18-month programme is provided. Each partner promotes this option to what are considered the best local students. Although open to all, priority is given to European students.

The long-term viability of the course appears very sound: applications continue to increase and the reputation of the course continues to be maintained. Demand, and the importance of MEES to the overall ROSE School/IUSS strategy are such that it is unlikely the programme would not be continued in some form if EU funding was no longer available. The consortium is providing its own funding for MEEES scholarships for European students.

It seems that Imperial College's future participation in the consortium is unlikely, given the failure of efforts to reach agreement within the partnership on that institution operating a joint degree.

2.5 Added value and perceived relevance of Erasmus Mundus

2.5.1 "Added value"

- ***What has the EMMC brought the universities involved that they would not have been available to achieve / obtain without it?***

The involvement of the partnership in the EM programme has provided significant added value to the universities involved, the students and the third countries of origin of the students. The MEEES programme is helping to build significant European capacity in this field of expertise and is able to offer a distinct product to relevant Third Countries, while providing access to the best academic expertise from the major non-European players, the USA, Canada and New Zealand for example.

- ***What has the EMMC offered students and scholars and to what extent has the EMMC provided something that they could not have achieved elsewhere / on another course?***

The course certainly appears to offer an experience and outcome that is not available in the same form elsewhere. The location of the coordinating partner within the RISE School/IUSS in Pavia is a major positive factor in achieving innovation and internationalisation for the benefit of all partners.

2.5.2 "Relevance"

- ***Has the programme overall allowed the institutions concerned to a) improve / expand the quality of their offer and b) attract additional talented students and scholars (based on findings above)***

The programme overall has allowed the participating institutions to improve and expand the quality of their offer and the students attracted appear to be highly motivated and likely to succeed in their chosen careers. The institutions have responded to problems identified, making curriculum changes for example where this has allowed students to have their needs met more effectively.

- ***To what extent has this allowed the institutions concerned to address what they perceived as their real needs?***

Participation in EM has allowed the partner institutions to contribute towards their individual internationalisation goals and to fulfil their own vision to provide a high quality European offer in the field of earthquake engineering and engineering seismology.

3.0 EMCL - European Masters Clinical Linguistics

Course title	Joint European Masters Programme in Clinical Linguistics (EMCL)
Coordinating institution	Universität Potsdam (Potsdam), Germany
Partner institutions	Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (Groningen), The Netherlands Joensuu Yliopisto (Joensuu), Finland Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca (Milan), Italy
Start date	EMCL already existed since 2000 and started with a preparatory year in 2004-2005. It officially started as an Erasmus Mundus Master Course in the academic year 2005/2006
Course length	15 months programme (90 ECTS)
Course objectives and content	The objective of the programme is to train highly qualified, advanced students who are well prepared for further research work and Ph.D. programmes in the area of theoretical and experimental neurosciences and psycholinguistics with clinical issues. When students have finished the programme, they are expected to have a fundamental knowledge of theoretical linguistics and brain sciences and are able to apply this knowledge to describe speech and language disorders.
Target student cohort	The requirement for admission is at least three years of higher education (BA, BSc or equivalent) with an emphasis on speech and language pathology, linguistics, biomedical sciences, psychology or special education.
Training paths	Students attend at least two and a maximum of three of the universities involved. Further details are provided under 1.2.1
Degree awarded	A joint degree is issued by Milan, Joensuu and Potsdam (M.Sc. European Masters Clinical Linguistics). Due to national legislation in the Netherlands, it is not possible for Groningen to participate in the joint degree. EMCL students who attend Groningen therefore obtain an additional Dutch degree (MA Letteren) together with the joint degree.
Action 3 partnerships	The consortium does not participate in any Action 3 partnership.

3.1 Outputs

3.1.1 The course

- **Overview of syllabus and mobility paths proposed to students**

Each student attends at least two and a maximum of three of the institutions of the transnational consortium. Students can either start in Groningen or Milan and can move to another university during the second term. The options available for the second term are Joensuu and Groningen. Students who start in Milan will have to move to another university in the second term, as no second term is offered there. All students are required to spend the third term in Potsdam. To finish the programme, students write a Masters thesis in the fourth term and attend a summer school or conference organised for them. The total number of credits required for completing the programme is 90 ECTS (i.e. a 15 months programme). An overview of the current mobility paths and the credit points allocated to each component is given below:

Table 3.1: Overview of mobility paths and credit point distribution

	Term 1 Sept - Dec	Term 2 Jan-mid. Apr.	Term 3 mid. Apr-July	Masters Thesis Sept.-Nov
Potsdam			30 ECTS	15 ECTS
Joensuu		30 ECTS		
Groningen*	15 ECTS			
Milan				

Source: EMCL website

* During the first year in operation, students also had the option to go to Groningen during term 1.

The **first term** starts in September and runs till December. This is a more general part and contains core courses in theoretical linguistics (morphosyntax, phonetics/phonology, semantics; total of 5 ECTS), statistics and methodology (total of 5 ECTS) and clinical linguistics (developmental speech and language disorders and aphasiology; total of 5 ECTS). The core courses are very similar at the different institutions (e.g. same literature and evaluation criteria) and are examined through either a written exam or an essay.

The **second and third term** (January-mid April and mid April-July) offer specialised courses in psycholinguistics, clinical linguistics, neurolinguistics and speech technology. The programmes contain research classes in aphasiology, developmental speech and language disorders, language and neuro-imaging, speech and speech technology. All of these classes are 5 or 10 ECTS and are examined by an essay. During some of these courses, the students also work on the development of a language assessment test.

Finally, students have to write a **Masters thesis** (August-November). They are expected to conduct an empirical study, test subjects (with or without language disorders), process the collected data and write a thesis which is, in principle, suitable for publication in an international journal. Each student has one supervisor for the thesis. Where the thesis is written depends on the topic and the preferences of the student. Each thesis is graded independently by a second supervisor of a different university.

- ***Brief overview of teaching approach including number of teaching staff deployed***

Teaching is based on small group seminars and lectures and all courses are taught in English. The modules that are offered to the students in each term are similar at each of the participating institutions and the teaching content of individual courses is constantly adapted to reflect the most recent research in the field. According to the progress report, the professor/student ratio at each institution is approximately 1 to 5. The programme website⁹ gives the names of 24 individuals under the category main teaching staff.

- ***Qualifications awarded***

A joint degree is awarded by Milan, Joensuu and Potsdam. Groningen is prevented from awarding a joint degree by Dutch legislation and continues to award the Dutch MA Letteren degree to those who spent part of their studies in Groningen (in addition to the joint degree)

⁹ <http://www.emcl-mundus.com/html/>

3.1.2 The students

Table 3.2: Applications, candidates selected, students starting and graduations

		2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
Applications	Non-EU	54	53	37	47
	EU	7	6	8	14
	TOTAL	61	59	45	61
Admitted candidates*	Non-EU	18	16	17	20
	EU	7	3	4	13
	TOTAL	25	19	21	33
Students starting course	EM scholarship	15 (of which 5 through "windows")	15 (of which 2 through "windows")	17 (of which 2 through "windows")	20
	Other non-EU		2 (with Taiwan government grant)		1 (self payer)
	EU	7	3	3	9
	TOTAL	22	20	20	30
Students graduating	EM scholarship	14	17	15	
	Other non-EU	14	17	15	
	EU	7	3	3	
	TOTAL	21	20	18	

Data provided by the programme coordinator *Figures for admitted non-EU candidates refer to candidates selected for scholarships

Above table shows that the number of applications received stayed rather stable for the last four rounds. The graduation rate is relatively high and drop-outs appear not to have been a major problem.

3.1.3 Action 2 Scholars

At the time of writing, a total of 18 visiting scholars had attended the participating universities. Scholars usually come to the University of Potsdam during term 3 so that they can teach and interact with the complete batch of students in a given academic year. A complete overview of scholars with names and duration of the mobility period was not available.

3.2 Results

3.2.1 The course –relevant, high quality, with a European dimension

- ***Is the curriculum well structured and integrated?***

By providing relatively strong common educational elements across sites, the consortium appears to have succeeded in guaranteeing a well integrated and coherent educational experience for EMCL students, regardless of their mobility paths. The overall structure of EMCL seems well-designed and reflects a consistent approach across sites and areas of specialisations.

- ***Is the content of the course "cutting edge" and how does it compare to other similar courses in Europe and beyond? (consider how many other similar courses exist).***

Given the research track record and high level of international recognition enjoyed by the senior teaching staff involved, the content of the programme can also be assumed to reflect the latest scientific findings and developments. Those interviewed stressed that it is difficult to draw comparison between EMCL and other programmes since EMCL covers a rather specific, interdisciplinary subject that is only taught at a small number of universities in Europe and abroad. Furthermore, emphasis is put on different aspects of the subject by different institutions. The programme coordinator reported that a somewhat comparable programme existed in Trieste (Italy), but stated that the flexibility in combining areas of interests and the combination of experimental and clinical methods and techniques clearly sets EMCL apart from other Master level programmes.

- ***What Quality Assurance mechanisms are used to ensure a) the quality of the course content (ie content of individual modules / components of the course) and b) the overall coherence of the curriculum (how the different elements fit together)?***

The QA approach of the EMCL consortium relies on combining the local QA capabilities and procedures put in place by the partners with the central coordination function of the EMCL Joint Board of Studies, which is tasked with Quality Assurance at the programme level. All EMCL courses are subject to a written evaluation by students and teacher(s) and the Board analyses the written feedback at least once per academic year. The Board consists of one representative of each of the institutions involved and two external members from the Universities of Newcastle (UK) and Oslo (Norway).

- ***How have quality procedures from the host institutions been adapted / integrated into the EMMC?***

Even though the partner institutions have different approaches to QA, it has been agreed that each of them has to guarantee a comparable QA standard. All four partners appear to put strong emphasis on QA and the coordinating institution (University of Potsdam) is currently in the middle of a system accreditation process (implementing agency: ACQUIN). Once successfully completed, this will certify that the university's quality assurance system in the field of teaching and learning is suitable to achieve its qualification objectives, to ensure the quality standards of its study

programmes and to create a quality culture, which is supported by broad quality awareness throughout the university.

- ***Has the course been able to deploy the most appropriate teaching staff?***

Overall, EMCL succeeded to deploy the most appropriate teaching staff and internationally renowned scholars in the area psycho- and neurolinguistics are involved in teaching EMCL students. However, one teaching staff related problem seems to have arisen. According to the programme coordinator, teaching staff at Italian universities were, until recently, not permitted to teach courses in any other language than Italian due to national legislation. This legal hurdle reportedly forced Milan to hire external lecturers to teach EMCL students. Against this backdrop, it seems possible that the programme has not managed to deploy the most appropriate teaching staff in these particular cases.

- ***How do students perceive the quality and organisation of the course?***

The students interviewed were generally happy with the quality and organisation of the course. They appreciate the overall academic quality and the possibility to work with some of the most pre-eminent scholars in their academic fields. However, they also reported that among their fellow students, many expected the programme to have a stronger practical (i.e. clinical) orientation. It is unclear whether this is due to problems in communicating the actual course content or the unwillingness of potential students to engage with the available information before applying. Furthermore, some of those interviewed reported that in light of the considerable breadth of subjects covered by the programme, students were sometimes lacking the necessary foundation knowledge in one of the subjects and would have appreciated more advice and guidance by the lecturers on how to get up to speed. It also appears to have been somewhat unclear why some students' mobility paths were approved and others' changed by the consortium. When changes were made, sometimes insufficient explanation appears to have been given to the students concerned. Students who hold first degrees from academic institutions in the United States tend to be slightly more critical than their peers from other academic systems when class sizes, responsiveness and accessibility of teaching staff, as well as the quality of the feedback provided by the teaching staff are concerned.

- ***Has the course been able to provide suitable academic facilities (equipment / labs / libraries / computing facilities etc)? [evidence comes mainly from students]***

The EMCL students interviewed did not express any concerns about the suitability of the academic facilities provided at the four sites. No problems or shortcomings were reported when teaching venues, libraries, access to academic publications or laboratory equipment are concerned.

- ***Does the course offer internships or other mechanisms to allow students to gain work experience?***

EMCL is a strongly research focused degree programme that mainly aims at educating future PhD students. Sound methodological knowledge, a good understanding of the latest research and well developed academic writing skills are seen as the key factors that will ensure the future employability of EMCL students. In response to calls by former students to strengthen the clinical

component of EMCL, a block seminar on clinical neurology and rehabilitation has been inserted into the programme in 2007. The block seminar takes place in a rehabilitation clinic near Berlin and gives EMCL students the possibility to gather clinical experience and to work directly with patients.

- ***Has the course been able to provide suitable non-academic support after selection (visas / housing / social aspects)?***

EMCL students are on the whole satisfied with the level of non-academic support provided by the participating universities. Groningen and Joensuu are frequently mentioned for the quality of their support in the area of housing, visa issues and general matters. Even though the level of support provided in Potsdam and Milan is also appreciated, there appear to have been some shortcomings when the quality of the information provided (e.g. a certain level of ambiguity concerning visa issues) and proactive communication are concerned. Some students appear to have received essential information rather late or only on their request. It was also reported that the international office in Potsdam was somewhat disconnected from the EMCL programme and appears to have lacked the necessary understanding of the programme to effectively support the students in some matters.

3.2.2 Excellent students?

- ***Evidence on qualifications of students accepted onto course***

Most of the students interviewed applied for EMCL right after finishing their undergraduate degrees. However, some of them already had a more advanced professional or academic qualification like a Master degree in a related subject or had undergone clinical training. Information on the final marks attained by students for their qualifying degrees is not available.

- ***Do course leaders and teachers believe the students attracted are of high quality? (including compared to the average standard in their department)***

The programme coordinator and the teaching staff interviewed agree that the students attracted by the programme are of high academic calibre and also highly motivated. Members of the teaching staff in Potsdam compared the quality of the EMCL students to the top 10% of students on the local degree programme in clinical linguistics. The most obvious difference the teaching staff observed between EMCL students and other programme students are the deep and genuine interest in the subject, high motivation and the level of preparation of the EMCL students.

3.2.3 The visiting scholars (academics)

- ***Are they of high quality? (what were they doing before (teaching, research, publishing)?, how were they identified and selected?) [This comes mainly from coordinator / partner interviews and factual evidence for scholar interviews]***

According to the programme coordinator, there are some spontaneous applications of visiting scholar candidates (mostly through the programme website) but most visiting scholars are recruited on the basis of pre-existing contacts and personal connections. Scholars are usually selected on the basis of their academic excellence, geographical spread and their ability to cover

disciplines represented in the programme with an eye on recruiting scholars from complementary backgrounds. Each of the applicants is requested to provide a list of possible courses they would be able to teach and the board of studies selects the most suitable ones for the programme.

- ***What did they contribute to the EMMC during their stay? [coordinators / partner interviews + their own opinions]***

18 scholars supported by an EM scholarship have visited the consortium universities so far. Visiting scholars are typically engaged in supporting EMCL students with their thesis projects, teach guest seminars and are normally in close contact with the students. One scholar is returning on an annual basis to teach a class on academic writing that has established itself as an important part of the EMCL curriculum.

3.3 Impact – "additionality" and wider effects

3.3.1 Impacts on Higher Education institutions – supply and demand

- ***Does the course provide something new, which would not have been provided if the programme had not existed? [hypothetical counterfactual, so difficult – but we must ask for views on this and compare them]***

According to the programme coordinator, a directly comparable educational offer did not exist before the consortium partners introduced the EMCL programme. This is mostly attributed to the fact that EMCL combined the capabilities of four leading European universities in the field of neurolinguistics/psycholinguistics in one degree programme and by bringing together different academic traditions and approaches.

- ***Has the experience of the course had wider impacts on the departments and institutions concerned (e.g. on other courses and provision, on quality procedures etc)?***

Some of the participating institutions were already strongly engaged in QA activities before EMCL and had institution wide QA systems in place (e.g. Groningen). Others were only about to build up their QA capabilities. It can be argued that EMCL brought about the necessity to coordinate these efforts and, in this respect, contributed to a greater degree of compatibility between the partners, which would not have been the case otherwise. However, it should be noted that the EMCL programme already existed before Erasmus Mundus was introduced. The impact of this particular course is therefore not necessarily identical with the impact of Erasmus Mundus.

- ***Has the programme made the departments more "internationally oriented"?***

Even though those interviewed stated that substantial progress has been made during the last couple of years, all four universities have the clear ambition to further internationalise their activities and to attract more international students. EMCL is reported to have made an important contribution to these efforts. From the perspective of the University of Potsdam, EMCL is an international flagship programme that has helped them to explore the possibilities and challenges involved in European cooperation in higher education. In this respect, it paved the way for broader internationalisation efforts of the institutions involved.

3.3.2 Impacts on students and scholars

- ***What do students expect to be the impact of attending the course on their personal and future career development?***

Most EMCL students appear to have a very clear research orientation and are driven by strong scientific interest in subjects covered by EMCL. The overwhelming majority states that they are planning to do a PhD after completing the programme. The stated goal of EMCL "to train highly qualified, advanced students who are well prepared for further research work and PhD programmes" is clearly in-line with most students' aspirations. However, some of the current students see their professional future less in research and more in the clinical field and, while judging the course to be intellectually rigorous and interesting, are unsure how it will help their careers in fields like clinical speech therapy. The third-country students interviewed tend to link the expected impact of their EMCL participation to the recognition of the universities involved and think that the flexibility and adaptability required to complete an international programme like EMCL will be appreciated by employers. Another factor that is appreciated by students and scholars is the opportunity to study psycholinguistics / neurolinguistics in different language environments (i.e. German, Dutch, Italian and Finnish) which offers different perspectives on the subject. One of the main benefits scholars mention is the possibility to work with an interesting and diverse group of students who have a strong interest in research. Furthermore, those involved stated that it enables the visiting scholars to step out of the daily routine at their home institutions and gain a new perspective on their fields of research. After their stay they are expected to have a better understanding of graduate education in the EU and are better informed about the research interest of their colleagues at the consortium universities which may form the basis of future cooperation.

3.3.3 Policy impact and contribution to EU strategic goals

- ***Impact, if any, on comparability and recognition of qualifications within Europe (Bologna principles) [this might be expected as a result of the requirement for joint working between consortium institutions from different countries – but needs to be checked]***

All partner institutions accept the courses taught and marks given by consortium partners as equivalent to their own. The representative of the University of Potsdam also stated that the role as EMCL coordinating institution provided the justification to stretch internal rules to the maximum to reach the necessary level of administrative and systemic compatibility. In this sense, EMCL is seen as a pioneer activity that opened-up the perspective for further internationalisation by the University of Potsdam. However, the ambition to introduce a joint degree awarded by all consortium partners, which was already formulated in the initial application for Action 1 and 2 support, did not materialise so far. This seems mostly due to the fact that the legal obstacles involved in this process were underestimated.

3.4 Implementation issues

3.4.1 Main issues linked to implementation

- ***List and analyse the main difficulties and barriers encountered which have influenced the ability of course leaders to achieve their objectives and the extent to which these have been overcome***

Overall, the level of buy-in and support in the university hierarchy appears to have been a determining factor for the ability of the consortium partners to overcome administrative and regulatory rigidities. The level of buy-in of the university leadership appears to have been lowest in Milan and this may have prevented the other partners from moving forward towards a higher level of integration and compatibility. This seems to be also reflected in the fact that Milan is not part of the consortium's Erasmus Mundus II application.

In the beginning the consortium also encountered logistical challenges mostly related to differences in the term/semester structures at the universities involved. In reaction to overlaps and partial incompatibilities, the mobility path was modified to guarantee the smooth implementation of the 15 months programme.

Finally, the consortium experienced some practical challenges related to the payment of scholarships. The programme coordinator stated that it proved difficult to arrange for timely scholarship payments to incoming third-country students. This appears to be mostly due to difficulties and delays in the process of opening bank accounts for third-country students and is said to have been particularly problematic in Italy. This is now being addressed by opening accounts for all third country students at the same branch of a bank the coordinating institution enjoys a good business relationship with.

3.4.2 Financial support

- ***Include consideration of the adequacy of the financial support provided by the programme in relation to objectives. (funding to course, level of scholarships, funding for third country partnerships if relevant)***

Overall, the programme coordinator, teaching staff and university management interviewed consider the level of financial support adequate. According to the programme coordinator, the consortium partners would probably have given up EMCL if it would not have been selected as an EMMC. It was always the ambition of the consortium partners to attract excellent international students. However, it turned out to be impossible to live-up to this ambition before third-country applicants could be offered the level of financial support now provided by Erasmus Mundus scholarships. The programme coordinator stated that the ability of EMCL to attract highly-qualified international students has clearly increased since EMCL became an EMMC. Therefore, they conclude that the level of financial support provided in form of scholarships is in-line with the objective of Erasmus Mundus to attract excellent students. Even though the level of financial support provided by the EU is seen as crucial for the success of EMCL, the representative of the coordinating institution stated that they still invest substantial amounts of their own funds in running

the programme. Since EMCL is regarded as an important building block of the university's internationalisation strategy, this is seen as a worthwhile investment.

To assess the sustainability of the EMCL programme, those interviewed were asked to comment on three different funding scenarios: 1) EU funding is removed altogether, even if courses are still branded as "Erasmus Mundus" (ie a sort of Quality Label approach). 2) EU funding for courses (ie the €15 000 per year) is removed, but scholarships remain. 3) EU funding for scholarships is removed, but funding for courses is retained.

Strong doubts are expressed about the future viability of EMCL without any form of EU funding. Those interviewed recognise the value of the Erasmus Mundus brand name and think that it is increasingly recognised as a quality label in higher education. However, they assume that the growing reputation of Erasmus Mundus is not only based on the high quality of the Master programmes supported, but also for a level of financial support that compares favourably with scholarships offered to excellent international students in other parts of the world (e.g. USA, Canada, Australia). Therefore, the recognition and prestige would probably suffer if all funding were removed. The representative of the University of Potsdam and the programme coordinator agreed that, should the flat rate grant of € 15 000 be removed, the consortium would still make every effort to continue with EMCL. Already at present, the actual costs involved in running EMCL are not matched by the level of financial support provided for this task. However, since the universities involved are committed to EMCL and believe that it provides value added, they are happy to also use some of their own funds for this purpose.

3.5 Added value and perceived relevance of Erasmus Mundus

3.5.1 "Added value"

- ***What has the EMMC brought the universities involved that they would not have been available to achieve / obtain without it?***

In this context, it is important to note that, according to the programme coordinator, the consortium partners would probably not have continued with EMCL if it had not been selected as an EMMC. This makes clear that the Erasmus Mundus support enabled the consortium partners to turn an educational offer that had the ambition to attract excellent international students, but couldn't live-up to it due to a lack of resources and visibility, into a success. This seems mostly related to the fact that Erasmus Mundus provided them with the additional financial capability and visibility to attract very good third country students they did not reach before. Furthermore, Erasmus Mundus appears to have helped the consortium partners to realise their broader internationalisation objectives (more and better third country students, more mobility and international networking opportunities for teaching staff and students as well as closer contacts with universities from other EU Member States).

- ***What has the EMMC offered students and scholars and to what extent has the EMMC provided something that they could not have achieved elsewhere / on another course?***

The third country students stressed that they highly appreciate the level of financial support provided by the European Union and that many of them would not have been in the position to come to study in the EU otherwise. As far as scholars are concerned, the opportunity to teach and interact with a culturally diverse and motivated group of students with strong scientific interest is seen as an enriching experience that benefited their own work.

3.5.2 "Relevance"

- ***Has the programme overall allowed the institutions concerned to a) improve / expand the quality of their offer and b) attract additional talented students and scholars (based on findings above)***

Overall, Erasmus Mundus participation made an important contribution to improve the quality of the educational offer of the universities involved. The most important observation is that Erasmus Mundus enabled the partners to develop a more attractive offer than they could have without the programme's support. Furthermore, the majority of Erasmus Mundus students and scholars can be seen as "additional" and would not have been in the position to come to study at the consortium universities without Erasmus Mundus.

- ***To what extent has this allowed the institutions concerned to address what they perceived as their real needs?***

The Erasmus Mundus supported EMCL programme has brought a number of important benefits to the consortium partners, in particular in terms of adding value to their overall internationalisation strategies. Especially the prestige and added visibility that went along with their successful Erasmus Mundus application is cited as an important factor in this context. This not only added credibility to their internationalisation efforts, but also underlined their actual capability to implement the necessary structural and administrative changes necessary to offer an international degree programme. This can be seen as a good basis for the further development of productive international partnerships.

4.0 SpaceMaster - Joint European Master in Space Science and Technology

Course title	SpaceMaster – Joint European Master in Space Science and Technology
Coordinating institution	Luleå University of Technology, Sweden (LTU)
Partner institutions	Cranfield University, United Kingdom (CU) Czech Technical University, Czech Republic (CTU) Helsinki University of Technology, Finland (TKK) Julius Maximilian University Würzburg, Germany (JMUW) Paul Sabatier Toulouse III University, France (UPS)
Start date	September 2005
Course length	2 year Master course (120 ECTS)
Course objectives and content	<p>The course objectives are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Combine the diversity of space expertise at six European universities to a common platform of competence within the guidelines of the Bologna process; ○ Give students cross-disciplinary extension from laboratory and computer simulation environment to concrete situations such as balloon, rocket, satellite and radar control; ○ Bring together, as a core group, students from the whole world to share the existing space competence, to develop it together and distribute it to benefit the European space industry and research community.
Target student cohort	Generally, students are required to have a good quality Bachelor degree in Engineering, Natural Science, Mathematics or equivalent qualification. Students from non-English speaking countries are also required to prove their proficiency in English through a passed TOEFL or IELTS test.
Training paths	<p>First year is the same for all students (first semester at JMUW and second semester at LTU). Second year divided into five engineering and three scientific study 'tracks' hosted by one of the consortium universities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Structural Dynamics and Control (CU) ○ Space Automation and Control (CTU) ○ Space Robotics (JMUW or TKK) ○ Space Technology and Instrumentation (LTU) ○ Space, Atmospheric and Solar Physics (LTU) ○ Space Physics, Astrophysics, Planetology, Spatial Techniques & Instrumentation (UPS)
Degree awarded	Double MSc degree awarded by LTU and the university where the students spend their second year, together with a joint Diploma Supplement.
Action 3 partnerships	<p>The Action 3 partnership consists of the following universities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China ○ Stanford University, USA ○ University of Tokyo, Japan ○ University of Toronto, Canada ○ Utah State University, USA

4.1 Outputs

4.1.1 The course

- **Overview of syllabus and mobility paths proposed to students**

The SpaceMaster is a four semester (2 year) Master course worth 120 ECTS credits. The first year is the same for all students and is hosted jointly by JMUW and LTU. The second year is divided into five engineering and three scientific tracks, according to the competencies of the partners:

Table 4.1: Engineering and scientific tracks

Engineering Tracks	Scientific Tracks
Structural Dynamics and Control (CU)	Space Physics, Astrophysics and Planetology (UPS)
Space Automation and Control (CTU)	Spatial Techniques and Instrumentation (UPS)
Space Robotics (JMUW)	Space, Atmospheric and Solar Physics (LTU)
Space Robotics (TKK)	
Space Technology and Instrumentation (LTU)	

The fourth semester is reserved for the Master thesis. All students are connected to a 'home university', which is determined on the basis of where the students are expected to spend their third semester.

Table 4.2: Semesters

Semester 1: Introductory space related modules (30 ECTS). Same for all students. Location: JMUW, Germany	Semester 2: Space related modules (30 ECTS). Same for all students. Location: Kiruna Space Campus (LTU), Sweden
Semester 3: Engineering/ science specialisation related to local expertise (15-30 ECTS). Location: One of the EU partner universities	Semester 4: Master's thesis administered by academics from a minimum of two universities (30-45 ECTS). Location: Semester 3 university, host university, industry or research institution.

The distribution of students has been relatively even across the partner universities, perhaps with the exception of CU and CTU, partly reflecting variations in the professional interests of students, but also crucially the capacity of individual universities to host students. Notably, a significantly higher share of EU students study at UPS and CU, whilst a relatively higher share of third country students studies at LTU, TKK and JMUW. Notwithstanding the lower than expected number of students attending the SpaceMaster, the actual mobility paths are not significantly different from the expected ones. The number of students choosing to study at CTU during Round 3 is, however, of some concern.

- **Brief overview of teaching approach including number of teaching staff deployed**

Some 50-60 lecturers (including guest lecturers) have been involved in the SpaceMaster, representing approximately 10 lecturers per university. This is largely in line with the number of

staff expected to be committed to the course, as noted in the application, perhaps with the only exception of UPS, where it was originally expected that some 30 staff would be involved.

- **Qualifications awarded**

Upon completion of the course, students are awarded with a double MSc degree by LTU and the university where the students spend their second year¹⁰. The Masters degrees issued by the consortium universities are officially recognised nationally and internationally. Students are also provided with a joint Diploma Supplement, which provides a full description of the curriculum, the role of the universities in the consortium and the university systems of each university in the consortium, in order to make it easier to apply for work/ education abroad.

4.1.2 The students

Table 4.3: Applications, candidates selected, students starting and graduations

		Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4
Applications	Non-EU				
	EU				
	TOTAL	121	172	206	
Admitted candidates	Non-EU				
	EU				
	TOTAL	70	75	88	
Students <i>starting</i> course	EM scholarship	25	27	25	19
	Other non-EU				
	EU	15	13	13	14
	TOTAL	40	40	38	33
Students <i>graduating</i>	EM scholarship	23	26		
	Other non-EU				
	EU	13	7		
	TOTAL	36	33		
		1 drop out		4 drop outs 2 replacement students	1 drop out

Data provided by the programme coordinator

It is clear from the table above that the number of students applying to the SpaceMaster course is increasing rapidly. However, whilst the number of students applying and being admitted to the SpaceMaster is increasing, the number of students registering onto the course is declining.

¹⁰ If students spend their second year at LTU, the degree will be awarded by LTU and JMUW or UPS.

Evidence from the interviews suggests that it is mainly “admitted” EU students who do not register onto the course, due to financial restrictions.

Whilst the proportion of registered students is falling (relative to admitted students), it remains significantly higher than that for other international programmes/ courses at LTU. Indeed, in 2007 only 20% of admitted students registered on an international programme/ course at LTU (including the two EMMCs), compared with 43% of students in relation to the SpaceMaster course.

The number of students registering onto the course has consistently been significantly lower than the 107 students expected for the first year. However, it is understood that the target was changed shortly after the start of the course - to some 50 students per year – as a result of changes to the organisation of the course. However, regardless of which estimate is used, it is clear that the course has not attracted enough students to meet the target.

With regards to the gender mix of students, more than 4 out of 5 students registering onto the course is male.

4.1.3 Action 2 Scholars

The number of applications from scholars has more than doubled since the start in 2005, albeit from a relatively low base. Indeed, in 2005 only three applications were received, compared with eight in 2008.

Overall, the SpaceMaster supported a total of ten different academic scholars from third countries. Notably, three of these scholars participated in the SpaceMaster more than once, resulting in a total of 15 teaching and research scholarships being granted. The returning scholars have been responsible for specific modules on the SpaceMaster. The scholars have been hosted almost exclusively by LTU and/ or JMUW. Three scholars came from the USA, two from Russia, two from China, two from Japan and one from Israel. All of them were male.

4.1.4 Action 3 partnership

The SpaceMaster has also been involved in Action 3 of the Erasmus Mundus programme, with the objective of:

- upgrading and enhancing the skills and mobility of postgraduate students, teaching staff and administrators of higher education institutions;
- promoting the exchange of experience and encouraging mutual knowledge and recognition of study programmes and access to higher education for EU students in Asia and North America;
- increasing the availability of information about the EU higher education system, specifically the Erasmus Mundus programme; and
- bringing together a core group of students from the whole world to share the existing competence, develop it together and distribute it to benefit the European and Global space industry and research community.

The Action 3 partner universities have been selected on the basis of previous cooperation and collaboration. All the partner universities are located in East Asia and North America:

- Shanghai Jiao Tong University, China
- Stanford University, USA
- University of Tokyo, Japan
- University of Toronto, Canada
- Utah State University, USA

The target for the Action 3 partnership has been to allow:

- 7-8 students on average per year to undertake their thesis research and one study module at an Action 3 partner university during the 4th semester (minimum of 5 months per student);
- 3 students on average per year to undertake study modules at an Action 3 partner university during the 2nd and 3rd semester; and
- 4 scholars (Year 1) and 5 scholars (year 2 and 3) to visit Action 3 partner universities for 1-3 months each.

It is understood that the opportunities available to EU students and scholars have not been fully utilised since the start in 2007. Among the Round 2 students, only four students benefited from an outgoing mobility period at one of the Action 3 partner universities (two students at SJTU, China, and two students at Utah State University, USA). Among the 13 EU students in Round 3, only two students benefited from an outgoing mobility period at one of the Action 3 partner universities (one student at the University of Tokyo and one at Utah State University, USA). This is significantly fewer students than targeted (7-8 students per year). However, this shortfall is to a large degree a result of the initial overestimation of the overall number of students expected on the course and the low numbers of EU students admitted. The sudden illness of the 'champion' for marketing the Action 3 partnership was also a factor.

In terms of the scholars, four individuals have benefited from the Erasmus Mundus Action 3 scholarship. In some cases, scholars have attended the Action 3 partner universities on more than one occasion. It is understood that other commitments have restricted the opportunities to participate further in Action 3. Regarding Action 3 scholars, two came from Germany, one from Sweden and another one was half German-half Chinese. All four were male.

4.2 Results

4.2.1 The course – relevant, high quality, with a European dimension?

- ***Is the curriculum well structured and integrated?***

The SpaceMaster course is well structured in that it offers the same modules to all students during the first year, allowing students to develop a common knowledge base. Students are then able to specialise in the second year, according to their personal and professional preferences. However, it appears that the first year of the course tends to prepare students better for the engineering

tracks than the scientific tracks. This suggests that the material taught during the first year could be improved to offer better integration with study tracks across all of the consortium universities.

- ***Is the content of the course "cutting edge" and how does it compare to other similar courses in Europe and beyond? (consider how many other similar courses exist).***

With respect to the distinctiveness of the SpaceMaster course, it is understood that the course provides relatively broad coverage of space science and technology. So, whilst the individual partner universities have their particular fields of expertise, the limited time spent at each university means that the course cannot be as in-depth as would have been possible if the students had stayed at one university for the full two years. Nevertheless, whilst some of the specialism is lost, the students gain a much broader knowledge of space science and technology. So, whilst more specialist Master courses are likely to exist, the distinctiveness of the course lies in the fact that students gain much broader knowledge, but also that they are given opportunities for geographical mobility and gain valuable experience of interacting with a range of nationalities and cultures (multiculturalism).

- ***What Quality Assurance mechanisms are used to ensure a) the quality of the course content (ie content of individual modules / components of the course) and b) the overall coherence of the curriculum (how the different elements fit together)?***

The SpaceMaster uses a number of Quality Assurance (QA) mechanisms to ensure the quality of the course content and overall coherence of the curriculum, including individual meetings with students and an evaluation questionnaire. The results of the questionnaire, which is structured around the general study environment and the individual modules/ courses undertaken, are discussed at the consortium meetings held biannually. The consortium meetings are also used to discuss the overall coherence of the curriculum. Notably, following the consortium meetings a number of changes to the teaching content and the course structure have taken place, including the introduction of a four-week German language course before the start of the academic year (mid-October in Germany), an extended Swedish language course, a repetition course in Basic Mathematics and Physics, a short course in Basic Electronics to prepare students for another module, a further two modules to choose from at JMUW during the first semester, and a compulsory Finnish language course for students attending TKK during the second year.

In addition to the consortium meetings, the universities also communicate regularly via emails and telephone.

- ***Has the course been able to deploy the most appropriate teaching staff?***

It is understood that each university has been able to deploy teaching staff who are experienced lecturers and researchers. Some of these come from the space industry and bring broad industrial experience to the SpaceMaster. In addition to the academic staff at the consortium universities, engineers and scientists from the space industry have also been invited to give lectures and seminars. Notably, in many cases these academics have also suggested Master thesis topics and supported students through their studies.

On the basis of the student focus group, students are generally satisfied with the quality of the teaching staff, but mentioned a lack of interaction with teaching staff in Germany, which may be explained by a reliance on guest lecturers and scholars at JMUW.

- ***How do students perceive the quality and organisation of the course?***

Whilst the students appear to be satisfied with the overall quality of the course, it is understood that the first semester at JMUW has not been very well-structured. On the basis of the student focus group, students appear to question the commitment of JMUW to the SpaceMaster and mention that the university has been unable to provide students with an outline of topics to be covered in lectures. This in turn has made it impossible for students to undertake any preparatory reading ahead of the lectures. It is also understood that some of the information (both academic and non-academic) has been provided only in German. On the basis of consultations with some of the teaching staff, it is also understood that some of the modules offered during the second semester would have benefited some students during the first semester, implying that there has been some difficulty in structuring the course content across several universities without incurring significant travel expenditure for students. There have also been some suggestions that some of the 'tracks' have not been well integrated with the material taught during the first year, suggesting that some parts of the course work in isolation.

The students consulted also highlighted that whilst, in theory, the course offers a range of opportunities for geographical mobility, particularly during the 3rd semester; in practice the opportunities are limited as a result of a range of issues. For example, it is understood that students are reluctant to study at:

- CTU - as it specialises in aerospace rather than space. Moreover, as the space industry still attaches a certain status to various universities, few students want to study at CTU during the 3rd semester, as they would receive a degree from CTU and one other university, rather than a joint degree from all partner universities.
- UPS – because most of the modules are taught in French.
- JMUW – since it does not have specialist space expertise and is not particularly well connected with the space industry.

By contrast, a relatively high share of students would like to study at CU, but the number of places available at that institution are restricted as a result of a relatively high tuition fee (€20,000). Indeed, the SpaceMaster tuition fee (€11,000) for third country students can only support a small number of students at CU without restricting the funding available to the other partners.

