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STUDIENGÄNGEN E.V.

FINAL REPORT

EUROPEAN FORESTRY (MASTER OF SCIENCE)

OFFERED BY

UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND, FINLAND

AGROPARISTECH, FRANCE

BOKU UNIVERSITY, AUSTRIA

TRANSILVANIA UNIVERSITY OF BRAȘOV, ROMANIA

UNIVERSITY OF FREIBURG, GERMANY

UNIVERSITY OF LLEIDA, SPAIN

WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY, THE NETHERLANDS

May 2026

Assessment following the European Approach
for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes



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DECISION OF THE AQAS STANDING COMMISSION ON THE STUDY PROGRAMME

▪ “EUROPEAN FORESTRY” (MASTER OF SCIENCE)

OFFERED BY

- UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND, FINLAND
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Based on the report of the expert panel, the comments by the universities, and the discussions of the AQAS Standing Commission in its 29th meeting on 18 May 2026, the AQAS Standing Commission decides:

1. The study programme “**European Forestry**” (**Master of Science**) jointly offered by the **University of Eastern Finland (Finland)** (coordinator), **AgroParisTech (France)**, **BOKU University (Austria)**, **Transilvania University of Brașov (Romania)**, **University of Freiburg (Germany)**, **University of Lleida (Spain)**, and **Wageningen University (the Netherlands)** is accredited according to the Standards defined in the European Approach for Quality Assurance for Joint Programmes.

The study programme complies with the requirements defined by the criteria and thus the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) in their current version.

2. The accreditation is given for the period of **six years** and is valid until **30 June 2032**.

The following **recommendations** are given for further improvement of the programme:

1. It is recommended that the institutions sharpen the clear and transparent distribution of tasks and responsibilities within the consortium even further to avoid any gaps in the implementation of the respective tasks in the future, particularly in the areas of quality assurance, global marketing, and fundraising.
2. It is recommended to further align and formalise common master’s thesis standards across the consortium, e.g. through the establishment of jointly agreed criteria, clearer shared expectations regarding supervision, assessment, and scope, as well as structured coordination mechanisms to ensure transparency and comparability across partner institutions.

3. The consortium is encouraged to further enhance the effectiveness of the integrated governance of internal and external quality assurance by a more structured and formalised interaction of the quality review board with the employer board and the alumni network.

With regard to the reasons for this decision the Standing Commission refers to the attached expert report.

**EXPERT REPORT
ON THE STUDY PROGRAMME**

▪ **“EUROPEAN FORESTRY” (MASTER OF SCIENCE)**

OFFERED BY

- **UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND, FINLAND**
- **AGROPARISTECH, FRANCE**
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- **UNIVERSITY OF FREIBURG, GERMANY**
- **UNIVERSITY OF LLEIDA, SPAIN**
- **WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY, THE NETHERLANDS**

Visit to the university: 21–22 January 2026

Panel of experts:

Prof. Dr. Achim Dohrenbusch	Professor Emeritus in Forestry, University of Göttingen, Germany
Prof. Dr. José Borges	School of Agriculture, Forest Ecosystem Management under Global Change, University of Lisbon, Portugal
Elina Warsta	Senior Manager Forest Affairs, UPM, Finland (labour market representative)
Jasmin Meixner	Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Germany (student representative)

Coordinator:

Dr. Christina Schönberger-Stepien	AQAS, Cologne, Germany
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I. Preamble

AQAS – Agency for Quality Assurance through Accreditation of Study Programmes – is an independent non-profit organisation supported by nearly 90 universities, universities of applied sciences and academic associations. Since 2002, the agency has been recognised by the German Accreditation Council (GAC). It is, therefore, a notified body for the accreditation of higher education institutions and programmes in Germany.

AQAS is a full member of ENQA and also listed in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) which confirms that our procedures comply with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), on which all Bologna countries agreed as a basis for internal and external quality assurance.

AQAS is an institution founded by and working for higher education institutions and academic associations. The agency is devoted to quality assurance and quality development of academic studies and higher education institutions' teaching. In line with AQAS' mission statement, the official bodies in Germany and Europe (GAC and EQAR) approved that the activities of AQAS in accreditation are neither limited to specific academic disciplines or degrees nor a particular type of higher education institution.

II. Accreditation procedure

This report results from the external review of the master's programme "European Forestry" offered jointly by the University of Eastern Finland, Finland (coordinator), AgroParisTech, France, BOKU University, Austria, Transilvania University of Braşov, Romania, University of Freiburg, Germany, University of Lleida, Spain, and Wageningen University, the Netherlands. The programme is funded by Erasmus Mundus.

1. Criteria

The programme is assessed against the criteria defined by the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes. The criteria are based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) 2015.

2. Approach and methodology

Initialisation

The university consortium mandated AQAS to perform the accreditation procedure in March 2025. The university consortium produced a Self-Evaluation Report (SER). In July 2025, the consortium handed in a draft of the SER together with the relevant documentation on the programme and an appendix as well as, in case of a reaccreditation, statistical data on the programme. The appendix included, e.g.:

- an overview over statistical data of the student body (e.g. number of applications, beginners, students, graduates, student dropouts),
- the CVs of the teaching staff/supervisors,
- information on student services,
- core information on the main library,
- as well as academic regulations.

AQAS checked the SER regarding completeness, comprehensibility, and transparency. The accreditation procedure was officially initialised by a decision of the AQAS Standing Commission on 8 September 2025. The final version of the SER was handed in October 2025.

Nomination of the expert panel

The composition of the panel of experts follows the stakeholder principle. Consequently, representatives from the respective discipline, the labour market, and students are involved. Furthermore, AQAS follows the principles for the selection of experts defined by the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA). The Standing Commission nominated the aforementioned expert panel in December 2025. AQAS informed the university consortium about the members of the expert panel and the university consortium did not raise any concerns against the composition of the panel.

Preparation of the site visit

Prior to the site visit, the experts reviewed the SER and submitted a short preliminary statement including open questions and potential needs for additional information. AQAS forwarded these preliminary statements to the university consortium and to all panel members in order to increase transparency in the process and the upcoming discussions during the site visit.

