D7.1. GUIDELINES

For the development of RUN-EU Joint Programmes

June 2021

Contents

1   Introduction

The following guidelines are based on the RUN-EU [Report D7.2](#). which deals with the development of RUN-EU Collaborative Degree Programmes.

Because of this contingent relationship when developing RUN-EU Joint Programmes, it is also recommended to become familiar with the contents of the RUN-EU [Report D7.2](#). This report focuses in detail on the national and European legislation as well as on recognition and quality assurance frameworks and RUN-EU specific targets.

Disclaimer: This document is intended to be a guideline for the development of Joint Programmes. While every effort has been taken to be as inclusive as possible, there may be changes and supplements to the content of this document.

2   Aim of this report

The aim of this report is to present guidelines and to provide practical information for the development of Joint Programmes within the parameters of the RUN-EU Network. It is important to note these guidelines are not intended to be a step-by-step guide for the development of Joint Programmes. Their purpose is rather to serve as an orientation and to refer to already existing professional tools, which should be used for the development of Joint Programmes. Furthermore, these guidelines contain relevant, RUN-EU specific criteria, which should be considered when developing RUN-EU Joint Programmes.

The overall aim is to provide the RUN-EU Network and other universities in Europe with a reasonable set of useful practice-based tools and guidelines for developing and implementing Joint Programmes.

3   Development of RUN-EU Joint Programmes

The development of a new Joint Programme has many elements which require careful consideration. The fundamental priority to programme development is the adherence to excellent quality standards.

3.1   The Joint Programme Checklist

To ensure that all relevant topics required in the development of a Joint Programme are considered, it is highly recommended to use the [Joint Program Checklist of the European Consortium for Accreditation in higher education (ECA)](#), which is anchored by quality assurance principles.

In addition, it is highly recommended to use the [ECA Website](#). The ECA Website has a range of resources that can be referenced to facilitate Joint Programme development. For example, the ECA Coordination Point provides guidance and assistance for quality assurance and accreditation of Joint Programmes. Furthermore, the Coordination Point provides all the essential background information for both quality assurance agencies and Joint Programmes.

Additionally, the publication Joint Programmes from A to Z provides information on all relevant issues relating to developing, coordinating and sustaining high quality Joint Programmes.

4 Accreditation of Joint Programmes

4.1 European Approach for Accreditation

RUN-EU Joint Programmes should, whenever possible, be accredited within the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes. The European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes, which has been adopted by European Ministers responsible for higher education, has been developed to ease external quality assurance of these programmes. It defines standards that are based on the agreed tools of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), without applying additional national criteria. This is expected to facilitate integrated approaches to quality assurance of Joint Programmes, which genuinely reflect and mirror their joint character. European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)

The European Approach is available to all higher education systems in Austria, Finland, Hungary and the Netherlands. Although the European Approach is accepted in the Netherlands, for Joint programmes that are newly developed, an additional assessment on macro-efficiency and an initial accreditation process must be carried out. In Portugal and Ireland, the European Approach is available to some higher education institutions under specific conditions. Therefore, it is necessary to clarify the relevant terms before starting the development of Joint Programmes.

4.1.1 The European Approach Online Toolkit
If accreditation of Joint Programmes by the European Approach is planned, it is highly recommended to become familiar with the European Approach Online Toolkit, as this is a very practical and excellent resource. This toolkit consists of written explanations and step-by-step video guidelines.

4.2 Alternative accreditation options for Joint Programmes

If the European Approach to accreditation is not available, programmes will have to be accredited based on the national accreditation frameworks of each participating RUN-EU University. This will have to be timed carefully as all Joint Programmes need to be accredited before the start of the programme, regardless of if they lead to a Joint, Double or Multiple Degree.

5 RUN-EU specific requirements for Joint Programmes

When developing new RUN-EU Joint Programmes, it is highly important to consider and implement the following criteria / priorities.

5.1   Enabling students to design their own flexible curricula

In the RUN-EU WP6, a variety of Short Advanced Programmes jointly offered by different RUN-EU partner institutions will be developed (see results of WP6). To ensure students can benefit from this additional course offering, and to enable them to design their own flexible learning paths, it is highly recommended that the consortium in charge of the development of Joint Programmes takes responsibility to facilitate this. This involves adoption of the curricular structure of the entire degree programme that takes into consideration these options and allows the necessary flexibility.

This means that flexible learning paths need to be considered in the curricular structure of the entire Joint Programme. This includes relevant time frames for elective courses (Short Advanced Programmes, for example, or any other educational offering/courses within the RUN-EU Alliance), as well as robust recognition processes already planned at the beginning. Micro Credentials which represent flexible elements need to be considered as well.

5.2   Ensure regional & RUN-EU thematic focus

When developing Joint Programmes, it is significant to consider the importance of the multinational interregional alliance and the collaborative potential of the innovation ecosystems linked to the European Innovation Hubs to be established in the RUN-EU network.

To enable students to develop cutting edge knowledge and skills in order to face future industrial and societal challenges, the new RUN-EU Joint Programmes should be closely linked to the outputs of the WP2 and the WP5. These Work Package outputs deal with the proposed and existing Regional Innovation Clusters the future European Innovation Hubs (WP2) and the RUN-EU Discovery Programme (WP5).