- ***Has the course been able to provide suitable academic facilities (equipment / labs / libraries / computing facilities etc)?***

In terms of academic facilities, students are trusted to access the Kiruna Space Campus (LYU) out of office hours. However, the last bus back to the town centre leaves at 16.20, which means that those students that do not have an alternative mode of transport cannot access the Space Campus after this time. A general issue among students has been the lack of internet access in their halls of residence (Kiruna), although it is understood that the university is in the process of addressing this.

- ***Does the course offer internships or other mechanisms to allow students to gain work experience?***

Kiruna Space Campus (LTU), in particular, is well connected to the European space industry and has strong links with a range of space-related organisations, including the:

- Esrange Space Centre (Swedish Space Corporation);
- European Incoherent Scatter Scientific Association (EISCAT) - HQ located at Kiruna Space Campus; and
- European Space Research and Technology Centre (ESTEC) in Noordwijk, Netherlands.

There are also opportunities for EU students to receive financial support from the European Space Agency (ESA) for their thesis studies during the second year of the SpaceMaster. Indeed, the Directorate of Human Spaceflight, Microgravity and Exploration, ESA, supports the course with annual grants/ scholarships and internships at ESA for students from the ESA member states. Indeed, during Round 2, two students undertook their thesis work at ESTEC under ESA supervision. In addition, four students received ESA scholarships for excellent academic achievements and Master thesis performance.

The SpaceMaster is also linked to the CubeSat programme at JMUW, the REXUS and BEXUS projects at the Esrange area in Lapland, Kiruna, where rockets and balloons are launched in close collaboration with the ESA and other space agencies around the world.

As a result of the differences in the academic years between Sweden and Germany, internships have also been offered between the second and third semester. Many of the internships were available via the guest lecturers who had taught on the course during the first semester. Consequently, students had already established a contact within the relevant organisations.

- ***Has the course been able to provide suitable non-academic support after selection (visas / housing / social aspects)?***

Whilst the course language is English (and French at UPS), language courses are arranged for students in German (1st semester, JMUW), Swedish (2nd semester, Kiruna Space Campus, LTU) and Finnish (3rd semester, TKK). From 2008/09, UPS has also started to offer a French language course for second year students. On the basis of feedback from the student focus group, it is understood that the language courses have been much appreciated by the SpaceMaster students.

All International Offices at the consortium universities have assisted students to secure accommodation during the first semester. During the first semester it is understood that students were spread out across the town of Würzburg, which in turn meant that the students found it difficult to form as a group. During the second semester, LTU arranged accommodation for students, however, it is understood to have been challenging, as the students arrive a few weeks into the second semester of the academic year. Notwithstanding this issue, the university has managed to find appropriate accommodation for all students that required it. Students who took part in the focus group, found that living in the same accommodation in Kiruna was a positive

experience. Generally, it appears that there has been more scope for intimacy at the smaller universities/ departments, compared with the larger universities/ departments.

In addition to assisting the students to find accommodation, the consortium universities have also organised a number of social activities and excursions, in order to allow the students to experience the local culture of the areas in which they are studying.

Arrangements for travelling between the consortium universities have been made by the students themselves, but with some support from the administrative staff at JMUW and LTU. Generally, the visa application procedure and travel between countries has functioned well.

4.2.2 Excellent students

- ***Evidence on qualifications of students accepted onto course***

Generally, students are required to have a good quality Bachelors degree in Engineering, Natural Science, Mathematics or an equivalent qualification. Students from non-English speaking countries are also required to prove their proficiency in English through a TOEFL or IELTS test.

Notably, the ranking and selection framework was improved for the Round 4 admissions, in order to make it more transparent and coherent. The different criteria in the framework include study credits; previous university ranking; suitability of previous studies; practical experience, professional capabilities and other Master degrees; and overseas experience. Notably, the scoring according to the above criteria is undertaken by two universities from the consortium in order to make the ranking system more coherent. A new, central Swedish on-line application system has also been used since December 2007.

Students have been described by the teaching staff as 'vitamin injections'.

- ***Do course leaders and teachers believe the students attracted are of high quality? (including compared to the average standard in their department)***

Course leaders and teachers report that in general the students on the SpaceMaster course are of high quality. It is also understood that the SpaceMaster students tend to be more motivated than students on other courses, which in many respects compensates for any deficiencies in academic quality. It is also understood that the students come from a more heterogeneous set of backgrounds (field of study and culture) than other courses, although this has not affected the of students' academic results. Notably, it is the belief of course leaders and teachers that the SpaceMaster includes many exceptional students.

4.2.3 The visiting scholars (academics)

- ***Are they of high quality? (what were they doing before (teaching, research, publishing)?, how were they identified and selected?)***

Scholars are primarily recruited via the consortium's academic network, joint research projects and Action 3 partner universities. The visiting scholar candidates tend to be proposed by the each of

the partner universities and are then evaluated at the consortium meetings (usually in February) on the basis of their CV (academic qualifications) and their proposed contribution to teaching and research activities (work plan).

It is understood that all the available scholarships have been fully utilised.

- ***What did they contribute to the EMMC during their stay?***

The contribution of the scholars includes participation in teaching/ lecturing modules. Special attention has also been paid to the formation of joint research projects, which can become the basis for future thesis work or PhD studies. Importantly, the scholars are also used for building and enhancing links with third country institutions. Notably, the participation of one of the visiting scholars resulted in a number of high quality applications from students at the scholar's university.

Importantly, the visiting scholars were selected in advance of the academic year and could thus, in many cases, be integrated into the course effectively. However, it is also understood that the early selection of scholars has restricted the number of scholars on the SpaceMaster.

Notably, some of the visiting scholars have been participating in more than one year of the course, suggesting that their contribution to the course has been valued. Action 2 scholars have been particularly important for JMUW in terms of funding teachers and lecturers, as JMUW does not benefit from the same level of funding as some of the other European universities.

In order to improve the contribution of the Action 2 scholarship, it has been recommended by one of the visiting scholars that more time and effort is invested in planning and preparing for the scholar visits, as the visit are generally relatively short (4 months).

4.2.4 Partnerships with third countries

- ***What do the consortium institutions perceive to be the benefit of the partnership? (Structured cooperation?)***

The Action 3 partner universities were selected on the basis of previous cooperation and collaboration. For the consortium institutions the Action 3 partnerships have resulted in enhanced links for future collaboration. The impact on the course itself has, however, been limited.

- ***What do the third country institutions perceive to be the benefit of the partnership? (Structured cooperation?)***

The Action 3 partnership has benefited the third country institutions by providing important international exposure. Moreover, it has allowed the institutions to gain a better overview of the international space agenda.

For those institutions that have had graduate students attending the SpaceMaster, it is also understood that the course has benefited the 'home' institution by providing Master graduates with European experience.

- ***What do those who have participated in outgoing mobility perceive to be the benefits of their mobility periods?***

The Action 3 partnership has been an important marketing tool for the consortium universities in attracting EU students, although to date the opportunity has not been fully utilised. Generally, it is understood that students that have participated in outgoing mobility have been preparing their Master thesis and used local expertise and facilities (laboratories etc) to add value to their thesis. Moreover, it is understood that the students consider the experience beneficial for their CV in the future, given that many of the third country institutions are leading universities within their particular field of expertise. At a personal level, it is also understood that the students enjoyed the experience of studying and living on a different continent. Notably, many of the students who visited one of the third country institutions have subsequently recommended it to other students on the course.

4.3 Impact – "additionality" and wider effects

4.3.1 Impact of Higher Education institutions – supply and demand

- ***Does the course provide something new, which would not have been provided if the programme had not existed?***

Whilst the partner universities have other international programmes in place, generally these do not tend to offer the same opportunities for geographical mobility as the SpaceMaster. The component of geographical mobility is beneficial both in terms of the wider spectrum of expertise on offer, but also in terms of the life experience gained by the students and scholars.

- ***Has the experience of the course had wider impacts on the departments and institutions concerned (e.g. on other courses and provision, on quality procedures etc)?***

The EM programme has allowed exchange of experience for both academic and administrative staff between universities. This may in turn lead to a number of joint research projects being developed.

Generally, the Erasmus Mundus programme has high visibility within the universities and it is generally seen as very prestigious to be a coordinator/ partner of an EMMC.

The SpaceMaster course has been stimulating for teachers involved in delivering the course.

- ***Has the programme made the departments more "internationally oriented"?***

The teaching staff has become more international as the course is provided in English, which removes barriers in terms of employability. The SpaceMaster has also resulted in the introduction of new ways of teaching and thinking on certain topics.

4.3.2 Impacts on students and scholars

- ***Perceived added value on future prospects of students and scholars (perceptions of students and scholars principally)***

Since space research is often international in nature and execution, the SpaceMaster has been important for the professional development of students, because it has allowed students to interact with several different cultures, languages and attitudes. Notably, students have also been given the opportunity to learn two, or even three, languages. The students interviewed consider that the course provides a sound foundation for future studies and research (PhD), as well as employment. For example, for those students choosing one of the science tracks it is understood that the experience of geographical mobility will be an important experience for their future career development, as scientists tend to travel around on a regular basis. Whilst some difficulties have been reported in terms of finding employment in France, with many space-related agencies and organisations restricting employment opportunities to French and/ or EU nationals, graduates have generally been considered to be in high demand in their home countries and abroad. Indeed, some students have come from countries with limited, if any, expertise in space science and technology and therefore expect to return to their country of origin with a significant competitive advantage. Notably, some students expect to stay in Europe at least for a few years. Students also expect to develop a strong global network, supported by the Alumni website developed by a Round 1 student, which may benefit them in the future, professionally and socially.

On the basis of the feedback from the student focus group, the multicultural nature of the course (both in terms of students and the geographical mobility) was reported to be of significant importance in terms of personal development.

Students and scholars have also had to adapt to a number of different educational models, which in turn may have had an impact on the students' and scholars' ability to adapt to new organisational structures and cultures.

With regards to the scholar's professional development, the Action 2 scholarship has allowed third country scholars to team up and work with scholars and researchers at the consortium universities, as well as teach a diverse group of students. In terms of personal development, it is understood that the visiting scholars have enjoyed the opportunity to live and work in one or more European countries.

4.3.3 Policy impact and contribution to EU strategic goals

- ***Impact, if any, on comparability and recognition of qualifications within Europe (Bologna principles)***

All the modules provided have been converted from the local system to ECTS. The double degree gained by the graduates is officially recognised nationally and internationally for the time being. In addition, students are provided with a Diploma Supplement, providing a full description of the curriculum, the role of the universities in the consortium and the university systems of each university in the consortium in order to make it easier to apply for work/education abroad.

4.4 Implementation issues

4.4.1 Main issues linked to implementation

- ***List and analyse the main difficulties and barriers encountered which have influenced the ability of course leaders to achieve their objectives and the extent to which these have been overcome***

Since the start of the SpaceMaster in 2005, the consortium has encountered a number of difficulties and barriers which have influenced the ability of the course leaders to achieve their objectives. For example, the academic years of the consortium universities are in some cases different, which has resulted in some compromises in terms of delivery. Indeed, as a result of the late start in Germany (mid-October), LTU do not receive the students until mid-February, which in turn reduces the time that LTU has with the students by about 4-5 weeks (compared with other Swedish courses). This has also meant that LTU does not have enough time to allow students to acclimatise into the new surroundings, which is something that the students have found quite challenging. It has also resulted in an increase in the number of lectures per day, which in turn has put an extra work load on academic staff. Differences in the academic years have also resulted in complications in relation to the issuing of Diploma Certificates, with the universities unable to issue the certificates at the same time.

As a result of the number of scholarships available to third country students, the course is attracting a large number of applicants, some of which do not qualify to be admitted to the course. It has therefore been necessary to apply a first filter to applications through the National Agency for Services to Universities and University Colleges (VHS) in Sweden, in order to make the number of applications that need to be evaluated more manageable.

Associated with the above problem, the consortium universities have also found it difficult to establish the academic standard of the qualifications obtained by applicants from non-EU countries. As a response to this, short courses in basic mathematics and physics have been introduced before the start of the official academic year in Germany. In addition, a written examination has been implemented to filter out any registered students who do not have the appropriate knowledge to pass the course.

Given the need to travel between the consortium universities, the EU students have found travel expenditure to be a particular problem. In response, a number of mobility grants have been made available for EU students, funded by LTU and JMUW.

In some cases it has also been difficult to find short-term accommodation, particularly in Kiruna. The students arrive a few weeks into the second semester of the Swedish academic year and by that time many of the bespoke student accommodation places have been filled. Moreover, with increased activity at the iron mine in Kiruna and other activities in the town, short-term accommodation places have also been filled by seasonal workers. Notwithstanding these difficulties, it is understood that the coordinating university has been successful in finding appropriate accommodation for all students.

Each of the universities operates under different national legislation. For example, in Sweden, five re-examinations are permitted for each subject, whilst in Germany and France only one or two are permitted. Moreover, whilst the length of an exam in Germany is 1.5 hours, it is 4 hours in Sweden. It has been particularly important to make students aware of these differences. Notably, the issues with the re-examinations were resolved for the Round 3 students (three re-examinations are permitted – the first of these will take place at JMUW and the second and third at LTU).

Differences in the way partner universities are funded has meant that it has been necessary to redistribute the available funding to universities which charge relatively high tuition fees (most notably, Cranfield), without consideration of the number of students hosted. However, more recently, the consortium has agreed to allocate funding during the second year on the basis of the number of students at each university.

Whilst the language of instruction is generally English, the study tracks at UPS are partly taught in French (there is a legislative requirement to provide courses in French, although this requirement has become less stringent in recent years). To some extent, this offers an opportunity for students to obtain significant language skills as well as the SpaceMaster degree. However, it may also restrict some students (with no prior knowledge of French) from applying to UPS. To overcome some of the issues facing students who are not proficient in French, free language courses are offered. Moreover, teaching staff offer individual assistance in English as appropriate and try to advise students of literature that is available in English. Students are also allowed to submit course work in English.

4.4.2 Financial support

- ***Include consideration of the adequacy of the financial support provided by the programme in relation to objectives. (funding to course, level of scholarships, funding for third country partnerships if relevant)***

The tuition fees charged for non-EU students and the Erasmus Mundus Action 1 grant do not cover all of the costs for the course. LTU and JMUW provide substantial in-kind support in order to run the course.

The support provided by the ESA through scholarships has been an important marketing tool in terms of attracting EU students who do not benefit from the Erasmus Mundus grants. The ESA scholarships are available for students from ESA member states and amount to €5,000 over two years (€1,000 for first year and €4,000 for second year, to ensure study completion). In total, six scholarships are available per year.

As noted above, the tuition fees charged for non-EU students and the Erasmus Mundus Action 1 grant do not cover all of the costs for the course, which has meant that LTU and JMUW have had to provide substantial in-kind support in order to run the course.

Due to differences in the funding structures of universities across Europe, universities in Scandinavia for example, would be in a better position than universities elsewhere to sustain the course with reduced funding from the EU. However, whilst some universities may be able to sustain the courses without EU funding, it is understood that all the universities would have significant difficulties in attracting third country students and scholars to the course without EU funding. It would also limit the opportunities for EU students and scholars to visit third country institutions as part of their course.

4.5 Added value and perceived relevance of Erasmus Mundus

4.5.1 "Added value"

- ***What has the EMMC brought the universities involved that they would not have been available to achieve / obtain without it?***

The Erasmus Mundus SpaceMaster course has allowed the consortium universities and the third country universities to strengthen and enhance links for collaboration and cooperation. Whilst some, mainly bilateral, links existed prior to the introduction of the SpaceMaster course, it is understood that the scope for collaboration and cooperation has been widened through the Erasmus Mundus programme.

Through the partnership, the participating universities have been exposed to new topics and approaches, which in turn has led to significant knowledge exchange.

- ***What has the EMMC offered students and scholars and to what extent has the EMMC provided something that they could not have achieved elsewhere / on another course?***

The distinctiveness of the course lies mainly in the breadth of expertise that the universities can offer the students. The opportunities offered for geographical mobility, both within Europe and to third countries, are also understood to be a distinguishing and attractive feature of the course.

For the scholars the distinctiveness of the course is largely related to the opportunities that exist in relation to networking and joint research projects. Indeed, the SpaceMaster course has resulted in a number of joint research projects that would not have been carried out in the absence of the Masters course.

- ***What has the EMMC / Action 3 partnership combination offered the third country institutions involved?***

The Action 3 partnership has benefited the third country institutions by providing important international exposure. Moreover, it has allowed the institutions to gain a better overview of the international space agenda.

4.5.2 "Relevance"

- ***Has the programme overall allowed the institutions concerned to a) improve / expand the quality of their offer and b) attract additional talented students and scholars (based on findings above)***

The course has allowed the participating universities the opportunity to benchmark the quality of their teaching and research and benefit from good practice exchange, which in turn may improve the quality of their offer. The Erasmus Mundus programme has over the years also provided important international exposure, which is likely to have attracted additional talented students and scholars.

- ***To what extent has this allowed the institutions concerned to address what they perceived as their real needs?***

Given the relatively higher registration rate on the SpaceMaster and the other Erasmus Mundus course at LTU (Advanced Material Science and Engineering), the EM programme is strategically important in terms of forward planning and ensuring that a sufficient number of students register onto courses. Notably, as set out in LTU's internationalisation goals 2008-2011, the university aims to participate in a further three Erasmus Mundus courses by 2010.

5.0 EMMAPA - Erasmus Mundus Master in Adapted Physical Activity

Course title	EMMAPA – Erasmus Mundus Master in Adapted Physical Activity
Coordinating institution	Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium
Partner institutions	Norwegian University of Sport and Physical Education, Norway Palacky University of Olomouc, Czech Republic University of Limerick, Ireland
Start date	2005
Course length	1 year programme (60 ECTS)
Course objectives and content	<p>The Erasmus Mundus Master in Adapted Physical Activity (EMMAPA) provides a state-of-art on research and teaching methodology in Adapted Physical Activity (APA); and the social, pedagogical and technical aspects of physical activity, adapted to the needs of the persons with disabilities.</p> <p>The objective of the EMMAPA course is to provide students with the comprehensive training and adequate knowledge in many aspects of Adapted Physical Activity through combining expertise of number of European Universities.</p>
Target student cohort	The programme targets students who hold a Bachelors Degree in Physical Education, Special Physical Education, Physiotherapy, Sport/Movement Sciences and Motor Rehabilitation
Training paths	There are four mobility modules. In three of these (Mobility A, C and D) students move to one of the partner universities during Phases 4 and 5 of the course, where they undertake practical training and prepare their thesis. The difference between the modules relates to the university in which the student chooses to undertake practical training. Students can also choose the Mobility B path, where after Phase 2 at the Catholic University of Leuven they undertake Phases 3 and 4 at the Norwegian University of Sport and Physical Education and prepare a thesis (Phase 5) at Leuven.
Degree awarded	Students receive a joint diploma: Erasmus Mundus Master in Adapted Physical Activity.
Action 3 partnerships	University of Queensland, Australia University of Virginia, USA Stellenbosch University, South Africa

5.1 Outputs

5.1.1 The course

- **Overview of syllabus and mobility paths proposed to students**

The Master course in Adapted Physical Activity (APA) was established in 1991 and has been receiving support from the EM programme since 2005. Students participating in the course acquire the necessary theoretical knowledge and practical experience in the field of adapted physical activity.

The curriculum consists of five phases:

Phase 1: Self preparation phase undertaken remotely, before students start the course. Students update their knowledge of research methodology and pathology in APA and information about current developments.

Phase 2: A multidisciplinary package of theoretical courses provided at the Catholic University of Leuven.

Phase 3: In-depth orientation in APA intervention. Students can choose their specialisation from sensorymotor disorders, physiological disorders or psychosocial disorders. This phase is provided at the Catholic University of Leuven. Students can also choose the phenomenological approach specialisation which is provided by the Norwegian University of Sport and Physical Education.

Phase 4: Introduction to existing APA intervention initiatives and APA research in a specialised centre addressing a specific population (practical training and seminars). This phase is provided by one of the partner universities according to the choice of mobility path.

Phase 5: Master thesis. This may be undertaken at any of the universities in the consortium.

Four mobility modules are provided for students. In three of them (Mobility paths A, C and D) students start at Leuven (Phase 2 and 3) and move to one of the partner universities during Phases 4 and 5, where they undertake practical training and prepare their thesis. The difference between the modules/paths relate to the University where students choose to undertake practical training. Students may also choose the Mobility Path B, whereby, after Phase 2 at the Catholic University of Leuven they undertake Phases 3 and 4 at the Norwegian University of Sport and Physical Education then return to Leuven to undertake their thesis (Phase 5).

- **Details of Action 3 partnership arrangements and outgoing mobility supported**

European students have the opportunity to spend some time during Phases 4 and/or 5 in a third country university utilising support from Action 3. The length and the content of the visit to the third country university depends on the thesis and need identified by the student and by their thesis supervisor. Students are entitled to spend three months in a third country university, but owing to the intensity of the programme in most cases they do not spend all of this time in the third country partner university.

Up to four students a year are hosted by the University of Queensland at the beginning of the second semester. Students are involved in the ongoing research project being undertaken by the coordinator of the programme at the University. Visiting scholars to the same institution do not visit at set times, as in the case of students. Scholars visit Queensland University for periods of ten days to three weeks. Their activities include provision of seminars for students and staff, elaborating possibilities for further cooperation and supporting visiting students in their thesis.

- **Brief overview of teaching approach including number of teaching staff deployed**

The theoretical part of the programme taught at the Catholic University of Leuven is provided in English by teaching staff from the University and by visiting scholars. There are 35 – 40 lecturers teaching the EMMAPA course. Visiting scholars who receive financial support through Action 2 also provide inputs to the course, giving the lectures in their field of expertise and supporting students in the preparation of their theses. The courses in Catholic University of Leuven are organised specifically for students of the EMMAPA course in English, since other courses in the faculty are taught in Dutch and EMMAPA students do not participate in them.

- **Qualifications awarded**

Upon successful completion of the studies, students receive a joint diploma: “Erasmus Mundus Master in Adapted Physical Activity”.

5.1.2 The students

Table 5.1: Applications, candidates selected, students starting and graduations

		2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
Applications	Non-EU	32	45	58	65
	EU	15	20	15	16
	TOTAL	47	65	73	81
Admitted candidates	Non-EU	20	21	21	21
	EU	14	17	17	14
	TOTAL	34	38	38	35
Students starting course	EM scholarship	20	21	21	21
	Other non-EU				
	EU	14	17	17	14
	TOTAL	34	38	38	35
Students graduating	EM scholarship	18	19	21	
	Other non-EU				
	EU	13	17	16	
	TOTAL	31	36	37	

Data provided by the programme coordinator

Since the beginning of the course in 2005, the number of applications received for the course has increased from 47 in 2005-2006 to 81 in 2008-2009. In 2007-2008, 35 students from third countries were selected for EMMAPA in total and 25 of these were offered an EM grant. In total, some 13 students from EU countries have been selected for the course. The target to accept on average 20 students from third countries and 20 students from EU countries per year, which was included in the original EM application, has been reached, albeit from a relatively modest but growing number of applications (the probability of third country students making a successful grant application to the EMMAPA course fell from 63% in the first year to 33% currently). Of the ten scholars who have participated in the course up to date, four came from the USA, two from Israel, and one from each of the following countries: Australia, Brazil, Canada and UK. Eight of them were men while two were female.

In the academic year 2007-2008 12 applications were received from third country scholars and eight received support from Action 2 funding. Initially it was foreseen that visiting scholars would spend three months at host universities. However, it proved difficult for the scholars to spend three months away from their permanent employment and it was therefore decided to invite more scholars for shorter periods.

5.2 Results

5.2.1 The course – relevant, high quality, with a European dimension?

- ***Is the curriculum well structured and integrated?***

An external evaluation of the programme¹¹ emphasised that, overall, the EMMAPA course provided a valuable experience and a good quality education. However, in terms of certain aspects of the curriculum such as the breadth of the programme, and coherence between the theoretical and practical parts of the course were identified as areas for improvement, specifically that there is an over-emphasis on the theoretical part of the course at the expense of the component concerning practical application.

It was widely acknowledged by all interviewees that the length of the course is too short for the content it contains. This appears to be because it not only aims to provide a broad theoretical course, but also includes a practical part to be acquired in other countries. It is understood that this issue has been addressed for the next round of the Erasmus Mundus Programme, by preparing a two-year Master course.

The partner organisation interviewed expressed the view that the course curriculum is based strongly on a “medical model” approach to adapted physical activity. However, this partner (the University in Norway) was also interested in incorporating more extensive social aspects into the theoretical part of the programme. Moreover, students who took part in the focus groups and who were interested in the qualitative research methods and social aspects of the APA discipline did

¹¹ Commissioned by the course management and carried out by an external, independent expert

not feel that they had received an adequate theoretical background in the field; although they also welcomed the opportunity the course provided to undertake practical training.

- ***Is the content of the course "cutting edge" and how does it compare to other similar courses in Europe and beyond? (consider how many other similar courses exist).***

The Erasmus Mundus Masters in Adapted Physical Activity is considered by the coordinator to be unique in Europe in providing a broad theoretical knowledge of the subject, as well as practical experience. The discipline is a relatively new area of science, which has been developed mainly in North America and Australia. Some European Universities do apparently provide specialised knowledge in one or some of the aspects, but they do not provide the overall course and degree in APA. The EMMAPA course incorporates both broad theoretical courses in APA and the specialised knowledge of the partner universities.

- ***What Quality Assurance mechanisms are used to ensure a) the quality of the course content (ie content of individual modules / components of the course) and b) the overall coherence of the curriculum (how the different elements fit together)?***

The quality of the course is ensured through quality assurance procedures applied in each of the partner universities. In the lead partner organisation, the quality of the content of the course is ensured by the Permanent Education Committee. Any changes related to the content of the course have to be approved by the Committee. The content of individual modules is evaluated by students through online survey. In addition, when the taught courses finish in December, students are invited to the EMMAPA board meeting in order to share their experience and provide feedback on the course, content, lecturers and organisation. Students select one representative who presents their feedback at the board meeting. The board selects some of the most important points of improvement and focuses on them in addressing students' feedback.

The EMMAPA was also evaluated by an external evaluator, who was a visiting scholar in 2007-2008.

- ***How have quality procedures from the host institutions been adapted / integrated into the EMMC?***

Each partner institutions apply their own quality assurance procedures while providing their part of the course. In addition, all partner Universities have agreed common deliberation procedures to be applied by each partner. However, there is limited evidence of the existence of quality assurance procedures applied for the overall course.

- ***Has the course been able to deploy the most appropriate teaching staff?***

The evidence from the interviews indicates that the course is provided by high quality experts from the Catholic University of Leuven and visiting scholars. The quality of the visiting experts, supported through Action 2 and who give lectures to students and support them in the preparation for their theses, appears satisfactory.

The external evaluation indicates that the quality of instruction is satisfactory; although he also highlighted that some of the lecturers provide very detailed information about their own research without putting it into a broader context. Achieving greater consistency between the courses was also indicated as an area for improvement.

- ***How do students perceive the quality and organisation of the course?***

Evidence from the focus group indicates that students' overall perception of the quality and organisation of the course is positive. Students stressed that the quality and the broad range of the courses provided was a significant positive aspect of EMMAPA. They also emphasised that visiting scholars were international experts in their fields and provided high quality lectures. Students interviewed also welcomed the fact that they could approach the visiting scholars outside the lectures in order to receive support for their thesis and respond to their questions. This helps students to build links and contacts with recognised researchers in the field.

The students consulted via the focus group considered that the EMMAPA programme is too short given the scope and range of content it tries to provide. Because the course aims to cover a broad range of subjects in a very short time frame, students felt that they do not have enough time to acquire in-depth knowledge in the selected field. Owing to the length of the course, the component of practical experience is also relatively short. This was recognised not only by students but also by the coordinators of the course and as a response it is understood that a two-year long EMMAPA course is in preparation.

- ***Has the course been able to provide suitable academic facilities (equipment / labs / libraries / computing facilities etc)? [evidence comes mainly from students]***

During the focus group with the students no concerns were expressed with regard to academic facilities. Students also appeared satisfied with the facilities provided by the partner universities during their mobility period, where they were involved mainly in practical work experience.

- ***Does the course offer internships or other mechanisms to allow students to gain work experience?***

Students receive some practical experience during their stay in one of the partner universities. The structure of the programme is organised so that Phase 4 of the EMMAPA programme consists of practical work experience with the specific target group. However, students taking part in the focus groups discussion emphasised that the time allocated for the practical experience element is too short. This issue may well be addressed in the two-year programme currently under development.

- ***Has the course been able to provide suitable non-academic support after selection (visas / housing / social aspects)?***

In the focus group students mentioned that, overall, they received a satisfactory level of non-academic support during the EMMAPA course. They especially stressed that the support for housing and other practical issues related to their mobility in Norway were organised very efficiently.

The non-academic support at Catholic University of Leuven is provided mainly by central University departments, which provide non-academic support for all international students. Practical information for students was provided by the administrator of the EMMAPA course. Some students participating in the focus group, especially those from third countries, mentioned that they struggled to find accommodation in Leuven. For example it appears that landlords there often prefer to rent accommodation to Belgians and do not speak English in any case. The support provided by University does not appear to take these factors into account these and in some cases it seems to take a long time for students to find accommodation.

With regard to practical support for obtaining visas, students mentioned that they receive information about being selected for EMMAPA course quite late, making it difficult to follow all the administrative procedures for visa application. Students need to start applying for a visa even before having final confirmation that they have been selected for the course.

5.2.2 Excellent students?

- ***Evidence on qualifications of students accepted onto course***

All the students entering the EMMAPA course pass through a competitive selection procedure. The final decision on student selection is made jointly by all the partner Universities during the consortium meeting. All students who have been selected have started the course. Evidence from the external independent evaluation report indicates that the quality of students has improved, but variability (in backgrounds) remains a challenge.

- ***Do course leaders and teachers believe the students attracted are of high quality? (including compared to the average standard in their department)***

Overall, the representatives from the EMMAPA course interviewed during the site visit mentioned that the course attracts good quality students who are able to adapt to the new environment and engage in the subject area.

The information gathered during the interviews of the coordinators of the EMMAPA course in Leuven and the external evaluation of the EMMAPA course emphasises that the quality of students has increased over the life of EMMAPA course. The course is attracting more students and their language knowledge as well as the quality of their qualifications is reported to be increasing year on year. The partner University interviewed mentioned that students are very engaged in the subject area they are studying and adjust quickly to the new studying and living environment.

However, the external evaluation as well as evidence from the interviews mentions that students entering the course have very diverse qualifications and cultural backgrounds. This is challenging for teaching staff providing the lectures for students. The Action 3 partner also expressed concern about the variability in the quality of students.

5.2.3 The visiting scholars (academics)

- ***Are they of high quality? (what were they doing before (teaching, research, publishing)?, how were they identified and selected?) [This comes mainly from coordinator / partner interviews and factual evidence for scholar interviews]***

The visiting scholars for the EMMAPA course are identified through the existing networks of the consortium partners and are invited to apply to participate in the course. It was identified that it is difficult to attract scholars who have significant commitments in their home institutions to apply for the full three month period. It was therefore decided to invite more scholars for shorter period of (1-2 months). The evidence from the interviews with the course coordinators and students suggest that the consortium receives well known and recognised scientists and researchers in the APA field to participate in the course.

- ***What did they contribute to the EMMC during their stay? [coordinators / partner interviews + their own opinions]***

Scholars' contributions to the course include giving guest lectures for EMMAPA and other Master students and providing guidance for students to undertake their own research. It was identified during the interview that it would be beneficial for the course to define specifically what each scholar is aiming to achieve during their visit to the course and evaluate the results at the end of the visit. The evidence from interviews shows that some of the visiting scholars were strongly engaged in supporting students and providing lectures. However, sometimes the engagement of visiting scholars is less pronounced. It was acknowledged by the course coordinator that it would be beneficial to clearly identify the role of the visiting scholars and provide clear goals for their visits.

The interview with the Action 3 partner revealed that the coordinator of the programme within partner University is also a visiting scholar to the consortium universities. He undertakes a one-week visit each year to the Catholic University of Leuven. During the visit he gives lectures to the students and staff, supports the students and is involved in the selection of the students who will travel to his University to undertake their third country placement.

5.2.4 Partnerships with third countries

- ***What do the consortium institutions perceive to be the benefit of the partnership? (Structured cooperation?)***

The cooperation with the third country Universities is very important for the coordinator of the consortium. The links are strongly developed among the partner Universities and the Action 3 partnership is based on existing networks. This partnership brings together a broad range of expertise and strengths of each of the partner University. It allows EU students to undertake a mobility period in one of the partner Universities. The Action 3 partnership also provides a valuable platform for promoting the EMMAPA course to third country students and scholars.

- ***What do the third country institutions perceive to be the benefit of the partnership? (Structured cooperation?)***

The interview with the representative from the University of Queensland shows that the benefits from the participation in the partnership are the following:

- The Erasmus Mundus brand is important for the institution. It is a prestigious programme and helps to improve the reputation of the institution;
- It is important for the institution to receive visiting scholars who are well-known experts. It helps to build links and develop further cooperation with scholars.
- Visiting students interact with post-graduate students and it is important for cultural exchange and interaction between students from different cultures and different backgrounds.
- Increased cooperation is also important for the institutions involved.

The interview identified that Action 3 partners would like to be more involved in certain areas of the organisation of the course. They would like, for example, to have more involvement in the selection process for students as well as certain aspects of organising the curriculum. Their involvement in the organisation of the course during the first phase of the programme was limited. The partner mentioned that this is likely to change during the second part of the programme as the Action 3 partners become formal consortium partners.

5.3 Impact – "additionality" and wider effects

5.3.1 Impacts of Higher Education institutions – supply and demand

- ***Does the course provide something new, which would not have been provided if the programme had not existed?***

The course provides the opportunity to build partnership among EU and third country Universities and brings together the strengths and specialism of the partner Universities. It provides a platform for cooperation and working together for recognised scholars and students to learn from each other. It obliges the partner institutions to adjust to the various needs and backgrounds of students and allow them to share their experience.

- ***Has the experience of the course had wider impacts on the departments and institutions concerned (e.g. on other courses and provision, on quality procedures etc)?***

Participation in the EM programme allows the partner Universities to create this course in the new and developing field of adapted physical activity. APA is a new discipline in Europe and allows for the partner Universities to build on each others competences to provide high quality training and practical experience for students.

- ***Has the programme made the departments more "internationally oriented"?***

As the result of the course the partner universities receive students from a broad range of countries. It was identified during the interviews that it is very important for the University to become more and more international. The course provides this opportunity for the department to accommodate more international students from various countries within and outside EU. For

example the department at KU Leuven traditionally provides education in Dutch, which limits the accessibility of the programmes for international students. The EMMAPA course was the first Masters course provided in English and able to accommodate international students. Moreover, the department started to introduce more lectures in English which are provided for the students in other Master courses. Therefore, the department has become more international, not only in terms of the students body, but also in terms of the training provided. Moreover, the department accommodates a number of the visiting scholars who are widely recognised in the field of adapted physical activity.

There is also evidence from a partner University that the course helps the relevant department to become more internationally oriented. It also helps to build reputation and prove to national funding bodies that the department is active and internationally oriented.

5.3.2 Impacts on students and scholars

- ***Perceived added value on future prospects of students and scholars (perceptions of students and scholars principally)***

Students receive a high quality education and practical experience during the course. They have the opportunity to participate in the lectures delivered by highly recognised experts in their field and to receive support for their Master thesis. This allows students to build networks and contacts. It is beneficial both for students who wish to continue their studies and students who would like to start working after the graduation. Students also emphasise the practical experience received during the course as being very beneficial for their future studies and employment.

- ***What do students expect to be the impact of attending the course on their personal and future career development?***

Students stress that they are receiving valuable experience from participation in the course. Some of the students are planning to continue to study after graduating from the EMMAPA programme, while others are planning to apply for PhDs. However, some of the students who took part in the focus group mentioned that participation into the course is not enough to enable them to apply for PhD programme. Rather, it depends if students have had some previous research experience before entering the course.

Students stressed that the course provided them with the valuable practical experience which they need to enter employment. They can either start their own project or apply for work in their home country, as well as work abroad. Some of the students are planning to start working after returning to their home country.

- ***What did scholars get out of the experience? (consider impact on both personal and professional development)***

The benefit for the visiting scholars is related to the close collaboration with the consortium Universities. It has provided the opportunity to develop collaborations for further research and publications which are funded by other routes. It has also been important for visiting scholars to

see how the EMMAPA programme is organised in practical terms. In addition, participation in the programme has provided valuable opportunities to interact with students and colleagues from various countries.

5.3.3 Policy impact and contribution to EU strategic goals

- ***Impact, if any, on comparability and recognition of qualifications within Europe (Bologna principles)***

The consortium provides all the graduates with a joint diploma and diploma supplement. The diploma supplement includes transcripts of records with all the marks and credits obtained in exams and the final grade of the Master thesis. The grading system, on which basis the student's results were calculated, is also included. The supplement is issued in English and Dutch and is available at the same time as the Diploma is issued.

5.4 Implementation issues

5.4.1 Main issues linked to implementation

- ***List and analyse the main difficulties and barriers encountered which have influenced the ability of course leaders to achieve their objectives and the extent to which these have been overcome***

In the Catholic University of Leuven it is strongly recognised by teaching staff, course coordinators and students alike that the duration of the course is too short for the amount of the content which is provided. The duration of the course is 10 months and it includes a number of theoretical lectures, specialised lectures, practical experience in one of the partner universities and the thesis. The consortium is therefore preparing a two-year Master programme to address this issue.

The evidence from the interviews with the partner institutions identified that the partnership among the Universities is quite centralised. The views of the different partner Universities could be incorporated more into the implementation of the course. This is especially relevant for the issues related to incorporation of the social model into the EMMAPA course.

5.4.2 Financial support

- ***Include consideration of the adequacy of the financial support provided by the programme in relation to objectives. (funding to course, level of scholarships, funding for third country partnerships if relevant)***

During the interviews it was identified that the course provides adequate financial support for third country students to study in Europe and undertake mobility periods. However, students from EU countries do not receive financial support but they also live abroad and undertake the mobility in one of the partner Universities, which is expensive for them.