Site visit

After a review of the SER, a site visit to the university took place on 21–22 January 2026. On site, the experts interviewed different stakeholders, e.g. the management of the higher education institution, the programme management, teaching and other staff, as well as students and graduates, in separate discussion rounds and consulted additional documentation as well as student work. The visit concluded by the presentation of the preliminary findings of the group of experts to the consortium's representatives.

Reporting

After the site visit had taken place, the expert group drafted the following report, assessing the fulfilment of the criteria. The report included a recommendation to the AQAS Standing Commission. The report was sent to the consortium for comments.

Decision

The report, together with the comments of the university consortium, forms the basis for the AQAS Standing Commission to take a decision regarding the accreditation of the programme. Based on these two documents, the AQAS Standing Commission took its decision on the accreditation on 18 May 2026. AQAS forwarded the decision to the university consortium. The university consortium had the right to appeal against the decision or any of the imposed conditions.

In June 2026, AQAS published the report and the result of the accreditation as well as the names of the panel of experts.

III. General information on the universities

The master's programme European Forestry is an international study programme developed and offered by seven European universities. As stated in the self-evaluation report, the Master of Science in European Forestry is a two-year Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Programme (EMJM) with a high expertise in the field of forestry education. Since 2002, over 400 students from more than 70 countries from all over the world have studied under the European Forestry programme.

The SER states that due to the regional differences the programme has provided training in ecology, management and governance that is applied in various conditions across Europe. Many of the partners have decades of long background of joint collaboration since the inception of the Silva network more than 20 years ago and also with other joint educational projects (e.g. Transatlantic Forestry Master).

According to the SER, the original consortium, consisting of the University of Joensuu (coordinator), Vienna Agricultural University (Austria), the University of Freiburg (Germany), the University of Lleida (Spain), Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (Sweden) and Wageningen University (the Netherlands), started in 2002. There have been several changes to the composition of the consortium over the years.

Since 2016, the consortium has consisted of the following full partners: University of Eastern Finland (coordinator); AgroParisTech, France; University of Freiburg, Germany; University of Lleida, Spain; BOKU University, Austria, and Transilvania University of Braşov, Romania. In 2026, Wageningen University, the Netherlands, rejoins the consortium as a full partner. As outlined in the SER, the renewed consortium additionally contains associated partners outside the EU: Albania, Brazil, Canada, China, Moldova, Nigeria, South Africa, Ukraine, and USA, and associated industrial/public/NGO partners (in the EU and outside the EU), who contribute to the programme in a variety of ways. Invited scholars and guest lecturers from the associated partners are said to ensure that multi-scale, cross-regional expertise can be developed, and that comparisons of the different conditions between regions can be integrated into the programme's teaching modules.

Full partners have an instrumental role in the programme regarding the programme's implementation, teaching organisation or administrative support, whereas associated industrial and scientific partners provide e.g. internships or they contribute to teaching from the labour market perspective.

The master's programme European Forestry is said to be based on both scientific and professional approaches and intends to prepare professionals to address the four Grand Challenges (GCs):

- Climate change and the expected increasing frequency and intensity of natural disturbances (GC1).
- Lack of biomass to meet the demands of the bioeconomy industry and mitigate carbon dioxide (CO²) emissions (GC2).
- Declining biodiversity and conversion of forest land to other land uses (GC3).
- Increasing societal demand for non-market ecosystem services (GC4), e.g. eco-tourism, recreation, non-timber forest products.

An important feature of the master's programme is said to be the opportunity for specialisation in five thematic areas (TAs) during the second year, based on the individual preferences and capabilities of the students. The thematic areas are:

1. Forest information technology and decision support
2. Ecosystem services and bioeconomy
3. Disturbance ecology and risk analysis
4. Silviculture and forest engineering
5. Policy, society and governance

The objective is to provide students with in-depth knowledge of the ecological, social, cultural, and economic dimensions of sustainable forest management in different parts of Europe through the full integration of the specific competences of all full partners in the design of the programme.

The following general objectives are listed in the SER:

1. Providing expertise for adapting forest management to climate change
2. Supporting the bioeconomy with knowledge on sustainable value chains
3. Providing solutions to maintain biodiversity
4. Support decision-making and respond to societal demands

The consortium wants to combine specialised knowledge with regard to the four GCs for a wide range of environmental challenges in the Mediterranean, Central European, Alpine and Boreal regions (e.g. disturbance agents such as wildfires, bark beetles, storm damage and natural hazards), as well as diverse socio-economic and socio-political settings and demands related to forests. According to the consortium, this nexus highlights the importance of forests and forestry as part of a socio-ecological system in various European contexts and enhances the expertise of graduates to develop specific solutions during work on their thesis.

IV. Assessment of the study programme

1. Eligibility

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

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

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

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

Description

The master's programme European Forestry is organised by the seven universities mentioned above. The consortium partners state in the SER that they work together closely, and the course programme is supposed to reflect the comprehensive strength of each university. According to the consortium, the attraction of the study programme is its cooperative character at European level. Students have to attend one full academic year at one of the partner universities, more than half a year at the coordinating university, and get to experience all partner universities during the field trip. As explained by the consortium, the design of the programme is based on an extensive analysis considering societal demands, research trends, European policy and the experience made with former master's programmes.

Currently, the programme issues a double degree. In the next phase, the programme will deliver two types of master's degrees to graduates and it is planned to gradually move towards a joint degree with those full partner institutions who can award joint degrees.

As for the double degree, the first degree will be issued by the coordinating UEF as the host institution for the first year of the programme, i.e. the "Master of Science in Agriculture and Forestry" (UEF). The second certificate is issued by the degree-awarding partner institution where the students spend their second year: i.e. either "Master of Science in Forest Disturbances and Nature Restoration" (UdL), "Master of Science" (BOKU), "Master of Science in Forest Sciences" (UFR), "Master in Agrosciences, Environment, Territories, Landscape, Forest" (AgroParisTech), "Master in European Forestry" (UNITBV), or "Master of Science in Forest and Nature Conservation" (WU).

