



ASIIN Accreditation Report

Second Cycle Programme ***European Master in Applied Ecology***

offered by
Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel,
Université de Poitiers,
Universidade de Coimbra,
University of East Anglia (Norwich)

ASIIN Accreditation procedure with on-site audits for
the Second Cycle Programme

European Master in Applied Ecology

offered by Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel, Université de Poitiers, Universidade de Coimbra, University of East Anglia

on November 12th, 2009, on February 3rd, 2010 and on February 5th, 2010

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For the ASIIN Central Office: Hilke Schaubitzer

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For the ASIIN Central Office: Hilke Schaubitzer

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A Preliminary remarks

An on-site audit for the Second Cycle programme *European Master in Applied Ecology* took place at the Université de Poitiers on November 12th, 2009. Before the talks with the representatives of the institutions of higher education offering the joint programme (hereinafter referred to as “the consortium”) the audit team met to discuss the self-report report submitted by the consortium and to prepare their questions. Prof. Mueller was asked to act as chairman of the audit team.

Additional on-site audits took place at the University of East Anglia on February 3rd, 2010 and at the Universidade de Coimbra on February 5th, 2010.

This accreditation procedure is assigned to the Technical Committees 10 – Life Sciences and 09 – Chemistry of ASIIN.

The following representatives of the consortium took part in the talks:

As representatives of the Universities'/schools' administrations on November 12th, 2009: Salwa NACOUZI-BOURDICHON (Vice-President for International Affairs, Université de Poitiers), Hervé SABOURIN (Vice-Dean for International Affairs and Communication, Faculty of Sciences, Université de Poitiers), Prof. João Gabriel SILVA (President of the Faculty of Scienc and Technology, Universidade de Coimbra), Carrie WHITE (Faculty Manager, School of Environmental Sciences, University of East Anglia);

On February 3rd, 2010: Carrie WHITE (Faculty Manager, School of Environmental Sciences, University of East Anglia);

On February 5th, 2010: Dr. Filomena DE CARVALHO (Head of International Relations Department), Maria da Conceição CUNHA, Prof. Dr. António Veríssimo PIRES (Head of Department of Life Sciences)

As responsible co-ordinators of the programme on November 12th, 2009: Yves CAUBET (overall co-ordinator of the programme, Université de Poitiers), Mathieu SICARD (local co-ordinator, Université de Poitiers), Wilhelm WINDHORST (local co-ordinator, Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel), Lina KLIUČININKAITE (assistant to local co-ordinator, Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel), José Paulo SOUSA (local co-ordinator, Universidade de Coimbra), Mark HASSALL (local co-ordinator, University of East Anglia);

On February 3rd, 2010: Dr. sc. Aldina FRANCO;

On February 5th, 2010: Prof. Manuel GRAÇA, PhD;

As lecturers on November 12th, 2009: Dr. sc. Aldina FRANCO (University of East Anglia), Joanne BERTAUX (Université de Poitiers), Didier BOUCHON (Université de Poitiers);

On February 3rd, 2010: Dr Iain BARR (Lecturer), Anthony J DAVY, PhD (Professor of Ecology), Dr. sc. William CHEUNG; Prof. Andrew LOVETT (GIS);

On February 5th, 2010: Miguel Ângelo PARDAL, PhD, Cristina CANHOTO, PhD, Maria da Conceicao Cunha, Isabel Maria de Oliveira ABRANTES, PhD, Prof. Manuel GRAÇA PhD, Jaimealbino RAMOS, PhD, Prof. Dr. António Veríssimo PIRES, João Carlos MARQUES, PhD, Isabel Luci CONCEIÇÃO, PhD, Alcides PEREIRA, PhD.

Furthermore, 30 students from different semesters of the degree programme in question took part in a talk with the auditors on November 12th, 2009.

11 students from different semesters took part in a talk with the peer on February 3rd, 2010.

5 students from the third semester took part in a talk with the peer on February 5th, 2010.

The following chapters B and E relate to the self-report by the consortium from October 9th, 2009 and to the information gathered during the on-site visits of the auditors as well as to the examples of exams and final theses (the latter from the related local Master's degree programmes) provided during the on-site visit at the Université de Poitiers.

Unless otherwise indicated, the following refers both to female and male persons.