The EMMAPA course would be sustainable without the EU funding in that the consortium would most likely continue to provide a Masters degree in adapted physical activity. However, the course

would not be able to attract the same quality of visiting scholars and the same quality of third country students. The Erasmus Mundus label is important in promoting the course and attracting students. On the other hand, funding for the course is also very important in order to deliver it in its current form. This was identified both by the course coordinator and partner representatives. In addition, the Action 3 partner also stressed that the EU funding is key in order for them to be able to be involved in the partnership.

5.5 Added value and perceived relevance of Erasmus Mundus

5.5.1 "Added value"

- ***What has the EMMC brought the universities involved that they would not have been available to achieve / obtain without it?***

Participation in the EMMC programme allows consortium partners to increase their international cooperation activity, which leads to the participating departments becoming more internationally oriented. An example is where the coordinating institution started to provide more courses in English. Participation in EM also helps the institutions involved to build their reputation and demonstrate their involvement in international activities to national funding bodies.

- ***What has the EMMC offered students and scholars and to what extent has the EMMC provided something that they could not have achieved elsewhere / on another course?***

Students have the opportunity to undertake mobility periods where they receive practical work experience. They have the opportunity to build the networks with the visiting scholars and partner institutions involved, which is useful for their future careers. However, there is some evidence from students that participation in the course is not enough in itself as a gateway to enter a PhD programme and those students who wish to do so need to undertake an additional research project in order to proceed to PhD studies.

Visiting scholars are afforded the opportunity to develop a cooperative research project. In addition participation provides the opportunity for interaction with the students and researchers in the host Universities.

- ***What has the EMMC / Action 3 partnership combination offered the third country institutions involved?***

The third country institutions benefit from participation in the Erasmus Mundus programme as it is recognised brand, making it beneficial for the University to be involved. In addition, it attracts highly recognised experts in the field to participate in the programme. Interaction among students and researchers is perceived as being a very important benefit for the third country institutions.

5.5.2 "Relevance"

- ***Has the programme overall allowed the institutions concerned to a) improve / expand the quality of their offer and b) attract additional talented students and scholars (based on findings above)***

Involvement in the programme allowed the institutions to increase their international cooperation with the other EU and third country Universities. Internationalisation is seen as the most important need and rationale for participation in the programme. The programme enables institution to provide the course in English, which increases internationalisation further. In addition, it allows for the consortium partners to provide a Masters course in a new and developing discipline.

The evidence from the interviews identifies that overall the course attracts students of satisfactory if variable quality. There are challenges when starting the course related to the diverse education and cultural backgrounds of students, language barriers, and moving to different countries. However, students have shown they are able to adapt to the new environment and benefit from working with each other during the course.

- ***To what extent has this allowed the institutions concerned to address what they perceived as their real needs?***

The evidence from the interviews suggests that the course addresses the needs of the institutions involved; notable these have become more internationally oriented, and have benefited from interactions with students and researchers. This has allowed them to develop future cooperation and develop common research projects.

6.0 EMM-Nano - Erasmus Mundus Master of Nanoscience and Nanotechnology

Course title	Erasmus Mundus Master of Nanoscience and Nanotechnology (EMM-Nano)
Coordinating institution	Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (K.U.Leuven), Belgium
Partner institutions	Chalmers Tekniska Högskola (Chalmers), Sweden Technische Universiteit Delft (TUD) & Universiteit Leiden (UL), The Netherlands ¹² Technische Universität Dresden (TU Dresden), Germany
Start date	Academic year 2005-2006 (first student intake in September/October 2005)
Course length	2 year programme (120 ECTS)
Course objectives and content	<p>The objective of the programme is to provide multidisciplinary education of the highest quality in nanoscience, as well as in the use of nanotechnologies for systems and sensors at the macro-scale.</p> <p>The educational programme covers four principal themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nanotechnology - Nanoscience - Biophysics - Bionanotechnology <p>Students build their individual area of specialisation through their choice of trajectory among the partner institutions. Each institution offers specialised courses in at least two of the four themes.</p>
Target student cohort	The programme is targeting students with an excellent Bachelor's Degree in Physics or alternatively a Bachelor's Degree in the fields of science or engineering e.g. Chemistry, Biochemistry, Electrical Engineering, Material Science, with a proven knowledge of physics (minimum of 180 ECTS).
Training paths	EMM-Nano is a two-location programme. Students choose a combination of two of the participating universities and spend one year at each. 60 ECTS must be obtained from each of the two universities attended.
Degree awarded	<p>Upon successful completion, students receive double degrees from the two universities attended. The title of the degree varies by university:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chalmers: Master of Science - Delft/Leiden: Master of Science in Nanoscience - TU Dresden: Master of Science in Molecular Bioengineering - K.U.Leuven: Erasmus Mundus Master Nanoscience and Nanotechnology
Action 3 partnerships	The consortium does not participate in any Action 3 partnership.

¹² TU Delft and Leiden University operate as a joint partner in the programme. Students who wish to spend one year in the Netherlands will study both in Delft and Leiden and can choose to receive their degree from either university.

6.1 Outputs

6.1.1 The course

- **Overview of syllabus and mobility paths proposed to students**

Each student attends two of the participating institutions and is required to obtain 60 ECTS from each in order to successfully complete the programme. Each partner institution offers specialised courses in at least two of the four principal themes covered by the course. Students choose one of the four themes as their minor (1st year) and another one as their major (2nd year).

Table 6.1: Overview of mobility paths

Principal theme	Nanotechnology	Nanoscience	Biophysics	Bionanotechnology
K.U.Leuven				
Delft/Leiden				
TU Dresden				
Chalmers				

Source: EMM-Nano programme brochure

Individual programme modules are divided into four categories:

- **Introductory modules:** Introduce students to the disciplines in which they have had no training and are essential to successful participation (Year 1);
- **Non-technical modules:** Covering important non-technical knowledge (e.g. ethics, scientific writing, entrepreneurship skills, intellectual property etc.) (Year 1);
- **Core modules:** Provide the basic knowledge required within the main disciplines. Students take these modules irrespective of their specialisation;
- **Theme modules:** Elective modules, covering the complete range of subjects within the nano field.

In addition to these modules the programme encompasses:

- **A Masters thesis project:** Designed to bring the student in close contact with a multinational and multidisciplinary research environment. The research project is finalised with the public presentation of the Masters thesis, which is examined by supervisors from the two universities which have hosted the student;
- **A lecture series on nanotechnology in modern society:** National and international experts speak on topics relating to nanotechnology and societal developments. Lectures are transmitted to all locations via videoconference and simultaneously followed by all students.

Figure 6.1: Overview of ECTS distribution:

TOTAL 120 ECTS	Introductory modules (12 ECTS)	Lecture series on nanotechnology in modern society 3 ECTS
	Non-technical modules (3-6 ECTS)	
	Core modules (18 ECTS)	
	Theme modules for the minor (12-15 ECTS)	
	Theme modules for the major (30-48 ECTS)	
	Master thesis project (30-48 ECTS)	

Source: EMM-Nano programme brochure

• **Brief overview of teaching approach including number of teaching staff deployed**

EMM-Nano is composed of existing courses at the participating universities and the sole language of instruction is English. Test and examinations, both written and oral, are also taken in English.

The teaching approach of the EMM-Nano programme is based on the following key considerations:

- **Multidisciplinary** of the nanosciences: Enable students to think and communicate across the boundaries of the individual disciplines involved;
- **Integrated core programme**: Core subjects are offered to all students, regardless of the two locations they choose;
- **Complementary curricula**: Thematic differences reflect the specific teaching and research strengths of the participating institutions, which cover at least two of the four principal themes;
- **Research connection**: All partner institutions work in close collaboration with specialised research institutes and recruit part of their teaching staff from these institutes. These include IMEC (Leuven), MC2 (Chalmers), the Kavli Institute of Nanosciences (Delft) and the Leiden Institute of Physics (Leiden). Furthermore, the students are required to do their own research and at least a quarter of the programme (30-48 ECTS) is dedicated to Masters thesis research, with students working in close collaboration with teams of PhD students and senior researchers.
- **Societal aspects of nanotechnology**: While the focus of the programme is on science and technology, societal and ethical aspects are also covered.

Due to the interdisciplinary character of nanoscience and nanotechnology, the teaching staff on the EMM-Nano programme are recruited from a range of different faculties and research institutes. Most courses that form part of the EMM-Nano curriculum bring together Erasmus Mundus students and students following the local nanoscience and nanotechnology programme at the university in question. Information on the total number of teaching staff involved in the programme is not available.

- **Qualifications awarded**

Upon successful completion, students are conferred a double degree from the two universities attended (i.e one each from each of the two universities where they have studied) The title of the degree varies by university:

- Chalmers: Master of Science
- Delft/Leiden: Master of Science in Nanoscience
- TU Dresden: Master of Science in Molecular Bioengineering
- K.U.Leuven: Erasmus Mundus Master Nanoscience and Nanotechnology

6.1.2 The students

Table 6.2: Applications, candidates selected, students starting and graduations

		2005-2007	2006-2008	2007-2009	2008-2010
Applications	Non-EU	62	146	90	106
	EU	5	10	7	11
	TOTAL	67	156	97	117
Admitted candidates	Non-EU	39	38	33	27
	EU	4	4	4	10
	TOTAL	43	42	37	37
Students starting course	EM scholarship	17	16	17	19
	Other non-EU	0	0	0	0
	EU	3	3	1	8
	TOTAL	20	19	18	27
Students graduating	EM scholarship	16	16	15	NA
	Other non-EU	0	0	0	NA
	EU	2	1	1	NA
	TOTAL	18	17	16	NA
		1 interrupted 1 changed to local programme in Delft	1 interrupted 1 changed to local programme in Dresden	2 interrupted	

Data provided by the programme coordinator

As the above-figures show, the gap between the number of applicants selected for the programme and the actual number of students starting their studies in a given year is quite significant, with under half the selected candidates from third countries starting the course in some years (see below for more on this). According to the course coordinator, the significant drop in the overall number of applications from 146 in 2006 to 90 in 2007 is mostly due to the introduction of a € 50

application fee, intended to discourage applications from unsuitable candidates and incomplete applications. This measure is reported to have raised the overall standard of applications received.

6.1.3 Action 2 Scholars

According to the programme coordinator, 11 scholars have visited EMM-Nano partner institutions so far. The geographical focus appears to be on the United States (3 participating scholars), Russia (3), Japan (2), Argentina (1), Ukraine (1) and Taiwan (1). The majority of scholars were male.

6.2 Results

6.2.1 The course – relevant, high quality, with a European dimension?

- ***Is the curriculum well structured and integrated?***

The structure of EMM-Nano as such (i.e. the different types of modules and the major/minor system) is well-designed and reflects a consistent approach across sites and specialisations. However, the relatively low number of common courses that all EMM-Nano students have to follow, regardless of which university combination they choose, raises questions as to how integrated the programme is. On the whole, the common elements across sites could be more pronounced to guarantee for a more coherent educational experience among EMM-Nano graduates. However, the consortium partners are aware of this issue and have addressed it by changing the mobility scheme of EMM-Nano, so that all students will study the first year at KU Leuven, and then go to one of the other partner universities for the second year. This change will become effective from the academic year 2009-2010 onwards.

- ***Is the content of the course "cutting edge" and how does it compare to other similar courses in Europe and beyond? (consider how many other similar courses exist).***

The breadth of the academic field in question makes a comparison with other educational offers in nanoscience and nanotechnology difficult. However, the fact that three out of four partner institutions run their own Masters-level programmes, covering different aspects of nanotechnology and nanoscience may indicate that the breadth and depth of resources, and the number of possible specialisations available under the umbrella of one programme, is exceptional¹³. As such, EMM-Nano is probably among the most comprehensive nanotechnology / nanoscience degree programmes in Europe. The partners involved in EMM-Nano recruit a large proportion of their teaching staff from internationally recognised nanotechnology research institutes and laboratories, such as IMEC (Leuven), MC2 (Chalmers) and the Kavli Institute (Delft & Leiden), which is likely to enhance the ability of the course to maintain its content at the "cutting edge" of research.

¹³ TU Dresden does not offer a standalone nanotechnology or nanoscience degree programme and specialises in biology and biomolecular engineering. The main overlaps with nanotechnology are in the area of bionanotechnology.

- ***What Quality Assurance mechanisms are used to ensure a) the quality of the course content (ie content of individual modules / components of the course) and b) the overall coherence of the curriculum (how the different elements fit together)?***

The quality assurance (QA) approach of EMM-Nano is based on linking the QA systems and mechanisms already in place at the participating universities. The fact that EMM-Nano is composed of four local degree programmes, which are all fully accredited by the responsible national or transnational bodies, contributes to ensuring a certain quality standard. The absence of an EU-level accreditation body makes it impossible to have the EMM-Nano programme as such accredited. The EMM-Nano board is the central coordination and discussion forum within the consortium when programme wide QA issues are concerned. However, the local teaching committees are the ones directly responsible for QA at each site and all decisions taken by the EMM-Nano board depend on implementation by the local teaching committees in order to become effective.

- ***How have quality procedures from the host institutions been adapted / integrated into the EMMC?***

Individual EMM-Nano courses are course modules taught as part of the local degree programmes and are thus subject to the same local evaluation procedures. Students' feedback is routinely collected for all courses at all sites and it is primarily the task of the local teaching committees at each university to detect needs, problems, suggestions for improvements / course modifications etc. Local teaching committees are also responsible for the QA of individual courses at the local level. The results of local evaluation activities are reported to the EMM-Nano board which meets four times a year to coordinate EMM-Nano-related QA activities across sites.

- ***Has the course been able to deploy the most appropriate teaching staff?***

There is no evidence for any shortcomings in terms of the quality and commitment of teaching staff involved in the programme.

- ***How do students perceive the quality and organisation of the course?***

Overall, the EMM-Nano students and alumni interviewed were content with the quality and organisation of the programme. The large majority of individual courses were found to be of a good standard and at an appropriate level. However, students reported they were sometimes insufficiently aware of the expected level or prior knowledge required for individual courses. For example, the strong biology focus of the thematic modules taught at TU Dresden, and the advanced level of cell biology knowledge required, appear to have surprised some of the students who chose to attend TU Dresden. In terms of organisation, there appear to have been some differences between institutions in the way exams are graded and in the speed of processing and communicating exam results. Among students, some sites appear to have the reputation of giving higher marks than others for comparable levels of achievement. However, this perception may be due to different grading systems and difficulties related to translating these systems into ECTS marks (for example, the highest possible mark may be given to students relatively often under one grading system, while giving "full marks" is almost unheard of in other systems).

- ***Has the course been able to provide suitable academic facilities (equipment / labs / libraries / computing facilities etc)? [evidence comes mainly from students]***

The current and former EMM-Nano students interviewed did not express concerns about the suitability of the academic facilities provided at the four sites. No problems or shortcomings were reported in terms of teaching venues, libraries, access to academic publications or laboratory equipment. At Chalmers, EMM-Nano students can also get basic training in clean room techniques and use the clean room facilities of MC2 (i.e. an environment, typically used in manufacturing or scientific research, that has a low level of environmental pollutants such as dust, airborne microbes, aerosol particles and chemical vapours). IMEC clean rooms are not accessible to EMM-Nano students as yet.

- ***Does the course offer internships or other mechanisms to allow students to gain work experience?***

Internships are not explicitly provided for in the course structure and no credit points can be obtained by doing a voluntary internship. However, the course coordinator stressed that, even though it would be difficult to integrate an internship period into the current curriculum, good links with research performing businesses exist at all four partner institutions and support to find an internship is provided if a student wishes to gain private sector experience. As the course aims to produce high quality future staff for academic and industry research, the focus of practical training is on laboratory work. However, student feedback indicates that some students would have appreciated more substantial involvement in lab work.

- ***Has the course been able to provide suitable non-academic support after selection (visas / housing / social aspects)?***

Assistance with finding housing was judged to be very good across all sites. Orientation days for international students routinely take place at the beginning of the academic year at all four sites and EMM-Nano students are either required or encouraged to participate in these. When it comes to the perceived level of bureaucracy involved at the participating universities, students reported that procedures are quite simple in Chalmers and Delft/Leiden, but more complicated and time-consuming at the other two sites (Leuven and Dresden). However, this appears to be largely due to differences in national regulation concerning registration requirements for non-EU students and is only partially within the remit of the universities themselves.

6.2.2 Excellent students?

- ***Evidence on qualifications of students accepted onto course***

The minimum requirement for a successful EMM-Nano application is an undergraduate degree in a relevant subject (e.g. physics, electric engineering, and chemistry) with a minimum GPA (Grade Point Average) of 75%. However, some of the students interviewed already held a Masters degree in a related discipline and/or had relevant work experience at the time of applying. Looking at completion rates for the first three batches of students, the low number of drop-outs suggests that students admitted to the programme were indeed suitably qualified. Some of the students interviewed also stated that they had been offered places on other nanotechnology / nanoscience degree programmes. However, the programme coordinator reported that the consortium was

frequently not in the position to admit the very best applicants, since many of them decided to accept other offers by the time their scholarships were officially approved by the EACEA. This seems mainly due to the fact that admission and funding decisions for similar programmes in Europe and beyond are taken more quickly and applicants have to take a final decision on whether to accept these offers before they learn whether their EMM-Nano application was successful.

- ***Do course leaders and teachers believe the students attracted are of high quality? (including compared to the average standard in their department)***

According to those interviewed, EMM-Nano students are of high academic quality, but not necessarily of higher quality than their peers following the local degree programmes. Teaching staff involved in EMM-Nano reported that they were frequently "more motivated", "harder working" and "more interested" than their peers, but of similar intellectual and academic calibre. However, the members of the teaching staff interviewed had the impression that EMM-Nano fails to attract the best Chinese and Indian students. This is mainly attributed to the superior image that leading US universities enjoy among Chinese and Indian students. Members of the teaching staff suggested that EMM-Nano students, on average, receive the same or slightly lower marks than their peers (although this observation could not be backed up with quantitative data), which they attribute to the additional challenge of adjusting to local teaching approaches and examination formats.

6.2.3 The visiting scholars (academics)

- ***Are they of high quality? (what were they doing before (teaching, research, publishing)?, how were they identified and selected?) [This comes mainly from coordinator / partner interviews and factual evidence for scholar interviews]***

According to the programme coordinator, spontaneous applications of visiting scholar candidates are rare and most are recruited on the basis of pre-existing contacts and personal connections. In concrete terms this means that they were invited by their local contacts to apply for an Erasmus Mundus scholarship in order to finance a short term research stay. Even though relatively generous funding is provided, those interviewed reported that it is not always easy to find suitable individuals and organise their visits, due to likely conflicts with research and teaching duties at the scholars' home universities.

- ***What did they contribute to the EMMC during their stay? [coordinators / partner interviews + their own opinions]***

The level of engagement and interaction of the visiting scholars with the EMM-Nano course and its students appears to have differed substantially from case to case. The visiting scholars' exposure to EMM-Nano students appears to have been limited to a single lecture in some cases. In other cases, it included participation in a series of seminars/lectures and exchange of ideas and advice on aspects of the students' planned or ongoing thesis projects.

6.3 Impact – "additionality" and wider effects

6.3.1 Impacts of Higher Education institutions – supply and demand

- ***Does the course provide something new, which would not have been provided if the programme had not existed?***

The introduction of EMM-Nano created an educational offer with a clear added value over existing ones by combining the specific strengths and capabilities of the four institutions involved under the roof of one degree programme. The fact that the programme covers all main dimensions of nanoscience and nanotechnology in considerable depth makes it a largely unparalleled within the EU and probably also puts it into a leading position internationally.

- ***Has the experience of the course had wider impacts on the departments and institutions concerned (e.g. on other courses and provision, on quality procedures etc)?***

The necessity to offer a common curriculum based on a large number of local courses appears to have triggered considerable efforts to break down administrative and procedural barriers separating the four universities involved. One of those interviewed stated that setting up and running EMM-Nano had made the partners aware what the Bologna process is really about. EMM-Nano necessitated steps towards a higher degree of European compatibility, particularly in the administrative area. One example for this is the modification of the existing online course catalogue at K.U.Leuven and the introduction of common course codes, so that courses taught at partner universities could be technically accommodated. According to the project coordinator, a number of barriers (e.g. agreeing common pass/fail criteria) that initially appeared to be rooted in national legislation proved to be surmountable with the necessary amount of goodwill and willingness to reach a compromise on all sides. The site coordinator at one of the partner universities stated that he did "pioneering work" in this respect and that colleagues within his own and other departments benefited from the experience and knowledge gained in the framework of EMM-Nano.

- ***Has the programme made the departments more "internationally oriented"?***

EMM-Nano participants typically present their decision to bid for Erasmus Mundus funding as a reflection of their international orientation and commitment to European cooperation in higher education. Therefore, it is difficult to ascertain whether EM made the departments involved more internationally oriented or whether it is the expression of a pre-existing attitude. It can be said, however, that EMM-Nano initiated a learning process in the participating institutions and appears to have made them more compatible in practical terms.

6.3.2 Impacts on students and scholars

- ***What do students expect to be the impact of attending the course on their personal and future career development?***

The third-country students from emerging economies consulted, frequently stated that their EMM-Nano application was motivated by the expectation to obtain a well respected academic qualification from renowned European universities. In terms of career development, EMM-Nano is mostly seen as a springboard to PhD programmes and some of the current students interviewed already have plans to do a PhD at one of the participating institutions. A smaller group is hoping to

directly move into a well-paid industrial R&D job or does not have any plans yet. The perception among non-EU students that the EMM-Nano degree will help their professional development seems to be mostly related to the international standing of the universities and research institutes involved and less based on the recognition of the Erasmus Mundus brand.

The alumni interviewed reported that EMM-Nano proved to be a valuable entry point to international PhD programmes and academic research in general. Furthermore, the close connections between the universities involved and leading research institutes were pointed out and students assume that the specific knowledge and skills gained during the programme will give them a competitive edge in their future careers. In terms of transferable skills, the fact that they demonstrated flexibility and the capability to adapt quickly to new environments and cultures by doing a Master in two different countries is seen as an additional advantage.

For scholars, the mobility period allows for an in-depth exchange of ideas with colleagues and students in a new environment. Third country scholars are also able to learn extensively about research and teaching at leading EU universities in the area of nanoscience / nanotechnology. The mobility period also provides good networking opportunities with colleagues from other countries and opens future collaborative prospects with the institutions involved in the programme. Assuming that most of the visiting scholars supported by EMM-Nano already had contacts and had worked with colleagues at their host institutions, it is mostly the opportunity to work in a different environment and exchange ideas with new people for a prolonged period which may help their work and careers in the longer term. Furthermore, it may contribute to enhance their understanding of graduate education in Europe and to forming a better judgement about the R&D capabilities of potential European research partners.

6.3.3 Policy impact and contribution to EU strategic goals

- ***Impact, if any, on comparability and recognition of qualifications within Europe (Bologna principles) [this might be expected as a result of the requirement for joint working between consortium institutions from different countries – but needs to be checked]***

Harmonising four existing degree programmes in four different EU Member States, so that individual courses can be integrated into a new transnational degree programme, can be seen as the key challenge involved in EMM-Nano. In order to accomplish this, common admission and examination standards and compliance with the ECTS have been agreed within the consortium and each partner recognises as equivalent the examination procedures of the other members of the consortium. However, the introduction of a joint degree has so far been held up by national legislation in Sweden and the Netherlands and it is unclear how this can be overcome.

6.4 Implementation issues

6.4.1 Main issues linked to implementation

- **List and analyse the main difficulties and barriers encountered which have influenced the ability of course leaders to achieve their objectives and the extent to which these have been overcome**

The percentage of non-EU applicants on the main list who don't accept a place on the programme is relatively high and amounted to 50% in some years. This forces the consortium to admit a relatively high number of reserve list candidates in order to fill the available places. The problem seems to be at least partially attributable to the lengthy approval process of the European Commission. Shortlisted applicants receive their confirmation letters very late (i.e. July of a given year) and have often accepted another university's offer by the time they are officially notified of their selection. The course coordinator stated that this regularly resulted in losing the best applicants. In reaction to this, the consortium is now sending a provisional notification to the selected students (main list and reserve list) directly after the selection meeting in March. The official consortium letter informing applicants that they have been selected for scholarships by the European Commission is then sent out once the Commission has given final approval.

Like many EMMCs, EMM-Nano has had difficulties attracting EU/EEA students. This is clearly visible in the first three batches of students when only a small minority of students came from the EU/EEA (3 in 2005, 3 in 2006, and 1 in 2007). It is not entirely clear what deterred applications from qualified EU/EEA students, but the lack of financial support available for EU/EEA students is seen as an important factor. However, the consortium started to work around this obstacle by offering a number of grants from university funds. For the academic year 2009/2010 the amount will be € 700 per month for 10 months (i.e. € 7000 for the entire academic year). The level of tuition fees charged does not provide a clear explanation for low EU/EEA student participation since waivers have been available to bring down fees to local programme rates¹⁴. Starting from the academic year 2009/2010, there will be a uniform € 540 tuition fee per year for EU/EEA students.

6.4.2 Financial support

- **Include consideration of the adequacy of the financial support provided by the programme in relation to objectives. (funding to course, level of scholarships, funding for third country partnerships if relevant)**

If direct funding for the consortium and the Action 2 scholarships – that partially flow back to the consortium in form of tuition fees – are considered together, those interviewed see the financial support for EMM-Nano as adequate. If the €15 000 in direct support for the consortium is considered in isolation, there is broad agreement that only a fraction of the costs involved in running EMM-Nano are covered by this sum. In comparison with other scholarships available for Masters-level students, the level of the Action 2 scholarships is considered as generous. Some

¹⁴ The official tuition fee for EU/EEA students was € 2100 for the academic year 2008/2009. However, under the waiver system annual tuition fees for EU/EEA students were reduced to € 533.10 at K.U.Leuven, € 1538 (for students under the age of 30) at Delft/Leiden, € 300 at TU Dresden and € 0 at Chalmers.

members of the teaching staff stated that the level of financial support given to third-country Erasmus Mundus students is comparable to the funding usually received by Ph.D. students.

To assess the sustainability of the EMM-Nano programme, those interviewed were asked to comment on three different funding scenarios: 1) EU funding is removed altogether, even if courses are still branded as "Erasmus Mundus" (ie a sort of Quality Label approach). 2) EU funding for courses (ie the €15 000 per year) is removed, but scholarships remain. 3) EU funding for scholarships is removed, but funding for courses is retained.

While those interviewed like the idea of Erasmus Mundus being a quality label for transnational graduate level university education, they expressed strong doubt whether EMM-Nano could be continued without any form of EU funding. They also made it very clear that € 15 000 is a welcome contribution to the annual overhead cost involved in administration and coordination of the programme, but fails to cover the actual costs involved by a wide margin. The fact that one person is assisting the current programme coordinator at K.U.Leuven on a full-time basis in running EMM-Nano underlines this claim. Therefore, the direct funding for courses is seen as the part of the Erasmus Mundus funding package they could most likely do without, provided that there is sufficient support to continue the programme in the university hierarchy. For the coordinating institution, removing the scholarships for students and the financial support for visiting scholars is clearly the most unrealistic option and it is highly questionable whether EMM-Nano could be continued without. This scenario is met with almost the same level of scepticism as the total removal of funding.

6.5 Added value and perceived relevance of Erasmus Mundus

6.5.1 "Added value"

- ***What has the EMMC brought the universities involved that they would not have been available to achieve / obtain without it?***

Although all consortium partners already had a strong international orientation before the start of the programme, Erasmus Mundus provided them with the additional financial capability and visibility to attract very good third-country students they probably could not have reached otherwise. This is especially relevant for reaching students from developing countries, who simply could not have afforded to come to Europe without the support of Erasmus Mundus. Furthermore, it enabled them to host a number of visiting scholars that enriched the academic life and exchange profit their research performance and may also help to further improve their international standing. Finally, the programme coordinator stated that being selected under the Erasmus Mundus programme lifted their offering out of the mass of other nanoscience/nanotechnology related Master programmes available and in that sense serves as a quality label.

- ***What has the EMMC offered students and scholars and to what extent has the EMMC provided something that they could not have achieved elsewhere / on another course?***

EMM-Nano represents a quite unique educational offer that enables students to combine a very comprehensive Masters-level education in nanoscience/nanotechnology with ample room for specialisation and a strong element of international mobility.

As far as the scholars are concerned, it is less clear what Erasmus Mundus offered them that they could not have achieved otherwise. The value added of the Erasmus Mundus funding for visiting scholars is not entirely clear in comparison to other mobility programmes for researchers.

6.5.2 "Relevance"

- ***Has the programme overall allowed the institutions concerned to a) improve / expand the quality of their offer and b) attract additional talented students and scholars (based on findings above)***

Many of the foreign students would not have chosen to study in the EU and/or at the universities involved in EMM-Nano without the Erasmus Mundus programme. The fact that many alumni have begun PhDs at one of the universities they attended during the programme (4 in Leuven alone) is also an indicator that Erasmus Mundus participation helped the universities to attract and maintain highly talented students. It is also quite clear that by pooling their expertise and thematic coverage, the partners jointly created a Masters programme with much higher visibility than each of them could have done on their own.

- ***To what extent has this allowed the institutions concerned to address what they perceived as their real needs?***

All of the universities involved have the ambition to attract the highest quality students and to play a leading role within their fields in Europe and internationally. By helping them to attract and retain excellent students, EMM-Nano makes an important contribution towards establishing and maintaining their places as leading organisations in the area of nanoscience/nanotechnology. Moreover, there is solid evidence that many EMM-Nano alumni stay at or return to the universities involved which also contributes to the research capabilities and international recognition of the consortium universities.

7.0 AGRIS MUNDUS – Sustainable Development in Agriculture

Course title	Sustainable Development in Agriculture MSc – AGRIS MUNDUS
Coordinating institution	Montpellier SupAgro (Institut des régions chaudes), France
Partner institutions	Wageningen University and Research Centre (WUR), The Netherlands University of Copenhagen, Faculty of Life Sciences, Denmark University College Cork (UCC), Ireland Università degli Studi di Catania, Italy Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, Spain
Start date	Academic year 2006-2007 (first student intake in September 2006)
Course length	2 year programme (120 ECTS)
Course objectives and content	<p>The objective of the programme is to train highly qualified post graduate students "to cope with current global / international concerns in agriculture and rural development". Key subjects covered are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crop science, horticulture, forestry and livestock systems • Water management • Management of rural development projects • Sustainable use of natural resources and the environment <p>Students attend one institution in M1 and a second in M2, with 9 possible combinations (study tracks), each with a thematic focus (reflecting institutional specialisations). The fourth semester is devoted to a Master's thesis worth 30 ECTS, evaluated by staff from both host institutions attended.</p>
Target student cohort	Applicants must have a Bachelor degree in a subject related to agricultural development <u>and/or</u> a social science and be able to demonstrate they have been among the top 20% of students on their previous course. Preference is given to candidates with "appropriate" professional experience.
Training paths	9 "study tracks" are proposed, each involving a specific thematic focus and a different combination of 2 partner institutions. It is thus possible to start in Wageningen, Copenhagen, Catania, Cork or Madrid. All students follow a common orientation week in Montpellier at the start of year 1 and a common research methodology workshop at the start of year 2.
Degree awarded	<u>Double degree</u> , awarded by the two institutions attended, accompanied by diploma supplements and a joint certificate issued by NATURA. Move to joint degree in discussion.
Action 3 partnerships	Action 3 partnership began in 2006, with 8 partners: 1. University of Chapingo (Mexico); 2. Universidad Centroamericana (Nicaragua) 3. 2IE (Burkina Faso); 4. Hassan II Veterinary and Agricultural Institute (Morocco) 5. University of Lampung (Indonesia); 6. Royal University of Agriculture (Cambodia); 7. Yunnan Agricultural University (China); 8. University of Sana'a (Yemen)

7.1 Outputs

7.1.1 The course

- **Overview of syllabus and mobility paths proposed to students**

AGRIS MUNDUS is a two-year programme which was established with the aim of offering a comparatively wide range of specialised study tracks, by combining studies at two of the consortium partner institutions with strongest expertise in the thematic areas concerned.

The first year (M1) and second year (M2) are spent at different institutions. Originally, 11 study tracks were proposed, but two were merged with others, so that nine possible combinations have been offered since 2007, (the second year of the programme). Another notable feature of the programme has been the conscious decision to provide courses in local languages at the French, Italian and Spanish partner sites. As a result, seven of the nine study tracks are multilingual, as summarised in Table 7.1.

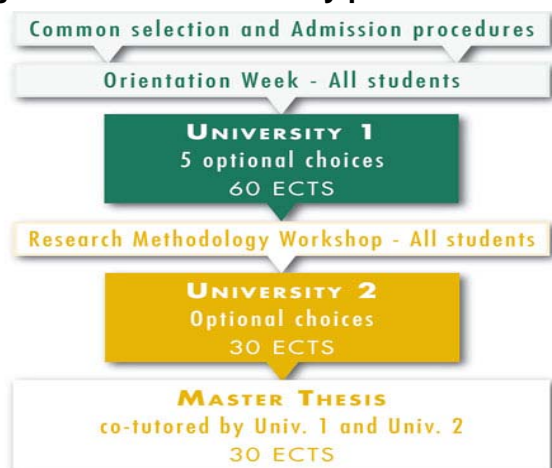
Table 7.1 Study tracks in AGRIS MUNDUS (2009)

	Study track	M1	Lan	M2	Lan
1	Water management: operation and design	Wageningen	EN	Copenhagen	EN
2	Water management in rural development	Wageningen	EN	Montpellier	FR
3	Water management in horticulture	Wageningen	EN	Catania	IT
4	Safe production in horticulture	Copenhagen	EN	Catania	IT
5	Livestock systems management	Catania	IT	Montpellier	FR
6	Agricultural development	Copenhagen	EN	Montpellier	FR
7	Food, nutrition and health	Cork	EN	Copenhagen	EN
8	Rural local development	Madrid	ES	Cork	EN
9	Agricultural systems for local development	Madrid	ES	Montpellier	FR

Source: AGRIS MUNDUS Progress Report to EACEA

The coordinating institution (Montpellier SupAgro) does not host any first year students, but runs a common coordination week in Montpellier for all students before formal teaching begins at their first host institution. Students generally arrive at their M1 host institution and then travel to Montpellier for the orientation week. Similarly, a joint research methodology workshop is hosted in Montpellier at the start of the second year. The fourth semester involves a Master's thesis, worth one quarter of total ECTS points, which is co-tutored by staff members from both M1 and M2 host institutions. In addition, EU students have the opportunity to undertake their thesis with support from one of the consortium's Action 3 partner institutions and spend time at that institution with financing from the consortium's Action 3 partnership funding. The overall course structure is presented in Figure 7.1.

Figure 7.1 Overall mobility path for AGRIS MUNDUS



Source: AGRIS MUNDUS Progress Report to EACEA

- **Brief overview of teaching approach including number of teaching staff deployed**

AGRIS MUNDUS was created by bringing together existing Master's courses, already taught in the participating consortium institutions. As such, AGRIS MUNDUS students attend courses alongside "national" students following the same options as part of other "domestic" Master's programmes. At Montpellier SupAgro, for example, second year Erasmus Mundus students attend courses alongside students on the existing *Master en Agriculture, Agronomie et Agro-alimentaire (3A)*.

The consortium partner institutions are all recognised as leading institutions in the field of tropical agriculture, agronomy and rural development and the participating departments employ internationally recognised specialists in these fields. The existing Master's programmes and the teaching staff providing them are subject to national quality control mechanisms, implemented in the departments in question.

The Master's programme involves a high proportion of taught classes in the first three semesters (M1 and the first semester of M2), followed by a semester devoted to individual research, leading to the production of a Master's thesis. From the start of the programme, AGRIS MUNDUS students are assigned two personal tutors, one from each institution attended. Among other pastoral responsibilities, these tutors help the students to design and manage their own learning plan within the framework of the overall M1 and M2 choices. The Master's thesis is co-tutored by staff members from both M1 and M2 institutions.

The structure of the course and the large number of options on offer to AGRIS MUNDUS students at different sites make it difficult to make a clear statement about the exact number of teaching staff available to the course. Overall, it is clear that students have access to a wide range of specialists in their chosen field.

- **Qualifications awarded**

Upon successful completion, students are conferred a double degree from the two institutions they attended. All partner institutions issue a degree covering the full 120 ECTS credits of the course – thus recognising the time spent at the partner institution. In addition, students receive a joint diploma supplement and a certificate from NATURA¹⁵, the network to which all consortium institutions belong.

The consortium has a stated goal of moving to a fully recognised, single joint master's degree, which appears to be possible within the framework of the regulations applying to the Spanish, Italian, Irish and French institutions. It is understood that the issuing of joint degree certificates is not currently possible within the Dutch higher education accreditation system, meaning that Wageningen University cannot award “joint” degrees.

7.1.2 The students

Table 7.2 Applications, candidates selected, students starting and graduations

		2006-2008 (Batch 1)	2007-2009 (Batch 2)	2008-2010 (Batch 3)
Applications	Non-EU	NA	NA	
	EU	NA	NA	
	TOTAL	487	355	
Admitted candidates	Non-EU	79	68	
	EU	10	6	
	TOTAL	89	74	
Students starting course	EM scholarship	26	24	24
	Other non-EU	3	0	0
	EU	8	5	5
	TOTAL	37	29	29
Students graduating	EM scholarship			
	Other non-EU			
	EU			
	TOTAL			

Data Progress and Final Reports submitted to EACEA

¹⁵ NATURA is the Network of European Agricultural (Tropically and Sub-tropically oriented) Universities and Scientific Complexes Related with Agricultural Development. The network was established in 1988 and involves 26 members from 16 European countries. See: <http://www.natura-net.eu/>

7.1.3 Action 2 Scholars

At the time of the case study research, seven scholars had been awarded mobility grants under Action 2 for periods of up to three months to spend time at the Consortium partner institutions. From these, there was one scholar coming from each of the following countries: Algeria, China, Cambodia, India, Mexico, Morocco and USA. One of them was female while the other six were male.

The scholars were not recruited through an open call, but were selected among candidates identified from existing partnerships and networks. Three of the scholars selected during this period came from institutions with which AGRIS MUNDUS has a partnership agreement under Action 3. As such, Action 2 funding was used to support the links developed under Action 3 (see below). Action 3 itself does not provide support for scholars from partner institutions to spend time in Europe.