The documentation and legal documents hold that all full partners are officially recognised and registered as Higher Education Institutions by the relevant authorities of their countries. All compulsory courses are recognised by all full partners, emphasising the jointness of the programme. Each full partner university contributes its own strength to the European Forestry study programme.

According to the SER, UEF will organise student admissions and financial monitoring and is responsible for overall general management. BOKU will coordinate global marketing and visibility. UFR will be responsible for thesis supervision and evaluation processes. AgroParisTech will be responsible for the programme's sustainability and fund-raising campaigns. WU will coordinate general quality monitoring and quality review board activities. UNITBV will organise EB activities to receive feedback and ideas on how to improve the programme's engagement with employers. UdL will maintain alumni-related activities and events. In terms of the first-year curriculum, each full partner institution contributes to trends in European Forestry and the graduation ceremony by giving lectures on topics in which they specialise.

According to the SER, the cooperation agreement complies with the guidelines and requirements of the European Education and Culture Executive Agency. It covers programme objectives, scope, formal aspects (degree titles, mobility, etc.), management and financial organisation (funding, costs and income), student admission and selection, examination regulations, assessment methods, credit recognition, and degree awarding procedures within the consortium.

Expert evaluation

All seven institutions offering the master's programme European Forestry are recognised as higher education institutions by the relevant authorities in their countries Finland, the Netherlands, Austria, Germany, Spain, France, and Romania. Their respective national legal frameworks enable them to participate in the joint programme and award a double degree. Moreover, the institutions awarding the Master of Science degree have ensured that the degree belongs to the higher education degree systems of the countries in which they are based. These were preconditions for the eligibility of the master's degree to be awarded the Erasmus Mundus status by the European Commission in its 2025 call for applications.

The master's programme European Forestry includes a jointly designed and fully integrated curriculum adhering to the Standards for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes in the European Higher Education Area. All seven partner universities are involved in the design, implementation, delivery, and quality assurance of the programme. As confirmed in discussions on site, the partners are involved in the joint student admission requirements and application, selection, fee policy, monitoring, and examination/performance evaluation rules/procedure, in the joint programme design and integrated teaching/training activities provided in English, and a joint process for recognition of all study periods in both the first year (at the UEF; field course and applied period at various locations) and the second year (advanced courses and master thesis). The jointness is also reflected in common services offered to students (e.g. visa and programme mobility support; insurance; field

course logistics, local language courses) and the joint promotion and awareness-raising activities to ensure worldwide visibility of the programme. The programme has a comprehensive specific website providing the necessary information about the programme for students and other relevant stakeholders such as future employers. Moreover, it uses social media and engages with alumni and employers. The consortium has confirmed joint administrative and financial management of the programme and offers double degrees (one degree issued by the UEF where first year students are based in the period August to April and another by the university where the students enrol in the second year).

The comparatively large number of consortium members naturally can also be challenging, as coordinating all partners regarding the points to be regulated can be time-consuming and difficult. This was somewhat evident in the fact that the tasks assigned to the seven partners, such as quality assurance, global marketing, or fundraising, were not always clearly recognisable in their implementation. This was particularly apparent in the interviews with individual senior management representatives of the universities in the consortium. It is therefore recommended that the institutions sharpen the clear and transparent distribution of tasks and responsibilities within the consortium even further to avoid any gaps in the implementation of the respective tasks in the future, particularly in the areas of quality assurance, global marketing, and fundraising (**Finding 1**).

The terms and conditions of the master's programme are laid down in a cooperation agreement which builds on the consortium's experience in running the programme since 2004. The cooperation agreement provides full information on the denomination of the degree awarded in the programme, the coordination and responsibilities of the partners involved regarding management and financial organisation, and describes the admission and selection procedures for students, the mobility of students and staff, as well as examination regulations, student assessment methods, recognition of credits and degree awarding procedures in the consortium.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

2. Learning outcomes

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

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

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

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

Description

The master's programme European Forestry comprises 120 CP (ECTS) with a focus on comprehensive knowledge and skills in sustainable forest management, European forestry practices and interdisciplinary approaches to forest sciences.

Students are supposed to gain fundamental knowledge and experience in:

- Understanding European Forestry (ability to critically discuss societal and environmental impacts on forest, including climate change, and forest industries),
- research and academic skills (research methodology, statistical analysis, ecosystem modelling, Geographic Information systems (GIS), remote sensing techniques),

- global perspective (SDGs, analyse and compare forestry practices across different countries),
- specialised knowledge (forest information technology, ecosystem services, disturbance ecology, silviculture, forest policy analysis, governance and management strategies),
- practical application (field courses, applied learning in forest institutions, project management, understanding European and international forest culture).

According to the SER, the selection of courses in the curriculum enables students to choose courses according to their needs and interests and receiving skills and knowledge they did not receive in their previous degree. The compulsory courses in the first academic year develop multi-disciplinary generic and methodological skills. These skills should enable students to tackle novel and complex problems in forest sciences related to the four Grand Challenges (GC).

As stated by the consortium, the overall learning outcomes of the programme are reflected in the intended learning outcomes at course level, which are outlined in the course descriptions provided in the consortium agreement, the student guides, and local online systems. The university proclaims that the consistent application of the ILOs take place at every consortium partner which is supposed to lead to a constructive alignment.

The university emphasises high graduation rates and low dropout rates demonstrate students' achievements. Most complete the programme on time, with excellent final grades. The master's programme aims to combine academic knowledge and multidisciplinary problem-solving abilities, whereby graduates can either start PhD positions or work in a problem-oriented business environment.

Expert evaluation

Learning outcomes are an essential part of the accreditation of degree programmes. Based on the self-evaluation report and the discussions during the site visit, the experts come to the conclusion that the learning outcomes of the programme are clearly outlined and well defined and that students acquire subject-specific knowledge, skills, and competencies in the broad field of European forestry. The programme and the intended learning outcomes correspond with level 7 of the European Qualifications Framework.

The programme offers a wide and comprehensive range of courses that cover the field of European forestry and addresses theoretical foundations as well as practical applications in the form of lectures, seminars, excursions and internships. The experts confirm that students gain an in-depth knowledge in the disciplinary field and acquire methodological, theoretical and practical skills that qualify them for the labour market. The available specialisations are outlined in detail, mapped with the learning outcomes, and reflect the broad field of European forestry.