B Peer report

B-1 Formal Data

1. Name of the degree programme	2. Profile according to KMK ¹	3. consecutive/ non-consecutive/ further education	4. Degree to be awarded	5. Standard period of study and CP	6. Commencement of studies and starting date of the programme	7. Target enrolment
European Master in Applied Ecology	More research-oriented	non-consecutive	M.Sc.	2 years 120 CP	September of each year Sept 2008	24

Re 1. The auditors considered the **name of the degree programme** not generally incongruous with its educational objectives and the contents being offered, though little specific for the graduates' special competence profiles. On the one hand, the peers noted a strong overall focus on Conservation Ecology and/or ecosystemic framework or bioindication. On the other hand, they gained the impression that, due to the comprehensive opportunities of developing an individual profile through the choice of elective modules and specialisation disciplines, the graduates' competence profiles may vary considerably. According to the peers, neither each concrete profile nor the variety between all profiles can be expressed accurately by the general term "Applied Ecology". The auditors missed a definition and general philosophy of the specific concept of Applied Ecology and the connection between the different working groups. The current name of the degree programme could lead prospective students and potential employers to misconceive the graduates' actual abilities and competences. Also, the focus on application in the name seems to be in contrast with the more research-oriented concept of the programme. Therefore, the auditors considered it necessary to adapt the name of the degree programme in a way that it specifically reflects the educational objectives and the contents.

Re 2. Taking into account the profile and the activities of the staff involved in the programme and the courses offered, the peers considered the classification of the degree programme within the more research-oriented **profile** justified.

Re 3. The auditors considered the classification of the degree programme as non-consecutive justified.

Re 4. The peers verified whether the degree to be awarded complies with the legal guidelines. They acknowledged that the consortium intends to award a joint degree. However, as

¹ KMK: Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic [*Kultusministerkonferenz*].

this currently conflicts with the ministerial guidelines for the German Federal Land of Schleswig-Holstein, a double or triple degree will be awarded at least temporarily as follows: The French degree will be awarded to all students who have successfully completed the programme. A second Master's degree will be awarded by the institution where the elective period has been carried out (German or Portuguese degree). An additional degree, if different from the aforementioned two, will be awarded by the institution where the specialisation period and the Master's thesis have been carried out. The peers found that the degrees to be awarded comply with the legal guidelines, though this provisional solution does not seem to be able to reflect the idea of a joint degree programme as well as a true joint degree would do.

Re 5. to 7. The auditors took note of the information provided by the consortium and took these indications into consideration for their overall assessment.

Tuition fees of EUR 5,500 for European students and EUR 8,500 for Third-country students (country other than those from EEA-EFTA States and candidate countries for accession to the European Union) for the entire programme are charged. The fee structure is different for European and non-European students because of British and Erasmus Mundus requirements. The fees include the institutional, teaching, logistic and organisational costs during the courses, the language training, and the travel costs for compulsory travels. The travel between the first and the second year of study is not financed as it occurs during the summer holidays, which the students might spend at different places. If a student has to interrupt or drop out of the studies as a result of changes in his private situation, the general rules regarding this case of the university where he was enrolled at that time apply.

The peers took note of the information about tuition fees provided by the consortium and included it in their overall assessment.

B-2 Objectives and Demand

According to the consortium, the main **educational objective** of the programme is to enable its graduates to carry out a wide variety of ecological projects throughout the world with a special focus on developing countries. The graduates should have acquired the competences, fundamental knowledge and skills necessary to assimilate the more recent approaches in ecology in an applied perspective. The graduates should be environmental specialists with comprehensive knowledge and skills in the main areas of applied ecology as well as a specialisation in one of the following fields: ecological diagnosis of human-related and natural disturbances, temperate continental and aquatic ecosystems, the changing environment, the disturbance and dynamics of ecosystems under climatic trends and land use, population and food chain dynamics, interspecific relationships and biodiversity changes.

According to the consortium, the intended **learning outcomes** of the programme are the following: The graduates should be able to autonomously apply and develop scientific work in specific areas of Applied Ecology. They should have in-depth knowledge in one of the four fields of specialisation offered. The prescribed travels should enable the graduates to deal

with different work environments and to apply their knowledge under varying constraints. The graduates should have the skills to prepare, organise and supervise complex projects. The graduates should have the ability to reduce the complexity of problems and to communicate with scientists, administrators and laymen. They should be well prepared to take over responsibility in international and cross-cultural groups. Furthermore, they should be able to communicate in English and in at least one other language both spoken and written.