7.1.4 Action 3 partnership

The Action 3 partnership run by AGRIS MUNDUS (“AGRIS MUNDUS Alliance”) was approved for funding under the 2006 call, so began operating in 2007 (a year after the AGRIS MUNDUS programme itself) for a period of three years. The partnership links the AGRIS MUNDUS consortium (the six EU institutions) with eight third country institutions:

- In Latin America: University of Chapingo (Mexico) and the Universidad Centroamericana (Nicaragua);
- In Africa: the *Institut International d'Ingénierie de l'Eau et de l'Environnement - 2IE* (Burkina Faso) and the Hassan II Veterinary and Agricultural Institute (Morocco);
- In Asia: the University of Lampung (Indonesia), the Royal University of Agriculture (Cambodia) and Yunnan Agricultural University (China);
- In the Middle East: University of Sana'a (Yemen).

In most cases, one of the European consortium institutions already had established links with one or more of the third country institutions. Action 3 has meant that these existing bilateral links have been extended to create a multilateral partnership (even if not all European partners have direct relations with all third country institutions).

The initial design of the Action 3 partnership placed considerable emphasis on the possibility it allowed for European students on AGRIS MUNDUS to spend time at one of the Action 3 partnership institutions to undertake research for their Master's thesis, with additional co-tutoring provided by an academic from the third country institution in question. In such cases, the European students receive mobility scholarships (€ 3,100) funded through Action 3.

In addition, flat rate funding is provided for the operation of the partnership (to support administrative tasks and partnerships meetings) and mobility funding is provided for scholars from the European institutions to spend time at the third country partner institutions. Outgoing mobility

by European scholars has focused on capacity development in the partner institutions, notably in terms of course and curriculum design and associated questions relating to assessment, award of credits and quality assurance.

7.2 Results

7.2.1 The course – relevant, high quality, with a European dimension?

- ***Is the curriculum well structured and integrated?***

The idea underpinning AGRIS MUNDUS was to create a series of unique learning paths for students by bringing together some of the best departments in Europe in specific fields of agriculture and rural development. This has allowed the creation of the specialised study tracks presented above, which draw on the specialised skills of the departments in question. The common orientation week at the beginning of the Master's programme and the research methods workshop at the beginning of year 2 are the only aspects of the programme followed by all students and are designed to help create a common identity for the course.

The course coordinators acknowledge that the comparatively large number of combinations possible within the same Master's programme has created some difficulties in ensuring a coherent and well-structured programme over the two years of the study track followed by individual students. An example has been "Agricultural systems for local development" (track 9 in the table above), where the courses in Madrid in M1 are specialised, but are followed by more generalist courses taught at Montpellier in M2. In light of student feedback, this organisation is likely to be changed in future years, so that students begin in Montpellier¹⁶.

More generally, the students present in the evaluation focus group (all of whom were in their second year of study) considered that there was only limited integration between the first and second years of the course. The students consulted had spent their first years (M1) at Madrid, Copenhagen or Wageningen and argued that staff involved in AGRIS MUNDUS at these institutions were only able to provide limited information about the courses and activities to be followed in Montpellier in M2. In particular, information about the Masters thesis (50% of ECTS in M2) was reported to have been limited. Moreover, some overlap in subjects covered in M1 and M2 was reported.

The number of possible study tracks available in the framework of AGRIS MUNDUS is such that a comparatively large number of academic staff are involved in the programme. Moreover, AGRIS MUNDUS students are taught alongside students on other (often "domestic") courses. Under these conditions, it is understandable that not all staff teaching on the programme will be fully informed about specific aspects of the AGRIS MUNDUS programme. Moreover, the number of course options available to students at different sites makes it difficult to avoid repetition and overlap entirely. Nevertheless, there may be a case for providing more detailed guidance to

¹⁶ Part of the difficulty has also been related to Madrid's ability to oversee the Master's theses, undertaken in the second semester of M2.

students on their specific study track and reviewing further the degree of coherence between M1 and M2 options.

- ***Is the content of the course "cutting edge" and how does it compare to other similar courses in Europe and beyond? (consider how many other similar courses exist).***

It naturally goes beyond the scope of an evaluation such as this to assess the academic content of AGRIS MUNDUS as such. Nevertheless, as with other Erasmus Mundus courses, the basic quality of the academic provision is guaranteed by the participating institutions. The course coordinators and partners argue that AGRIS MUNDUS groups together the leading departments in the fields of tropical agriculture and rural development in the countries covered by the consortium and thus constitutes the leading group of departments in this field in Europe. The range of curricula on offer in the different study tracks of AGRIS MUNDUS is viewed as unique in Europe. This assessment is supported by partners, Action 2 scholars and students, who were consulted for the evaluation. The excellence of the participating departments and staff is thus the fundamental guarantor of the quality and academic and practical relevance of AGRIS MUNDUS.

- ***What Quality Assurance mechanisms are used to ensure a) the quality of the course content (ie content of individual modules / components of the course) and b) the overall coherence of the curriculum (how the different elements fit together)?***

The actual academic content of the courses provided as part of AGRIS MUNDUS (discussed above), as well as the quality of teaching and the coherence of the curricula provided in individual institutions, are primarily the responsibility of the institutions themselves (through academic committees etc) and, where relevant national Quality Assurance and accreditation agencies. Accreditation organisations in some countries, such as the NVAO in the Netherlands, assess the coherence and quality of the whole AGRIS MUNDUS programme (including elements provided in other countries) as a pre-requisite for allowing the participating institution from their country (Wageningen in the case of the Netherlands) to operate "accredited" joint Master's programmes. Although the role, powers and approach to accreditation of joint programmes of accreditation and quality agencies in the Member States covered by AGRIS MUNDUS vary to a considerable extent, the process of accreditation of the whole programme by one or more accreditation agencies provides an additional guarantee of the quality of the course.

In addition to the "standard" processes of quality assurance and accreditation, AGRIS MUNDUS also uses consortium-specific quality assurance mechanisms. Firstly, the programme follows the "Tropiqua" quality assurance system developed by the NATURA network, which allows it to label itself as a "NATURA" course. In addition to standard procedures, this system involves approval by and regular reporting to the NATURA Board of Directors and external peer review at all participating institutions by reviewers chosen by the Quality Assessment of NATURA. This external peer review had not been completed at the time of the case study research.

Secondly, AGRIS MUNDUS has put in place a system for gathering feedback from students. Students are asked to evaluate all individual courses, using standardised feedback questionnaires, and each year of the programme overall. This feedback is reviewed by the Consortium Programme Committee, which holds three meetings a year and discusses curriculum coherence

and teaching approaches. Tutors also keep a record of issues raised, which are passed on to the Programme Committee. Additionally, AGRIS MUNDUS student representatives are elected at all participating sites to represent student interests. Two student representatives attend the annual NATURA General Assembly, where a report of AGRIS MUNDUS is presented and discussed.

- ***How have quality procedures from the host institutions been adapted / integrated into the EMMC?***

As noted, the quality procedures of the host institutions form the basis for guaranteeing the quality of the courses, while AGRIS Mundus as a whole has been accredited by some national accreditation organisations. The main change adaptation to local quality requirements that was required appears to relate to the definition of the Master's thesis. The Dutch and Danish partner institutions had established quality requirements for a 30 ECTS Master's thesis, with particular requirements in terms of theoretical foundation and innovative research. The French coordinating institution had traditionally placed greatest emphasis on the practical aspect of the thesis, developed through empirical fieldwork. A common understanding regarding the theoretical content of the theses has now been reached.

- ***Has the course been able to deploy the most appropriate teaching staff?***

As noted, as AGRIS MUNDUS students follow established courses in the participating institutions, the programme is able to draw on a wide range of teaching staff. There is no evidence that the course has not been able to deploy appropriate staff. As would be expected, the sample of student feedback provided to the evaluators demonstrated different levels of appreciation of individual teachers on specific courses. Overall, the students consulted for the evaluation were satisfied with the quality of the teaching they had received, even if the difference in style between the more independent approach favoured in the northern European partners and the more "top-down" approach used in the southern European partners was highlighted.

- ***How do students perceive the quality and organisation of the course?***

The students consulted during the evaluation focus group reported a generally high level of satisfaction with the quality and organisation of the course, although there were clear differences in appreciation between individuals.

The overall concept of the course and the ability to spend time at different institutions in different countries was praised by all students. Students acknowledged that there were considerable differences in academic traditions between the institutions in northern Europe attended by some of them (Copenhagen and Wageningen) and those in the South (Montpellier and Madrid)¹⁷, with a greater emphasis on independent research in the former institutions and more direct teaching (*cours magistraux*) in the latter.

While some participants felt it was enriching from an educational and professional perspective to experience both types of system, some students expressed a clear preference for the more independent style of learning favoured in the Danish and Dutch partner institutions. It was

¹⁷ None of the focus group participants had attended Catania or Cork.

suggested by some participants that the timetable in Montpellier was overloaded with taught classes, which left insufficient time for individual learning.

More generally, students reported that teaching staff in one partner institution appeared to have limited (or no) knowledge of the content of courses followed in the other institutions attended by students. While it was acknowledged that this was in principle difficult to achieve, given the number of options available (for example, M1 students in Wageningen could move on to three other institutions, while M2 students in Montpellier can come from four different M1 institutions), students argued that more could be done to inform M1 students about the courses they would follow in M2, while M2 teachers could be made more aware of the courses followed at M1 sites.

- ***Has the course been able to provide suitable academic facilities (equipment / labs / libraries / computing facilities etc)?***

The students consulted in the focus group were all undertaking their M2 studies at Montpellier and had thus spent their M1 at different partner institutions (Copenhagen, Wageningen and Madrid). Those who had previously spent time at the Danish and Dutch sites specifically commented that library and computing facilities were of a considerably higher quality in these partner institutions than at Montpellier. The more limited library facilities in Montpellier were seen in part as a reflection of the institution's greater reliance on direct teaching and the lower emphasis placed on individual research. When asked about the same issues, the course coordinators and teaching staff acknowledged the differences in the level of library provision between partner sites, but noted that this situation was primarily influenced by resourcing decisions beyond their direct control.

- ***Does the course offer internships or other mechanisms to allow students to gain work experience?***

Internships as such are not built into the study tracks provided and there are no formalised links between the course and internship providers. However, the Master's thesis, undertaken in Semester 4, involves compulsory fieldwork, which the course coordinators argue is particularly relevant to labour market requirements in the field. The coordinating institute, Montpellier SupAgro, has traditionally focused on delivering professional qualifications accredited by the French *Commission des Titres d'Ingénieur*, which have a strong vocational, as well as academic element¹⁸.

More importantly, many AGRIS MUNDUS students already have considerable professional experience on entering the course – indeed, previous professional experience is an important consideration within the course selection criteria. The students consulted during the evaluation focus group did not report any concerns about the lack of formalised internships.

- ***Has the course been able to provide suitable non-academic support after selection (visas / housing / social aspects)?***

¹⁸ The French higher education system is characterised by a distinction between universities and specialised "écoles d'ingénieurs", which focus on specific professional qualifications (leading to the title of "engineer") and impose strict entry criteria.

The course coordinators reported that AGRIS MUNDUS has experienced some difficulties with students' visas in the first year of the course. In particular, the comparatively late formal approval of the Erasmus Mundus scholarship awards at EU level had meant that some students had not begun their visa application procedures in time to be able to attend the first orientation week. Students recommended for an Erasmus Mundus scholarship are now advised to begin visa application procedures before they receive formal approval, in order to ensure they have visas to come to Europe in time. The visa situation for third country students is further complicated if they begin their studies in M1 at Cork, as they then require both a visa for Ireland and a Schengen visa to attend the orientation week in Montpellier.

The course has approached visa-related problems by providing very clear guidance to selected students. The course coordinators reported that previous attempts to discuss particular cases with the relevant visa authorities had not been effective and may even have been counterproductive. This highlights the extent to which visa issues lie largely outwith the control of individual courses. This said, it was reported that the Spanish visa authorities had implemented internal procedures to facilitate the visa attribution procedure for Erasmus Mundus students going to Spain.

All partner institutions provide housing for AGRIS MUNDUS students and the students consulted in the focus groups reported no problems in this respect, even if housing costs vary considerably between different partner locations. From a social perspective, the students consulted reported a tendency for AGRIS MUNDUS students to "stick together" outside classes and that interaction with "local" students tended to be limited at the sites they had attended. This was seen by the students present to be inevitable, given general trends among international students, language issues and the fact that they were only present at the universities concerned for one year at most.

7.2.2 Excellent students?

- ***Evidence on qualifications of students accepted onto course***

From the outset, the AGRIS MUNDUS consortium has drawn on its existing academic and personal networks in the field of tropical agriculture and rural development to attract students. This network includes the institutions included in the Action 3 partnerships. Applicants are required to demonstrate that they were in the top 20% of students in their undergraduate studies. This is verified with the undergraduate institutions, while the existing links existing between the consortium and third country institutions mean that the selection committee has a generally good overview of the general quality of the institutions in question. As AGRIS MUNDUS is a broad course, including both natural science and social science elements (the latter linked particularly to rural development), students are drawn not only from agronomy-related undergraduate degree programmes, but also social science programmes.

In general, the course coordinators and partner consulted report that students selected for AGRIS MUNDUS have a level of academic qualification well above the average for their discipline in their home country. However, the selection committee for AGRIS MUNDUS also attaches considerable value to prior professional experience, which gives students a good grounding in many of the more

practical issues covered by the programme, as well as enhanced “transferable skills” (interpersonal skills, problem solving etc).

- ***Do course leaders and teachers believe the students attracted are of high quality? (including compared to the average standard in their department)***

The teaching staff consulted at the coordinating and partner institutions, as well as Action 2 scholars who had had some contact with students, all report that AGRIS MUNDUS students are of a high quality. From a purely academic perspective, the general standard is reported to be on a par with standards on other courses in host institutions, whereas AGRIS MUNDUS students are reported to have notably more developed transferable skills than their counterparts on mainly domestic courses.

The perceived academic standard of students is influenced by their previous academic experience. It is clear that AGRIS MUNDUS students come from a wider range of backgrounds (for example, social science, as well as scientific) than would be typical on domestic Masters programmes, which, particularly in the French institution, tend to come from a rather narrow range of prior study programmes. This may mean that AGRIS MUNDUS students are not always familiar with specific scientific elements of the course as would be expected from their domestic counterparts. Nevertheless, all teaching staff consulted agreed that these comparative “weaknesses” were more than compensated for by AGRIS MUNDUS students’ strengths in other areas. Notably, the students were reported to be more willing to engage in debate, to challenge their teachers more frequently and to be able to draw on a wider range of experience and examples than domestic students.

- ***Success / drop out rates and final marks (check progress reports for aggregate data – if not there, request from coordinators)***

We are currently awaiting the latest data on completion and drop-out rates from AGRIS Mundus for the first two batches. However, the course coordinator and partner report no major problems in relation to examinations and graduation rates.

There have been a number of instances where students have been forced to interrupt their studies for personal (rather than academic) reasons and these have been dealt with in a considerate manner by the course coordinators.

7.2.3 The visiting scholars (academics)

- ***Are they of high quality? (what were they doing before (teaching, research, publishing)?, how were they identified and selected?)***

The evidence available to the evaluation suggest that the Action 2 scholars who have visited AGRIS MUNDUS consortium institutions in the framework of Erasmus Mundus are of a high academic standard, with solid track records in academic fields relevant to course. On average, the visiting scholars were highly experienced academics, with over 20 years’ experience and solid publication records.

- ***What did they contribute to the EMMC during their stay?***

Feedback from the course coordinator and scholars themselves (interview and survey findings) suggests that scholars have tended to concentrate on research and developing institutional links with the host institution, while contributing to a limited extent to the implementation of AGRIS MUNDUS itself, through teaching and student assessment activities.

As such, the level of integration between AGRIS MUNDUS itself and the use of the Action 2 scholarship funding has been quite limited. Two of the AGRIS MUNDUS visiting scholars replying to the online survey explicitly note that they were not able to undertake as much teaching on the course as hoped, as teaching time had already been allocated. The comparatively heavy schedule of lectures at the coordinating institution (Montpellier) made it difficult to schedule additional lectures or seminars.

7.2.4 Partnerships with third countries

The Action 3 partnership was successfully established in 2007. The first EU students on AGRIS Mundus could travel to Action 3 partnership institutions to work on their Master thesis in 2008 (Batch 1 students, having started in September 2006, reaching the second semester of M2 in 2008). Five EU students undertook such outgoing mobility periods in 2008. This opportunity was also open to EU students in Batch 2 (writing their thesis in 2009). However, as the Action 3 partnership agreement was established for three years, this aspect of the programme will not continue. Moreover, the lower than expected numbers of EU students on the course mean that programme has had difficulty in actually disbursing the €186,000 allocated for outgoing student mobility under Action 3.

Resources allocated for outgoing mobility for staff at EU institutions have been used to fund "missions" to third country partner institutions. These missions, so far undertaken only by staff from SupAgro Montpellier and the University of Catania, have mainly focused on helping the partner institutions to develop their capacity in teaching in the field of sustainable agriculture. Four of the eight partner institutions have their own Master's programmes in sustainable agriculture. Those consulted for the evaluation report that these exchange processes have been very valuable for developing capacity in the third country institutions and reinforcing links to the European institutions involved. These links are seen as particularly important for future research cooperation.

7.3 Impact – "additionality" and wider effects

7.3.1 Impacts of Higher Education institutions – supply and demand

- ***Does the course provide something new, which would not have been provided if the programme had not existed?***

The course coordinators and partners argue strongly that the added value of AGRIS MUNDUS, over and above the pre-existing higher education offer in Europe, is its federation of relevant expertise in the different partners institutions into a new, structured Master's programme. While

individual institutions covered elements of the curriculum now on offer, none covered all aspects. As such, students on AGRIS MUNDUS have access to a wider range of specialisations. Access to the different institutions is seen not only to allow students to access a broader spectrum of expertise, but also to increase their awareness of further study opportunities in Europe, thus helping to retain good third country students, who wish to undertake a PhD in Europe (instead of seeing them move to the US).

This new, federated supply of Master's-level education is seen to be more competitive on an international stage than the existing Master's courses offered by individual institutions, as it offers more and can be made more visible. As such, it can compete more effectively with principal competitor universities in the field of sustainable agriculture, such as Cornell, Michigan State and Florida in the US, McGill in Canada or Sydney and New South Wales in Australia.

AGRIS MUNDUS is seen by the course coordinator to offer a distinctly European perspective on sustainable agriculture in the world (which may differ from that offered in the English-speaking countries mentioned above). Moreover, the combination of northern and southern European institutions and the multi-lingual approach built into the programme are considered to add a valuable cultural dimension to AGRIS MUNDUS. The distinctive cultural aspects, while acknowledged, were seen to be less significant than the academic quality of the course and breadth of coverage by the partner institution representative whom we consulted.

- ***Has the experience of the course had wider impacts on the departments and institutions concerned (e.g. on other courses and provision, on quality procedures etc)?***

The staff, including the Director of Studies, consulted at the coordinating institution, as well as the representative of the partner institution to whom we spoke, reported a number of wider institutional impacts resulting from participation in Erasmus Mundus.

At a practical level, AGRIS MUNDUS has brought about a considerable institutional learning process in the coordinating institution, as staff have had to deal with the intricacies of establishing and implementing a trans-national Master's programme. Staff have thus learned more about such issues as visa requirements for third country students, organising joint selection procedures and recruitment procedures and implementing the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The need to reconcile differing conceptions of the role and content of the Master's thesis (see above) is given as an example of how the programme has forced participating institutions to seek to understand how institutions in other EU countries operate and to reach consensus.

Participating institutions appear to have maintained their existing quality assurance procedures, although the introduction of standardised student feedback forms and regular meetings to discuss feedback and teaching methods has marked a departure from established practice in some institutions (particularly those in southern Europe). Teaching staff consulted reported that the greater willingness of Erasmus Mundus students to challenge teachers and seek discussion has also generated a wider reflection on existing methods and approaches. It is reported that this is not universally welcomed by all teaching staff at the institution, some of whom are less willing to see their established practice challenged.

- ***Has the programme made the departments more "internationally oriented"?***

Participating in Erasmus Mundus is seen to have led to a general “widening of perspectives” at an institutional level, particularly at the comparatively small Montpellier SupAgro. Although this institution had a very long tradition of hosting students from third countries, the programme has allowed it to broaden the range of countries from which it recruits students and helped to strengthen its wider internationalisation strategy. Moreover, the experience of implementing a two-year Master’s programme (in comparison to the three year studies offered as part of its engineering qualifications) has led the institution to plan for its own, domestic two-year programme. One of the Action 2 scholars (from a US institution) reported that he had been able to contribute to the ongoing debate about modifying the teaching and research mission of SupAgro.

Although the Life Sciences faculty of the University of Copenhagen is far larger and also participates in other joint Master’s programmes, the local AGRIS MUNDUS coordinator also reported that Erasmus Mundus has led to a greater degree of awareness of higher education in other EU countries among staff and had also strengthened the Faculty’s international outlook. Notably, Erasmus Mundus has led to more courses being offered in English, which in turn has made it possible to offer (or plan to offer) some other Master’s programmes in English, rather than Danish. As Danish is not a widely spoken language, offering courses in English is seen to increase their attractiveness for an international audience.

7.3.2 Impacts on students and scholars

- ***What do students expect to be the impact of attending the course on their personal and future career development?***

Two of the six students consulted in the evaluation focus group had plans either to continue their studies by undertaking a PhD, while the rest planned to work in a relevant sector in their home country or internationally. The third country students all felt that having studied in Europe was a considerable advantage for their future career development (either academic or otherwise). Moreover, they argued that AGRIS MUNDUS was meeting their expectations in terms of developing their knowledge and skills, even if some individual courses were more relevant than others.

The EU students in the same group (two of the six), stressed the experience of studying in another EU country and developing language skills as key reasons for having chosen AGRIS MUNDUS. The language aspect in particular was viewed as an important factor for their future career development.

The scholars consulted for the evaluation (interview and online survey) reported that the experience of spending time at consortium partner institutions had been beneficial for improving their knowledge of the institutions concerned and establishing cooperative links which could be the basis for future joint research work. Scholars also stressed the intercultural dimension – the experience of being in Europe, as none of those consulted for the evaluation had previously spent an extended period in the EU.

7.3.3 Policy impact and contribution to EU strategic goals

- ***Impact, if any, on comparability and recognition of qualifications within Europe (Bologna principles)***

The course coordinator and partner argued that the process of working together to operate a joint course had forced them to learn more about different aspects of higher education in partner countries. Such enhanced knowledge and awareness is doubtless and important basis for developing the so-called European Higher Education Area.

On a more practical level, as already mentioned, the structure of AGRIS MUNDUS means that partner institutions have to recognise credits gained at partner institutions. Where disagreement emerged within the consortium about the work required to achieve a specific number of credits (as in the case of the Master's thesis), this was resolved through joint discussions. Moreover, developments in the national administrative and legal frameworks in some Member States have allowed preparations to be made for the award of joint degrees (diplomas) between some pairs of AGRIS MUNDUS partners.

The course also illustrates some of the difficulties which persist as a result of differences in higher education systems and legal frameworks. Notably, it is not yet possible for all partners to award a joint degree diploma. The case of AGRIS MUNDUS also highlights that strong national accreditation requirements in individual countries can mean that the whole consortium for joint degree programmes has to adapt its activities to allow accreditation in the country in question. Although this has been possible in AGRIS MUNDUS, by adapting the scope of the Master's thesis, there is a risk that particular countries (or institutions in them) are perceived as "knowing better" than the others, which is not necessarily conducive to strong partnerships.

7.4 Implementation issues

7.4.1 Main issues linked to implementation

- ***List and analyse the main difficulties and barriers encountered which have influenced the ability of course leaders to achieve their objectives and the extent to which these have been overcome***

Overall, those consulted for the evaluation felt that the implementation of AGRIS MUNDUS had gone smoothly and that most difficulties that had been encountered had been effectively addressed. The consortium initially experienced some internal communication difficulties with one partner institution, as responsibility within the department in question had changed, resulting in a lack of clarity for the consortium coordinator and students attending that site. This was resolved, with clear responsibility now attributed in the partner institution concerned.

Some difficulties have also been experienced with students being unable to obtain visas on time to begin the course. As noted, retained candidates who are put forward for Action 2 scholarships are now informed of this immediately and advised to begin visa application procedures before final confirmation of their scholarship is received from the European Commission. On an internal

administrative level, the consortium experienced some difficulties in disbursing scholarship payments to students and scholars in a timely fashion. After an initial payment had been provided to student scholarship beneficiaries, subsequent payments were planned on a two-monthly basis. However, delays in the internal system in Montpellier meant that these payments were made at irregular intervals. These problems were also resolved internally, after being raised by student representatives.

More fundamentally, one of the major challenges faced by AGRIS MUNDUS has been the recruitment of EU students. The course has not managed to attract the numbers of EU students anticipated and, as a direct result, has not sent as many students abroad in the context of the Action 3 partnership as hoped. As noted, the main explanation put forward for this is the comparatively high level of the fees charged by AGRIS MUNDUS (and the absence of scholarships for EU students in the first Erasmus Mundus programme), which made the course comparatively unattractive for EU students, particularly those from countries with a tradition of no or low fees.

7.4.2 Financial support

- ***Include consideration of the adequacy of the financial support provided by the programme in relation to objectives. (funding to course, level of scholarships, funding for third country partnerships if relevant)***

The level of funding received to date is considered adequate by the course coordinator and partner institution representative consulted. The level of tuition fees charged, and deducted from the scholarship funds for students, has been an issue, as the “fees culture” varies considerably among partner institutions. In particular Wageningen charges comparatively high fees and fees have now been introduced at Master’s level in Denmark (although Erasmus Mundus courses are currently excluded from this regulation), while institutions in France, Spain and Italy have a tradition of charging comparatively low fees. This imbalance means that most fee income from AGRIS MUNDUS goes to the institutions with the highest fees, although this raises issues of equity within the consortium.

To assess the sustainability of the EMM-Nano programme, those interviewed were asked to comment on three different funding scenarios: 1) EU funding is removed altogether, even if courses are still branded as “Erasmus Mundus” (ie a form of Quality Label approach). 2) EU funding for courses (ie the €15 000 per year) is removed, but scholarships remain. 3) EU funding for scholarships is removed, but funding for courses is retained.

At present the flat rate Action 1 funding from Erasmus Mundus is used to cover the administrative aspects of the consortium (managing the partnership, the application and selection process and providing support to applicants and students). Of the funding for student scholarships (€ 42,000 per student for the two years), € 15,000 is retained for fees, of which a proportion is allocated to SupAgro for administering the course. The rest of the fees income is distributed to partners according to varying institutional requirements for fee income (highest in the Netherlands and Denmark).

The course coordinator and partner representative interviewed for the evaluation recognised the trend towards lower numbers of grants under the new Erasmus Mundus programme, as well as the need for the European Commission to achieve value for money. It was argued that now that AGRIS MUNDUS is up and running and has gained credibility, it will be easier to attract self-financing students and secure alternative sources of public or private financing. The focus of the programme on issues related to development mean that development programmes and bilateral partnerships could be used as a source of scholarship funding for some students.

However, the nature of the subject covered by the course means that business concerns are unlikely to contribute to student funding and alternative sources of funding to replace EU funds would be difficult to come by. As such, it is not yet clear that the course would be able to continue with the removal of EU funding, particularly funding for scholarships.

7.5 Added value and perceived relevance of Erasmus Mundus

7.5.1 "Added value"

- ***What has the EMMC brought the universities involved that they would not have been available to achieve / obtain without it?***

Alongside the fact that Erasmus Mundus has supported the creation of a joint course that would otherwise almost certainly not have been created, the staff consulted at the coordinating institution stress the wider effects on their institution. Notably, participation in Erasmus Mundus is seen to have strengthened commitment to an institutional internationalisation strategy, while the process of establishing and implementing AGRIS MUNDUS has given staff an opportunity to reflect critically on their existing practice. These factors have been important in the context of wider institutional reform at SupAgro (the merger of previously distinct research entities), which have called on the institution to rethink its teaching and research mission.

In addition, representatives of the coordinating institution and partner institution consulted stressed the value of the structural links put in place by Erasmus Mundus and the greater visibility the programme has given offered to their institution and department through being part of an Erasmus Mundus branded course.

- ***What has the EMMC offered students and scholars and to what extent has the EMMC provided something that they could not have achieved elsewhere / on another course?***

The students consulted stressed primarily the mobility and different languages involved in AGRIS MUNDUS as the main feature of the programme that they would not have been able to get from a more "standard" Master's programme. For third country and EU students, the ability to experience the studying environment at more than one institution was considered to be valuable, particularly for those considering future study at PhD level, who could sample two institutions and higher education systems before making a choice about the location of their PhD. From an external perspective, it is also clear that students applying to other Master's programmes would not have access to the range of possible courses and thematic specialisations available within AGRIS MUNDUS.

Although the scholars report mutual benefits (for themselves and their host institution) of their mobility periods, it is less clear that they would not have been able to gain this experience in another context. This is particularly the case given scholars' comparatively limited direct involvement in delivering AGRIS MUNDUS.

7.5.2 "Relevance"

- ***Has the programme overall allowed the institutions concerned to a) improve / expand the quality of their offer and b) attract additional talented students and scholars (based on findings above)***

As discussed on the previous sections, the experience of establishing and implementing AGRIS MUNDUS has indeed allowed the participating institutions consulted to improve and expand their higher education offer, through provision of a new course with a distinct international (European) dimension, while at the same time attracting additional, high quality students from a diversified range of third countries.

- ***To what extent has this allowed the institutions concerned to address what they perceived as their real needs?***

There is a clear perception among the consortium members consulted that the experience of participating in Erasmus Mundus has contributed positively to institutional internationalisation strategies, while at the same time supporting mutual understanding and recognition between higher education institutional partners inside Europe. The introduction of an Erasmus Mundus course as a partially "external" process (ie a process requiring cooperation with and input with other partners) appears to have contributed to a wider process of reflection about established objectives and practices in the coordinating institution.

8.0 EURO CULTURE

Course title	Euroculture - EM MA
Coordinating institution	University of Groningen, The Netherlands
Partner institutions	<p>University of Göttingen, Faculty of Social Sciences, Centre for European and North American Studies, Germany</p> <p>University of Deusto, Faculty of Humanities, Spain</p> <p>Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Centre of European Studies, Poland</p> <p>Palacky University Olomouc, Department of History, Philosophical Faculty, Czech Republic</p> <p>University of Uppsala, Faculty of Theology, Sweden</p> <p>Whilst not full partners in the consortium, the universities of Strasbourg (France) and Udine (Italy) are also involved in the EM MA Euroculture programme.</p>
Start date	September/ October 2006
Course length	16 months (90 ECTS)
Course objectives and content	<p>The general aim of the EM MA programme Euroculture is to focus on the cultural and social developments in modern Europe, and particularly on the functioning of the EU taking a cultural studies approach.</p> <p>In all partnership universities the course programme is based on four main components:</p> <p>A. Core fields of European culture (25 ECTS);</p> <p>B. Eurocompetences (including internship or research seminars) (30 ECTS);</p> <p>C. Intensive Programme (5 ECTS); and</p> <p>D. Research (30 ECTS).</p>
Target student cohort	Participants must have a good level degree in a discipline of relevance to Euroculture (European Studies, History, Law, Theology, Linguistics, Literature, Philosophy, International Relations, Cultural Studies, Anthropology or Sociology) and a recognised level of proficiency in the language(s) of instruction, as well as motivation and research work experience.
Training paths	<p>All students spend their first semester at their 'home' university, whilst the second semester is spent at one of the other consortium universities. The universities of Strasbourg and Udine that cooperate in the programme do not have full partner status and are therefore not able to formally host the students.</p> <p>The third semester is spent at one of the two universities attended during the first and second semester. During the third semester the students also choose between two tracks to complete the course: a job market-oriented track (internship) or a research-oriented track. Notably, since September 2008 the research-orientated track offers the opportunity for EU students to spend three months at one of the Action 3 partner universities.</p>
Degree awarded	Double degree (Master of Arts in Euroculture) awarded by the two universities attended.
Action 3 partnerships	<p>An Action 3 partnership was set up in 2008, consisting of the following partner universities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - University of Osaka, Japan - Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), Mexico - Pune University, India - University of Indianapolis, USA

8.1 Outputs

8.1.1 The course

- **Overview of syllabus and mobility paths proposed to students**

The general aim of the EM MA programme Euroculture is to focus on cultural and social developments in modern Europe, and particularly on the functioning of the EU, taking a cultural studies approach. Various aspects of the EU as a political and social entity are discussed and analysed in an interdisciplinary setting, including historical, political, social, legal, philosophical, heritage, religious and other perspectives. The course programme is based on four main components:

- Core fields of European culture (25 ECTS);
- Eurocompetences (including internship) (30 ECTS);
- Intensive Programme (5 ECTS); and
- Research (30 ECTS).

The general layout of the study programme at all partner universities is set out in the table below:

Table 8.1: General layout of the study programme at all consortium universities

Semester 1: Acquiring of generic and subject-specific competences (knowledge, skills and methodology)		30 ECTS
A	Core fields of European Culture (consortium university specific) The core fields of European culture are taught, analysed and discussed across the following four interlinked areas: - <i>Mobility</i> : analysis of people, communities and cultures in local and global; - <i>Transfer</i> : analysis of cultural meanings and values in social interrelations; - <i>Intervention</i> : analysis of policies, programmes and action; and - <i>Co-operation</i> : analysis of implications of cross-cultural co-operation in trans-national projects.	25 ECTS
B	Eurocompetences I	5 ECTS
Semester 2: Deepening and applying competences in research		30 ECTS
B	Eurocompetences II	10 ECTS
D	Research Seminar: Europe in the wider World (based on the field of expertise of each university of the consortium)	10 ECTS
D	MA thesis (research)	5 ECTS
C	Intensive Programme	5 ECTS
Semester 3: Exercising competences in practice		30 ECTS
D	MA thesis (writing)	15 ECTS
B	Internship or research seminars (depending on the track chosen): - a research-oriented track prepares for the third cycle studies (includes extra research seminars); or - a job market-oriented track contains vocational education and training component (internship)	15 ECTS

The first semester is spent at the home university¹⁹ where students develop generic and subject-specific competences (knowledge, skills and methodology); the curriculum includes several core subjects specific to the consortium university as well as Eurocompetences seminars, which are more or less comprehensively implemented across all consortium universities (there is a common teacher's guidebook for this part of the curriculum). These are aimed at developing 'capacity competences' such as language and presentation skills, critical analysis and research methods, intercultural communication and academic writing.

The second semester is spent at one of the other consortium universities ('the host university'²⁰). Each participating university offers one or more specialisation courses and the Eurocompetences II module, as well as supervising the research process for the Master thesis.

At the end of the second semester there is a joint event/ conference called Euroculture Intensive Programme (IP). It usually lasts for 10 days and is organised by one of the network universities (including the universities of Strasbourg and Udine)²¹. The overarching purpose of the event is to provide a platform for interaction for EM students and teaching staff through a well planned work programme. For example, the students present their essays and so called IP papers that they have developed over the second semester and receive feedback from the academic staff, whereas the consortium management group has a possibility to discuss programme organisation and content, implementation issues and teachers.

For the third semester, two tracks may be chosen by the students: a job market-orientated track or a research-orientated track. Students who have chosen a job market-oriented track spend three months as an intern in an organisation in any country (within or outside the EU) where relevant job experience can be acquired. With regards to the research-orientated track, EU students have, since September 2008, had the opportunity to spend three months at an Action 3 partnership university. In addition to the two study tracks, the third semester is also dedicated to the completion of the Master thesis.

The table below provides an overview of Euroculture students by 'home' university and their followed mobility path. Generally, the mobility paths of students are determined on the basis of the students' preferences, as expressed in their application form, unless the choices will result in considerable imbalances. Notably, the additional number of registered students for the academic year 2008/09 appears to have been accommodated within the University of Uppsala and the Jagiellonian University in Krakow.

¹⁹ The University where students spend their first semester is referred to as the 'home university'.

²⁰ The University where students spend their second semester is referred to as the 'host' university.

²¹ To date, one IP has been organised, with another one arranged for this year: 23 June – 3 July, 2008. Uniwersytet Jagiellonski, Krakow, Poland. Theme: 'European Heritages and Collective Memories'; 21 June – 2 July, 2009. Palacky University, Olomouc, Czech Republic. Theme: 'Unity and Variety in the Perception of European Cultures'.

Table 8.2: Mobility path followed by students

	Academic Year	Georg-August-Universität Göttingen	Rijksuniversiteit Groningen	Universidad De Deusto San Sebastian	Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci	Uniwersytet Jagielloński w Krakowie	Uppsala Universitet
Total number of students hosted as a home institution	2006/07	14	16	6	9	9	3
	2007/08	14	17	5	5	10	3
	2008/09	17	14	4	9	16	10
Total number of students accepted in the 2nd semester	2006/07	6	10	16	5	9	11
	2007/08	8	11	10	7	8	10
	2008/09	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Source: Data provided by the EMMC coordinator

- **Brief overview of teaching approach including number of teaching staff deployed**

There are about 40 of academic staff working within the programme. At all the consortium universities the language of instruction is English, with the exception of University of Deusto where the instruction language is Spanish in the first semester.

In relation to the Master thesis, each EM student has two supervisors – one from the 'home' and one from the 'host' university. The expertise and experience of the supervisors in relation to the chosen thesis topic largely determines which of the supervisors acts as the main supervisor.