The courses listed and detailed in the module handbook meet the Bologna requirements for learning outcomes. All courses learning outcomes are formulated as "specific," meaning that they precisely describe what students are expected to be able to do. They are predominantly "measurable," meaning they can be assessed. They are intended to be "achievable," meaning that the associated modules are realistically doable for students in terms of scope and content. This also includes that achieving a certain competency within a given timeframe is possible. From the students' perspective, there was no indication that there is a discrepancy between the performance requirements of the study programme and their possible implementation within the framework of the examinations to be completed.

Finally, the professional relevance of the teaching modules is also a criterion that is relevant in terms of their usefulness for professional practice. This criterion is in any case met for the compulsory courses. For the comprehensive list of elective courses, there is not one clear professional perspective but a wide range of professional profiles for the graduates of the study programme.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

3. Study programme

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

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

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

Description

The master's programme European Forestry is a two-year programme. The teaching language of all modules is English. The study programme is structured in modules.

The programme applies the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) with a total of 120 credit points. As stated by the university, the full-time study is designed for four semesters. The curriculum is organised in three modules and elective courses across two years. Every student has at least two attempts for each module. The consortium has agreed on joint rules for workload, which ranges from 25 to 28 working hours per ECTS-credit.

The study programme aims to provide insights into different environmental and social-economic conditions and to provide information on how these conditions affect bioeconomic aspects. As stated in the SER, the modules can be differentiated as follows: module 1 includes a joint introductory course and elective courses, module 2 includes a field course to provide practical knowledge, module 3 provides specialisation within thematic areas and a master's thesis and an online thesis seminar.

Year 1	Year 2
MODULE 1 AND ELECTIVE COURSES Professional knowledge Improvement (43 ECTS)	MODULE 3 Specialisation within thematic areas and MSc Thesis and Online Thesis Seminar (60 ECTS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trends in European Forestry (5 ECTS) - Academic skills in Forest Sciences (1.5 ECTS) - Research Methodology in Forest Sciences (3.5 ECTS) - Global Virtual Seminar (3 ECTS) - Elective courses (30 ECTS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TA1 - Forest information technology and decision support (24–30 ECTS) TA2 - Ecosystem services and bioeconomy (24–30 ECTS) TA3 - Disturbance ecology and risk analysis (24–30 ECTS) TA4 - Silviculture and forest engineering (24–30 ECTS) TA5 - Policy, society, and governance (24–30 ECTS) MSc Thesis and Online Thesis Seminar (30–36 ECTS)*
MODULE 2 Practical perspective and industrial visits (17 ECTS)	Graduation ceremony and Working Life event
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - European Forestry Field Course (8 ECTS) - Applied Period in Forest Institutions (internship) (9 ECTS) 	

These modules are supposed to provide a common background on forest management issues at European and global scales. Academic presentations and research methodologies are covered in the first year, focusing

on multi-disciplinary generic skills and methodological skills (e.g. critical thinking). As stated in the SER, these skills are highly valued by employers and enable students to address novel and complex problems in the multidisciplinary field of forest sciences.

In the first academic year, the students are introduced to the full partner institutions, the associated partner institutions, and the associated industrial/public/NGO partners. Furthermore, a package of elective courses is offered to students, who can deepen their knowledge and skills in their desired topics and fields of interests, such as geoinformatics and forest inventory and modelling. The available courses are said to be reviewed each year, and additional online courses are available for those not sufficiently competent in some topics or thematic areas (TAs).

In the second academic year, students choose a university where they can focus on specific TAs. The co-supervision of theses is said to enable the integration of the expertise of all full partner institutions. As explained in the SER, TAs are supposed to be complementary and defined based on the specific competencies of the institution to address the identified GCs and achieve the intended learning outcomes. This is followed by the master's thesis.

Expert evaluation

The overall concept of the programme is rated very positively as a cross-university study programme involving seven universities from seven European countries. A strength of the consortium of the participating universities is that these are renowned institutions in their respective countries, some of which also occupy top positions in international rankings. The selection of university locations covers the main climate zones in Europe. This is particularly advantageous for a programme in forestry, as forest structures and the corresponding management systems vary significantly depending on the climate, and the variety provides students with a broad overview. The programme's long duration, spanning more than 20 years so far, can also be regarded as a strength. During this period, the consortium was able to gain experience and develop even further, and both the programme and its implementation were continuously optimised.

As described in the documentation and confirmed on site, the study programme consists of three sequentially structured components. In the first semester, all students are based at the Joensuu campus in Finland. Afterwards, there is a joint trip for all students to each of the other six university locations, with about one week spent at each location. Semesters 2 and 3 take place at one of the six universities available within the consortium, also with the possibility of collaboration with one of the many associated partners. The fourth semester is planned for the final thesis (master's thesis). It is a concept that is extremely attractive for students and their learning goals, but places high demands on organisation and logistics. Conversations with the students, the lecturers, and the central administration in Joensuu have shown that these organisational challenges are being very well managed. Both the provided documents and the interviews with lecturers and students made clear that students acquire methodological competencies and skills in critical thinking, analysis, and problem-solving. In the extensive elective course offerings as well as in the mandatory courses, social skills such as communication, presentation, and intercultural competence are taught. The mandatory excursion following the first semester is particularly suitable for this. Teamwork skills are trained through seminars, lab courses, and joint small projects that must be completed. Personal competencies include skills such as independent work, initiative, efficient time management, as well as the ability to learn. Conversations with lecturers and students confirmed that there are corresponding individual support offerings from lecturers to optimise these competencies.

Furthermore, the range of elective courses at the seven locations is impressive. At the central location in Finland, 25 electives are offered, in Germany 30, in Romania 22, in Austria 21, in Spain 19, in the Netherlands, 15, and in France 13 elective courses are offered. This provides students with a variety of courses to choose from and develop specific fields of interest.