A summary of the educational objectives and the intended learning outcomes is laid down in the examination regulation for the Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel for the degree programme.

The **objectives of individual modules** are fixed in the module descriptions. The module handbook is at the students' and at the teachers' disposal.

The peers found that the objectives of individual modules are almost entirely defined as learning outcomes and competences. From the talk with the students they gained the impression that communication on the availability of the module handbook could be intensified. Furthermore, the auditors found that an editorial revision of the module descriptions and additional information about which modules are particularly suitable for certain specialisation areas could be reasonable, for instance in the framework of the regular revision of the module handbook.

The auditors found the overall objectives and learning outcomes of the degree programmes as presented in the self-report and during the talks valid and desirable. In their view, the objectives and outcomes correspond to the National Qualification Framework for German Graduate Degrees. The qualification objectives encompass the scientific qualification, the qualification to take up a qualified employment, and the qualification for societal commitment and self-development.

The peers used these objectives and outcomes as reference for the analysis of the programme's curriculum.

The **demand** for the programme stems, according to the consortium, from industries that are in need of graduates broadly qualified in applied ecology. In developed countries, several Second Cycle Programmes on environmental and ecological approaches are offered. However, these programmes used to be highly specialized and, thus, cannot deal with a large scope of environmental fields without decreasing their detailing. This conflicts with the needs of students from developing countries who used to return to their homelands where they will have to be able to deal with a huge variety of complex environmental projects. The consortium intends to establish a new approach in the European academic scenery that has been successful in other regions: integrating ecological balances, ecosystem dynamics, ecological restoration and biological conservation.

The target group consists of Bachelor graduates (or equivalent) in Biology, Ecology, Population genetics, Evolution, Environmental Sciences or other fields related with the programme in question. Up to now, applications have clearly surpassed the number of places available.

The graduates of related Second Cycle Programmes at the institutions of higher education involved in the consortium have had, according to the consortium, little difficulties in finding employments and hold positions like: Environmental Consultants, Research Associates in environmental consultancies, Research Fellows, Research Officers, Scientific Officers in national administrations for the Environment/Forestry/Fisheries/Hunting/Aquatic Sciences, Research Assistants in societies for the protection of animals and plants, Coordinators of animal surveys, Field Project Supervisors, Conservation Officers, Plant Surveyors, Biodiversity Project Managers, Scientific Data Analysts.

According to recent surveys, employments related to environmental aspects in general are expected to show disproportionately high growth rates during the next decades.

Taking into account the graduates' positioning on the labour market, demand from industry and the target groups as well as European and international trends, the auditors found the rationale for establishing the programme comprehensible. However, during the talks with the programme co-ordinators and the students it turned out that the majority of the graduates are expected to enter a Ph.D. programme afterwards. Also, the peers felt an incertitude concerning the employment perspectives outside the research sector as the labour market still needs to further adapt itself to the reformed degrees. Admittedly, this challenge can hardly be influenced by the consortium. The auditors acknowledged that the within the framework of the degree programme specific courses on skills in molecular tools, statistics, and modelling, which are typically required by employers, are offered.

B-3 Educational Process

The **entry requirements** for the degree programme are defined in the Regulations for Qualifying Examinations for the EMAE-European Master in Applied Ecology of the Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel. Admission to the Master degree program is contingent upon the following prerequisites: (1) passing a Bachelor examination with at least 180 ECTS credits in a degree programme for natural sciences with an emphasis in ecology, biology, population genetics or environmental sciences or a comparable degree examination in a related degree programme with a grade of at least 2.8 (according to the German scale of grades), (2) good knowledge of English (IELTS score of 6.5 or equivalent), (3) passing an entrance examination. An academic equivalency may be attributed based on the professional experience of the applicant (validation of acquired experience).

The joint Selection & Management Board of the consortium partners is in charge of the admission process. Applicants will be selected through an evaluation based on the following criteria: academic ability (60 %), motivation (25 %), and work experience (15 %). The applications from European students and from Third-country students are examined in the same manner while respecting the requirements of the Erasmus Mundus programme (a maximum

of 25 % of the places can be given to applicants from the same country, the principle of gender equality is respected).

The Selection & Management Board, taking into account the applicants' wishes as well as the need for balanced group sizes, undertakes the students' distribution to the elective courses and specialisations. Modifications at a later date are possible upon approval by the Selection & Management Board.