- **Qualifications awarded**

After successful completion of the programme students are awarded a double degree (Master of Arts) in Euroculture from the 'home' and 'host' universities. The consortium is hoping that they will be able to award a joint degree in the future, although this would require changes to the national legislations in some of the consortium countries. An overview of the degrees awarded, their recognition at the national level and the status of accreditation is presented in below:

Table 8.3: Degrees awarded

University	Degree awarded	Recognised at national level?	Recognition validity period
Georg-August Universität Göttingen	Master of Arts in Euroculture	Yes (recognised at level of Niedersachsen)	Until 03/09/2013
Rijksuniversiteit Groningen	Master of Arts in Euroculture	Yes	Until 31/12/2013
Universidad de Deusto	Master of Arts in Euroculture (Erasmus Mundus)	Yes	Until 22/06/2012
Uniwersytet Jagielloński, Instytut Europeistyki	MA in European Studies, specialisation: Euroculture	Yes	Accredited on 29/06/2002 No renewal required
Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci	Master of Arts Euroculture	Yes	Until 08/03//2012
Uppsala Universitet	Master of Euroculture	Yes	Accredited on 13/02/2004 No renewal required

Based on information provided by the EMMC coordinator

8.1.2 The students

Table 8.4: Applications, candidates selected, students starting and graduations

		2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
Applications	Non-EU	100	120	108
	EU			
	TOTAL			
Admitted candidates	Non-EU			
	EU			
	TOTAL	120	120	120
Students starting course	EM scholarship	22	17	21
	Other non-EU	3	1	6
	EU	32	36	44
	TOTAL	57	54	71
Students graduating	EM scholarship	22	11	11
	Other non-EU			
	EU	30	25	22
	TOTAL			
		1 drop-out 11 withdrawals	3 drop-outs 3 withdrawals	4 withdrawals

Data provided by the programme coordinator

Table 8.4 above gives an overview of Euroculture students by year. In general, to ensure quality, enrolment is limited to 20 students per university (including 3-4 scholarship students). Therefore there are about 120 students admitted every year for the EMMC across the consortium.

- In 2006, there were 22 students across the consortium who received an EM grant (13 in the general stream; 3 in Asia Window and 2 in the China, India and Thai Windows respectively) and 35 non-grant holders from the EU and other non-EU countries.
- In 2007, there were 17 students with an EM grant (15 in the general stream and 2 in the Western Balkan Window) and 37 non-grant holders from the EU and other non-EU countries.
- In 2008, there were 21 students with an EM grant (19 in the general stream and 2 in the Western Balkan Window) and 5 non-grant holders from the EU and other non-EU countries.

Notably, the number of grant holders has remained fairly consistent over the three years that the course has been in operation, whilst the number of non-grant holders (particularly students from EU countries) increased significantly for the start of the 2008/09 academic year.

Since the start of the course, the overwhelming majority of students have been female – generally between 75-80% for both grant and non-grant students.

8.1.3 Action 2 Scholars

To date, the consortium universities have hosted nine visiting scholars. Notably, the number of visiting scholars has increased every year – from two in 2006/07 to four in 2008/09. The geographical origin of the scholars is skewed towards USA and Japan, accounting for more two-thirds of the visiting scholars. Of the nine visiting scholars, three were coming from USA, three from Japan, one from Brazil, one from Mexico, and another one from India. All of them were male.

In terms of the hosting consortium universities, there has been a relatively balanced spread across all partners.

8.1.4 Action 3 Partnership

The Action 3 partnership was approved in 2007 and established in 2008. To date, the Action 3 partnership has supported the mobility of 18 Euroculture students and four scholars.

Table 8.5: Action 3 students

University	Number of students	Number of scholars
University of Osaka (Japan)	5	1
Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (Mexico)	3	1
Pune University (India)	4	1
University of Indianapolis (USA)	6	1

Information provided by the programme coordinator

8.2 Results

8.2.1 The course – relevant, high quality, with a European dimension?

- ***Is the curriculum well structured and integrated?***

It is understood that the consortium has placed significant emphasis on developing a coherent and integrated curriculum, whilst at the same time taking advantage of the expertise of each of the consortium universities. Indeed, the composition of subjects, their sequence and timing and the number of ECTS have been developed, agreed and adopted across all the consortium universities. Furthermore, several parts of the curriculum have been developed to provide more or less the same content for all Euroculture students across all the consortium universities to equip them with the same competences and skills, including the Eurocompetence I and II seminars, for which a common teacher's guidebook has been developed, and the MA thesis (common Euroculture Theses Assessment Form). By contrast, the core fields in the first semester and the research seminars in the second semester reflect the particular expertise possessed by the individual consortium universities and thus differ in content.

Despite the efforts made by the consortium universities to make the course well-structured and integrated, it is understood from the student focus group that there is scope for better communication, coherence and integration of studies across the consortium universities. Indeed, students reported repetition of material taught and differences in the content of modules, even in those that are supposed to be consistent across all consortium universities (e.g. Eurocompetence I and II).

- ***Is the content of the course "cutting edge" and how does it compare to other similar courses in Europe and beyond? (consider how many other similar courses exist).***

Compared to other European Studies programmes around Europe, the EM MA in Euroculture is distinctive primarily because of its interdisciplinary nature. Traditionally, European studies are taught from the political science perspective, whereas in the Euroculture course the political science perspective is not overemphasised, but integrated with a humanities and a cultural approach. This unique interdisciplinary approach to European Studies is also recognised among the students, who are exposed to new areas of European culture through the course.

- ***What Quality Assurance mechanisms are used to ensure a) the quality of the course content (ie content of individual modules / components of the course) and b) the overall coherence of the curriculum (how the different elements fit together)?***

Each of the consortium universities is responsible for the successful implementation of the course in their institution. All course units are evaluated on the basis of student surveys (questionnaires), through which students are given the opportunity to offer their opinion on the individual courses and the programme as a whole. However, it is understood that some students are not aware of these surveys, which would suggest that the surveys are not systematically distributed.

At Groningen University there are also so called 'evaluation meetings', held regularly with the course manager, teaching staff and a student representative, to discuss the course.

The consortium management meetings (three per year) are also used to discuss the quality of the delivery of the course. This is done in two ways: general issues are discussed in plenary sessions, whilst more detailed (institution related) issues are discussed in private sessions.

Notably, the consortium universities have been working on making the content and the delivery of the programme coherent across the partners by producing a number of manuals and guidebooks.

As required by national education legislation, some of the consortium universities (Deusto, Göttingen and Olomouc) also undergo external quality assurance on a regular basis.

- ***How have quality procedures from the host institutions been adapted / integrated into the EMMC?***

No coherent quality procedures have been adopted for the Euroculture course. All consortium universities use their own quality systems for evaluation of the course units.

- ***Has the course been able to deploy the most appropriate teaching staff?***

The consortium universities are dedicated to deploying the most appropriate teaching staff to the course. For example, following a Programme Management Committee decision, students at the University of Deusto have since 2008 been attending the Bilbao campus instead of the San Sebastian campus, as this campus could offer higher quality academic staff, as well as providing research seminars and the Eurocompetences modules in English.

- ***How do students perceive the quality and organisation of the course?***

On the basis of feedback from the student focus group, there is a general view that the coherence of the courses in terms of content across the consortium universities (particularly in relation to those subjects that are supposed to equip the students with the same skills and competences, i.e. the Eurocompetences modules) needs to be improved. Furthermore, students reported some repetition of the material taught and differences in the grading of students, with consistently good grades being awarded in Spain compared to more average grades awarded in Groningen. Moreover, students report on differences in the teaching approaches (lecturing vs. self-tutoring).

Generally however, the students consulted considered the overall quality of the course to be satisfactory, with the interdisciplinary nature of the course being particularly valued.

- ***Has the course been able to provide suitable academic facilities (equipment / labs / libraries / computing facilities etc)?***

Euroculture students mainly need access to the library and the Internet, and on the basis of the feedback from the student focus group, access to these has been satisfactory. However, the students consulted reported that there are differences among consortium universities in terms of the availability of course literature in English.

- ***Does the course offer internships or other mechanisms to allow students to gain work experience?***

During the third semester students have the option to choose between two study tracks, including a job-orientated study track with a three month internship period. Notably, this track was chosen by the majority of students before the introduction of the Action 3 partnership in 2008, which allows EU students to spend three months at one of the third country partner universities as part of the research-orientated study track. The number of students in each study track is now more or less balanced.

The students consulted were generally very pleased with the opportunity to acquire relevant work experience as part of their study programme.

- ***Has the course been able to provide suitable non-academic support after selection (visas / housing / social aspects)?***

It is understood that all students have been provided with basic non-academic support. Although evidence from the focus group suggests some students felt they are missing 'an integrated overview' of their individual cases as such. At present their mobility paths and practicalities associated with them appear to be pulled together on a rather ad hoc basis – if for example three visas are required, the student needs to coordinate this with three different consortium coordinators and if a student wishes to undertake an internship outside one of the consortium countries, no assistance appears to be provided. Some countries treat an internship as employment and therefore require work permits in addition to visas. This causes students unexpected difficulties.

Individual experiences in relation to housing seem to have varied across the consortium universities. For example, in Uppsala students who participated in the focus group considered the facilities and organisation of the whole process to be excellent, whilst in the Netherlands feedback suggests that students were obliged to stay in accommodation of unacceptable quality owing to contracts being exchanged before the students had been able to view the accommodation. In Krakow, students reported that they were required to share a room with another student.

8.2.2 Excellent students?

- ***Evidence on qualifications of students accepted onto course***

The course is open to students who have successfully completed a degree in the fields of European Studies, History, Theology, Linguistics, Literature, Philosophy, International Relations, Law, Cultural Studies, Anthropology, Psychology or Sociology. Candidates are also required to have a recognised level of proficiency in the language(s) of instruction, as well as motivation and research/ work experience. The majority of the students on the course have a BA degree, whilst some of them hold Master degrees. Notably, some the students (mainly third country students) are pursuing PhD studies in their home countries or are planning to do so upon completion of the EM MA in Euroculture.

- ***Do course leaders and teachers believe the students attracted are of high quality? (including compared to the average standard in their department)***

On the basis of consultations with Euroculture teaching staff, it is understood that the students are of very high quality, active and enthusiastic. The teaching staff also consider the students to be

well prepared for lectures/ seminars. Notably, students are also very competitive and have very high aspirations. Teaching staff from other faculties are sometimes required to teach the EM students and they have also been very complimentary about the course and the quality of the students, particularly as a result of the variety in backgrounds and the students' eagerness to learn.

8.2.3 The visiting scholars (academics)

- ***Are they of high quality? (what were they doing before (teaching, research, publishing)?, how were they identified and selected?)***

To date, the consortium universities have hosted nine visiting scholars. All of them are experienced teachers and active researchers in their home countries.

The Action 2 scholar grants were promoted on the consortium universities' websites, as well as actively by the consortium universities through their own research networks and contacts around the world. Scholars have applied directly to Groningen University enclosing their CV, a proposal for lectures and/ or research and a letter outlining their motivation for applying. Notably, most of the scholars have come from Action 3 partner universities.

- ***What did they contribute to the EMMC during their stay? [coordinators / partner interviews + their own opinions]***

It is understood that the visiting scholars contributed to teaching (lectures and seminars) parts of the curriculum, IP activities (lecturing, sitting on teachers' panels, assisting students in their research topics), the supervision of students researching an area of their expertise, as well as hosting open lectures at the consortium universities and undertaking their own research activities.

On the basis of the focus group with teaching staff, there appears to be further scope for engagement with the visiting scholars through joint research activities and conferences. The engagement with visiting scholars is understood to have been restricted by the consortium universities' dedication to developing an integrated and coherent programme (content, teaching methods etc).

8.2.4 Partnerships with third countries

- ***What do the consortium institutions perceive to be the benefit of the partnership? (Structured cooperation?)***

On the basis of consultations with the EMMC coordinator, international relations officers, the vice-dean responsible for internationalisation and the course teaching staff, it is understood that the Action 3 partnership offers an opportunity to expand and deepen cooperation with excellent universities around the world, as well as providing opportunities for EU students and consortium teaching staff to experience other cultures and environments. It is also understood to have increased the visibility and attractiveness of the course across the world, whilst at the same time establishing a reputation of excellence at a global level.

- ***What do the third country institutions perceive to be the benefit of the partnership? (Structured cooperation?)***

On the basis of consultations with the EMMC coordinator, course teaching staff and the Action 3 programme coordinator at the University of Pune in India, it is understood that the Action 3 partnership has offered better opportunities for Action 3 partners to attract students and scholars from Europe - not only to study subjects that are traditional in India (e.g. anthropology, old languages, literature etc.), but also for contemporary subjects such as economics, management etc. Furthermore, it has provided scholars at the Action 3 partner universities with opportunities to visit Europe, which has been much appreciated by the scholars.

Notably, the EMMC has, through the visits of European students and scholars and the cooperation as a whole, attracted significant attention in national and local media, which may benefit the Action 3 partner universities in the future, particularly in terms of attracting students.

- ***What do those who have participated in outgoing mobility perceive to be the benefits of their mobility periods?***

The outgoing mobility opportunities for students and scholars are understood to have been very stimulating, particularly through working/ studying and living in completely different cultural environments. At a more professional level, the outgoing mobility allowed scholars to present lectures and seminars at the partner universities and gain invaluable insights into the understanding and perception of Europe across the world. Furthermore, outgoing mobility has provided students and scholars with new insights into their own research areas, as well as expanding their network of contacts for future research activities.

8.3 Impact – "additionality" and wider effects

8.3.1 Impacts of Higher Education institutions – supply and demand

- ***Does the course provide something new, which would not have been provided if the programme had not existed?***

As noted above, compared to other European Studies programmes around Europe, the EM MA in Euroculture appears unique in terms of its interdisciplinary nature. Indeed, traditionally, European studies are taught from the political science perspective. However, in the Euroculture course the political science perspective is not overemphasised, but integrated with a humanities and cultural approach. This unique interdisciplinary approach to European Studies is also recognised among the students, who are exposed to new areas of European culture through the course.

- ***Has the experience of the course had wider impacts on the departments and institutions concerned (e.g. on other courses and provision, on quality procedures etc)?***

The Faculty of Arts at the University of Groningen is involved in four EMMCs (Euroculture, Clinical Linguistics (EMCL), Humanitarian Action (NOHA), Language and Communication Technologies) and is often regarded as a role model for other faculties at the University of Groningen and other universities in the Netherlands. The Master courses have been developed according to the EMMC

requirements and quality standards and have required close cooperation with partner universities in Europe and third countries. Notably, the EM MA Euroculture course has had an impact in internal procedures at some of the Action 3 partner universities. Indeed in India, the internal procedures in relation to the Euroculture programme are understood to be less bureaucratic than those of other programmes, largely as a result of the positive perceptions of the EMMC.

- ***Has the programme made the departments more "internationally oriented"?***

The programme has made the relevant departments more 'internationally orientated' in a number of ways, such as attracting more third country students, allowing more students to spend part of their studies abroad and allowing further academic exchange between staff.

8.3.2 Impacts on students and scholars

- ***Perceived added value on future prospects of students and scholars (perceptions of students and scholars principally)***

Generally, the students on the courses have very high aspirations and the EM MA in Euroculture is considered to provide a strong platform for achieving their career prospects. Notably, many of the students are already pursuing their PhD studies or plan to do so upon completion of the EMMC. At the personal level, the third country students interviewed were very positive about the cultural differences they have experienced during their studies in Europe, while European students appreciated the cultural diversity of the class. Many of the students also mentioned that the course had improved their understanding of the world, and enabled them to acquire a global network of contacts.

With regards to the scholars, it is understood that they have acquired new ideas and insights into their own research work and expanded their research and cooperation network. Involvement in the EMMC is also understood to represent a stamp of good quality, which should benefit the scholars in the future.

8.3.3 Policy impact and contribution to EU strategic goals

- ***Impact, if any, on comparability and recognition of qualifications within Europe (Bologna principles) [this might be expected as a result of the requirement for joint working between consortium institutions from different countries – but needs to be checked]***

With the help of the National Structure (Nuffic in the Netherlands), universities and especially a group of all EMMC coordinators in the Netherlands act as a “lobbying group” for the Bologna process as well as dealing with EM course coordination and implementation issues in the Netherlands, including the length of Master courses (e.g. from 60 ECTS to 90 ECTS and the future prospect of 120 ECTS), visa issues, double degrees (working towards joint degrees) and study fees. According to the course coordinator, the same is happening in the other participating countries of the consortium.

8.4 Implementation issues

8.4.1 Main issues linked to implementation

- **List and analyse the main difficulties and barriers encountered which have influenced the ability of course leaders to achieve their objectives and the extent to which these have been overcome**

Although there were a number of difficulties at the beginning, these were resolved with the help of the partner universities, the National Structure and the Dutch government. This support was forthcoming partly because the programme is viewed as a clear benefit to the Dutch education system, both by the universities and the national government. The main issues were related to the length of Master studies (e.g. from 60 ECTS to 90 ECTS and the future prospect of 120 ECTS), visa issues, double degrees (working towards joint degrees) and study fees.

There have also been some issues in relation to the differences in the academic year between consortium universities. For example, at some universities the academic year starts in September, which allows the students to have a week's holiday before moving to their host university for the second semester. This is not the case at other institutions, where the academic year starts in October. This means that students at these universities have very little time to adapt to the new environment and resolve various practical issues (e.g. opening of a bank account etc).

As noted above, students have the opportunity to undertake a three month internship as part of the course. However, it is understood that it is the student's responsibility to find an internship placement, which often implies the need for good practical assistance (especially for third country nationals), whereas this appears to have been variable between the universities. For example, in Groningen there is a long tradition of internship placements as part of the study programme and the Faculty of Arts has set up an Internship Bureau to assist with any practical issues. At the other consortium universities this is often not the case and issues are generally dealt with by an already busy International Relations office. Notably, there have been several incidences where third country nationals have not been able to accept an internship offer as a result of particular visa requirements and/ or the time associated with the obtaining a visa. Consortium universities are usually only aware of visa requirements in their own country and little help seems to be available if the internship placements are planned outside the consortium countries. Notwithstanding these practical issues, the consortium universities have, over the years, developed a network of relationships with organisations that are willing to offer placements for Euroculture students in their own countries, as well as a common internship manual, assessment criteria and a template of internship agreement.

8.4.2 Financial support

- **Include consideration of the adequacy of the financial support provided by the programme in relation to objectives. (funding to course, level of scholarships, funding for third country partnerships if relevant)**

With regard to financial support, it is understood that the grant available has not been sufficient to support the full implementation and management of the course. This is particularly true for the

University of Groningen, where the government only supports Master courses worth 60 ECTS. Consequently, the remaining share (30 ECTS) has been subsidised directly by the university.

In terms of the scholarships available to third country students, it is understood that these are extremely important to the institutions. Indeed, without direct support from the EC, the course would not be able to attract the same number of high quality students. This is partly because wealthier students tend to choose other subjects, not humanities. On the other hand, and the consortium universities are aware of this issue and apply appropriate measures, the generous scholarships attract potentially fraudulent applicants.

It is understood that the management of the course would be able to continue even if the EU funding was reduced or ceased altogether. However, the consortium universities would not be able to support visiting scholars and outgoing mobility of students and scholars.

8.5 Added value and perceived relevance of Erasmus Mundus

8.5.1 "Added value"

- ***What has the EMMC brought the universities involved that they would not have been available to achieve / obtain without it?***

The EMMC has allowed universities to achieve closer cooperation with partners in Europe and across the world; create an interesting learning and teaching environment (intercultural); accelerate the internationalisation process; expand international teaching and research networks; attract additional high quality students (particularly from third countries); and offer opportunities for European students and scholars to visit third country partner universities.

- ***What has the EMMC offered students and scholars and to what extent has the EMMC provided something that they could not have achieved elsewhere / on another course?***

The EMMC has provided students and staff with an exciting intercultural learning environment of high quality; opportunities to live and study/ work in at least two European countries; and opportunities to extend personal and professional contact networks within Europe and across the world.

- ***What has the EMMC / Action 3 partnership combination offered the third country institutions involved?***

The EMMC have offered the Action 3 partners an opportunity to extend and strengthen cooperation with some of the best European higher education institutions within their field as well as gaining a better understanding of European culture and higher education.

Notably, following participation in the EM programme, the University of Osaka in Japan, is currently exploring possibilities to introduce a similar programme in the Asia region to improve the understanding of, and cooperation between, higher education institutions in this region. Similar

discussions have been initiated at several universities in China following the return of Euroculture students.

8.5.2 "Relevance"

- ***Has the programme overall allowed the institutions concerned to a) improve / expand the quality of their offer and b) attract additional talented students and scholars (based on findings above)***

Participation in the EM programme has allowed the partner institutions to develop a new high quality offer to third country and EU students. The students and scholars attracted have proved to be of high quality and have made a significant academic and cultural contribution to the institutions concerned.

- ***To what extent has this allowed the institutions concerned to address what they perceived as their real needs?***

Participation in the EM programme has supported and energised the internationalisation processes and as a result the programme has acquired a very high profile among Dutch HE institutions and is strongly supported by the universities themselves.

9.0 MONABIPHOT - Molecular nano- and bio-photonics for telecommunications and biotechnologies

Course title	Molecular nano- and bio-photonics for telecommunications and biotechnologies (MONABIPHOT)
Coordinating institution	Ecole Normale Supérieure de Cachan (ENS Cachan)
Partner institutions	Complutense University of Madrid, Spain Wroclaw University of Technology (WUT), Poland University of Wroclaw, Poland
Start date	2006
Course length	2 years (120 ECTS)
Course objectives and content	To provide students with the strong interdisciplinary skills necessary to master the relevant emerging technologies and to develop original concepts and applications aimed at new technological breakthroughs in this domain.
Target student cohort	The course is targeted at students holding Bachelor degrees in the following science and engineering disciplines: physics, chemistry, biochemistry, electrical engineering and materials science.
Training paths	The study programme starts with common introductory training at ENS Cachan (covering fundamentals in photonics and biology, together with language modules). Students spend the second semester at either Complutense University of Madrid (organic chemistry and sensors), or at the University of Wroclaw (biochemistry and modelling). At the end of the first year a summer school is organised on a research topic relevant to the course. The third semester is spent at either Cachan (materials and photonic devices for optical signal processing or biological applications) or at WUT (optoelectronics and photonics for life science). The last semester is devoted to a research project in an academic or industry laboratory.
Degree awarded	Masters Degree in Molecular Photonics and Nanotechnologies from ENS Cachan; National Masters Degree in Molecular Nano- and Bio-photonics for Telecommunications and Biotechnologies from Complutense University of Madrid; MSc Eng in Materials Science from Wroclaw University of Technology; MSc in Chemistry from the University of Wroclaw.
Action 3 partnerships	Russell Berrie Nanotechnology Institute, Technion-Israel Institute of Technology, Israel Laser Physics Centre, Australian National University Laboratory for Nanophotonics, William Marsh Rice University, USA Al Akhawayn University, Ifrane, Morocco National Taiwan University, Republic of China (Taiwan)

9.1 Outputs

9.1.1 The course

- **Overview of syllabus and mobility paths proposed to students**

The core of the Masters course consists of 90 ECTS units of theoretical aspects, acquired during the first year of the course (60 ECTS) and the first semester of the second year (30 ECTS). The course is multidisciplinary and students are expected to take at least 20 ECTS units in theoretical aspects of each of the three core disciplines: physics, chemistry and biology. The course consists of the mandatory and optional lectures. Students also choose 30 ECTS units in their preferred discipline and may also receive up to 6 additional ECTS units for taking language courses. Students spend the second semester of the second year spend in an academic or industrial laboratory working on a research project.

Students spend the first four months the first year at ENS Cachan. Here they receive general training in photonics and biology, together with two mandatory lectures in nanophotonics and light-matter interactions. Students then spend the subsequent six months at either the University of Complutense or Wroclaw University. At the University of Complutense students receive chemistry-oriented training, whereas at Wroclaw they receive lectures mostly in biology and some in chemistry.

At the end of the first academic year, in June, students are offered the opportunity to participate an International Summer School which provides them with complementary training on recent research developments. Training is provided by scientists and industry representatives.

Students spend the first semester of the second year either at ENS Cachan or the Technical University of Wroclaw. They receive more physics and/or biology-oriented training, with a greater emphasis on practical applications e.g. in topics like biosensors, signal processing or genetic engineering. At the end of the semester, in February, students undertake a final examination. During the remainder of the course, from March to August, students receive research training in a laboratory in Europe. During this period students develop a short research project, which is evaluated during an oral presentation in early September.

- **Brief overview of teaching approach including number of teaching staff deployed**

All courses provided during the first semester of the programme in Cachan are new and they are provided in English language. Teaching staff from the Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Electrical Engineering Departments have been involved in the preparation of the courses.

- **Qualifications awarded**

Students are awarded a multiple degree after successful completion of the programme. Depending on the institution the degrees awarded are as follows:

- Masters Degree in Molecular Photonics and Nanotechnologies from ENS Cachan;

- National Masters Degree in Molecular Nano- and Bio-photonics for Telecommunications and Biotechnologies from the Complutense University of Madrid;
- MSc Eng in Materials Science from Wroclaw University of Technology;
- MSc in Chemistry from the University of Wroclaw.

Each partner university delivers its own Masters degree, and the consortium operates a system of mutual recognition of ECTS acquired during the course.

9.1.2 The students

Table 9.1 Applications, candidates selected, students starting and graduations

		2006	2007	2008	2009
Applications	Non-EU	69	126	111	108
	EU	20			
	TOTAL	74	131	119	
Admitted candidates	Non-EU	16	21		
	EU	5	5	8	
	TOTAL	21	26		
Students starting course	EM scholarship	16			
	Other non-EU				
	EU	5			
	TOTAL	21			
Students graduating	EM scholarship				
	Other non-EU				
	EU				
	TOTAL				

Data provided by the programme coordinator

In the original EM application, the consortium planned to accept 25 third country and 15 EU students. As presented in the table above, the consortium received 126 applications from third country students to participate in course during the academic year 2008-2009. This represents an 80% increase compared with the number of applications received in 2006 (69).

In 2007, 15 students were proposed for the main admissions list and 42 for the reserve list. Six students were proposed for acceptance via the Indian Window list and one via the Chinese Window list. In 2006, 12 students from third countries were selected for the main scholarships list and four were selected via the Asian Window.

During 2008-2009 five students from the EU took the course; all from Poland. In 2006, five students from Poland were selected to participate in the course, out of the 20 applicants received from EU students.

9.1.3 Action 2 scholars

The consortium receives three visiting scholars during each academic year. The scholars are identified through existing academic networks and are invited to participate in the programme. Of the six scholars who have participated in the course to date, two came from Taiwan and one each from Brazil, Mexico, Ukraine and the USA. All six were male.

9.1.4 Action 3 partnership

The consortium signed the Action 3 funding agreement with the Executive Agency in 2008, so the partnership with universities from the third countries is a new one. To date no EU students have visited a third country university. There are two main reasons for this: firstly, the course does not attract many EU students and, secondly, it will take time to build the momentum of the Action 3 partnership.

9.2 Results

9.2.1 The course – relevant, high quality, with a European dimension?

- ***Is the curriculum well structured and integrated?***

In general the course appears well integrated. Issues concerning potential duplication of course components are discussed in partner meetings and resolved among the partners if required. The main challenge that the course coordinator faces concerns the need to balance the course with regard to the separate disciplines covered - physics, chemistry and biology. For example, the course coordinator identified a need to provide students with a stronger background in biology, but the limited availability of biology courses in English was a constraint. The lead partner therefore provided an opportunity in the second year to undertake biology courses in French. This proved to be successful and will be extended. This demonstrates that issues related to the curriculum are taken into consideration and are addressed through a consortium approach.

- ***Is the content of the course "cutting edge" and how does it compare to other similar courses in Europe and beyond? (consider how many other similar courses exist).***

The course is provided in what the consortium considers is an innovative and multidisciplinary domain (molecular nano- and biophotonics). Most of Master Degrees provided in the European Research Area (ERA) remain focused on a single discipline in science or technology. However, the course coordinator and the partner organisation interviewed believe that recent developments in this R&D sector have increased the requirement for scientists who have specific knowledge across all three domains of physics, chemistry and biology. The need to provide multidisciplinary course across those disciplines is therefore increasing.

- ***What Quality Assurance mechanisms are used to ensure a) the quality of the course content (ie content of individual modules / components of the course) and b) the overall coherence of the curriculum (how the different elements fit together)?***

There are two ways for ensuring the quality of the course: firstly, students evaluate every course at every partner institution and a meeting to collect overall feedback from students is organised. This information is taken into account by the course coordinator and any issues raised are addressed further. For example, after the first year, students expressed concern that the exams were organised within a short time frame. This was addressed in subsequent years by giving students more time between the exams. Secondly, in terms of QA, partner universities comply with national quality assurance systems.

- ***How have quality procedures from the host institutions been adapted / integrated into the EMMC?***

The MONABIPHOT courses are subject to the same quality assurance procedures as the other courses provided by the consortium partners. For example, ENS Cachan follows national accreditation procedures for the course, which require re-accreditation every five years.

- ***Has the course been able to deploy the most appropriate teaching staff?***

The evidence from the site visit and the interviews indicates that, overall, the course attracts good quality teaching staff. As the course is provided jointly by different university departments the quality of the teaching staff depends on the department. The interviews with the lead partner identified that most of the departments provide some of their best professors. Students also mentioned that in some cases professors are more focused on their research work and are not necessary best teachers. On the other hand, students stressed as well that being able to learn from people who undertake their own research as being positive aspect of the quality of teaching provided. It allows them to get more insights into the issues related to the research which in their countries is not always possible.

- ***How do students perceive the quality and organisation of the course?***

The evidence from the focus group discussion with students suggests that they perceive that the course provided is of high quality. Students stressed the importance of the interdisciplinary aspects of the course, the opportunity to undertake the mobility periods abroad and the quality of the teaching provided at ENS Cachan in particular. Moreover, students stressed that the course provides them with the strong background required to progress in their research career. In addition, it was stressed by the students who participated in the focus group that the professors who provide the course are also leading scientists in their fields. Moreover, students may use the laboratory facilities in order to apply the research in practice, which is not always possible in their home countries.

- ***Has the course been able to provide suitable academic facilities (equipment / labs / libraries / computing facilities etc)? [evidence comes mainly from students]***

The evidence indicates that the course been able to provide suitable academic facilities. Students have access to the research facilities and laboratories at ENS Cachan for example. One of the aspects mentioned by students who took part in the focus group was that accessibility to the latest academic literature relating to the subjects being studies could sometimes be challenging.

- ***Does the course offer internships or other mechanisms to allow students to gain work experience?***

Students have the opportunity to undertake their own research project in the laboratory, either at one of the partner universities or at an industrial laboratory. It appears, from the focus group discussion, that most of the students participating in the course aim to enter PhD studies and it is therefore very important for them to have time to work in the laboratory on their own research projects.

- ***Has the course been able to provide suitable non-academic support after selection (visas / housing / social aspects)?***

In ENS Cachan non-academic support for students is provided by the central University student support services and the course coordinator. Students are integrated into the social life of the University and are integrated into the social activities of the other students as well. In general, students are satisfied with the practical support provided by all partner Universities. Some issues have been raised that in partner University in Poland it was not very clear who is responsible to deal with some of the practical issues; however students received appropriate practical support.

9.2.2 Excellent students?

- ***Evidence on qualifications of students accepted onto course***

Students are accepted onto the course through a competitive selection process. The majority of students who took part in the focus group discussion highlighted that this course was the first choice for them during the application process. In addition, one student mentioned that he originally accepted onto another course first, but chose the MONABIPHOT course instead. This suggests that the course attracts highly motivated and highly qualified students.

- ***Do course leaders and teachers believe the students attracted are of high quality? (including compared to the average standard in their department)***

The evidence from the interviews suggests that the course attracts high quality students. However, the quality of the students which the institutions attract at national level is very high as well. Moreover, the MONABIPHOT students come from very different backgrounds, not only in terms of cultural aspects but they tend to have a strong academic background in only one of the three disciplines. However, the course attracts highly motivated students who are able to adapt to different studying environments and it was reported that some of them outperform some of the French students on the course.

9.2.3 The visiting scholars (academics)

- ***Are they of high quality? (what were they doing before (teaching, research, publishing)?, how were they identified and selected?) [This comes mainly from coordinator / partner interviews and factual evidence for scholar interviews]***

The visiting scholars are selected through established procedures which take into account their academic qualifications, publications and teaching experience. The number of applications received varies from year to year, so that in some years the consortium finds it difficult to attract enough visiting scholars. Information on opportunities to apply for a visiting scholar grant is disseminated through existing networks. Overall, the evidence from the interviews suggests that the course coordinator is satisfied with the quality of the visiting scholars.

- ***What did they contribute to the EMMC during their stay? [coordinators / partner interviews + their own opinions]***

During their stay at ENS Cachan visiting scholars are actively involved in teaching and providing the course for students. The way in which a visiting scholars provide this training depends on the when their visit takes place during the year. In some cases, they provide whole courses, while in the other cases they provide teaching in the form of seminars.

9.2.4 Partnerships with third countries

- ***What do the consortium institutions perceive to be the benefit of the partnership? (Structured cooperation?)***

The Action 3 partnership is built on pre-existing professional and personal networks. One of the benefits of the Action 3 partnership envisaged by the consortium is that it should help to attract more European students. However, so far no students have participated in Action 3 mobility. This is attributed by the course coordinator to two factors: the course does not attract many EU students and the partnership is new (starting in 2008).

- ***What do the third country institutions perceive to be the benefit of the partnership? (Structured cooperation?)***

Since there no students have visited third country universities yet, no interviews were undertaken with the third country partner universities.

- ***What do those who have participated in outgoing mobility perceive to be the benefits of their mobility periods?***

Not applicable.

9.3 Impact – "additionality" and wider effects

9.3.1 Impacts of Higher Education Institutions – supply and demand

- ***Does the course provide something new, which would not have been provided if the programme had not existed?***

One of the features of the course which would otherwise be difficult to provide is its interdisciplinary. Without the platform the MONABIPHOT course offers, it is unlikely that the cooperation required between different departments in order to provide a single course would have been possible. The other aspect which is very important for the course is its international perspective and the opportunity to undertake mobility in one of the partner universities.

- ***Has the experience of the course had wider impacts on the departments and institutions concerned (e.g. on other courses and provision, on quality procedures etc)?***

The impact of implementing of the course have been the following:

- Teaching in English was introduced with this course. This can be quite challenging for some professors, but they have accepted it very well. However, it is not very common for French universities to teach in English.
- The interaction between the departments in ENS Cachan in relation to research and teaching was introduced and it is new for the institution.
- Student support services needs to adapt to accommodate international students coming for a short time period as they undertake mobility periods during the course of the year. For example, traditionally, students' accommodation is provided for the whole academic year. However, in ENS Cachan as a result of the implementation of the course, the course coordinator was able to convince the relevant institutions to provide students accommodation for five months as students move to the other country to undertake their mobility periods. Moreover, there has also been a "spill over" benefit for the department because they can provide short-term accommodation for domestic students, i.e. PhD students who do not need accommodation during the whole academic year.
- The interview with the course coordinator identified that operating the course has highlighted the need for the wider administration of the university to adapt to the needs of international students who undertake "non-traditional" courses, becoming more flexible. Greater flexibility in the way the department functions is one of the most important impacts of the course. It is not only applicable to the wider administration but is also relevant to cooperation among individual departments and the way the course is provided.

- ***Has the programme made the departments more "internationally oriented"?***

The course has helped the coordinating institution to become more internationally oriented through the experience gained in accommodating international students and meeting their needs. Because the teaching language is English, the lead institution receives applications from students who traditionally would not be able to participate in the course owing to a lack of knowledge of French.

In addition, the course helps to strengthen links with academic colleagues in other countries. Internationalisation is also very important to the partner University in Spain.

9.3.2 Impacts on students and scholars

- ***Perceived added value on future prospects of students and scholars (perceptions of students and scholars principally)***

The added value for students relates to participation in the interdisciplinary aspect of the course. In addition, students who took part in the focus group discussion stressed that the quality of the course was the other strong added value aspect of their participation in the course. The fact that course teachers undertake their own research as well as teaching, (which is not always the case in students' home countries), was also highlighted as providing added value to students in terms of their academic experience. The other important aspect cited by students was the opportunity to undertake the mobility periods in the other EU country. Overall, the students perceived participation in the course as a very positive experience, and stressed that the course provides a strong background for their future research careers.

9.3.3 Policy impact and contribution to EU strategic goals

- ***Impact, if any, on comparability and recognition of qualifications within Europe (Bologna principles)***

All the partner universities have signed a "Learning Agreement", which ensures recognition of ECTS credits received in partner institutions. Diploma supplements are provided by two of the consortium universities, namely ENS Cachan and the Wroclaw University of Technology. The other two universities are also in favour of diploma supplements and are currently preparing to implement these, so that the whole consortium will eventually offer them.

9.4 Implementation issues

9.4.1 Main issues linked to implementation

- ***List and analyse the main difficulties and barriers encountered which have influenced the ability of course leaders to achieve their objectives and the extent to which these have been overcome***

It was highlighted during the site visit that one of the difficulties encountered by the coordinator is related to the availability of staff to support the administration and organisation of the course. The course coordinator considers the amount of work required in this respect to be very high and has found it difficult to secure additional staff to share the workload. The other difficulty mentioned relates to difficulties in obtaining visas for students.

9.4.2 Financial support

- ***Include consideration of the adequacy of the financial support provided by the programme in relation to objectives. (funding to course, level of scholarships, funding for third country partnerships if relevant)***

The financial support provided via EM is very important for the implementation of the course. During the interviews, it was identified that the financial support for the course coordinator and students grants are sufficient. However, the view of the course coordinator is that the grant for the Action 3 students would not always cover their expenses incurred during a placement within the framework of Action 3 partnership. It was especially mentioned as being relevant if students would need to go to the countries like US.

In the opinion of the coordinator, the course would not be the same without the financial support provided by the EM programme. Without this support it would probably operate as a national course for national students and would lose its international dimension. Therefore, the course would be sustainable at national level, but not at international level without EM funding. The faculty would not be able to receive financial support for the international activities. The partner university in Spain also emphasised that they would not be able to participate in the course without EM funding.

9.5 Added value and perceived relevance of Erasmus Mundus

9.5.1 "Added value"

- ***What has the EMMC brought the universities involved that they would not have been available to achieve / obtain without it?***

The international aspect of the course is one of the most important aspects, which would be difficult to achieve if the EM programme did not exist. The partner university also highlighted the benefits that the course provides in terms of the opportunity for closer cooperation with the consortium partners.