The Bologna guidelines envisage a workload of 25 to 30 hours per credit for students. The mutually agreed arrangement among the consortium members is 25 to 28 hours of student workload per ECTS, which falls within the prescribed Bologna framework. Checks of the credit allocation revealed critical workload/credit assessments for the Global Virtual Seminar, for which 3 credits are awarded, even though the listed components with four hours of lectures, 20 hours of group work, four hours of seminar, and 20 hours of self-study (= 48h / 28 = 1.7 ECTS) at best correspond to an evaluation of two credits. Discussions with the group of lecturers have revealed that this problem – apparently an isolated case – is known and, following feedback from students, has been addressed within the consortium and has been taken care of.

The final thesis accounts for 25% of ECTS credits of the study period and also 25% of the grade weighting for the overall evaluation, making it a very important part of the programme. A positive aspect is the cooperative concept, meaning that the grading is always and the supervision usually bilateral, i.e., conducted by professors from two universities of the consortium.

What was already critically discussed during the 2019 accreditation and also now in the current assessment is that there are no uniform rules for the timing requirements at the partner universities involved. Although the joint study regulations stipulate that the master's thesis is to be completed in the fourth semester, at some universities the work can be started much earlier. While this is critical from the perspective of fair and equal treatment, the limitations of national frameworks were explained in detail. Hence, the coordinators and lecturers were able to convince the experts in the discussion that, although the problem is recognised, implementing a uniform time limit for the processing period is hardly feasible.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

4. Admission and recognition

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

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

Description

As stated in the SER, the student selection criteria are designed jointly by the consortium members in an annual meeting. The operational student selection is organised by University of Eastern Finland as the coordinator. UEF performs a preliminary ranking after an eligibility check of applicants. The criteria are also defined by the consortium and include relevance of previous degree, academic excellence, motivation letter, work experience, and international experience.

The jointly agreed requirements for student applications are: (1) a bachelor's degree in forestry or related field with good grades issued by an internationally recognised university, and (2) good command of the English language (previous higher education in English in EU/EEA countries or in Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa, United Kingdom and United States, or completed TOEFL (iBT) or IELTS or Cambridge C1 Advanced (CAE) or Cambridge C2 Proficiency (CPE) language tests with the required minimum scores).

According to the university, the final selection is done in a consortium meeting, where a representative from each full partner is present. In that meeting, the consortium agrees upon a main list of selected students and

a reserve list. Student scholarship allocation is based on a selection process in which the best students will receive a scholarship. As stated in the SER, the selection process is open to applicants from diverse backgrounds and abilities. Guidelines ensure that any issues are addressed and that gender and geographic diversity (10% rule per nationality excluding targeted regions) is taken into account.

Expert evaluation

The cooperation agreement of the consortium outlines the joint student admission requirements, application and selection procedures. The admission requirements, instructions on how to apply, the application period, and the selection criteria are available on the programme website. Specifically, applications are submitted online and must include the documentation package detailed in the cooperation agreement. The UEF is responsible for storing the applications, screening them to check if they meet the eligibility criteria, developing a preliminary ranking, and submitting the eligible ones to partners that will develop the final ranking according to the evaluation criteria agreed by all.

As confirmed during the site visit, the requirements for admission are adequate and well in place. They enable students to reach the level of the programme as well as its intended learning outcomes as highlighted by the successful graduation rates reported in the documentation as well as in the discussions with faculty, alumni, and other stakeholders on site.

The selection of students is based on a joint decision by the partners and validated by the consortium board in a meeting scheduled to agree on the definition of the main and reserve lists. The decision is based on five evaluation criteria agreed by all partners and that include (1) studies in forestry (0–40), (2) academic excellence (0–80), (3) motivation letter (0–30), (4) work experience (0–40) and (5) international experience (0–40). The global ranking is made according to the total score. If there is a tie, the candidate with the higher score in academic excellence is placed first. Moreover, gender balance is addressed by ranking women first when the score is the same. The programme also addresses geographical representation in the selection process, thus meeting the Erasmus+ Agency requirements that a maximum of 10% of the EMJM scholarships (excl. scholarships for targeted regions) may be assigned to candidates from the same country. All candidates are informed about the results of the selection process and due appeal procedures are in place. Those selected receive a welcoming package with relevant documents and information. This selection procedure is transparent, impartial, and equitable and thus adequate for the programme.

The documentation describes the regulations regarding recognition of studies developed at other universities by each partner university. They are appropriate, binding, and transparent. Admitted students may apply for a substitution of studies based on the recognition of prior learning either at other HEIs (formal studies) or at other institutions where they were employed (non-formal studies). Nevertheless, students cannot apply for substitution of any of the compulsory courses. Moreover, there are constraints to substitutions in the case of Erasmus Mundus scholarship holders. The SER reports that students can discuss the possibility of substitutions with the study advisors of their first- and second-year host universities when developing their study plans. The SER reports further that study periods in each partner university and the corresponding credits are fully recognised by all other partners and that the programme's recognition regulations take the Lisbon Recognition Convention into account. All programme degrees are fully recognised by all partners, the programme has graduated over 400 students since 2002, and the programme is recognised in Europe and worldwide as an EMJM degree. This is highlighted by the tracer studies and its information about alumni careers.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

5. Learning, teaching and assessment

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

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

Description

All students start their first semester at University of Eastern Finland with an orientation course in August. For the third and the fourth semester, students move to one of the consortium partner countries. The last semester is dedicated to their master's thesis. As outlined in the SER, the study programme takes into account the need to use and learn different communication methods and approaches. Thus, traditional and innovative learning and training tools such as e-learning, blended learning, distance learning, flipped classroom and self-learning approaches are said to be used. During the courses of Module 2, project-based and case-studies learning is explained to be used. For example, students usually have at least one research question/project for applied periods at forest institutions. These periods require planning, critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, communication and decision-making skills. Students also need to analyse their learning and provide feedback on their internship. Similarly, a variety of activities are available at all second-year host universities. Interactive, problem-oriented courses combine presentations by teachers, discussions, self-studies (including literature reviews and field studies), student presentations, and written reports. Research workshops begin with problem definition, continue with material and method identification and data evaluation, and end with presentations, as stated in the SER.

The specificity of the study programme is its diversity of students and their needs. Therefore, the study programme design tries to enhance their intercultural awareness. In addition, the consortium offers an intercultural workshop at the beginning of the studies which aims to provide student skills and communication knowledge to work in a multicultural environment.