The peers discussed the entry requirements with the lecturers and with the students. With regard to the programme's focus on biodiversity, the auditors wondered why a minimum knowledge of species and taxonomic skills are neither required by the admission criteria nor included in the content. The programme co-ordinators explained that the students are expected to have basic knowledge of species and fundamental taxonomic skills from their previous studies, which they are supposed to deepen and broaden if needed for their Master's thesis. In any case, the students should rather gain transferrable taxonomic skills than detailed knowledge. Besides, the students have the opportunity to refresh or catch up their abilities in species determination during the field works. The auditors understood these explanations and found that the admission procedures are reasonable for maintaining the quality of the degree programme.

Concerning the students' distribution to the specialisations, the peers gained the impression that the definite choice of the specialisation discipline at the time of application, thus before the students have made contact with the contents and the staff, is very early. The consortium suggested that a student who changed his mind might change his specialisation area if there was another student who was interested in exchanging the specialisation areas. Another solution suggested by the consortium is to offer a thesis co-supervised by the institution where the student would have liked to spend his specialisation period. In order to avoid later changes of the specialisation areas the consortium plans to improve the information for prospective students about each university's focus. The auditors acknowledged that the programme co-ordinators have made some arrangements to allow for later changes of the field of specialisation although the specialist and financial concept of the degree programme virtually depends on an equal distribution of the students to the four areas. Nevertheless, fixing the specialisation before the commencement of studies seemed too inflexible to the peers. They recommend that a more flexible solution for changes after the commencement of studies be developed.

The **curriculum** of the degree programme "European Master in Applied Ecology" is made up of seven periods that reflect the main areas of competences of the consortium partners:

First year:

Integrative period (period P0): All students begin with an introductory session at the Université de Poitiers during the first week of September dedicated to administrative aspects as well as a French language course for non-native speakers and applicants with a low per-

formance in the entry-level test. The incoming students are also invited to attend the farewell congress for the graduates (presentation of their work during the Master's project).

Compulsory interdisciplinary study periods (periods P1 and P2): The first study period takes place in Poitiers between September and December. It contains the modules "Multivariate Statistics & Data Analysis in Ecology", "Basics of Population Genetics & Evolutionary Ecology" and "Animal Strategies & Basics in Behavioural Ecology" as well as language training in German, Portuguese or French in preparation for the second year of the programme and an elective module ("Basics of Ecosystem Analysis" organised by the Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel or "Environmental Physiology and Toxicology" organised by the Universidade de Coimbra). From January to March, all students are in Norwich for a second course period. This period contains the following modules: "Ecological modelling", "Ecological consequences of climate change" and "GIS module" as well as 10 ECTS credits out of the following modules: "Communities, Ecosystems and Macro-Ecology", "Resource Development and Conservation", "Evolutionary Biology and Conservation Genetics", "Pollution, Toxicology and Chemistry", "Behavioural Ecology: From theory to practical analysis", "Conservation Genetics". The aim of the periods P1 and P2 is to provide basic knowledge in the main fields of ecology as a preparation for the specialisation.

Elective study period (period P3): During the second semester (April to July), half of the students are in Coimbra (P3a: Environmental Quality & Ecotoxicology) and half of them in Kiel (P3b: Functional approach of ecosystems). The teaching staff encourages the students to select during period P1 the elective module organised by staff from Kiel if they plan to follow period P3 in Coimbra and reciprocally.

Second year:

The second year is dedicated to the professional specialisation. The two last semesters (P4 and P5) normally take place in the same institution. However, the Master's project can be carried out abroad.

Specialised study period (period P4): The following specialisations are offered: Ecotoxicology & Bioindicators of Environmental quality (Coimbra), Applied and theoretical approaches in Animal Ecology and Population Biology (Poitiers), Environmental sciences & Conservation ecology (Norwich) and Advanced studies on the dynamics of terrestrial, aquatic and coastal ecosystems (Kiel).

Master's thesis (period P5): 30 ECTS credits are awarded for period P5, 24 credits for the Master's thesis and 6 credits for the module "Project Management". The second examiner for the Master's thesis is a representative of one of the remaining partner universities in order to ensure comparability of the requirements.

Farewell congress (period P6): Once they have completed their Master's project, all students are reunited one last time in Poitiers for a presentation of their work during a Farewell congress (around two weeks). The newly-arrived students are invited to attend the congress.