- ***What has the EMMC offered students and scholars and to what extent has the EMMC provided something that they could not have achieved elsewhere / on another course?***

Students highlighted the following aspects, as important to them: the interdisciplinary aspect of the course; the opportunity to undertake a placement abroad; and the strong background the course provides in terms of pursuing a future research career.

9.5.2 "Relevance"

- ***Has the programme overall allowed the institutions concerned to a) improve / expand the quality of their offer and b) attract additional talented students and scholars (based on findings above)***

The evidence from the interviews indicates that the programme allows the institution to provide a good quality, innovative, interdisciplinary course. It also helps the institution to attract talented students and scholars from third countries.

- ***To what extent has this allowed the institutions concerned to address what they perceived as their real needs?***

Participation in EM gives institutions the opportunity to provide an interdisciplinary course for international students, which is not available elsewhere in Europe. It contributes to their increasing internationalisation and attracts students from countries that are not traditional markets for the consortium institutions.

10.0 MUNDUS MAPP - Erasmus Mundus Master's in Public Policy

Course title	MUNDUS MAPP – Erasmus Mundus Masters Programme in Public Policy
Coordinating institution	Central European University – CEU (Budapest, Hungary)
Partner institutions	Institute of Social Studies – ISS (The Hague, Netherlands) University of York (York, United Kingdom) Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals – IBEI (Barcelona, Spain)
Start date	Academic Year 2007-2008 (first cohort started 09/2007)
Course length	24 months (120 ECTS)
Course objectives and content	MUNDUS MAPP provides scholarly education and policy training for future academic and policy leaders in the public, private and non-profit sectors. It provides a detailed and systematic understanding of how political institutions, processes and public policies operate and interact from the global political economy through to national and local levels with a direct focus on European engagements at these levels of governance. The multidisciplinary curriculum is conceptually grounded in public policy, international relations, development studies, public administration and public management. The programme also provides practical work experience and transferable skills gained through an internship programme.
Target student cohort	The programme is targeting those students and potential graduates who are aiming at developing an international professional career as policy-makers, policy analysts and advisors in either politics, the civil service, international organisations or the corporate and non-governmental sector.
Training paths	The possible training paths or mobility combinations are the following: York + summer school + IBEI + internship York + summer school + CEU + internship ISS + summer school + IBEI + internship ISS + summer school + CEU + internship
Degree awarded	Mundus MAPP graduates receive double degrees (two of the following MA degrees) as well as a diploma supplement at the end of their studies: - MA in Development Studies from the Institute of Social Studies; OR - MA in Public Administration and Public Policy from the University of York. In combination with: - MA in Public Policy from the Central European University; OR - MA in International Relations from the Barcelona Institute of International Studies.
Action 3 partnerships (if relevant)	The consortium does not participate in any Action 3 partnership. The reason argued for this is that there was already 'too much work to do' with the running and management of a 4 universities consortium and the Programme itself.

10.1 Outputs

10.1.1 The course

- **Overview of syllabus and mobility paths proposed to students**

MUNDUS MAPP is an integrated educational programme that consists of a foundation year with an introduction to public policy and governance, and a second, specialist year during which Erasmus Mundus students focus on transnational and European policy aspects in a second host institution. The consortium runs this double degree programme for a period of 20 teaching months, including a summer school, and offers a +2 or 3 month long internship period. Students earn a minimum of 60 ECTS in the first host institution, and another 60 at the second host institution. The language of tuition is English in all institutions. MUNDUS MAPP offers:

- A foundation year in policy studies and research methods at either the University of York OR the Institute of Social Studies in the Hague, finishing with a thesis;
- A second, specialised year on the transnational dimensions of policy at either the Central European University OR at the Barcelona Institute of International Studies, finishing with an applied research or policy paper;
- An annual summer school (4 ECTS), jointly taught by the consortium faculties, European scholars from the GARNET Network of Excellence and Erasmus Mundus visiting scholars.
- An internship at a relevant policy institution, where students will have the chance to gain practical experience in policy analysis;

The structure, time sequence and ECTS values of the different MUNDUS MAPP components are summarised in Table 1.1 (see next page).

- **Brief overview of teaching approach including number of teaching staff deployed**

According to the Application submitted to EACEA in 2006, there are 33 teachers involved in the master's course. Teaching staff include the permanent resident faculty, affiliated academics and professionals with recognised experience. The majority of the teaching staff are Dutch, Hungarian, Spanish or UK nationals. MUNDUS MAPP is considered as one course among many, and staff are assigned to it according to practices at the respective universities.

- **Qualifications awarded**

Depending on the study track, two of the following degrees will be awarded, jointly with a diploma supplement:

- ISS: Master of Arts (MA) in Development Studies accredited by the Dutch Ministry of Education OR
- York: Master of Arts (MA) in Public Administration and Public Policy awarded on the basis of the York University charter AND
- CEU: Master of Arts (MA) in Public Policy registered by the Board of Regents of the New York State Education Department OR
- IBEI: Master of Arts (MA) in International Relations awarded jointly by Universitat de Barcelona, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and Universitat Pompeu Fabra.

Table 10.1: MUNDUS MAPP structure, integration and mobility

	Admissions	Course work: Foundation year	Thesis and examination	Summer School	Internships	Coursework: Transnational, International and European aspects	Policy paper and examination	MUNDUS MAPP degree and diploma supplement award
Central European University, Budapest, Hungary	MUNDUS MAPP joint admissions policies and procedures	Oversees coursework through Board	Contributes to joint examination	Team taught by all, rotating host institution	Coordinates and oversees internships	Provides courses	Supervision and examination	All participating universities
Instituto Barcelona de Estudios Internacionales Barcelona, Spain		Oversees coursework through Board	Contributes to joint examination		Oversees internships through Board	Provides courses	Supervision and examination	
Institute for Social Studies The Hague, Netherlands		Provides courses	Supervision and examination		Oversees internships through Board	Oversees coursework through Board	Contributes to joint examination	
University of York York, UK		Provides courses	Supervision and examination		Oversees internships through Board	Oversees coursework through Board	Contributes to joint examination	
ECTS values	N/a	40	20	4	0	50 less summer school	10	Total: 120

Legend
 = primary responsibility, coordinating role
 = secondary responsibility, monitoring role

Source: MUNDUS MAPP Application Form submitted to EACEA (2006)

10.1.2 The students

Table 10.2: Applications, candidates selected, students starting and graduations

		2007-2009	2008-2010
Applications	For EM scholarships	148	402
	Not for EM scholarships (self-financed)	174	65
	TOTAL	322	467
<i>Admitted candidates</i>	Non-EU	23	23
	EU	0	0
	TOTAL	23	23
<i>Students starting course</i>	EM scholarship	22	20
	Other non-EU	1	3
	EU	0	0
	TOTAL	23	23
<i>Students graduating</i>	EM scholarship		
	Other non-EU		
	EU		
	TOTAL		
		1 interrupted (one-year leave on medical grounds)	1 dropped out and was replaced

Source: Progress Reports and data provided by the programme coordinator

As the above figures show, the programme has been highly competitive, with an increasing number of applications from 2007 to 2008 for the 23 places available. This appears to be the maximum number of places offered, although it also goes in line with the number of EM grants available (22 in 2007-09 and 20 in 2008-10). According to the latest Progress Report (March 2009), the increment in applications indicates that the promotional techniques used by the course are effective and require no major change with respect to student recruitment. Applications for MUNDUS MAPP have been well above the target set by the consortium (around 250 applicants/year).

The consortium has selected 23 students per academic session, totalling 46 in the first two years of the Programme. The majority of students (22 in 2007 and 20 in 2008) are Erasmus Mundus scholarship holders.

A significant factor is the absence of EU students. The course has had no EU students enrolled so far. This is obviously far away from the consortium target of 20+ EU students established in the application submitted to the EACEA in April 2006. From the consortium's point of view, the main reason appears to be that three out of four consortium universities (CEU, ISS and IBEI) do not differentiate between students by country of origin, and therefore charge with the same tuition fee

for all students. The price is not attractive to EU students many of whom do not pay fees at all in their home countries (with the exception of York). Therefore, the uniform consortium tuition fee charged at each institution (including York) is not competitive.

Regarding the origin of the students, they are drawn from 24 different countries (US, Canada, Australia, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, China, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, Serbia, Albania, Armenia, Argentina, Mexico, Peru, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Ghana, Cameroon, Nigeria and Malawi).

In relation to gender, there is a balanced distribution between the 2007-2009 and 2008-2010 editions, which means that in the first two years of MUNDUS MAPP, 24 male students and 22 female students have taken part in the course. The 2007-09 edition counted with 14 male and 9 female students, while in the 2008-10 MUNDUS MAPP edition 10 male students and 13 female students participated in the course.

10.1.3 Action 2 scholars

The course has attracted one female scholar from Argentina and one male scholar from Colombia. Only one scholar was selected in 2007. She has completed 2 months of her scholarship period in Barcelona and York (focusing on research and the preparation of the summer school) and will return to also participate in the Barcelona summer school in July 2009. Also only one scholar was selected in 2008. He is due to be based in Barcelona, focusing on a course on Latin America.

The consortium is not using all scholarships available (3 per year) as among the applicants only 2 in 2007 and 1 in 2008 met the selection criteria. Therefore, weak candidates were rejected as academic quality of scholars is of primary importance.

In the first years, the consortium received very few scholars' applications²² and the consortium considered they did not reach their target, as they were able to select up to 3 visiting scholars under Action 2. However, this situation has changed for the better, and for the latest selection the consortium has attracted a much larger pool of scholar applications.

10.1.4 Action 3 partnership activities

Not relevant for MUNDUS MAPP.

10.2 Results

10.2.1 The course – relevant, high quality, with a European dimension?

- ***Is the curriculum well structured and integrated?***

²² The consortium received 6 applications for the first edition of the programme (2007-09) and 3 applications for the second (2008-10). However, this trend has changed with the latest edition (2009-2011), which has received 17 candidates.

It can be said that course modules are mainly those on offer at participating institutions, but with an attempt to fit them to an Erasmus Mundus curriculum. Concerning the taught modules, students have a wide variety of choice among the participating institutions. During the 1st year of MUNDUS MAPP, ISS focuses on development theories and strategies as well as governance, while York has a prominent focus on research techniques, methodologies and analysis. In the 2nd year, Budapest has a focus on Public and Administration policy, while IBEI has a more internationally-oriented approach (theories of international relations, international economics, comparative politics or international public law). This differentiation on taught courses at institutions is well regarded, both in terms of possible course choices and future professional prospects for students: the combination of a 'foundation' and more conceptual/theoretical year at York or ISS with a second more policy-focused (and practical) in Barcelona or Budapest provides a powerful mix improving the adaptability and competencies of students, while matching labour market demands. This is an added value identified both by students and teaching staff involved. Moreover, both the summer school and the internship complement the integral formation for students.

With the objective of harmonising the degree programmes and of ensuring consistency in procedures, the partner organisations have established a Joint Academic Board with consistent membership over the five years of the programme, which meets at least twice a year. The Board is responsible for ensuring common admissions (at least two universities examine students' applications) and examination standards (thesis are jointly graded by the two universities in which the student studies). The Board is also responsible for establishing procedures for students to choose their degree specialisation in the second year of MUNDUS MAPP. The members of the consortium have also agreed on the recognition of credits earned at the other institutions. All these integration policies are supported by a Memorandum of Understanding.

- ***Is the content of the course "cutting edge" and how does it compare to other similar courses in Europe and beyond? (consider how many other similar courses exist).***

There are no other courses in the EU offering a comparable curriculum²³ as MUNDUS MAPP is the only master's course in its field involving four high profile European universities with the possibility of studying in two of them. It is the only Erasmus Mundus programme offered in the field of public policy. Both the content of the course and the teaching staff are constantly assessed by intra-university mechanisms, guaranteeing the up-to-date knowledge of the taught disciplines as well as the highest possible standard on research and academic practices.

- ***What Quality Assurance mechanisms are used to ensure a) the quality of the course content (i.e. content of individual modules / components of the course) and b) the overall coherence of the curriculum (how the different elements fit together)?***

Each institution in the consortium conforms to national and international standards of teaching excellence and peer review. Rigorous systems of national review are in place:

- CEU meets quality standards with its accreditation with the New York State (US) and the US Middle States Commissions on Higher Education;

²³ Findings from interviews with Programme Coordinators at CEU and IBEI and the ECOTEC online survey, with the ISS Programme Coordinator also stating the same viewpoint.

- IBEI assessment procedures are standardised and monitored by an Academic Council, with representatives of the IBEI founding universities (Universitat de Barcelona, Universitat Pompeu Fabra and Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona) and supported by the Catalan Ministry of Universities and Research;
- ISS is recognised by the Dutch Ministry of Education (which requires regular institutional and course reviews) and in compliance with the QANU (Quality Assurance Netherlands Universities)
- The Department of Politics at the University of York was awarded '24 out of 24' by the UK Quality Assurance Agency for the quality of its teaching programmes.

All four institutions also employ a system of external review for the individual degree components. External assessors and reviewers are senior experts invited from the GARNET Network of Excellence²⁴ who provide feedback and quality assurance and undertake an independent academic evaluation.

Each degree is also evaluated by students with a yearly evaluation questionnaire and an open discussion with the head of the degree programme. Regular meetings between master's coordinators and students also take place when needed or requested by students. The integration of students in Board meetings and in evaluation exercises has been considered as 'best practice' by the EACEA²⁵.

Visiting scholars are also contacted by the consortium to provide feedback on their visits. The consortium also requires each scholar to give an extensive assessment of their teaching programme.

As it has been previously mentioned, the Joint Academic Board ensures the overall coherence of the course, promoting mobility and research collaboration and overseeing course integration as the primary quality controller. The Board meets at least twice a year to select a list of students and scholars, to confer on students' applications, student assessment and examinations, the state of student facilities, the development of the curriculum, evaluate faculty competencies and follow the progress of existing scholars. Other practicalities are regularly discussed by the members of the Board making use of telephone conferencing and e-mail.

- ***How have quality procedures from the host institutions been adapted / integrated into the EMMC?***

The Joint Academic Board fosters joint quality assurance through rotating its venue and through visits of faculty members from partner institutions to allow for course appraisal, harmonised student feedback systems (i.e. standard evaluation form) and common standards for 'external' system review (external and independent evaluations conducted by academics from other EU universities). The Board has established procedures for the evaluation and review of the MUNDUS MAPP

²⁴ The European Commission FP6 Network of Excellence – GARNET has the aim to develop a multi-dimensional, multi-disciplinary network of scientific excellence of researchers, analysts and practitioners with expertise in key issues and themes in global and regional governance.

²⁵ Letter of acceptance of MUNDUS MAPP 2008 Progress Report

course by the students at the end of their studies. Moreover, all consortium partners operate regular student feedback mechanisms that are constantly reviewed by the Joint Academic Board.

- **Has the course been able to deploy the most appropriate teaching staff?**

The EMMC is considered as any other course, with no differentiation. Staff are assigned to it according to practices in partner institutions. The four partner institutions pride themselves on the international scholarly reputations of staff teaching on their MA programmes. All four consortium universities set high standards for recruiting the teaching body: from a pool of international scholars, they are selected competitively with the usual and minimum requirement being the acquisition of a doctoral degree in a relevant discipline from reputable higher education institutions. Students' perception on the teaching body is very positive: they consider instructors are well prepared for classes with a score of 4 on a 1 to 5 scale (please see table on the next page for additional information).

- **How do students perceive the quality and organisation of the course?**

According to the 2007-2008 evaluation by students at the end of the first academic year of MUNDUS MAP, students rated the programme in the following way:

Table 10.3: Students' perception: Organisation of the course

(Scale: 1 = Not satisfactory; 5 = Excellent)

	ISS (The Hague)	University of York	Total (all students)
Courses were systemic and well organized and instructors were well prepared for classes	3.67	4.44	4
Course materials were clear and timely distributed	4.25	4.67	4.43
Courses were scheduled in such a way that sufficient time could be spent on the subject	3.33	3.89	3.57
There was adequate time dedicated to thesis research	2.25	4.22	3.09
Total (average from all questions)	3.38	4.30	3.77

* 12 students from ISS and 9 students from York completed the programme evaluation. They are part of the first cohort of MUNDUS MAPP students (2007-09). The total average aggregates data from each of the 21 students.

Table 10.4: Students' perception: Satisfaction with the course

(Scale: 1 = Completely dissatisfied); 5 = Completely satisfied))

	Total (all students)
In general I am satisfied with the first year of the programme	4.19

As tables show, students are widely satisfied with the organisation of the course, particularly concerning the course materials (with a score of 4.43 out of 5) and the structure and systemic organisation of the course and the preparation of teachers (total score of 4 out of 5). The

organisational aspects with the lowest score relate to adequate time dedicated to thesis research (mainly in ISS). In all aspects, the University of York scores higher than ISS.

Regarding the overall satisfaction with the course, a high score of 4.19 out of 5 is obtained from the 21 students who responded. Answering additional open questions, the students also confirmed that they would recommend MUNDUS MAPP to potential applicants.

- ***Has the course been able to provide suitable academic facilities (equipment / labs / libraries / computing facilities etc)?***

According to students' comments during the group discussion, facilities at universities are of a high standard and have met their expectations, for instance, in terms of number of computers available for students or library facilities (number of volumes and online journals availability). Some students did mention that European universities do offer better academic facilities than their home country universities and consider these as one of the reasons for choosing to study in Europe.

- ***Does the course offer internships or other mechanisms to allow students to gain work experience?***

An internship programme is available for students, to provide them with the opportunity to experience the policy process at first hand and deepen conceptual understanding with policy work. Internships are meant to take place in Year 2, after courses end (end of May at IBEI and end of April at CEU) and during the summer. The possibility for internships before submitting the second year theses exists, however, students are recommended to complete their academic work first.

CEU and IBEI have existing internship programmes, and the latter also has contacts with organisations that provide paid internships. The internships normally last 2-3 months (with a minimum requirement of at least a month) and they are not assessed and carry no credit.

The internships are seen as a valuable attribute of the double degree as placements are in:

- Think Tanks (such as the Centre for European Policy Studies in Brussels and CIDOB in Barcelona);
- International Organisations (WHO, World Bank, UNDP...);
- International NGOs (such as the European Centre for Not-for-profit Law in Budapest);
- Professional bodies (such as the International Institute for Administrative Sciences in Brussels);
- Governmental bodies and embassies.

- ***Has the course been able to provide suitable non-academic support after selection (visas / housing / social aspects)?***

According to the 2007-2008 Programme Evaluation, students are highly satisfied with the administrative support received (on a scale from 1 to 5 -where 1 was 'not satisfactory' and 5 was 'excellent'-, all support services were rated with a score of 4 or higher).

Table 10.5: Students' perception: Administrative support received

(Scale: 1 = Not satisfactory; 5 = Excellent)

	ISS (The Hague)	University of York	Total
Support on visa and residence permits issues	4.67	4.67	4.67
Support on accommodation issues	4	4.33	4.14
Support on financial issues (such as arrangement for bank accounts and scholarship disbursement)	4.58	4.56	4.57
Total	4.42	4.52	4.46

* 12 students from ISS and 9 students from York completed the programme evaluation. They are part of the first cohort of MUNDUS MAPP students (2007-09). The total average aggregates data from each of the 21 students.

Students consider support on visa and residence permits very close to the maximum excellence, rating them with 4.67 out of 5. Support on financial issues also scores very highly, 4.57. With support on accommodation issues also with a total score above 4, students can be considered to be very satisfied with the administrative support they receive. However, they also consider that students should be more aware of visa and financial issues well in advance to avoid problems when they have already left their country.

Moreover, each consortium institution has university offices to welcome Third Country students and scholars and to provide support and advice during their stay. Non-academic support, with the specificities in each consortium university, is mainly focused on counselling and coaching, personal induction courses, language courses, housing arrangements, welfare services, activities aimed at social integration, etc.).

10.2.2 Excellent students?

- **Evidence on qualifications of students accepted onto course**

Three sources of evidence are used to consider the excellence of students' applications accepted onto the course:

1. The rigorous set of assessment criteria used among by the Joint Academic Board (all consortium partners) focused on the following weighting (0-20 scale):

- Academic background (0-7 points)
- Work and/or research experience (0-6 points)
- Motivation and leadership potential (0-4 points)
- Recommendations (0-3 points)

The consortium wants to prioritise students who combine excellent academic record with relevant work/research experience, leaving relatively less importance to the subjective criterion of motivation.

2. Number of applications received: From the point of view of the course co-ordinator, the number of applications received (more than 540 in 2009) provides high competition among applicants and enough high profile potential candidates for MUNDUS MAPP. The top students, the ones selected and with higher scores on the above-mentioned 0-20 scale, are considered to be very high quality students by the coordinating institution.

3. Information gathered from the focus group (5 students): The group discussion brought to light that MUNDUS MAPP students had also been selected for studying in other high profile American and European universities (2 of the interviewed students were selected at LSE; another was selected by an American university; but all were lacking external funding / scholarship support) or received other scholarships not applicable jointly with the Erasmus Mundus grant (such as the International Policy Fellowship from the Open Society Institute, Budapest). This is notable in two ways: firstly, selected EM students had also been considered 'excellent' by other prestigious universities or bodies; secondly, it reflects the students' preference for a combination of academic excellence (in the case of MUNDUS MAPP, the 1st or 'foundation' year + a 2nd year more policy-focused as well as the degree of choice among institutions and course modules) and the funding provided by the Erasmus Mundus Programme to students (considered as 'great' by all participants in the group discussion).

- ***Do course leaders and teachers believe the students attracted are of high quality? (including compared to the average standard in their department)***

Yes, both course leaders and teachers believe that the academic standard of both applicants and, more importantly, students are 'significantly above average' standards in the respective departments. Students are considered to have a higher academic standard in terms of methodological competences (e.g. abstract and logical thinking, analytical skills) as well as information competences (e.g. use, choice, judgement and design of information sources)

Moreover, due to their origin, they bring diversity, different perspectives and ways of thinking into the class which, at the same time, is a basis for enrichment and teachers' motivation. It is worth noting that teachers expressed their views on the issue of 'entitlement': Those students who received an Erasmus Mundus scholarship are very self-confident and experience a sense of entitlement that makes them more demanding in two ways:

- Self-demanding: as a consequence, they are likely to increase their performance;
- Demanding towards teachers: EM students' expectations from teachers are higher than those of normal cohort students, mainly regarding teachers' availability and support.

This goes in line with the development of an identity as Erasmus Mundus students. Students were aware of the fact there was high competition to get into the course and appeared to want to get out the most from their EMMC, being participants in a prestigious programme.

10.2.3 The visiting scholars (academics)

- ***Are they of high quality? (what were they doing before (teaching, research, publishing)?, how were they identified and selected?)***

One of the problems encountered on the implementation of MUNDUS MAPP has been the inability of the consortium to attract applications from scholars during 2007 (6 applications) and 2008 (only 3 applications). In both years, only one scholar has been selected. As of April 2009, only one scholar has participated in the programme; the other will start his mobility period in May 2009.

Evidence on the quality of scholars is assured by three means:

1. A competitive recruitment procedure: All scholars go through a competitive recruitment procedure, which is responsibility of the Joint Academic Board. Scholars are interviewed by the members of the Board and the selection is based on the following criteria:
 - Academic excellence including prominence in the field and publication report;
 - Potential contribution to the course including relevance of their expertise and experience;
 - Teaching abilities to deliver high quality courses in English and/or Spanish²⁶;
 - Contribution to diversity (disciplinary and geographical background) and future collaboration potential.
2. CVs and previous work and academic experience of the selected:
 - The first scholar (PhD) is a senior researcher at FLACSO (Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, established in many Latin American countries, considered 'the main' social sciences academic and research institution in Latin America). She specialises in regional governance and economic institutions and trade. She is Argentinean and was previously a student at CEU. Her list of publications is very extensive.
 - The second scholar (PhD, Stanford) is an assistant professor at the University of Virginia (Politics Department). He is specialised in formal approaches to comparative politics and theory of collective action. He teaches courses on game theory, on Latin America and on the connections between rational-choice theory and other traditions (especially social theory). He is originally from Colombia and will be teaching courses on Latin America at IBEI during 2009.
3. Evaluation from students: The focus group was significantly satisfied with the performance of the first MUNDUS MAPP scholar. Apart from that, teachers are considered very positively by students (which includes the participation of scholars), scoring 4 on a scale of 1 to 5 in the Programme Evaluation 2007-2008.

- ***What did they contribute to the EMMC during their stay?***

Although teaching of elective courses (based on the scholars' expertise) is part of the scholars' work at the consortium universities, visiting scholars are mainly integrated into ongoing research projects of MUNDUS MAPP faculty, as it has been the case of the first MUNDUS MAPP scholar from FLACSO – Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, Argentina. She has mainly been focusing on research at IBEI (preparing some unpublished research papers) and has participated in the 2008 summer school in York. She will also be involved in the next edition of the summer school (2009, in Barcelona).

²⁶ The first edition of MUNDUS MAPP (2007-2009) had two possible tuition languages: English and Spanish. Due to imbalances generated by the Spanish language requirement at IBEI, the subsequent cohorts have only English as its tuition language.

The second scholar will be also based in IBEI, although putting more emphasis on the 'teaching' side of its scholarship, offering an elective course on Latin America while working on other faculty research projects.

The scholars' contribution to the course also generates a fruitful discussion not only focusing on European affairs but on global issues, a different perspective that generates a richer exchange in two ways: scholars to students; and scholars to scholars. The participation in the Erasmus Mundus Programme also opens future collaborative research prospects. A joint research proposal by the first scholar and IBEI faculty was submitted during the scholar's stay in Barcelona.

10.2.4 Partnerships with third countries

Not relevant to MUNDUS MAPP, there are no A3 partnerships.

10.3 Impact – "additionality" and wider effects

10.3.1 Impacts of Higher Education institutions – supply and demand

- ***Does the course provide something new, which would not have been provided if the programme had not existed?***

MUNDUS MAPP assembles the expertise of 4 high standard European universities and offers a unique course in Europe which matches public policy and European studies in an integrated way. It is the only masters course in Public Policy which allows students to combine strong conceptual foundations (Year 1) with practice and policy-oriented learning (Year 2) in two different EU universities.

The course has provided a new design, a new student cohort and the formalisation of a 2-year master's programme (normally programmes at the partner institutions last for one year). Without funding from the Erasmus Mundus Programme (mainly scholarships to attract students and cover the fees), the course would probably not have been developed, and universities would not have had a so large pool of Third Country students from so different origins.

The course has also provided institutional learning experiences to all partner institutions, allowing them to enhance their practices in working in partnership, establish common methods of assessment and evaluation, etc. The development of new academic networks outside EU borders under Action 2 has also been fostered by the Programme.

- ***Has the experience of the course had wider impacts on the departments and institutions concerned (e.g. on other courses and provision, on quality procedures etc)?***

MUNDUS MAPP has further enhanced the consortium partners' standards of quality assurance, internal and student evaluation mechanisms, and review of monitoring practices, with the clear impact of setting up higher standards while providing harmonisation among the institutions²⁷. The fact of putting all this together and creating a particular model of course integration and institutional mechanisms embodied in the mandate of the Joint Academic Board as well as the transparent management²⁸ provided by the Management Unit serve as examples of good practice for future collaborative efforts. This is also understood as a process of institutional learning and a challenge to improve the quality in many different areas of teaching and learning.

The Erasmus Mundus brand and the participation of Third Country students and scholars has increased both the prestige and the international visibility of the institutions involved.

- ***Has the programme made the departments more "internationally oriented"?***

All consortium institutions have a long tradition in international relations and they participate in different networks or have contacts with EU and Third Country institutions. However, Erasmus Mundus has allowed them to reach a bigger pool of students from countries they did not receive applications from, therefore, increasing the internationalisation of their institutions²⁹.

MUNDUS MAPP has permitted to further enhance the extensive international co-operation of the consortium members. Before the start of MUNDUS MAPP, the consortium had already a relevant history of cooperation among its members:

- CEU and ISS were already part of the GARNET Network under FP6;
- A senior faculty member from ISS was already teaching at IBEI;
- Due to common research interests in international policy transfer of core MUNDUS MAPP faculty, there was already inclusion of staff from partner institutions in publication projects.

Therefore, it can be said that MUNDUS MAPP has institutionalised the already existing European networks and contacts among the partners and has increased the internationalisation of all concerned institutions by enhancing international contacts with non-EU institutions while attracting a new pool of international students from Third Countries.

10.3.2 Impacts on students and scholars

- ***What do students expect to be the added-value and impact of attending the course on their personal and future career development?***

²⁷ This was stated in interviews conducted with both the CEU and IBEI representatives.

²⁸ On the letter of acceptance of the 2008 Progress Report, the EACEA considered the 'transparent and self-critical management of the course' as good practice on the implementation of the Programme.

²⁹ It is worth noting that all partner institutions have a big share of international students: in the case of IBEI, 75% of the student body is considered as 'international' while CEU has a tradition of receiving a vast majority of non-European students, mainly from the former Soviet Union. ISS has a long record of attracting students from Asia and Africa.

Regarding students, the combination of strong conceptual foundations (Year 1) with practice and policy-oriented learning (Year 2) provides MUNDUS MAPP students with transferable skills and subject-specific knowledge for embarking on or furthering professional careers as policy-makers, policy analysts and advisors in politics, the civil service, international organisations or the corporate and non-governmental sectors. When finishing their Masters, students are meant to have a substantial knowledge of EU policy making and solid institutional and personal networks that will help them to create constructive future engagements within Europe and the rest of the world. Moreover, obtaining two different degrees is particularly stressed by the students, who consider this as a double international experience and 'milestone' in their academic career that will contribute to increase their chances to get a better job. The focus group also pointed out that if formal barriers were not existent (mainly visa requirements), the vast majority of the students would like to stay in Europe and have some work experience in the EU before returning to their home country.

MUNDUS MAPP also provides a very strong conceptual and practical basis for those students who would like to continue their academic path and progress to PhD studies. From the group discussion is clear that some Third Country students are favouring an academic path and would like to progress to a PhD.

- ***What do scholars expect to be the added-value and impact of participating in the course on their personal and future career development?***

For scholars, the greatest impact of the EM-supported mobility period is in career development. The mobility period allows for a positive interchange on visions, experiences and knowledge among students, scholars and institutions. Third Country scholars are able to extensively learn about teaching performances in other (EU) countries and to update literature and theoretical debates on topics related to the scholars' research. The mobility period also increases networking opportunities with colleagues from other countries and opens future collaborative prospects with the institutions involved in the programme. Therefore, Erasmus Mundus and the contacts/links among Third Country scholars and EU scholars allow an exchange of experiences, both academic and personal, that contribute to the enhancement of academic standards both in Europe and (primarily) in Latin America.

From her personal perspective, the first scholar considers her participation in the Erasmus Mundus programme as a 'unique opportunity' to enrich her professional and academic background with a European experience, not available to all scholars from Latin America. She pointed out that mobility periods in Europe are very costly and without the programme they will be impossible. Moreover, Erasmus Mundus allows the creation of new research networks that, from her point of view, are a platform for future opportunities and research collaborations. She also mentioned the importance of European values (mainly solidarity and sense of community, contrary to American individualism) to be widely spread among students and participants in Erasmus Mundus, something that she thinks the programme achieves with no doubt.

10.3.3 Policy impact and contribution to EU strategic goals

- ***Impact, if any, on comparability and recognition of qualifications within Europe (Bologna principles)***

In order to harmonise the degree programmes and ensure consistency in procedures, the Joint Academic Board ensures common admissions and examination standards and compliance with the ECTS. Therefore, the four partner organisations recognise as equivalent the admission and examination procedures of the other members of the consortium.

Regarding the official recognition status of the Masters Degree in all participating countries, feedback from EACEA considers it as a requirement to be followed up by the consortium³⁰. The Consortium will award double degrees to the first three cohorts of students (2007-09, 2008-10 and 2009-11) as ISS, York and CEU have not yet succeeded in obtaining new accreditation for more integrated degrees from their respective national authorities³¹. The Consortium is actively working towards further degree integration in the form of newly accredited joint and/or double degrees in all four countries. The process appears to be hindered by national legislation, mainly in Hungary, where legislation has been in a flux and a recent law has been passed, making difficult and very laborious to accredit a new 2-year degree in Hungary specifically tailored to the MUNDUS MAPP study plan with the Hungarian Accreditation Board³². Moreover, in the Netherlands the accreditation of joint degrees is currently not possible.

Nevertheless, IBEI has submitted a request to the Spanish authorities for the accreditation of a joint degree for the ISS-IBEI mobility pathway and a satisfactory answer is expected from Spanish authorities by the end of the current academic year. The name of the degree will be Public Policy and International Development³³. Once this is approved, IBEI is planning to use this as a template to accredit the York-IBEI combination too.

10.4 Implementation issues

Main difficulties and barriers encountered which have influenced the ability of course leaders to achieve their objectives and the extent to which these have been overcome

³⁰ Letter of acceptance of MUNDUS MAPP 2008 Progress Report

³¹ The influence of the CEU status (a private and non-national university recognised both in Hungary and the US, awarding a US-accredited MA in Public Policy) in the accreditation process still needs to be further explored.

³² However, a December 2008 amendment to the Hungarian Act on Higher Education created the possibility of registering degrees recognised by EU and OECD countries by the Education Office without the involvement of the Hungarian Accreditation Board. This procedure is still unclear for CEU representatives but the possibility will be further explored.

³³ According to the IBEI Director, this is a viable possibility and the Spanish Authorities will give green light to the issuing of joint degrees for the ISS-IBEI mobility pathway. However, it remains uncertain if Dutch authorities will recognise this in its territory.

10.4.1 List of main implementation difficulties

The main difficulty for the consortium has been to attract EU students. This challenge is understood as a reflection of the MUNDUS MAPP tuition fees not being competitive for European students, as the price set for all Consortium universities (€11,000 per year) appears not to be competitive compared to other master courses offered around Europe (with lower fees). However, from 2010 onwards funding addressed to EU students under Erasmus Mundus II will help in alleviating this problem.

During the 2007 and 2008 selection, only few applications were received from scholars. The consortium was aware of the lack of potential of some of the candidates and rejected all applications except 1 per year (the scholars finally selected). According to the first scholar selected, there is lack of information availability about the scholarships for visiting professors. Information (publicly available on the MUNDUS MAPP website) is not well marketed and not very accessible to potential candidates. She received the information through informal channels and academic contacts with the Central European University (she was previously a student at CEU). This problem seems to be overcome as applications for 2009 have risen from 6 in 2007 and 3 in 2008 to 17 (up to March 2009). The consortium has relied on a more targeted approach, involving the members of the Board in directly encouraging young scholars from their overseas networks.

The main difficulties encountered by students are related to visa facilitation and insurance policies. In general, visas have been problematic for students moving between the UK and the three other universities, all of which are in Schengen countries. However, visa support provided by the consortium is highly rated as it has been previously shown (students value the support received on this issue with a score of 4.67 out of 5). Concerning insurance policies, students have experienced problems with regards to cumbersome and delayed reimbursements of legitimate medical expenses by the insurance company.

10.4.2 Adequacy of the financial support

Financial support received by the consortium in relation to objectives is considered both by the coordinating institution (CEU) and one of the partners interviewed (IBEI) as 'adequate'. Resources provided by the Programme cover management and administration costs of the whole masters course, although the consortium has had to bear the cost of board meetings and travelling arising from the afore-said meetings. Therefore, consortium universities do receive some funding but all is devoted to the EMMC and the Programme is not understood as a 'lucrative' activity for the university.

According to the coordinating institution and the partners interviewed, the course would be viable in the long run without EU institutional funding (the current €15,000 grant is already seen as inadequate and insufficient for the running of the consortium). However, EM scholarships for attracting Third Country students are required to guarantee the sustainability of MUNDUS MAPP and a high number of applicants as other alternative sources of scholarships have not been explored by the Consortium. It is worth noting that Third Country students attracted mostly come

from poor countries and only a small proportion of them would be able to fund their own studies in Europe without support received from the Erasmus Mundus Programme.

The Coordinators of MUNDUS MAPP expressed their concerns on the feasibility of Erasmus Mundus II and the new conditions for the 2009-2013 period, mainly the reduction of grants for the consortium, the inadequate (not enough) grant for EU students and the difficulty to manage PhD programmes due to mobility issues and teaching methods. If the work under Erasmus Mundus I had not been done, applying for Erasmus Mundus II would not be worth for the consortium taking into account the new conditions for the 2009-2013 period.

10.5 Added value and perceived relevance of Erasmus Mundus

10.5.1 "Added value"

- ***What has the EMMC brought the universities involved that they would not have been available to achieve / obtain without it?***

Erasmus Mundus is seen as a very good marketing tool linked to a prestigious brand. This combination serves as a helping instrument to attract students from outside Europe, increasing the application rates and the quality of students enrolled in their institutions.

Although all consortium universities were highly international to start with, Erasmus Mundus has permitted them to attract students from countries where previously they did not receive applications from³⁴: for instance, in the case of IBEI, already with a constant pool of applicants from EU and Latin America, it permitted to attract more students from Asia. This increased diversity is beneficial for the departments involved, and due to the highly competitive admissions process with more than 540 applications for 2009, the academic calibre of the students is very high. Moreover, it is worth noting that non-EM students and teachers also benefit from interacting with Erasmus Mundus students.

Moreover, Erasmus Mundus has allowed all involved universities to institutionalise their previous inter-university relationships and formalise their contacts and networks (i.e. exchange of scholars, practices and the establishing of common evaluation and examination mechanisms). The creation of new academic and research networks with Third Country institutions has also been possible with the Programme. All this partnership cooperation has been an institutional learning process from which the universities consider they have strongly benefited.

- ***What has the EMMC offered students and scholars and to what extent has the EMMC provided something that they could not have achieved elsewhere / on another course?***

The consortium provides distinctive European added value for third country students and scholars, by linking centres of excellence in international relations, development studies and public policy to provide a cutting-edge masters in an EU and international context. The consortium combines

³⁴ MUNDUS MAPP has higher fees than other masters courses, so the financial aspect is an additional burden for some Third Country students in case they do not receive any scholarship

perspectives from a founding member (Netherlands – ISS) with those from Member States joining in successive enlargement waves (UK – York; Spain – IBEI and Hungary – CEU). Currently, there is no similar masters course at EU level with the involvement of such high profile institutions, the amount and variety of course modules for students and the differentiation and combination of academic paths (according to preferences and mobility paths, students can choose 2 among 4 institutions).