Should a student have any special needs, these are said to be noted in their personal study plan. The coordinator is supposed to ensure that students receive adequate assistance, regardless of their physical location at any of the partner universities. For students with an impediment or disability, special arrangements can be requested, such as extra time to complete an examination, taking an examination orally rather than in writing, taking an examination in a quiet and more private setting, obtaining extra lighting, lecture materials in advance, in electronic form, or printed with a large font size, complete a course or an examination in an alternative manner (for example, an examination taken at home), use a computer or some other aid, and the possibility to use an interpreter or a personal assistant.

Throughout the master's programme, the students are said to get to know a variety of assessment types. As stated in the SER, a common framework between the partners for achievement of credits and subject to qualification descriptors of national authorities shall assure academic integration and quality across the programme. The assessment of students is regulated by joint rules for examination and re-sit examination upon which every consortium partner has agreed. According to the SER, the thesis evaluation process is reviewed for transparency and equal treatment of students, regardless of their thesis placement. The European Forestry Field Course, the Applied Period in Forest Institutions and the Global Virtual Seminar are evaluated by different institutions in different countries. For example, the Applied Period in Forest Institutions is evaluated by the supervisor (often an employee of the institution, not involved in education or teaching) and local coordinators (based on a written report and an oral presentation).

Expert evaluation

The programme is designed to equip students with a comprehensive understanding of the ecological, social, cultural, and economic dimensions of sustainable forest management across Europe. During the first academic year, students build a strong foundation through a set of mandatory courses, while the second year offers diverse opportunities for individual specialisation and applied learning. This structure directly supports the intended learning outcomes of the European Forestry programme, fostering a broad, internationally oriented perspective on sustainable forest and resource management, EU policies, and bioeconomy developments.

The first academic year, jointly spent at UEF, together with the joint field excursion at the beginning of the second academic year involving visits to all partner universities, provide students with a comprehensive set of perspectives on forestry as well as its economic and societal dimensions across Europe. Discussions with teaching staff, students, graduates, and labour market representatives confirmed that the curriculum, including its teaching methods and assessment practices, is appropriately structured and effectively supports the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

The methods used in the courses consistently implement student-centred teaching. Diverse and contemporary teaching formats such as group work, case studies, presentations, hackathons, project work, field courses, hybrid and co-teaching formats with guest lecturers from industry and research, and soft-skills training predominate; instructors emphasise problem-solving and teamwork. In addition, state-of-the-art methods such as terrestrial laser scanning are integrated into practical fieldwork, thereby supporting targeted, modern training for students. Students, graduates, staff and labour market representatives confirm the effectiveness of these methods in fostering practice-relevant competencies. When necessary, for example in laboratory work, course content is prepared for small groups. This ensures that students and their diversity remain at the centre of the learning experience and that practical skills are effectively developed.

The international diversity of the student body is appropriately addressed through the provision of courses in English, individualised support for mobility, recommendations for individual specialisation pathways, and structured orientation sessions that facilitate informed decision-making. Students and graduates emphasised the high level of support offered in relation to visa procedures, logistical matters, and academic tutoring. Labour market representatives particularly commended the graduates' adaptability and professional maturity.

The forms of assessment are suitable for demonstrating the achievement of the learning outcomes at both module and programme level. A wide range of formats (essays, presentations, portfolios, projects, oral examinations, group work) aligns well with the practice-oriented content; students perceive them as fair and resistant to AI misuse. Student feedback mechanisms have shown to be effective: ECTS adjustments according to the workload in single modules are implemented, annual analyses, and student participation in meetings all contribute to continuous improvement of the curriculum.

National regulations make full harmonisation challenging, particularly regarding master's theses (see chapter 3). Shared guidelines, joint seminars, and trust in the partners' quality assurance processes address this issue. At present, the standards for master's theses of the partner institutions are not fully aligned. The consortium should therefore further formalise common master's thesis standards across the consortium (**Finding 1**). Beyond documentation, this could include the establishment of jointly agreed criteria, clearer shared expectations regarding supervision, assessment, and scope, as well as structured coordination mechanisms to ensure transparency and comparability across partner institutions. Strengthening these common regulations would further enhance consistency and mutual recognition within the programme.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

6. Student support

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

Description

The consortium reportedly divides student support in two stages, i.e. services and support before and during the mobility periods. The UEF is said to be responsible for administrative formalities (registration, resident permit accommodation, orientation programmes etc.). Due to close contact to the immigration office, the permits can be delivered without major issues, according to the SER. Pre-arrival webinars are organised to inform and encourage students to confirm their studies in the programme.

In the first semester, an introduction to the programme and a short excursion are offered (incl. an intercultural workshop and a general orientation programme). As stated in the SER, a new students practical guide delivers information on student life, programme practicalities, such as registration for courses and exams, personal safety, accommodation, free-time activities, finances and travel in Europe. This specific guide, together with the Practical Guidebooks and websites of each partner institution, is supposed to provide students with all necessary information regarding their studies and the practicalities in each country during their two-year study period. Peer learning activities like a variety of student discussion forums and get-together events are said to encourage students to interact with different cohorts and to share their experiences.

Students get similar support with organising their mobility period for the second year through the UEF. Additionally, all institutions are said to be familiar with receiving international students. The second-year local coordinators are also responsible for covering practical topics such as residence permit, visa, travel, and accommodation. At the second host university, welcoming and orientation days aim to make the acclimatisation easier for new students upon arrival. Social integration to students in each participating university also plays an important role as stated by the university. Therefore, student tutors, student unions and the faculties' student associations are integrated into the acclimatisation process of new students.

Expert evaluation

The study organisation provides excellent support for the programme's feasibility and the achievement of its learning outcomes. The clear structure – with the first year jointly spent at UEF in Joensuu in a fully face-to-face format, including the mandatory field course, followed by specialisation in the second year at one of the six partner universities – ensures a strong degree of jointness and an international perspective.