From the auditors' point of view, the curriculum corresponds with the aforementioned objectives of the programme. The curriculum encompasses field-specific knowledge and key skills as well as methodological and generic competences. The peers found the broad ecological education and the good set of methods taught particularly positive. The opportunity of a master's thesis carried out outside Europe appeared interesting to them.

From the peers' point of view, the degree programme is a challenging project, particularly with regard to organisational matters. They appreciated this enterprise in principle and acknowledged that it offers interesting opportunities. At the same time, the scheme proposed seemed to contain certain risks the peers noticed during the on-site visits.

The peers discussed the collaboration between four universities with different profiles with the programme co-ordinators and with the students. The peers acknowledged that, although the collaboration does not seem to be imperative from a specialist point of view, it offers the students to deal with four different scientific approaches and cultures. Still, the auditors were aware of the fact that this collaboration requires thorough co-ordination in order to offer a well-structured, smoothly running and interesting combination without unintended overlaps. For instance, the peers noticed that at each of the universities involved a module on remote sensing/GIS/spatial analysis is taught. According to the programme co-ordinators, these modules cover different levels: the compulsory module in Norwich is a basic course, whereas the other (elective) modules are designed for advanced students. The programme co-ordinators explained that the curriculum design was focused on the compilation of existing modules with slight adaptations of the first year modules. The students reported that the study periods are separate stages without theoretical connections to make interrelations evident. In order to improve the co-ordination between the single components, the peers found it necessary to clearly divide the scopes of responsibility with regard to contents, to increase the co-ordination of the contributions by the different universities, and to arrange a theoretical connection between them.

From the talks the peers gained the impression that the beginning of the studies needs to be reorganised. The auditors saw a huge potential for improvement with regard to guidance, time commitment and staff-student ratio during the integrative period at the Université de Poitiers. The students criticised that at the beginning of the studies time is not used efficiently, that their scientific courses start late, that some courses are of low level (Statistics) and that the introduction to the French language is not detailed enough to enable them to pursue Second Cycle courses in French. The auditors saw a need to reduce time losses, to improve administrative assistance and guidance (which would imply an enlargement of staff), and to offer more courses in English during the integrative period at the Université de Poitiers. The peers suggest, for instance, to integrate staff from the other universities involved or to carry out the beginning of the studies at one of the other universities. Adapting the entry requirements (requiring good knowledge of the French language) appeared a less promising measure to the auditors.

The degree programme contains **practical training** in the form of laboratory courses. Industrial placements are not compulsory but welcome. Several modules are taught by staff from industrial partners.

The peers gained the impression that sufficient practical training is included in the curriculum.

The degree programme is designed for full-time study. According to the self-report, the **didactic concept** comprises the following elements: lectures, laboratories, seminars. Teaching languages for the modules in Poitiers are both French and English for oral explanations; all supporting materials (papers, videos and slides) are in English. The elective modules organised by Kiel and Coimbra and taught in Poitiers are in English. The modules of the elective study period P3 in Coimbra and Kiel are taught in English. During the specialised study period P4, depending on the hosting institution, part of the modules are taught by staff from industry and administration partners. In addition, the students are frequently in contact with professionals in the field. That is why the teaching language may at times be the national language. In order to be well prepared the student must follow the language training of year 1 (period P1, see above) in the native language of the hosting institution for the second year. Upon request the students can also register for supplementary language training in year 2.

The auditors judged the didactic concept appropriate for the achievement of the educational goals.

The degree programme has been **modularised** and makes use of a **credit point system**. The modules offered are mostly also offered in local Second Cycle degree programmes. The overall number of ECTS credits for the degree programme is 120; the number of credits per module is between 2 and 6, for some elective modules 9. The award of credits for modules and the estimation of the average work effort for each module result from experiences with the corresponding local degree programmes.

The peers judged that the presented concept meets the ASIIN standards for the award of credits.

Concerning the creation of modules, the auditors found that they represent reasonable packages of contents of adequate volume. With regard to the module size, the peers acknowledged that the relatively small modules almost exclusively belong to the introductory periods P0-P2 where they found them didactically reasonable. The auditors judged that the presented concept meets the ASIIN standards for modularization.