Moreover, the combination of a 'foundation' (and conceptual) year on the basics of development studies, governance, public policy and/or research methodologies with a second more policy-oriented year is extremely valued by students due to its multidisciplinary approach. The fact of being taught in two different European universities (obtaining 2 different MA degrees!) is also much valued by students: experiencing two different teaching methods and being able to interact with teachers from different backgrounds and origins is another added value of the MUNDUS MAPP course. Overall, students consider they receive a proper and intellectually-challenging formation as well as a good preparation for a future job.

The MUNDUS MAPP consortium is also considered as a very good platform for exchange and the building of research and collaboration networks both within Europe and between EU institutions and Third Country universities. In the case of the only MUNDUS MAPP scholar under Action 2 who has started her mobility period, she extremely valued the possibility of being a visiting professor in Europe for the first time in her career. Moreover, she mentioned this kind of initiatives allow Third Country institutions to rise their academic standards and bring them in line with EU and US standards.

On a personal note, one of the scholars considered living and working in Europe as an open-minded experience: the opportunity to understand and be aware of values found in Europe such as solidarity and the sense of community in contrast with American individualism. The spreading of EU values around the world is considered as a remarkable asset of the Programme.

Both students and scholars are aware of the significant grants they are receiving. However, the vast majority of grantees do consider them extremely necessary to be able to come to study or teach in Europe. Without the scholarship amount, their participation in the programme would not have been possible due to high fees and living costs in Europe.

- ***What has the EMMC / Action 3 partnership combination offered the third country institutions involved?***

Not relevant

10.5.2 "Relevance"

- ***Has the programme overall allowed the institutions concerned to a) improve / expand the quality of their offer and b) attract additional talented students and scholars (based on findings above)***

While it is traditionally the United States that has attracted the most talented Third Country students in the field of public policy, MUNDUS MAPP is helping develop EU credentials and

excellence in policy studies by offering a highly competitive, distinctly European programme. By working in partnership with other relevant EU universities, the consortium members consider that they have been able to offer a 'better product' to prospective students and expand the quality of their offer. The combination of linking EU centres of excellence such as all partners and attracting students from all around the world would have not been possible without Erasmus Mundus funding.

All partner institutions have been able to attract a bigger pool of non-European students and increase the number of applications from parts of the world from which they did not receive applicants. The increase of applications ensures that there are enough very high quality candidates.

- ***To what extent has this allowed the institutions concerned to address what they perceived as their real needs?***

The consortium members have internally benefited from 'added value' in the complementary interests that exist between the partner institutions with the exchange of students and visiting scholars: the four institutions complement their expertise in social and political transition and development, fostering co-operation among institutions in old and new Member States, therefore symbolising the widening of Europe. Towards external scholarly audiences and the student community, the consortium consolidates and enhances the visibility of the four institutions, embedded in the (as they consider) prestigious Erasmus Mundus brand as a marketing tool to attract the best students from all around the world, expanding the geographical scope of the students at partner institutions.

In conclusion, the Erasmus Mundus programme is seen as a beneficial framework for all parties involved. On the one hand, excellent students are able to study in high profile EU institutions due to the scholarships they receive. Their contribution to the course, jointly with participation from Third Country and EU scholars, generates an exchange of practices and knowledge which represents an added-value learning experience for all involved. On the other hand, universities, through the programme, are able to attract the best Third Country students (not possible without EM funding for Third Country students) and increase their international visibility while institutionalising their previous research and academic networks among the participating partners and creating new networks of excellence with Third Country institutions.

11.0 GEMMA: Master's Degree in Women's and Gender Studies

Course title	GEMMA – Erasmus Mundus Masters Degree in Women's and Gender Studies
Coordinating institution	University of Granada (Spain)
Partner institutions	University of Bologna (Italy) Central European University of Budapest (Hungary) University of Hull (United Kingdom) ISH Graduate School of Humanities, Ljubljana (Slovenia) University of Lodz (Poland) University of Oviedo (Spain) University of Utrecht (Netherlands)
Start date	Academic Year 2007-2008 (first cohort started 09/2007)
Course length	24 months (120 ECTS)
Course objectives and content	GEMMA is a joint multidisciplinary programme which aims to bring together different approaches to feminism from 7 European countries. The course is structured with a core component taught at all consortium universities (Feminist History, Feminist Theory and Feminist Methodology) plus a wide variety of modules offered at the partner institutions. Students are able to start their academic year at any of the consortium institutions and normally spend 3 semesters at the 'home' university (first university attended) and one semester mobility period at another university of the consortium ('partner' university or second university attended).
Target student cohort	GEMMA aims to provide academic education and professional competencies for students wanting to conduct further research or intending to work in the areas of women's studies, gender studies and equal opportunities.
Training paths	A mobility period is conducted during the 3 rd semester at a partner institution, depending on the choices and areas within Women's Studies and Gender students work upon. There are currently 40 different mobility paths among consortium members available for GEMMA students which involve one home and one partner institutions.
Degree awarded	Students will be awarded double degrees from the two universities (home and partner institutions) where they have undertaken the studies. These degrees are fully recognised by all eight consortium members.
Action 3 partnerships	In the framework of Action 3, the GEMMA Consortium through GEMMA World has established partnerships with 5 institutions from the US, Mexico, Argentina and Dominican Republic.

11.1 Outputs

11.1.1 The course

- **Overview of syllabus and mobility paths proposed to students**

The programme is structured over two academic years (120 ECTS), including:

- Core component – 1st semester: it includes 30 ECTS taken at the 'home' university (first university attended) and organised around the same three modules at all consortium universities (Feminist History, Feminist Theory; Feminist Methodology)
- Electives / Practice / Specialisation: Students choose the area within Women's and Gender Studies they would like to focus on. This counts for 60 ECTS divided into:
 - Elective cluster A: 30 ECTS at home university (2nd semester)
 - Elective cluster B: 30 ECTS at partner university (3rd semester)
- Masters thesis: Students will write a MA thesis on any topic of their interest and under the supervision of faculty from the home or partner university (30 ECTS during the 4th semester)

The large size of the consortium has allowed GEMMA to combine a diverse offer of optional courses, creating almost an *à la carte* programme that ranges from Women's literature (Bologna) to Gender in politics (Granada, Budapest) or Gender issues in development (Hull) among a wide variety of modules. Very specific and tailored courses, such as Gender and Archaeology (Granada), Reproductive Psychology (Lodz) or Gender and Religion, to name a few, are also on offer. The language of tuition is mainly English, with some courses taught in Spanish and Italian in the respective countries.

The following mobility path combinations are proposed:

Figure 111.1: GEMMA mobility path combinations

	GRANADA	BOLONIA	BUDAPEST	HULL	LODZ	LJUBLJANA	OVIEDO	UTRECHT
GRANADA	...	X	X	X	X	X		X
BOLONIA	X	...		X			X	X
BUDAPEST	X		...		X		X	X
HULL	X	X	X	...			X	X
LODZ	X		X	X	...	X	X	X
LJUBLJANA	X			X		...		X
OVIEDO	...	X	X	X	X		...	X
UTRECHT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	...

Source: GEMMA's official Masters Programme Guide

- **Brief overview of teaching approach including number of teaching staff deployed**

The total number of core teachers devoted to GEMMA is 39. However, the total teaching population is distributed in the following way:

Table 11.1: Number of teaching staff deployed

University	Number of teachers involved in GEMMA
University of Granada	20
University of Bologna	10
Central European University of Budapest	9 full time faculty + 11 associated professors
Ljubljana Graduate School of Humanities	11
University of Hull	20
University of Lodz	17
University of Oviedo	18
University of Utrecht	10
Total teaching population	126

Therefore, about 126 teachers from the 8 members of the consortium provide tuition. They are experienced professors (senior lecturers and senior researchers) with a solid academic background and long experience in international cooperation. They appear to be complementary in their specialisation.

- **Qualifications awarded**

Students will receive two degrees according to the two universities chosen following the mobility combination specified. The degrees are validated by the whole consortium (degrees are recognised by all partners and have the approval of all legal representatives of the consortium institutions). All students (whether European or Third Country nationals) receive the same degree title, the Erasmus Mundus Masters Degree in Women's and Gender Studies (all institutions have approved a degree with this title in their own systems). Each partner institution can award a degree upon the completion of the programme, either as 'home' (first attended university) or 'partner' (institution where the mobility period takes place) university. It is the intention of the GEMMA consortium to move towards joint degrees in the near future, however the coordinating institution is aware of the legal obstacles that must be overcome to achieve this aim.

All consortium institutions offer a Diploma Supplement giving complete information on the seven different national grading systems and their equivalences in ECTS.

No degrees or Diploma Supplements have been awarded so far. However, there have been consortium meetings and contact with the respective National Structures in order to avoid problems during future implementation.

11.1.2 The students

Table 11.2: Applications, candidates selected, students starting and graduations

		2007-2009	2008-2010	2009-2011
Applications	Non-EU	165	269	200
	EU			
	TOTAL			
Admitted candidates	Non-EU	20	26	
	EU	24	17	
	TOTAL	44	43	
Students <i>starting</i> course	EM scholarship	20	21	
	Other non-EU	0	5*	
	EU	24	17	
	TOTAL	44	43	
Students <i>graduating</i>	EM scholarship			
	Other non-EU			
	EU			
	TOTAL			
		No drop-outs	No drop-outs	

* From these 5 students, 2 are scholarship holders from the Ford Foundation, 1 has received a grant from the Spanish Ministry of Education, 1 has received a scholarship from Thailand's government and 1 student has no external support or grant.

As the above figures show, the programme has been competitive and the consortium considers the number of applicants 'very satisfactory'. The number of Third Country applicants increased significantly from 2007 to 2008 (which shows the effectiveness of the initial promotion efforts) but slightly decreased in 2009. Although this outcome is positive, some partner institutions that receive fewer applications as home universities (i.e. Lodz, Ljubljana) recognise that a special effort must be made on their part to attract more candidates.

The consortium selected 44 students in 2007 and 43 students in 2008, roughly half the desired number of students stated in the Application submitted to EACEA under Action 1 in 2006: 90 students³⁵. From these 90, 54 places were meant to be for EU students but only 24 (in 2007) and 17 (in 2008) have been filled.

The consortium aimed to attract 36 Third Country students per year. In practice, they attracted 20 in 2007 and 26 in 2008. Taking into account the significant number of Third Country applicants, it

³⁵ This is based on the assumption that the consortium considers 90 students as the target for each edition of the course (each student cohort) and not for the total number of students enrolled in a year (which would comprise 2 editions of the course – in the 2008/09 academic year, 87 students from 2 editions (2007-09 and 2008-2010) were enrolled in GEMMA, which would be close to the '90 students-target').

seems that Third Country students are only willing to study on the course if they receive the Erasmus Mundus grant or some other form of funding (so far, only one Third Country student has participated in the course on a self-financing basis). Although it may seem contradictory with the set targets, the consortium seems reluctant to accept any additional Third Country student than those granted an EM scholarship (the fewer the selected students, the higher the quality of the cohort is meant to be).

The students are drawn from 31 different countries (Australia, US, Canada, Spain, France, Poland, Netherlands, Italy, Slovenia, Romania, Albania, Serbia, Croatia, Russia, Iceland, Colombia, Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Uruguay, Mexico, Cuba, Philippines, China, Malaysia, Thailand, Taiwan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Cameroon and Ethiopia).

There is not a balanced distribution of male and female students, with the vast majority of students being female: taking into account the 2007-09 and 2008-10 editions, 93% of students (81 students out of a total of 87) are women. The presence of male students is reduced to the first cohort of GEMMA students, with 6 male participants. This can be attributed to the subject area of the EM course.

11.1.3 The scholars

According to the programme coordinator, 7 scholars have visited GEMMA partner institutions so far. Of the seven scholars who have participated in the course to date, two came from Argentina and one from each of the following countries: Serbia, Peru, Thailand, Georgia and Morocco. All of them were female.

Based on the budget available, the GEMMA consortium can select up to 4 scholars per edition for a period of 3 months each. During the first edition of GEMMA (2007-09) the consortium chose 3 scholars. 4 scholars were selected in 2008. However, one of the scholars selected in 2007 was not able to carry out her mobility period in 2007 at the University of Hull and is currently participating in the programme during the 2008-09 academic session. This means there are currently 5 scholars participating in the development of the GEMMA programme during the 2008-09 academic year.

Although the number of scholars for such a big consortium could be much higher and applications have not increased from 2008 to 2009 (with only 12 applications received³⁶), the consortium appears to be very satisfied with the quality of applicants (the first selected scholar for the 3rd edition received 98.5 points out of 100).

Regarding the scholars' host institution under Action 2, Granada is the main destination for visiting scholars. Half of the visiting scholars have spent their mobility at the coordinating institution.

³⁶ The consortium received 12 applications each year in 2008 and 2009. However, this number is higher than the number of applications received in 2007 (8 applicants).

11.1.4 Action 3 partnerships

In the framework of Action 3, the GEMMA consortium has established partnerships with five prominent third country Women's / Gender Studies centres, forming GEMMA World – the extension of the GEMMA EMMC to non-European contexts. The Third Country university partners under GEMMA world are the following:

- University of Buenos Aires (Argentina)
- Florida International University (USA)
- National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM, Mexico)
- Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, (USA)
- Technological Institute of Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic)

GEMMA World gives the opportunity to GEMMA European students to visit non-European Research and Higher Education Institutions where either English or Spanish (two of the masters' official languages) are spoken.

Up to 23 European students per year, selected on a competitive basis, are able to receive a scholarship to spend a short research or study period in one of the above-mentioned institutions for a period of up to 3 months. The scholarship amount EU students receive is up to €3,100.

Three students of the first GEMMA edition are already taking courses at Rutgers (USA) while seven more students have applied for research visits in 2009 in Buenos Aires, UNAM (Mexico) and Florida International University (USA). In the first case, the novelty of the programme and the lack of promotional efforts explain, according to the main coordinator, little participation in Action 3 partnerships (only 3 out of 23 EU students took part of the experience) during 2008. In the second edition of the programme, 7 EU students (out of 17) did apply for the 2009 research visits. Therefore, it seems that the more the Action 3 is known through promotional techniques and the more established the partnership is, the more attractive Action 3 is.

11.2 Results

11.2.1 The course – relevant, high quality, with a European dimension?

- ***Is the curriculum well structured and integrated?***

According to the coordinator of the programme, GEMMA's curriculum has been specifically designed for Erasmus Mundus and is taught as a fully integrated cross-partner programme. The coherence of the curriculum is exemplified in the Cooperation Agreement signed by all partner institutions (approved during the first half of 2009). The Agreement considers GEMMA as an 'integrated course' including a compulsory first semester common to all partner universities (with Feminist History, Feminist Theory and Feminist Methodologies). In the second and third semesters, each institution offers various elective courses to students depending on their respective expertise. The fourth semester is devoted to the preparation and submission of the thesis either at the home or mobility institution.

- ***Is the content of the course "cutting edge" and how does it compare to other similar courses in Europe and beyond? (consider how many other similar courses exist).***

There are no other courses in the EU offering a comparable curriculum. The most prestigious universities in Europe in the field of gender studies have been brought together to create GEMMA, based on their already existing research and thematic networks in the field. No other masters course is able to compete with the possibility of choosing to study in eight partner universities (apart from the added value for EU students brought in by Action 3 mobility periods).

An important way in which the teaching content of the programme initially proposed has been adapted to the recent developments in the field of Women's and Gender Studies is the participation of professors from prestigious universities which are not members of the consortium. They have been invited to give lectures on the topics of their specialisation within the core courses of the masters. Collaboration from prestigious lecturers from other institutions has been possible thanks to the additional subsidies received from governmental institutions (Spanish national and regional authorities) and has been positively evaluated by students.

- ***What Quality Assurance mechanisms are used to ensure a) the quality of the course content (i.e. content of individual modules / components of the course) and b) the overall coherence of the curriculum (how the different elements fit together)?***

The national Quality Evaluation Agencies have assessed consortium institutions in their respective countries. At the level of each partner institution, specific quality assessment procedures for postgraduate programmes are implemented. The coordinators place special emphasis on the evaluation of the courses by students. These evaluations are done anonymously, in writing, on special evaluation forms that are distributed after each course is terminated. The outcome of these evaluations is discussed at the level of each department/centre involved and reported to the consortium at the GEMMA Steering Committee (composed by the coordinators from all institutions) meetings.

Furthermore, each institution organises meetings between students and coordinators to evaluate the development of the programme, discuss possible problems and adopt convenient solutions at the level of each institution.

Regarding the overall coherence of the curriculum, the Cooperation Agreement provides that the GEMMA Steering Committee will facilitate cross-institutional consistency (comparability in terms of standards, learning experiences and further strengthening of the partnership among the institutions).

Considering the overall quality of the course, evaluation processes have been developed at regional and national level at the coordinating institution. Both Spanish regional and national quality assessment bodies have granted GEMMA the recognition of 'Official Masters Programme'.

The main coordinator of the Programme, has also visited all partner institutions to ensure the smooth organisation and running of the course at all consortium universities.

- ***How have quality procedures from the host institutions been adapted / integrated into the EMMC?***

During the first two editions of the programme, integrated quality procedures were not in place. Separate quality assessments at each partner institution were applied and reported to the Steering Committee. However, with the entry into force of the Cooperation Agreement³⁷, common quality guidelines have been agreed at consortium level and will be implemented in the near future. The set of detailed guidelines was proposed by the University of Hull, following the standards of British universities and the UK Quality Assurance Agency. With the Agreement, these guidelines will be implemented to all consortium partners.

- ***Has the course been able to deploy the most appropriate teaching staff?***

According to results from the ECOTEC online survey to coordinators and partners, GEMMA partners have assigned the highest quality staff from the relevant disciplines to deliver the EMMC across the institutions. Teachers include some of the most recognised European figures in gender and women's studies, being famous in the field for their contribution to the advancement of feminist theories and the construction of contemporary feminism. Their professional record can be summarised in the positions of responsibility they occupy (chairs of European associations, international or national networks, directors of women's centres, etc.). They are all senior lecturers or senior researchers.

Moreover, the GEMMA consortium has invited famous and renowned senior professors from non-EU universities to teach some lectures in the course.

- ***How do students perceive the quality and organisation of the course?***

The GEMMA consortium has not yet undertaken a common evaluation concerning all GEMMA students and their opinions on the quality of the course³⁸. However, the focus group highlighted some perceptions from students concerning the following issues:

1. Academic quality: The vast majority of students consider they are studying in very prestigious European universities, the top European ones in the field of Women's and Gender Studies. They also recognise that teaching staff are of a high quality academic standard and value very positively the fact that academics are well prepared for lectures. The quality of course modules and their organisation are also very well considered (it is worth noting that some courses are also taught at PhD level). The participation of renowned scholars from non-EU universities (in addition to Action 2 scholars), who give some lectures in the course regarding recent developments in the field or their specific expertise, is very well-valued by students as it is seen as a 'unique' opportunity to get in touch with these first-class academics.

2. Organisation / course structure: According to students' comments, courses are systemic and well organised. Course materials are also clear and modules are well scheduled to allow time for class

³⁷ The Common Agreement has already been signed and agreed by all partner institutions and will be applicable as from the 3rd edition of the programme (2009-2011).

³⁸ As mentioned before, the Common Agreement includes a set of quality guidelines common to all partner universities, which will provide comparable information/opinions across all institutions in the future.

preparation and further research. Students particularly valued the possibility of choosing from such a variety of:

- Institutions part of the consortium in which to study;
- Semester mobility periods (with the added value of Action 3 for EU students);
- Subjects in order to specialise in a particular field.

Moreover, they considered very positively the time schedule for thesis research, as it was seen as an 'adequate' time to write a proper masters thesis.

However, they also shared their concerns about the Eurocentric approach of the course and the need to increase perspectives from outside Europe (partially solved by the participation of Action 2 scholars and other visiting academics). Other concerns refer to the different teaching methods at partner institutions which create a destabilized effect among students, although they also consider this may help them in their professional and academic future due to the learning experience of interacting with different institutions and countries.

3. Administration: Organisation of payments (on a three-monthly basis rather than the proposed monthly payments by the EACEA) and, overall, the delay in payments made by the coordinating institution has caused a very bad impression among students (some of them received their grant 2 months after arriving in Europe) and has irritated some of the scholars (and, according to them, influenced on their research and contribution to the course). Students also complained regarding the lack of housing/accommodation support received from the University of Granada.

4. Social activities: GEMMA students are extremely involved in social and extra-curricular activities. They have taken part in different literature seminars; they have participated in a Feminist Cinema Festival organised (with others) by the GEMMA consortium; and students have also created a blog for the programme (one for each edition) containing academic discussions, information on events, students' pictures, etc. Students are very enthusiastic about these initiatives and see them as a complement to the pure academic activities of the programme.

- ***Has the course been able to provide suitable academic facilities (equipment / labs / libraries / computing facilities etc)?***

All GEMMA students (Third Country and European) at all partner universities have full access to all the standard university facilities (libraries, computer rooms, Wifi services, university sponsored dining services, sports facilities, etc). Additionally, free of charge language courses are offered at the coordinating institution.

The student focus group highlighted that facilities in Granada (university where the focus group took place) are of a high standard, with an extensive library (number of volumes) and number of computers available for students. Students' expectations on this aspect were completely met, and they recognised this as a great asset for studying in Europe (facilities at EU universities are more suitable than those available in their home countries). The University of Utrecht was also considered 'excellent' in terms of facilities offered to students.

However, two of the scholars interviewed were 'quite dissatisfied' with the facilities at the University of Granada, considering there are scarce resources offered by the university library to further expand their research³⁹.

- ***Does the course offer internships or other mechanisms to allow students to gain work experience?***

The University of Granada and the University of Utrecht are the only two consortium institutions that make internships available for students. Both universities have agreements already signed with governmental bodies, local NGOs, foundations... for students to have a work placement in bodies related to the field of gender and/or equal opportunities. So far, the participation of students in internships is not recognised as an activity to obtain credits from.

- ***Has the course been able to provide suitable non-academic support after selection (visas / housing / social aspects)?***

Each partner institution has its own international relations office, responsible for welcoming and hosting foreign students and scholars. The reception of students includes support on various services related to housing, induction sessions, social events, language courses, etc.

During the group discussion, students stressed the differences in non-academic support received at the different consortium institutions, as some of them had already experienced a period in another partner institution.

- *Housing facilities* – They were rated 'very good' in Utrecht and Hull but Bologna and Granada were seen as not providing enough support on this aspect.
- *Visa* – Some students coming to Spain from the UK experienced visa problems that could be avoided if more information had been provided beforehand.
- *Scholarship payments* – Students (and scholars!) were very disappointed with the difficulties they experienced related to receipt of their grants. Some students received the first instalment of their EM grant two months after their arrival in Europe.

In short, although international offices exist in all partner institutions and all GEMMA students can rely on the University of Granada International Office (centralising, for instance, the payments and the management of grants), clear guidelines on visa, housing, payments, etc. are necessary for students well in advance their arrival in Europe⁴⁰.

11.2.2 Excellent students?

- ***Evidence on qualifications of students accepted onto course***

³⁹ An evaluation of the Library Services at the University of Granada conducted by the Vice-Chancellery of Planning, Quality and Evaluation in 2004 showed that teaching staff at the University of Granada are very satisfied with the availability of books, research papers and journals at the library. The different research resources evaluated obtained scores of at least 4.5 points out of 5 (on a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 is 'completely dissatisfied' and 5 is 'completely satisfied'). The sample of the survey covered more than 3,500 teachers.

⁴⁰ Current students are creating new guidelines and a programme guide for prospective students.

Three sources of evidence are used to consider the excellence of students accepted onto the course:

1. The rigorous set of assessment criteria used among the partners and the GEMMA Steering Committee focused on the following weighting (0-100 scale):

- Academic excellence (0-50 points, according to the ECTS grading scale and previous students' marks)
- Prior knowledge and professional experience (0-15 points)
- Motivation (0-20 points)
- Knowledge of language of host institution (0-5 points)
- Social skills (0-5 points)
- Other (0-5 points)

Candidates are assessed by two different evaluators, from the two institutions in which the candidate would like to carry out their studies.

2. Scores obtained by all selected students: Students selected for the course have been considered as 'high quality' students by the consortium. The scores obtained during the selection process are considered as 'very satisfactory' by the consortium, with all selected students obtaining a score of at least 82% (in 2008) and 83.5% (in 2009), being these the scores of the last selected students.

It is worth mentioning that the two students selected under the Western Balkans and Turkey⁴¹ Window obtained a significantly lower evaluation mark. For instance, in 2009, the two selected students obtained scores of 70.5% and 64%, far lower than the next lowest scoring selected student and the five students included in the reserve list (with scores ranging from 81.5% to 82.6%). Therefore, it is clear that, in the case of these two students, the consortium has prioritised the geographical origin of candidates (on the basis of criteria set by the programme) over the quality and excellence of students.

3. Information gathered from the focus group (eight students): Students are aware of the degree of competition to get onto the course and consider that this implies all their classmates are participating in EM because of their merits and qualifications.

- ***Do course leaders and teachers believe the students attracted are of high quality? (including compared to the average standard in their department)***

Both course leaders and teachers believe that the academic standard of both applicants and, more importantly, students are 'above average' standards in their respective departments.

Teachers believe that students provide a continuous stimulus for staff and reported that they enjoy teaching EM students and have found it a challenge as well as a pleasure. 'Students are mature,

⁴¹ The GEMMA consortium considers Turkey as part of the Western Balkans Window, considering the existence of a Western Balkans and Turkey Window.

very motivated and intelligent'. Especially at the University of Granada, teaching staff consider EM students as very qualified students with a solid academic and critical background to progress to PhD level.

Students are considered to have generally good social competences (e.g. communication, cooperation) as well as decision making skills (e.g. dealing with situations in a confident and responsible way).

11.2.3 The visiting scholars (academics)

- ***Are they of high quality? (what were they doing before (teaching, research, publishing)?, how were they identified and selected?)***

Evidence on the quality of scholars is assured by three means:

1. A competitive and open recruitment procedure: All scholars go through a competitive recruitment procedure, which is responsibility of two different evaluators. Selection is based on the following criteria (0-100 scale):
 - Academic excellence including prominence in the field and publication report (0-50 points);
 - Professional experience: management/coordination skills and relationship between experience and GEMMA programme (0-15 points);
 - Visit / Research plan (0-20 points);
 - Knowledge of language at host institution (0-5 points);
 - Other (0-10 points).
2. CVs and previous work and academic experience of the selected: All visiting scholars have previous experience in both teaching and research practices. Moreover, six of the seven visiting scholars have more than five years' experience in the field of women's and gender studies and all of them have had research papers published in peer-reviewed journals or reviews in the last two years.
3. Evaluation from focus group students: The academic level of visiting scholars involved in GEMMA is considered 'very high' by students who participated in the evaluation focus group. Some of these students had had bilateral meetings with visiting scholars to discuss their masters thesis. They also considered very valuable the fact that visiting scholars brought different perspectives into the course, which complement the generally Eurocentric focus.

- ***What did they contribute to the EMMC during their stay?***

GEMMA visiting scholars have focused both on teaching elective courses (related to their specific expertise), as well as on their own research. However, the visiting scholars interviewed mentioned that the number of lectures and teaching hours available for them was insufficient to have a notably impact on students. The coordinating institution has not allowed visiting scholars to increase their teaching hours owing to the already busy schedule for lectures/courses for students.

The presence of visiting scholars has contributed to exchange of experience along two dimensions: among academic staff and researchers, and between visiting scholars and students. Students have been able to obtain a sense of different (and non-European) perspectives brought to Europe by the visiting scholars and benefit from the scholars' background and expertise. Academic staff could

learn from each other and share common research interests, familiarising themselves with literature and research conducted in other countries

11.2.4 Partnerships with third countries

- ***What do the consortium institutions perceive to be the benefit of the partnership? (Structured cooperation?)***

The participation in Action 3 partnerships allows consortium institutions to establish a permanent (and structured) links with Third Country institutions (research networks and exchange of students and professors). It is worth mentioning that, although some previous research collaboration between A3 institutions and the consortium existed before GEMMA was established, Erasmus Mundus has allowed the consortium to build new relationships with non-European institutions.

Moreover, the possibility of participating in Action 3 is seen by the consortium as a marketing instrument to attract potential EU student candidates (as they can undertake mobility periods outside Europe). It is also seen as a very positive research experience abroad for EU students who want to continue their studies towards PhD level (some EU students participating in the focus groups wanted to continue studying at PhD level at consortium institutions and were looking forward to their A3 mobility period experience).

- ***What do the third country institutions perceive to be the benefit of the partnership? (Structured cooperation?)***

According to one of the scholars (s) Third Country institutions appear to value their participation in the programme. Apart from the institutional learning experience of being able to create and manage a partnership among universities from different countries (considered more difficult in Latin America, for instance), EM is also seen as a marketing tool. The participation in the programme benefits the institution in two ways. It assists them in attracting potential future students from Europe (mainly PhD students) and institutionalises research and collaboration channels with EU universities, while disseminating research findings and literature from the Action 3 institution to the European context.

Erasmus Mundus also opens new opportunities to foster exchange of students, professors and knowledge across the participants.

- ***What do those who have participated in outgoing mobility perceive to be the benefits of their mobility periods?***

EU students selected under Action 3 have the opportunity to spend up to 3 months at a Third Country institution. They benefit from the use of available resources and faculty expertise at the host institution for the preparation of their Masters Thesis⁴². Moreover, they are also able to gain a different perspective on gender issues and women's studies and to spend some time away from Europe in order to 'internationalise' their academic background. Action 3 students have considered their personal experience during this study period very valuable.

⁴² Action 3 mobility periods normally take place during the 4th semester, as this is the time scheduled for the writing-up of the Masters Thesis.

11.3 Impact – "additionality" and wider effects

11.3.1 Impacts of Higher Education institutions – supply and demand

- ***Does the course provide something new, which would not have been provided if the programme had not existed?***

GEMMA is the result of bringing together all the consortium members' existing experience in postgraduate teaching. All partners had already run national Masters, Expert's and Doctoral programmes on Women's and Gender Studies for a number of years. However, they lacked a European dimension to their offer. GEMMA offers a unique masters programme, which brings together the relevant consortium university courses under the same umbrella, providing new mobility options with a wider range of choices between optional modules. This allows students to tailor the programme they follow to their own interests.

The level of cooperation between the eight consortium institutions in the implementation of a masters programme is also distinctively new. Bringing together eight universities for the creation of a new postgraduate programme with such a big consortium would have been extremely difficult without the framework provided by Erasmus Mundus. Indeed, GEMMA is the largest Erasmus Mundus consortium and the closer working relationships between the institutions involved has increased their cooperation activities, their research links, etc. Moreover, the added value of Action 2 scholars (both for students and the host institutions) and the possibility of Action 3 mobility for EU students would probably not have been possible without Erasmus Mundus.

- ***Has the experience of the course had wider impacts on the departments and institutions concerned (e.g. on other courses and provision, on quality procedures etc)?***

The evidence from the case study research suggests the experience of the course has had the following impacts:

1. Institutional changes: The University of Granada is participating in four Erasmus Mundus Masters Courses (two as a coordinating institution and two as a partner). This has involved a significant increase in workload. To be able to support this workload increase, the Postgraduate School has created a new International Unit, responsible for all administrative issues related to EM students from the moment of their selection until their graduation and the awarding of the degrees.
2. Common Agreement and quality procedures: All consortium universities have prepared a Common Agreement between all partners involved with the aim at regulating the implementation and management of the GEMMA programme. The Agreement includes common quality assessment procedures (universities previously had their own separate quality procedures). The agreement is considered as a good implementation practice by the EACEA⁴³.
3. New courses and modules: New courses have been exclusively created for GEMMA with the cooperation of different departments at the coordinating institution. Moreover, some existing PhD level courses have been integrated into GEMMA.

⁴³ On the letter of acceptance of the 2008 Progress Report, the EACEA welcomed the preparation of a Common Agreement between all GEMMA partners, considering it as a good implementation practice to be maintained.

4. Change in teaching methodologies: The contribution of Third Country scholars have permitted to enhance the teaching environment and to introduce new ideas and methods more tailored to the specificities and needs of a multinational pool of students.
5. Increase in demand of PhD studies: The University of Granada has experienced an increase in the number of application for its PhD in Women's and Gender studies. A significant number of GEMMA students would like to progress to PhD level when they finish their masters course.
6. The Women's Research Institute in Granada has increased its research collaboration links with other institutions, mainly from Latin America.

- ***Has the programme made the departments more "internationally oriented"?***

All consortium universities have a long tradition in international relations, mainly focused on their long standing collaboration at European level in postgraduate training in Women's and Gender Studies through the ATHENA (Advanced Thematic Network in Activities in Women's Studies in Europe) and COTEPR (Comparative Studies: Theory and Practice) networks.

However, Erasmus Mundus has enhanced their internationalisation, bringing a non-European approach to the already strong European dimension. Erasmus Mundus has allowed them to reach a bigger pool of students from countries they did not receive applications from, therefore, increasing the internationalisation of their institutions. Moreover, they have established contacts with non-EU institutions in the field of research and academia.

In the case of the coordinating institution, Erasmus Mundus is seen as a 'golden opportunity' to address all three core objectives of the international strategy of the University of Granada:

- Increase the number of applications from Third Country nationals;
- Foster mobility at postgraduate level, both for students and professors, generating a win-win situation for both the sending and the host universities;
- Move forward towards the awarding of multiple degrees with other institutions (and prepare the path for future joint degrees).

Erasmus Mundus is seen as 'the programme' to implement the key objectives of the international strategy at the coordinating institution. Therefore, it is a means to achieve the ends and to increase even further the internationalisation of the University of Granada⁴⁴.

- ***Has the number of third country students attending the department and university increased since the beginning of the EMMC?***

The Erasmus Mundus Programme provides an additional pool of students for the institutions involved. Although EM grants cover around 20 students per year and course, consortium partners consider this amount as 'significant' and state that the number of Third Country students in the departments of consortium universities has increased⁴⁵. This point is also reinforced by opinions

⁴⁴ According to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor of International Relations at the University of Granada, the University of Granada is the main recipient of Socrates-Erasmus students at EU level (with around 2,200 students per year) and the first sending institution at Spanish level (about 2,000 per year) in the framework of the Socrates-Erasmus programme.

⁴⁵ Information is obtained from the ECOTEC online survey to coordinators and partners.

from the Postgraduate School representatives at the coordinating institution, who emphasise that the number of applications received from Third Country nationals to follow postgraduate studies (in addition to Erasmus Mundus Master Courses) is now much higher.

The visibility of the brand is seen as a key factor for attracting additional Third Country students, essentially in Granada, participating in 4 EMMCs.

11.3.2 Impacts on students and scholars

- ***Perceived added value on future prospects of students***

GEMMA is seen to provide the necessary professional skills and competences for those working or intending to work in the areas of Women's Studies and Gender Studies across Europe. When finishing their Masters, students consider they are meant to have a substantial knowledge of different approaches to feminism and equal opportunities, allowing them to work in the public sector, Women's Institutes, related NGOs, etc. and increasing their chances to obtain a (better) job. Therefore, students consider their participation in GEMMA as a platform for future professional development. They emphasised the 'uniqueness' of the course and its differentiation compared to other 'typical' master courses (an added value for their professional future).

Moreover, GEMMA also provides a very strong conceptual and practical basis for those students who would like to progress to PhD level and continue their academic path after their Masters (four of the eight students who took part in the discussion group aim to progress to a PhD). Research links made by students at Action 1 and Action 3 institutions may also help both their future academic and professional development.

Regarding the impact on students' personal development, the sharing of experiences among people from different countries, as well as the appreciation of different ways of thinking brought in by students from different backgrounds is extremely valued. Students feel they acquired a more respectful and tolerant approach to coexistence among people and cultures (international understanding).

- ***Perceived added value on future prospects of scholars***

For scholars, the greatest impact of the EM-supported mobility period is in career development. Although scholars are, on average, over 50 and already have relevant experience, the mobility period allows for an in-depth exchange of experiences and knowledge between students, scholars and institutions. Moreover, it allows them to share their research findings with staff at the host institution and to obtain access to new literature and topics not available in their country. The mobility period also increases networking opportunities with teaching staff and it is an open door for future collaborative research.

Moreover, participation in the EM programme appears to give scholars an opportunity to learn how to manage a partnership at the institutional level, how to obtain the necessary resources, etc. and adapt what is learnt to the scholars' institutions of origin. In short, a very valuable institutional learning process. This is possible, for instance, at the coordinating institution where scholars were

in direct and close contact with the main coordinator of GEMMA and while being also responsible for managing Action 3 partnerships at their home institutions.

Two of the scholars interviewed (both coming from a Latin American institution) also had the possibility to compare the EU academic and intellectual level of scholars to the one in Latin America. According to them, this appears to be similar.

11.3.3 Policy impact and contribution to EU strategic goals

- ***Impact, if any, on comparability and recognition of qualifications within Europe (Bologna principles)***

The Common Agreement agreed by all partner universities establishes that GEMMA students must acquire 120 ECTS credits, including the compulsory mobility period, at one of the consortium universities. Before the first edition of the programme, participating institutions agreed to award national diplomas on successful completion of the 120 ECTS. GEMMA is recognised and has the approval of all consortium universities, being officially recognised by all countries concerned. Students are awarded double degrees from the two universities (home and partner institutions) where they have undertaken the studies. The GEMMA consortium has also designed its own Diploma Supplement, giving complete information on the eight different national grading systems and their equivalence in ECTS.

In addition, the intention of the consortium is to move towards the awarding of a joint degree in the near future.