Responsibilities for study organisation are distributed in a decentralised manner across the consortium partners. Despite the multiple study paths and specialisation options available in the second year, students are effectively supported in making informed academic choices through structured presentations and advice. The feedback from students either currently studying or recently graduated was very encouraging: they had received support from both the teaching staff as well as the support staff to questions on course content, examination practices or levels of requirements to reach good results, as well as on more practical issues. Challenging or unclear situations were solved together or explained well to the students, which demonstrates that enough time is dedicated to each individual student.

Organisational challenges, such as funding gaps, have been successfully managed at UEF without programme interruptions, which was also reflected in the student's feedback. In the second academic year, study organisation at the respective host universities is structurally independent of cohort sizes. Internationalisation at the partner institutions ensures an adequate number of English-language courses. Second-year local coordinators manage both administrative matters (residence permits, visas, travel, accommodation) and academic

counselling, including guidance on specialisations, thematic area selection, and thesis preparation. Established institutional structures for international students facilitate smooth transitions between partner universities.

Pre-arrival information, webinars, and the “New Students Practical Guide” provide essential orientation, clarify expectations, and enhance planning security. Close collaboration with immigration authorities further demonstrates proactive support for international mobility, enabling residence permits to be processed without major issues.

The tightly scheduled programme structure – particularly during the transition phase at the end of the first academic year, which includes relocation from Joensuu to the selected host university and a month-long field course involving travel to all partner universities – presents mobility-related challenges. However, the support system during this critical phase is clearly structured and highly effective. Students and graduates consistently reported outstanding guidance and accessibility of coordinators and faculty. Joint courses in the first academic year also allow students to establish early contact with teaching staff and counsellors at all second-year host institutions.

In the second academic year, individualised counselling supports diversity of academic pathways without compromising quality standards. Financial support mechanisms include Erasmus travel grants; some internships contribute to living expenses, and self-funded students (up to six per year) may receive fee reductions, if applicable. Students report a strong sense of jointness, minimal language barriers, and sufficient English-language course offerings.

Overall, the programme organisation demonstrably strengthens the learning outcomes through structured coordination, effective mobility management, and strong practical orientation.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

7. Resources

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

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

Description

As outlined by the consortium, the key staff (15 academic members) involved in the master’s programme European Forestry is internationally recognised for their research, scientific production, and academic merits, and the programme makes use of the strengths contributed by its staff. The competencies expected from all key staff members include high academic knowledge and skills based on most recent research, educational and pedagogical competencies, as well as coaching skills and intercultural competencies.

As stated in the SER, teaching and administrative staff visit other partners. Through these visits, the academic staff is said to gain competences and skills with regard to their own professional practices, integrating good practices and new methods from others.

Enrolled students of the study programme have access to all facilities at the institutions of the consortium partners, including libraries, computing labs, and spaces for self-study and group work. Online resources such

as Moodle or online library services are also made available. As stated in the SER, all full consortium partners have sufficient facilities to impart the outlined learning outcomes adequately.

Expert evaluation

According to the documentation and the discussions during the site visit, the academic staff involved in the study programme European Forestry is highly qualified, internationally experienced, and sufficient in numbers to cover all contents of the programme. Academic staff contributes their expertise to the programme and benefit from the strong collaboration within the consortium. Coordinators in each institution are mainly professors, which ensures a high academic level of key staff in the programme. Administrative staff is excellent and available to students at all consortium partner institutions.

Students in this programme are only a small part of the full number of students studying at the institutions involved. This means that the resources at each institution are planned independently from the number of the students in this programme, and the availability of teaching staff, facilities, etc. are ensured accordingly.

The majority of the teaching takes place face-to-face, which is valuable for the future working life to train group work and other social skills. Some courses are organised remotely, such as virtual seminars, which provide opportunity to train online presentation and engagement skills. Teaching is carried out in classrooms, laboratories, computer classes, or in the forest. These options demonstrate good variability in teaching methods and the opportunity of students to learn in real environments. Based on the discussions during the site visit, the panel confirms that the libraries, computer labs, and facilities for self-studying are sufficient and up to date, that the consortium provides a very good infrastructure, and that students have constant access to the facilities. The equipment and facilities enable the achievement of the programme learning outcomes. In addition, all students have access to a Moodle platform and to an online library during the entire study programme.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

8. Transparency and documentation

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

Description

As explained in the SER, relevant information on the joint programme can be found on the programme website, e.g. on financial support, mobility grants, the course programme and contents, and links to the study programme partners and their services. Enrolled students and teaching staff have access to the programme's eLearning platform "Moodle" for joint courses, which is said to connect students, instructors, and administrators. Coordinators of the full partner institutions also use a meeting platform for sharing documents related to the programme. Additionally, students' progress is said to be collected by the study programme coordinator during the first academic year. Student grades will also be submitted by the partner universities during the second year so that the coordinating university will have an overview on the results.

Expert evaluation

A website is in place for the study programme under the lead of the coordinating institution. The content of the study programme, the learning outcomes, the complete course descriptions, and information on quality assurance procedures can be found on the programme website as well as in more detail in study handbooks or

study guides provided on the website. Information on financial support and mobility grants is provided, so that students are fully aware of financing options.

The labour market orientation of the study programme is outlined by giving examples of alumni paths after the completion of the study programme. In addition, the history of the programme content is visible on the same website going back to years 2017–2019. In this way, the students and external stakeholders can observe the evolution of the curriculum over the years. The structure and content of the curriculum is described on the website and learning outcomes of different study tracks are publicly available in a separate document. Other useful supportive documents for students are publicly available on the websites of the different partner universities, including study guides, traineeship guide, new student guidebook, and more.

Admission requirements and documents needed to apply for the programme are listed publicly on the programme website. The main requirements cover a bachelor's degree in forestry or related field, and minimum English language proficiency. The English language level needs to be demonstrated with internationally accepted language tests and minimum scores in them, which are all listed in the programme website. No other ways to demonstrate the English language is accepted, which ensures equal requirements on the language side. Important factors to admission are also other required documents, such as a motivation letter and CV. The motivation letter should contain a response to questions, which are listed on the programme website, and even the use of generative AI is mentioned to be allowed together with the length of the letter. These detailed instructions and requirements ensure that all applicants are on equal footing for the application process.