Examinations include written exams, oral exams, reports/essays, presentations, exercises, and projects. The examination period generally corresponds with the last full week of the lecture period. The students must present their Master's thesis in a colloquium. Failed module examinations can be repeated, the number of repetitions is governed by the rules of the university concerned. Re-examinations are organised on an individual basis in order to avoid conflicts with the prescribed mobility scheme. The **organisation of examinations** is described in the self-report and is laid down in the examination regulations.

The peers discussed the organisation of examinations with the students and with the teaching staff.

They acknowledged that the regulations for the University of East Anglia for repeated examinations represent a measure to keep students from tactically postponing assessment dates. The peers saw that, in principle, marking only depends on the achievement of the targeted learning outcomes.

The auditors found the organisation of the examinations adequate and suitable for the achievement of the programme objectives within the standard period of study.

Instead of a joint **examination regulation** for the entire degree programme, the regulation(s) of the university the student is staying applies. At some universities there are both specific regulations for the corresponding local Master's degree programme and general examination regulations for (Bachelor's and) Master's degree programmes. All relevant examination regulations are in force. The self-report contains the regulations for the Université de Poitiers and the Universidade de Coimbra in French and Portuguese respectively. The regulations specify the period of study, examinations, the grading system and other aspects of the degree programme. The final grade is also expressed as a relative grade in accordance with the ECTS grading scale.

The peers took note that all matters concerning the degree programme and the examinations are laid down in regulations that are in force. The peers found it necessary that every student has the relevant regulations in the teaching language at his disposal. They kindly ask for English translations of the French and Portuguese regulations. The peers saw from the documents submitted that English translations of the French and Portuguese examination regulations are available for the students.

The award of a **Diploma Supplement** is stipulated in the examination regulations. The self-report contains a draft English model for the degree programme in question.

The auditors kindly ask for a complete and up-to-date model Diploma Supplement and Transcripts of Records to see whether these documents comply with the guidelines. The auditors found that the model Diploma Supplement submitted complies with the guidelines.

B-4 Resources

With regard to the **academic context** as well as to **internal** and **external co-operations**, the following can be derived from the self-report and from the talks: The Second Cycle Programme "European Master in Applied Ecology" is jointly offered by the Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel, the Université de Poitiers, the Universidade de Coimbra, and the University of East Anglia. These universities have been working together for several decades on various research projects and have exchanged students and researchers.

The degree programme in question is largely based on modules belonging to other Second Cycle degree programmes of the consortium partners that have been offered for several years, namely:

- the Second Cycle degree programmes “Environmental Management”, “Biologie” and “Biological Oceanography” at the Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel,
- the Second Cycle degree programme “Ecologie & Biologie des Populations” at the Université de Poitiers,
- the Second Cycle degree programme “Ecologia”, with specialisation in “Ecologia Aplicada”, at the Universidade de Coimbra,
- the Second Cycle degree programme “Environmental Sciences” at the University of East Anglia.

According to the self-report, the consortium partners’ research activities with regard to the degree programme in question are as follows: At the Université de Poitiers, the Ecology Evolution & Symbiosis laboratory, which is integrated in the Reaumur Institute of Environmental Sciences, undertakes research activities aiming at understanding the interactions between organisms and their modulations by global and/or local environmental perturbations. At the Universidade de Coimbra, the Institute of Marine and Freshwater Research is involved in the degree programme in question. At the Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel, the Centre for Ecology, belonging to the Faculty of Agriculture and Nutritional Science and the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, is involved in the programme. At the University of East Anglia, the following research centres within the School of Environmental Sciences are relevant to the programme: the Centre for Ecology, Evolution and Conservation that focuses on the conservation of biodiversity, the Earth and Life Systems Alliance – a collaboration with the John Innes Centre for plant science and microbiology, the Climatic Research Unit, the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research which addresses socio-economic aspects of global climate change, and the Centre for Social and Economic Research on the Global Environment.

According to the self-report, the consortium aims at promoting collaborative research between European and Third-country institutions. A partnership has been established between the consortium and five overseas institutions of higher education: University of Georgia (Athens, USA), Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (Porto Alegre, Brasil), Universidad San Francisco de Quito (Ecuador), University of Adelaide (Australia), and University of Otago (Dunedin, New Zealand). Within the framework of this partnership, European students should have the opportunity to study key topics in applied ecology in different ecosystems for a period of two years.