11.4 Implementation issues

List and analyse the main difficulties and barriers encountered which have influenced the ability of course leaders to achieve their objectives and the extent to which these have been overcome

11.4.1 Main implementation difficulties

- Difficulties experienced in the administrative process of enrolment of a high number of students at 8 different institutions, centralised at the coordinating institution (i.e.: time consuming process, the need to have one person dedicated solely to the monitoring of the enrolment and its changes);
- Delays due to the re-organisation of the International Relations Office following the election of a new Rector of the coordinating institution, the University of Granada. This affected the process of the Consortium Agreement negotiation, since the new University's government had to revise the text and introduced changes which delayed the whole process;
- Not enough resources for financing more frequent meetings of 8 coordinators;

- Payment of the scholarship grant: Both students and scholars complained about the delays in scholarship payments (in some cases, the payment was done 2 months after their arrival at the host institution). Moreover, there was resistance from students from the 2007-09 edition to change from a three-monthly payment schedule to a monthly payment schedule (as suggested by the EACEA in order to comply with EM financial rules). The Executive Agency agreed on maintaining the three-monthly payment, but only for the first cohort of students (2007-09);
- Visa problems: A student from Bangladesh arrived late at ISH due to problems at the Slovenian embassy in India; another student from Cameroon left Poland (University of Lodz) for Christmas and was refused re-entry. Both problems were solved with direct assistance of the coordinating institution and the EACEA;
- Fee waiver policy: According to the EACEA, the fee waiver policy for non European and European students applied by the consortium is not in line with Erasmus Mundus rules. The Executive Agency considers that, if a fee waiver is granted, it should be the same for the whole consortium and independent on the mobility track of the students⁴⁶. Furthermore, it should be based on objective, non-discriminatory and transparent criteria⁴⁷. For the first two editions, all consortium universities were charging different fees to EU students. From the 2009-11 edition, this will be rectified and different fees at partner universities will be substituted by a common fee as requested by the Executive Agency.

11.4.2 Adequacy of the financial support

Financial support received by the consortium is seen as insufficient in relation to the programme objectives for running of a consortium with eight partners. Due to the centralisation of administrative procedures at the coordinating institution, it has been agreed by the consortium that the University of Granada will receive €700 of the tuition fees of each Third Country student (enrolled for GEMMA at any consortium university) for the expenses of the programme's technical coordination (the employment of one technical support staff). It appears that institutional funding in addition to the extra amount given by partner institutions per student to the coordinating institution cover all management and administration costs of the whole masters course.

The meetings of the GEMMA Steering Committee are financed by the Consortium flat rate grant. The large number of consortium members makes it difficult to organise more frequent face-to-face meetings because of budgetary restrictions. This problem is partially solved by means of organising meetings coinciding with other events such as the ATHENA network meetings, since all partners are part of the network except for the University of Hull.

During the first and second edition of the course, the GEMMA programme has been awarded a number of grants from governmental institutions for the development of the programme (from the

⁴⁷ EACEA's letter of acceptance of the 2008 Progress Report.

Spanish Ministry of Education, the Spanish Women's Institute and the newly created Spanish Ministry of Equality). These grants have made possible the invitation of renowned professors from other institutions to teach in the course, as well as to finance more technical support staff at the coordinating institution.

Moreover, European students in GEMMA have received a number of EU/regional/national scholarships for their mobility period. Seven students of the University of Granada have received the prestigious TALENTIA⁴⁸ grant of the regional Andalusian government for their mobility period in Bologna, Granada and CEU, since these partner universities are considered top high-quality European academic institutions by the Andalusian authorities. The rest of European students in Granada and Oviedo are able to receive a mobility grant from the Spanish Ministry of Education. Moreover, EU students across the consortium are also entitled to the Socrates-Erasmus grant.

Regarding the sustainability of the course, the general view among consortium members appear to be that the course would be viable in the long run without EU institutional funding (the current €15,000 grant is already seen as inadequate and insufficient for such a big consortium). However, scholarships for attracting Third Country students are required to guarantee the sustainability of GEMMA and a high number of applicants. Some concerns were also raised regarding the dependence of the course on current funding (mainly to attract Third Country students) as potential students could be dis-incentivised if they do not receive their scholarship.

The main coordinator of the GEMMA programme in Granada emphasized the fact that such a big consortium is not sustainable and she is aiming to reduce its size in the future, with only universities with the strongest economic potential being part of the consortium. So far, the consortium has been receiving external funds (mainly from the Spanish and Andalusian government) which have helped in the implementation of the GEMMA programme.

11.5 Added value and perceived relevance of Erasmus Mundus

11.5.1 "Added value"

- ***What has the EMMC brought the universities involved that they would not have been available to achieve / obtain without it?***

Erasmus Mundus has brought the creation of new units of management and administration (at the coordinating institution) and it has actually served to advance the European Space of Higher Education (i.e. the Spanish government has passed new legislation regarding postgraduate studies and joint degrees as a consequence of the experience of Spanish universities in the EM Programme).

The Erasmus Mundus brand and the scholarships involved have allowed the consortium to attract nationals from Third Countries previously unrepresented in the constituent departments. The

⁴⁸ Scholarship programme financed by the Andalusian government for EU students to participate in mobility periods at excellent EU universities. More info at <http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/innovacioncienciayempresa/talentia/index.jsp>

presence of Third Country students/scholars has also created a 'unique scientific environment', in which nationalities, race, genders and viewpoints intersect, and this has conducted to a creative brainstorming and fruitful discussions undertaken on course meetings and classes.

Apart from that, Erasmus Mundus has served as a channel to put into practice the international objectives set by consortium universities, namely the increase in numbers of Third Country students, the increase in mobility options for teachers and students as well as the strengthening of cooperation among EU institutions and between European and Third Country universities in:

- Future potential collaborative research;
- The institutionalisation of the already existent thematic networks: Although consortium institutions were already participating in some thematic and research networks such ATHENA, Erasmus Mundus allows them to 'institutionalise' their expertise with the creation of the GEMMA programme. The Programme also permits to build up new structured cooperation with Third Country institutions.

- ***What has the EMMC offered students and scholars and to what extent has the EMMC provided something that they could not have achieved elsewhere / on another course?***

The programme has permitted scholars from Third Countries to spend a mobility period in Europe and to interact with EU students and teaching staff. Moreover, some scholars also had the opportunity to be in more than one consortium institution, enriching even more their stay in Europe. Research possibilities and exchange of academic staff originated by the interaction of Action 1 and Action 3 universities would have been rather difficult without the programme.

Erasmus Mundus has changed teaching methodologies, with teachers and students benefiting from experiences of students and scholars from many different cultures of knowledge. Teachers and scholars appear to have gained more flexibility and more understanding in regards different personal and academic backgrounds as well as diversity issues. The programme has also created a challenge and a positive reinforcement for professors, an extra motivation linked to new, very motivated and mature students.

Moreover, students have had the opportunity to participate in a unique masters course bringing together all the expertise of EU postgraduate studies taught at consortium universities. This involves different perspectives from seven different European countries. Both the mobility period and the large pool of universities involved (with specialised modules and expertise) allow students to select their field of specialisation with an 'à-la-carte' programme tailored to their needs

Both students and scholars are aware of the significant grants they are receiving. However, the vast majority of grantees consider this funding as a pre-requisite to be able to come to study or teach in Europe. Without the scholarship, their participation in the programme would not have been possible due to high fees and living costs in Europe and the fact they come from low income countries.

- ***What has the EMMC / Action 3 partnership combination offered the third country institutions involved?***

Third Country institutions have benefited in the following ways:

1. The participation in EM is seen as a learning experience on the creation and management of a consortium;
2. It helps to attract potential PhD students from Europe (after the completion of their Action 3 mobility period) and benefit from their input when they are based in the Third Country institution;
3. It increases mobility for scholars of the Action 3 institution as mobility periods in Europe would be very costly without EU funding⁴⁹;
4. It institutionalises research and collaboration channels with European universities while spreading research and literature topics from the Action 3 institution to European universities, facilitating the exchange of knowledge and practices.

11.5.2 "Relevance"

- ***Has the programme overall allowed the institutions concerned to a) improve / expand the quality of their offer and b) attract additional talented students and scholars (based on findings above)***

Erasmus Mundus is seen as a very good instrument to expand the quality of offer at consortium universities. The consortium has brought together eight EU institutions representing seven different countries and cultures across Europe, being representative of the wide span of European feminism (Northern, Southern, Eastern, Western and Central Europe). It collects the best offer of courses at the partner institutions, all of them being complementary to each other. Therefore, it can be considered *the* masters in Women's and Gender Studies in Europe. All consortium universities have increased excellence in their offer by involving all other partners.

Students have been attracted by the wide choice of mobility and partner institutions (for the 3rd semester) and the large variety of course modules available at the universities involved, which allow them to choose their desired career path and specialisation. Although the number of applications received by each partner may vary (with Granada, Hull and Utrecht attracting more students than the other partners), all partner institutions have been able to attract a bigger pool of non-European students and increase the number of applications from parts of the world from which they did not receive applicants. Moreover, it is worth noting that GEMMA also allowed the universities involved to attract talented EU students. As explained by the main coordinator and staff from the University of Granada Postgraduate School, both Third Country students' application numbers and EU students' application numbers are higher compared to other 'typical' masters programmes⁵⁰. The higher number of applications received compared to 'typical' courses ensures that there are more high quality candidates in comparison with other courses.

GEMMA has been able to attract highly qualified scholars. The first selected scholar in 2009 obtained a assessment score of 98.5 out of 100. Scholars who have already participated in the

⁴⁹ In the case of GEMMA, some Action 2 scholars were also Action 3 coordinators from a non-European university.

⁵⁰ Concerning Third Country applicants, this has been corroborated by the ECOTEC online survey to coordinators and partners.

programme normally have a long experience in teaching and research and a consistent track record in publications and papers. Moreover, due to additional funding obtained from Spanish authorities by the coordinating institution, the consortium has been able to invite renowned scholars from outside Europe to give some lectures to GEMMA students.

- ***To what extent has this allowed the institutions concerned to address what they perceived as their real needs?***

The consortium members have internally benefited from 'added value' by institutionalising their long-standing collaboration and collective expertise at European level in postgraduate training in Women's and Gender studies and platforms such as the ATHENA network. This is seen as a joint venture that contributes towards the construction of the European identity and the European Space of Higher Education, by integrating institutions from the North, South, East, West and Centre of Europe). The consortium institutions perceive the GEMMA programme as a pilot experience to allow them to advance towards Bologna principles. This is in line with the key international strategy objectives at partner institutions, which also include the increase of mobility for students and scholars and the attraction of new (and talented) students. Erasmus Mundus Actions 2 and 3 are the tools to achieve these objectives and, at the same time, increase the visibility and prestige of the participating institutions.

In conclusion, the Erasmus Mundus programme generates benefits for all parties involved. Excellent students and scholars, with the support of Action 2 grants, are able to come and study/teach in Europe. Their interaction and their contribution to the course generates a 'unique scientific environment' for the exchange of practices, knowledge, methodologies, research findings... which represents an added-value learning experience for all involved. On the other hand, universities are able to increase the number of talented Third Country students/scholars they receive while, at the same time, advancing towards the implementation of Bologna principles and build up on existent and new research collaborative networks with EU and Third Country institutions

12.0 IMESS: International Masters in Economy, State and Society

Course title	International Masters in Economy, State and Society (IMESS)
Coordinating institution	School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES), University College London (UCL), United Kingdom
Partner institutions	Charles University Prague, Czech Republic Corvinus University Budapest, Hungary Jagiellonian University Krakow, Poland University of Helsinki, Finland University of Tartu, Estonia
Start date	Academic Year 2007/2008 (first cohort started 09/2007)
Course length	24 months (120 ECTS)
Course objectives and content	The objective of the course is to provide in-depth multi-disciplinary study of Central and Eastern Europe and Russia through an integrated study programme and “immersion” in the language and society of two countries. Intensive training in the language of the intended second-year destination is a key element.
Target student cohort	The course is aimed at both those students intending to follow an academic path (e.g. progress to taking a PhD) and those looking to make a career in the public and private sectors. The target cohort size is up to 30 students per year.
Training paths	All students spend the first year at UCL, before moving on to one of the partner universities in the second year. A 15,000-20,000 word research dissertation is produced in English. There are three study tracks: Nation, History and Society; Economics and Business; and Politics and Security. All non-language elements are taught in English.
Degree awarded	The degree awarded is MA, specifically a double degree awarded by UCL and the relevant partner institution, together with a joint Diploma Supplement.
Action 3 partnerships	The IMESS partnership decided not to participate at this stage. This aspect was not considered a priority during the first few years of this relatively new course. Not applicable.

12.1 Outputs

12.1.1 The course

- ***Overview of syllabus and mobility paths proposed to students***

The IMESS course is a two-year programme, with the first year spent at the co-ordinating institution, the School of Slavonic and East European Studies (SSEES) at University College London (UCL). Students choose one of the partner institutions to study at for the second year. Depending on their choice for the second year of study, students take intensive course in the appropriate language to allow them to reach a certain level of competence in using original source materials in that language. Students are not permitted to select a language in which they have already achieved a high level of proficiency prior to joining the course. The language element plays a key role in the distinctiveness of the course; and is considered central to learning about and understanding the cultural context and research methods of the host country.

There are three academic tracks onto which students can enrol:

- Track 1: Nation, History and Society;
- Track 2: Economics and Business; and
- Track 3: Politics and Security.

There were originally four tracks. Track 1 is the result of a merger between the original Nation & Society and History & Culture tracks after the first cohort had completed the first year at UCL. The tracks are designed to give a disciplinary focus but multi- and inter-disciplinary approaches are fostered across the programme as a whole. As well as language training (16 ECTS), students in Year 1 all receive a grounding in track-specific research methods (8 ECTS), a compulsory multidisciplinary research methods course (12 ECTS), specialist elective courses (24 ECTS), together with a compulsory, common, but non-assessed research skills course, and attend a series of research seminars. The intention is that the first year prepares the students to be able to maximise the benefit of studying in their Year 2 location, culturally and intellectually. In the second year students continue language training (10-15 ECTS), take further specialist elective courses (10-18 ECTS) and produce a dissertation (30-40 ECTS). The aim is to produce students who can complete a PhD within three years of the IMESS or enter the labour market.

There are about 140 students in total at SSEES, taking 11 different Masters Courses. IMESS is materially different from these: the other courses are all one year in duration, except one offered through the associated UK Centre for East European Language Based Area Studies (CEELBAS)⁵¹, (MRes in East European Studies, which like IMESS is also two years), and because of the diversity of the EM scholarship students. IMESS course modules are shared with other Masters courses. Although fully integrated within the wider portfolio of masters at SSEES, IMESS is clearly seen by the course management team as having a distinct and separate identity and the EM students represent a strong and cohesive cohort.

⁵¹ <http://www.ceelbas.ac.uk/>

The study period lasts 20 months, from September to July. Then first cohort of 20 (17 Third Country and three EU students) started in September 2007 and these students are now at their second Year institution. The second IMESS cohort was enrolled in September 2008 and is currently at UCL.

- **Brief overview of teaching approach including number of teaching staff deployed**

The research and teaching capacity is in place across the consortium institutions to ensure relevant compulsory and elective modules are available to students, and the opportunity to study research subjects in the context of the relevant host country is a very strong feature, and may make the course unique in this respect. Geographical mobility therefore aligns with geographical research context. Inter-disciplinarity is explicitly promoted and encouraged. In total, SSEES staff resources comprise ten Professors, two Readers, 14 Senior Lecturers, 17 Lecturers, three Lectors, six Senior Teaching Fellows (language) and seven Teaching Fellows (languages). This amounts to 52.8 FTE for the academic period 2008-2009. At UCL eleven staff members deliver modules relevant to the IMESS Economics and Business track for example. For Year 2 of the NHS track at Jagiellonian University for example, ten lecturers are listed as delivering relevant modules. Similar staff resources would appear to be applied across the IMESS course.

- **Qualifications awarded**

The degree awarded is a double MA degree awarded by UCL and the relevant partner institution, together with a joint Diploma Supplement. The consortium intends to eventually awarding joint degrees for IMESS.

12.1.2 The students

Table 12.1: Applications, candidates selected, students starting and graduations

		2007-2009	2008-2010	2009-2011
Applications	Non-EU	46	163	267
	EU			19 ⁵²
	TOTAL	97	182	286
Admitted candidates	Non-EU	46	65	185
	EU			
	TOTAL	22	23	
Students <i>starting</i> course	EM scholarship	16	17	19
	Other non-EU		0	
	EU	3 ⁵³	3 ⁵⁴	2
	TOTAL	19	20	21

⁵² For an IMESS bursary, introduced from 2009

⁵³ From the UK, Slovakia and Estonia (all self-funded)

⁵⁴ From Spain and Germany, supported through national funding

		2007-2009	2008-2010	2009-2011
Students <i>graduating</i>	EM scholarship			
	Other non-EU			
	EU			
	TOTAL			

Data provided by the programme coordinator

There are currently (beginning of 2009) about 50 students on the IMESS programme drawn from 23 different countries (Belarus, Canada, China, Estonia, Germany, Ghana, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Montenegro, Nigeria, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Taiwan, Thailand, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, United Kingdom and United States)⁵⁵. From 2009, two IMESS bursaries (funded from internal UCL resources) are available per year for EU students, which meet the cost of course fees.

Of the three tracks offered, Economics & Business attracts the most applications, followed by Politics & Security and Nation, History and Society. Demand appears fairly consistent across the three years; with E&B having 50-60%, P&S 25-30% and NHS around 20%. In terms of geographical preferences, the Czech Republic and Finland are the most popular second year destinations, with Estonia the least popular choice. Again, this pattern appears reasonably consistent across the period 2007, 2008 and 2009. It should be noted however that the E&B track tends to attract a more diverse range of applicants and a higher proportion of ineligible or very poor quality applications; while applicants for the other tracks tend to have thought through their goals more thoroughly. Targeted marketing of the course has been carried out, specifically to solicit applications from China, Russia, Ukraine and the United States, and this has proved successful.

For the academic year 2007-2008 only two applications were received from prospective Action 2 scholars, although three places were available. A scholar from Uzbekistan went to Krakow and one from the Ukraine was hosted by SSEES. For 2008-2009, applications increased to nine, as a result of which three scholarships were awarded (Bangladesh to Krakow, Armenia to Prague and Russia to SSEES/UCL).

The IMESS course has operated successfully for the first year and a half, although the original target complement of 30 students per year has not been realised as a result of a shortfall of EU students (target was 20 from Third Countries, which has been achieved, plus 10 from the EU). The rate of applications to the course has risen rapidly over the three recruitment cycles and the consortium appear satisfied with the demand is sufficient to ensure enough high quality candidates are available. Five visiting scholars have been supported under Action 2 over two academic cycles, rather than the six originally envisaged. This reflects the limited time available for recruitment in the first year, which resulted in only two applications. However, the number of applications has reached satisfactory levels in subsequent years.

⁵⁵ Source: www.imess.eu

In terms of gender, the data available indicates that for 2008 admissions there were six male and 13 female students.

12.1.3 Action 2 scholars

To date five visiting scholars have been supported, each of them from one of the following countries: Armenia, Bangladesh, Russia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Three of them were female and two were male.

For the academic year 2007-2008, only two applications were received from prospective Action 2 scholars, although three places were available. Both were awarded grants. The lack of applicants reflects the relatively short timescale for mobilisation following the launch of the IMESS course and the need to focus on the administrative arrangements for the students. For 2008-2009, nine applications were received, and the full complement of three scholarships was awarded.

12.2 Results

12.2.1 The course – relevant, high quality with a European dimension?

- ***Is the curriculum well structured and integrated?***

The IMESS course appears well structured, coherent and in addition has been adapted to respond to early experience in operation (reducing the number of tracks from four to three, strengthening training in quantitative methods from 4 ECTS to 8 ECTS and introducing new core modules in 2009-2009 for example). The design and structure is based on a sound rationale, both for the Masters course in itself, but which also aligns it closely with the added value principles of the Erasmus Mundus programme, focusing on trans-national education and including a strong element of recognising and learning from the diversity of research traditions, cultures and methods. Despite the relatively high financial cost to students (a large proportion of the scholarship grant goes in tuition fees⁵⁶), demand is still high, and has almost trebled in the three years that applications have been open. The mobility element is an intrinsic part of the course rationale and structure, rather than an add-on; with language training as a central element designed to enable students to immerse themselves in the culture and draw upon original source documents for their research.

- ***Is the content of the course "cutting edge" and how does it compare to other similar courses in Europe and beyond? (consider how many other similar courses exist).***

In terms of course design, this draws on the strengths of each institution and the relevant academic disciplines. Some research was carried out to assess demand and make sure students' needs would be met by the final course design. For example, it was identified that there was a particular interest from China in comparative economics and political systems. The course is aimed to appeal to a broad range of interests and to promote inter-disciplinary study, while highlighting clear thematic paths. It was quickly recognised that the initial structure was perhaps too restrictive,

⁵⁶ These amount to €14,800 per year for Third Country students and €6,250 per year for EU students. In the first year these all go to UCL and in the second they are apportioned to partner institutions according to an agreed calculation.

hence the reduction in the number of tracks. It is now much easier for students to map out their own study path through the syllabus. Students are provided with a list of broad topic areas for dissertations, which are designed to be coherent with the elective modules available. Applicants must outline the type of dissertation they are considering and its theme.

The partners are described by the IMESS management team as leading institutions and the partnership is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding. As co-coordinator, UCL has a strict policy of only signing cooperation agreements with institutions of high standing and where there are concrete activities and benefits for all parties, and pre-existing working links. Governance arrangements appear appropriate: an IMESS Management Board (comprising representatives of all partners plus external experts) oversees the programme, and an IMESS Programme Committee (comprising programme directors and an elected student representative) reports to the Board. All changes to the programme must be approved by the Committee and Board.

The applications procedure is centralised and administered by UCL. An IMESS admissions panel makes recommendations to the Programme Committee based on commonly agreed selection criteria. Applications from potential Action 2 scholars go directly to the relevant institutions. The partnership arrangements appear to be working well so far; although it is acknowledged by the IMESS co-ordination team that new challenges will have to be met as the first student cohort moves through its second year at partner institutions.

The two-year duration of the course (unusual for the UK institution) appears particularly appropriate in the experience of the co-ordinator, given that a shorter course would not allow sufficient time to prepare thoroughly for the period spent in the New Member State partner institution.

- ***What Quality Assurance mechanisms are used to ensure a) the quality of the course content (ie content of individual modules / components of the course) and b) the overall coherence of the curriculum (how the different elements fit together)?***

The Quality Assurance mechanism used has a number of elements: national accreditation systems (for either the institution or the specific programme according to local practice); QA procedures in each institution; QA procedures agreed for the IMESS programme itself and operated by the consortium. The latter appear rigorous and well designed – for example, each institution has defined courses through outlines, learning outcomes and objectives consistent with the overall objective of the programme; all new modules must pass internal quality controls and confirmed by the IMESS programme committee, and student feedback questionnaires are used extensively to identify emerging problem areas.

- ***How have quality procedures from the host institutions been adapted / integrated into the EMMC?***

To progress to Year 2, students must normally pass modules worth 60 ECTS, although re-sits are permitted where students have failed fewer than 16 ECTS. Examination processes are those of UCL in the first year and the host university in the second. The IMESS Management Board has overall responsibility for ensuring common quality standards. As part of efforts to ensure this

consistency and work towards truly integrated QA, a number of steps are being taken or are under consideration with respect to examinations, and in particular the assessment of dissertations (where different academic cultures and traditions come into play). This would require some form of cross-consortium marking system. Under consideration at the moment is a system where SSEES/UCL carries out an initial screening of a research dissertation, it is then passed to be marked by the relevant partners. The final stage is for the work to be considered by an Exam Board comprising the programme committee plus external experts. Two external examiners have also been appointed, who will be sent a selection to review to ensure consistency.

- ***Has the course been able to deploy the most appropriate teaching staff?***

The teaching staff deployed all have experience and a disciplinary focus appropriate to the content and rationale of the IMESS course. The strengths of each institution are drawn upon to provide the required expertise. At the partner institution the Jagiellonian University, Krakow teaching staff for the EM course are selected from various parts of the wider university, including specialists from other institutions.

- ***How do students perceive the quality and organisation of the course?***

A sample of seven students, consulted at SSEES as part of the evaluation, perceived the quality and organisation of the first year of the course at SSEES to be very strong. No evidence is yet available on their experiences in the second year at one of the five partner institutions. Students place particular value on the reputation of UCL and the partner institutions, the high quality of teaching and research, the language element and cultural exposure, and the opportunity to study in New Member States. The organisation at SSEES is considered by students to be very strong and the IMESS staff very supportive, approachable, responsive and communicative. The transparency and lack of a hierarchy was commented on positively. Course leadership at SSEES appears particularly strong.

There were mixed feelings about some of the methodological modules (this may reflect the different academic backgrounds of students), but the general high quality of course was highlighted by students. Some thought that the size of seminar and discussion groups was too large (at around 20) to allow full participation. Language training was seen as challenging but valuable, and was the subject that seemed to cause most anxiety, together with difficulties in accessing computer facilities. Some felt more contact time for language teaching would be beneficial. Overall, the course (at SSEES) was viewed as very academic, challenging, internationally-orientated, flexible and high quality. Those favouring a route to a PhD particularly welcomed the preparation that a two-year masters course can provide.

The generally positive perception of the course seen at the student focus group is supported by evidence from the results of feedback questionnaires completed by students. Analysis of feedback from 2007-2008 (collected in July 2008) shows a high rate of satisfaction with programme organisation, pastoral support, content, library, workload and assessment (all scoring an average of more than 4.0 out of 5.0); but with some recurring concerns (albeit in the context of an overall high level of satisfaction) about the focus of language training, lack of advice on careers or internships, and some deficiencies in course feedback (some individuals highlighted the excessive

time it took to receive this). However, the feedback seems to acknowledge that some of the problems encountered were to be expected for a new course and that they were being addressed as far as SSEES itself was able to do so (for example the issue of language training has been explored and adjustments made). There were mixed experiences of accommodation (high cost, difficulties in finding it), which is not unexpected for London-based institutions.

- ***Has the course been able to provide suitable academic facilities (equipment / labs / libraries / computing facilities etc)?***

The library facilities and academic resources at SSEES are a very significant asset for the School and for IMESS students. With a history dating back to 1915, SSEES provides one of the most important resources of information for teaching and research on Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union in the UK. It holds some 400,000 printed volumes and more than 190 archive collections, including an extensive number of audio-visual materials (films, TV programmes etc.). News programmes from relevant countries are recorded regularly. As noted above, students did express some concerns that at busy times, access to computers and resources (e.g. required reading) could be problematic.

- ***Does the course offer internships or other mechanisms to allow students to gain work experience?***

Internships are not offered, in line with the nature and scope of the field of study. While it might be possible to identify and offer such opportunities, neither students nor staff expressed any concerns about this issue.

- ***Has the course been able to provide suitable non-academic support after selection (visas / housing / social aspects)?***

In terms of non-academic support, students rated this as very good. Practical problems concerning visas or accommodation appear to have been resolved rapidly by SSEES and overall the institution was considered very supportive. It was also noted that the IMESS cohort was quite cohesive and there were strong links with the previous cohort, which is now located in the various second-year universities. To some extent this positive experience reflects the context of a very “internationalised” institution. Feedback also shows the role of the course co-ordinator at SSEES has been central to its success in providing a supportive and positive atmosphere in which to study. At partner institution the Jagellonian University in Krakow a dedicated member of staff is charged with taking care of the interests of the EM students – this student advisor is responsible for providing assistance with day-to-day needs (e.g. health, accommodation and so on).

12.2.2 Excellent students?

- ***Evidence on qualifications of students accepted onto course***

Three sources of evidence are available to inform an assessment of the quality of IMESS students: data from the application procedures (including level of competition for places on the course), the views of teaching staff, and interviews with students themselves to explore their motivation and career plans. A selection of CVs was also available on the IMESS website.

- ***Do course leaders and teachers believe the students attracted are of high quality? (including compared to the average standard in their department)***

Evidence from a focus group discussion with five IMESS lecturers provided further evidence concerning the quality of students. It was noted that after a “slower” start than mainstream students, the IMESS cohort quickly overcame any issues and showed themselves to be more mature, flexible and better able to make inter-disciplinary connections than students taking mainstream UK masters courses at the same institution. EM students’ aptitude for learning was considered to be good, as was their ability to identify their needs clearly. They were described by the lecturers as proactive, serious and self-directed. It was also highlighted that the IMESS students provide valuable input and new perspectives to the school (drawing on their wider background and experience), which is welcomed by staff. It was noted there was a strong sense of community among the IMESS cohort. The IMESS model is considered very positively by the lecturers consulted, compared with the normal one-year masters model. The staff regarded the students as important promoters of the EM brand.

Some issues had arisen with the language training, including the major challenge in learning a new language in such a short time, as well as whether the purpose was academic or pastoral. Changes have been made and it appears some of the issues are being resolved. The issue concerning language training concerns the way it is delivered, rather than questioning the underlying rationale and objective.

12.2.3 The visiting scholars (academics)

- ***Are they of high quality? (what were they doing before (teaching, research, publishing)?, how were they identified and selected?)***

Feedback reports provided by two visiting scholars were available, together with the scholarship contract for an incoming scholar, giving details of planned activities. While the two feedback reports suggest visiting scholars benefited greatly from access to academic resources and had very productive and stimulating interactions, both highlighted the need for greater integration with host institutions and more formal arrangements for making and demonstrating tangible contributions to the course in the form of teaching and publishing research results. Similar results were reported by the partner institution Jagellonian University, Krakow: while the visiting scholar from Uzbekistan undertook some limited teaching and was able to observe teaching methods, activity mostly concerned research and it proved difficult to achieve integration over the three-month period).

The proposed activities of the third visiting scholar appear appropriate – in particular, in this case, there are concrete plans to deliver a series of lectures to students at Charles University. In conclusion, the visiting scholarship component of IMESS is still evolving. In particular the need for better integration with host institutions is recognised and is being addressed, as is the need for scholars to provide stronger teaching inputs to the course.

12.3 Impact – "additionality" and wider effects

12.3.1 Impacts of Higher Education institutions – supply and demand

- ***Does the course provide something new, which would not have been provided if the programme had not existed?***

The course has provided something new; in terms of design, content, student cohort and not least the two-year duration compared with the one-year Masters course more usual in the UK. It is clear that the course would probably not have been developed without the EM programme, and there is no evidence to suggest that IMESS has displaced pre-existing provision.

- ***Has the experience of the course had wider impacts on the departments and institutions concerned (e.g. on other courses and provision, on quality procedures etc)?***

In several ways, the internal aspirations and strategies of UCL and SSEES map strongly to the objectives of EM. So as UCL/SSEES aims to become a pre-eminent location for post-graduate education, it benefits from being associated with the EM brand, receiving a boost in its global positioning as a result. In addition, SSEES agenda to build partnerships with universities in the geographical area of study corresponds well to EM objectives concerning fostering excellence in EU HE, building a European HE area and finding innovative ways to work jointly across academic traditions and systems. The SSEES managers acknowledge the valuable opportunity their involvement with EM has provided to revitalize their post-graduate training and reflect on how they can re-structure their courses. In particular the experience has demonstrated to them the value of a two-year approach to masters training, which is now influencing their future approach. SSEES also benefited from a funding injection of £6 million from the UK government for capacity building at about the same time as the EM course was developed. This has funded the CEELBAS⁵¹ centre - a joint initiative with UCL, Oxford and Birmingham Universities leading a consortium of seven others involved in research in the field.

- ***Has the programme made the departments more "internationally oriented"?***

UCL has a commitment to promoting "global citizenship", and to "position difference at the heart of everything they do". It is an explicit aim to prepare students for an international environment and expose them to what it means to work across boundaries. This ethos fits very well with SSEES's interests in working within the context of the geographical area they are studying. UCL acknowledges the benefit of what they describe as the "halo effect" from SSEES's participation with the EM programme. This implies that SSEES's association with EM raises its profile and credibility in the academic marketplace as well as reinforces UCL's commitment to "global citizenship". SSEES would also argue that the EM programme helps institutions to move away from a hierarchical system towards autonomous learning (where students "stretch" teachers) and learning communities. It is SSEES management's view that the EM brand is becoming stronger in some parts of the world, especially in China and Russia, and that it is identified with "excellence" – i.e. it is considered to convey that image. There is also some evidence that where applicants have had offers from other courses they have opted for IMESS, probably partly because of the EM brand but also because of the UCL brand. It may therefore be fair to say that the institutional and EM

brands benefit from each other. Evidence from discussions with students also suggests the EM brand has growing value as a badge of quality and useful factor in building a career.

12.3.2 Impact on students and scholars

- ***Perceived added value on future prospects of students and scholars (perceptions of students and scholars principally)***

Evidence from the focus group discussion with students suggests a highly motivated, flexible and resilient group, from a variety of backgrounds and with very different career paths envisaged. Several had had offers (to take other courses) from other institutions, but had opted for the EM route. Some are from the field of public administration and will return to that role; others favour an academic path and progressing to a PhD; while others have a career in a commercial business in mind (around risk management or investment for example). This mixture is probably a positive feature, widening the experience of students and the value of the course. It also suggests the course has successfully managed to appeal to both academically-minded students and those whose intend to seek employment after graduation. Feedback from questionnaire show that students are convinced of the high value of the IMESS degree in terms their future career path. This is supported by the students CVs, which in most cases highlight the prestige of being awarded an EM scholarship.

It was the experience of the course leaders that the original duration of the visits by scholars (three months) was impractical and a period of two to three weeks was more appropriate (as is now the case). In terms of the experiences of the visiting scholars themselves and their contribution to the IMESS programme, the outcomes appear mixed for the first academic year. While the visits were of significant value to the beneficiary scholars and host institutions (as evidenced by the scholars' reports they were required to complete by IMESS), it is probably fair to say they were less full integrated into IMESS than was desirable. As a result, IMESS management agreed that, whereas the focus must be on their research, subsequent visiting scholars would be asked to contribute towards teaching and give seminars on their work in progress.

12.3.3 Policy impact and contribution to EU strategic goals

- ***Impact, if any, on comparability and recognition of qualifications within Europe (Bologna principles)***

In terms of Bologna, the view of UCL is that homogenization would be detrimental and that the different systems can not only work together, but we can draw strength from each other and to lose some of the distinctive elements would be damaging. The key for UCL is to provide the opportunity for interactions between systems so that institutions across Europe can draw on the strengths of each and use increased knowledge to reflect on their own national and local practice. Involvement in the EM programme provides one focus for doing this. Partner institution the Jagellonian University, Krakow reported that the system in Poland is moving towards a Bologna ("3+2") model, whereas previously the norm was a five-year degree.

12.4 Implementation issues

12.4.1 Main issues linked to implementation

- **List and analyse the main difficulties and barriers encountered which have influenced the ability of course leaders to achieve their objectives and the extent to which these have been overcome**

The IMESS course is still in its relative infancy and few significant implementation issues appear to have arisen, while those that have seem to have been addressed adequately. The next phase of the programme, when the first cohort completes its year at the various partner institutions and the first students receive their degrees, may well provide further challenges. One of the most significant issues concerns financing.

12.4.2 Financial support

- **Include consideration of the adequacy of the financial support provided by the programme in relation to objectives. (funding to course, level of scholarships, funding for third country partnerships if relevant)**

In line with UK practice, the tuition fees are high compared with other countries (€14,800 for third country and €6,250 for EU students) and for EM students this means that once the fees are paid very little is left of from the scholarship grant to meet everyday living expenses. The practical implication of this for IMESS students at UCL is that it is not uncommon for them to have a part-time job. While it is unclear whether this has a detrimental effect on academic performance, it is of concern to SSEES and ways are being examined for securing additional financial support. From 2009, two IMESS bursaries (funded from internal UCL resources) are available per year for EU students, which meet the cost of course fees. The partner institution interviewed expressed satisfaction with the numbers of students it hosted, which it considered appropriate in terms of management and support needs.

Concerning sustainability, the IMESS course would not have come into being without EM and EM funding, but the strength and value of it is such that SSEES would probably continue to run the course (i.e. find alternative sources of funding) if EM support was no longer available.

12.5 Added value and perceived relevance of Erasmus Mundus

- **What has the EMMC brought the universities involved that they would not have been available to achieve / obtain without it?**

There is compelling evidence of significant added value concerning a number of dimensions of IMESS, its implementing institutions and the EM programme itself.

The EM-supported IMESS course has brought a number of key benefits to SSEES in particular in terms of adding value to the overall UCL internationalisation strategy, providing a course that was not available before, which is probably unique in the world and one which supports the school's academic mission (*inter alia* to ensure that economics is placed within a political, cultural and

historical context). IMESS allows the further development of concrete and productive partnerships with key institutions in the geographical area of focus and promotes reflection on different academic traditions and research methods. SSEES has also benefited from the contributions of IMESS students – in terms of their academic inputs, wide range of perspectives and active involvement in the life of the school. They have proved to be proactive, focused and flexible and have widened the diversity of the student body. In addition, SSEES's experience of IMESS has influenced its thinking to look more favourably than before on two-year as opposed to one-year masters courses.

- ***What has the EMMC offered students and scholars and to what extent has the EMMC provided something that they could not have achieved elsewhere / on another course?***
IMESS offers students something they cannot obtain elsewhere and the opportunity to study within the cultural and national context of the thematic subject of investigation. In particular, the strong emphasis on the language element is highly valued, insofar as it provides the added dimension of providing students with the skills they require to draw on original sources for research while also providing for immersion in the relevant culture.

12.5.1 Relevance

- ***Has the programme overall allowed the institutions concerned to a) improve / expand the quality of their offer and b) attract additional talented students and scholars (based on findings above)***
The EM programme has allowed the IMESS partners and in particular SSEES as coordinator and prime mover, to improve and expand the scope and quality of its offer, and thereby to attract additional talented students and scholars.
- ***To what extent has this allowed the institutions concerned to address what they perceived as their real needs?***
Participation in the EM programme has allowed the institutions concerned to address real needs (of the institutions and the sector in general) and satisfy real demand from third country and EU students. This applies in particular to the contribution to internationalisation strategies, benefiting from the inputs of high quality students from other cultures and working towards common goals with partners from different academic traditions.