The eLearning platform Moodle serves as a common platform for information, communication, and collaboration which is the core of a well-structured interaction between teaching staff, coordinators, and students.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

9. Quality assurance

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

Description

As outlined in the SER, quality assurance processes of the master's programme European Forestry are carried out on an internal and an external level.

As outlined in the SER, the consortium has agreed upon best management practices and course evaluations to be conducted annually. The annual consortium meeting is mainly reserved for a feedback discussion and its consequences. Feedback instruments such as student representatives from different cohorts and alumni questionnaires are in place to strengthen the connection between the study programme, the labour market, and its requirements.

Internal evaluation procedures comprise the collection of student feedback after the end of each course. Each consortium member has its own quality assurance unit, which also collects student feedback. The results of both UEF and consortium partner evaluations are supposed to be discussed in the annual Consortium Board meeting, where, according to the SER, student representatives are invited to present their views and make suggestions for improvement. Actions regarding curriculum development can be taken based on those results and both students and affected instructors are said to be informed immediately about the outcome.

The local coordinator of Wageningen University will act as the secretary of the quality review board, which involves industrial and scientific associated partners. The Chairperson is selected by the participants for each meeting. This board holds annual meetings, and its main task is to analyse student feedback and give recommendations for further curriculum development. Additionally, applied period evaluations are carried out by the industrial partners according to guidelines set by the consortium agreement.

Regarding external quality assurance, the consortium points out that they are committed to the accreditation following the European Approach. Each full partner institution and its study programmes are also subject to external quality assurance procedures in accordance with their national evaluation schemes, which are carried out periodically at each partner university as part of general university audits.

Expert evaluation

The programme has set up a quality assurance governance scheme that includes partnership and cooperation arrangements to effectively address quality assurance. This setup reportedly includes a consortium board and a quality review board. Moreover, the programme is committed to external QA in the form of accreditation by both national agencies as well as by the international accreditation following the European Approach. Specifically, the consortium board is chaired by the academic director of the programme and includes the administrative director as well as the local coordinator at each partner institution. It is the body in charge of implementing and managing internal QA practices and of taking measures to improve the quality of the programme. The quality review board acts as an advisory board to the consortium board on quality assurance and includes one faculty member from each partner institution as well as students, alumni, and representatives of the associated partners.

This programme governance scheme supports the implementation of both internal and external QA processes. The former encompasses standard practices for course evaluation by each partner institution (e.g. individual first year and second year courses evaluations). These include student feedback collected by the UEF with the support of local coordinators and quality offices at partner institutions. They encompass further programme-specific QA processes. As confirmed in the discussions on site, these include further feedback by students' representatives invited to consortium board meetings, namely after the completion of the programme when the coordinator (UEF) asks the students questions about the entire curriculum as well as about non-academic aspects to get feedback on activities, outcomes and practical arrangements. The information thus collected by the consortium board is used for immediate action whenever appropriate and is sent to the quality review board for analysis during its annual online meeting. Building from this analysis of evaluation results from courses, modules and the overall programme, the quality review board puts recommendations forward to the consortium board to improve it. The latter considers these recommendations and decides on measures to improve the programme. During the visit to the UEF, the programme provided evidence that the feedback of the students is indeed considered to improve the programme (e.g. a change in the number of ECTS credits of the course "Global Virtual Seminar"). The regular exchange between the consortium board and the quality review board contributes to the effectiveness of the implementation and management of internal QA processes and to the monitoring of the quality indicators.

The external QA processes are implemented and managed by both the quality review board, the consortium board, and external audits (e.g. national accreditation agencies/institutions in Finland, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, France, Spain, and Romania, and an international accreditation following the European Approach). Each national degree has been accredited by the respective national agency/institution. The SER reports that the quality review board collects and also analyses other external quality assessments by alumni, guest lecturers and scholars, associate industrial/public/NGOs partners and by the employer board. The quality review board completes its external quality report considering these assessments, accreditation outcomes, results from tracer surveys, and the quality indicators. It submits it to the consortium board that takes measures

to improve the programme as described in the SER (e.g. structure and content of the programme, teachers' performance and teaching methods, timetables and organisational arrangements, and project management procedures). While these procedures are commendable, the discussion with external stakeholders has shown that they are not always informed about the results of QA processes. The consortium is therefore encouraged to further enhance the effectiveness of the integrated governance of internal and external quality assurance by a more structured and formalised interaction of the quality review board with the employer board and the alumni network (**Finding 2**). The consortium partners could thereby e.g. develop the potential of their partnerships even further by streamlining their relationship with the alumni network, also to understand where graduates find work.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

V. Recommendation of the panel of experts

The panel of experts recommends accrediting the study programme “European Forestry” (Master of Science) offered by the University of Eastern Finland, Finland (coordinator), AgroParisTech, France, BOKU University, Austria, Transilvania University of Braşov, Romania, University of Freiburg, Germany, University of Lleida, Spain, and Wageningen University, the Netherlands without conditions.

Commendation:

The joint master’s programme European Forestry is highly relevant and profoundly demonstrates the European mindset. As an excellent and long-running programme involving renowned partner institutions, the outstanding quality and success of the programme is highly commendable. With excellent and supportive faculty and exceptionally committed students, the consortium demonstrates a remarkable jointness and commitment in their endeavour to provide an attractive joint programme. The organisation as well as the cooperation between partner institutions, research institutions, and industry partners are particularly noteworthy and a strong asset of the ambitious programme.

Findings:

1. It is recommended that the institutions sharpen the clear and transparent distribution of tasks and responsibilities within the consortium even further to avoid any gaps in the implementation of the respective tasks in the future, particularly in the areas of quality assurance, global marketing, and fundraising.
2. It is recommended to further align and formalise common master’s thesis standards across the consortium, e.g. through the establishment of jointly agreed criteria, clearer shared expectations regarding supervision, assessment, and scope, as well as structured coordination mechanisms to ensure transparency and comparability across partner institutions.
3. The consortium is encouraged to further enhance the effectiveness of the integrated governance of internal and external quality assurance by a more structured and formalised interaction of the quality review board with the employer board and the alumni network.