It is envisioned that the consortium in charge of the development of a Joint Programme interacts with the mentioned WPs and considers their results. The recommended prioritised areas defined are:
- Future Industry and Sustainable Regional Development
- Bio-economy
- Social Innovation

It is also recommended that the consortium developing the Joint Programme ensures that the below mentioned research clusters identified by the WP5 are considered:
- Creative Art, Design and Materials Thinking
- Food & Biotechnology
- Tourism
- Internet of Things (IOT) & Cybersecurity
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Climate Change – Circular Economy & Decarbonisation
- Education & Social Sciences
- Health & Wellbeing

5.3   Ensuring inclusiveness

Ensuring inclusiveness, multiculturalism and connectivity to society are further top priorities of the RUN-EU network. Therefore, it is also very important to remove barriers to learning and improve access to quality education to enable young people to benefit from the best education and training to help them find employment across Europe. It is to be ensured that the perspectives of the participating universities get considered, but also the perspectives of the established Student Advisory Board have been considered regarding these topics. The Student Advisory Board advises the Management Committee as well as several work packages on the design of new, and the alteration of existing programmes, with a view to enhancing social inclusion and social diversity among the student body. Inclusiveness, multiculturalism and connectivity to society are, among others, also the core topics of WP4 (EMIC), WP6 (SAP) and WP2 (EIH). Therefore, the results of these work packages are also available when developing RUN-EU Joint Programmes.

5.4   Ensuring incorporation of elements of innovation

With regards to innovation, it is important to consider the results of the following Work Packages when developing new Joint Programmes:

- WP2: European Innovation Hubs (EIH), which will stimulate and create interregional research, innovative and regional stakeholder engagement

- WP3: Future and Advanced Skills Academies (FASA), which will promote and develop joint student-centred and flexible learning activities, through collaborative and pedagogically innovative inter-university and interregional approaches to higher education

- WP4: European Mobility Innovation Center (EMIC), which will build and share expertise in innovative physical and virtual international mobility initiatives, and which will assess the quality of the new mobility activities.

5.5   Inclusion of elements of societal transformation & cultural understanding

When developing RUN-EU Joint Programmes, the consortium in charge is advised to consider the relevant components of societal transformation and cultural understanding. These elements will be deduced from the results of the following work packages:

- WP6: Short Advanced Programmes (SAPs), which are also relevant to the promotion of multiculturalism and multilingualism among the alliance regions. All SAPs, due to their joint and collaborative nature, will (in)directly foster intercultural competences/understanding. In addition, it is also envisaged that the alliance will design and deliver some specific SAPs focused on local culture and language.

- WP4: European Mobility Innovation Center (EMIC), which will assist in the promotion of a strong sense of the European identity, of Europe's cultural heritage and its diversity among the academic community, as well as boost the learning of other languages by RUN-EU students and staff.

5.6　Continuous Quality Control and Optimisation

To supplement these guidelines, a separate Quality Controlling Toolkit is planned for development and will be provided.

This Quality Controlling Toolkit will contain information regarding the
- frequency of reviews
- evaluation of the development and collaborative processes
- evaluation of staff and student mobility. Governance for quality assurance is a requirement for academic and administrative components of Joint Programmes.

The Quality Control Toolkit provided by the RUN-EU network is mandatory for the evaluation of all RUN-EU Joint Programmes. It is crucial that the persons in charge develop a common understanding regarding the quality assurance system of the RUN-EU Joint Degree Programmes. It is also necessary that the responsibilities for internal quality assurance be clearly defined.

6　Implementation of the EHEA standards / tools

When developing new RUN-EU Joint Programmes, implementing the standards defined and tools developed for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is crucial. These instruments are, amongst others, the **European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System** (ECTS), the **Diploma Supplement** (DS), the **overarching and national qualifications frameworks** (QFs), the **European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance of Higher Education** (ESG), the **Database of External Quality Assurance Results** (DEQAR), etc. An overview regarding these instruments as well as detailed information provides the EHEA Tools website.

7　Consideration of the vision of European Degrees

The European Commission recently highlighted in an announcement that Joint Study Programmes leading to a "European degree" are one of the flagship activities of the European Universities. This proposed vision is designed to "create globally recognised degrees that will be synonymous for innovative and transformative higher education from multiple institutions in multiple European countries." A final report is expected by the European Commission at the end of 2021. It is important to consider the results of this reports when developing RUN-EU Joint Programmes.

8　Conclusion

Regardless of national and European legislation, quality assurance and institutional guidelines, two essential questions should already be clarified at the beginning of the development of any Joint Programme. It is important to consider and clarify all financial issues while balancing the importance to question what the added value of the Joint Programme for different stakeholders is, the participating universities and especially for students. Undertaking these exercises of

development needs to have relevance and meaning. The structure of guidelines will enable the creation of these kinds of initiatives, but we must be anchored in our primary goal of delivering value of these programmes for those involved.

9   Appendices

9.1   Sources

- [European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)](#)
- [European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes](#)
- [European Approach Online Toolkit](#)
- [Possible scenarios on the path towards a European degree](#)
- [Joint Programmes from A to Z](#)
- [RUN-EU Report D7.2](#)