Taking into account the academic profiles and the research activities of the Schools involved, the auditors saw a solid basis for the successful implementation of the degree programme thanks to a close co-operation between the four universities and good contacts to other uni-

versities. They found the co-operation between the scientists from the different Schools involved, which in some cases resulted in joint publications in internationally renowned journals, positive.

It became apparent to the peers, particularly from the talks with the students, that the qualitative conditions to carry out the degree programme differ between the universities involved. This refers to the teaching languages as well as to the staff-student ratio and the opportunity for cross-links to research projects and contacts with internationally renowned scientists. The University of East Anglia offers a wide range of Anglophone Second Cycle degree programmes whose course can partially be used by students of the degree programme in question. In contrast, at the Université de Poitiers many Second Cycle degree programmes are offered in French language, thus limiting the offer for students with only basic knowledge of the French language. Offering courses both in French and in English would mean increasing the teachers' work load.

The local Second Cycle degree programmes have undergone the following **accreditation / evaluation / validation** procedures:

- The Second Cycle degree programmes "Environmental Management", "Biologie" and "Biological Oceanography" at the Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel were accredited by ASIIN e. V. in 2006 / 2007 (accreditation valid until September 30th, 2011 / 2013).
- The Second Cycle degree programme "Ecologie & Biologie des Populations" at the Université de Poitiers was evaluated by the French agency AERES in 2008 ("habilitation des diplômes Masters").
- The Second Cycle degree programme "Ecologia", with specialisation in "Ecologia Aplicada", at the Universidade de Coimbra was approved by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education in 2007 ("despacho").
- The University of East Anglia has undergone institutional audits conducted by QAA in 2004 and in 2009.

Based on the current knowledge, no programme-oriented procedures of external quality assurance have been carried out for the corresponding Master's degree programmes at the Universidade de Coimbra and at the University of East Anglia. In order to rate the necessity for additional audit(s), additional information about the status of the Portuguese ministerial approval and the British institutional audit will be needed.

The peers saw from the documents submitted that the Master's degree programme "Ecologia Aplicada" at the Universidade de Coimbra has been approved by the Portuguese Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education. The approval is valid until all degree programmes offered by Portuguese universities have been accredited. The first accreditation procedures are planned to begin in 2010, the last ones are planned to end in 2012. The ministerial approval for the Master's degree programme "Ecologia Aplicada" at the Universidade

de Coimbra was awarded on the following basis: The degree programme exists since 1992. In 2007 the Ministry requested a report on the modifications planned in order to implement the Bologna process. The report had to describe the curriculum, the ECTS credit system and the workload, competence descriptions for the modules, the objectives of the degree programme, the didactical concept, a benchmarking with similar degree programmes in other European countries, the results of a survey among graduates and employers and their implementation in the adapted programme, a module handbook, the facilities and equipment, and the teaching staff. Each modification of the degree programme has to be reviewed and approved by the Ministry. Some modifications were made according to this procedure. The auditors found that the ministerial approval of the Master's degree programme "Ecologia Aplicada" at the Universidade de Coimbra is not equivalent to an accreditation procedure according to the requirements of the German Accreditation Council.

The peers saw from the documents submitted that the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) has a statutory duty to ensure that the teaching provision it funds with public money is of good quality. It discharges this duty by contracting the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) to devise and implement quality assurance methods. The QAA is therefore responsible for reviewing the quality of all publicly funded higher education teaching provision in England on behalf of HEFCE, in both higher education institutions and further education colleges. The current review cycle for QAA to undertake audits of all higher education institutions in England and Wales is 6 years. The University of East Anglia underwent the typical English external quality assurance procedure, the institutional audit, in 2004 and in 2009. Audits are carried out by a team of academics who review the institution's quality and standards, using their knowledge of higher education and reference points in the Academic Infrastructure. After each audit, QAA publishes a report on the audit team's findings. QAA is a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). It is not included in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR). The peers found that some aspects of the institutional audit at the University of East Anglia could be comparable with a German accreditation procedure.

(Decision on additional audits: cf. chapter C)

The following **committees** are responsible for the organisation of the degree programme: The Selection & Management Board is composed of eight members (two representative of each university involved in the consortium) and is responsible for the overall management of the curriculum, all issues concerning at least two consortium members and/or that cannot be clarified locally. The rules of co-operation within the consortium are fixed in a consortium agreement. The local committees responsible for the organisation of those parts of the degree programme that do not need to be managed by the Selection & Management Board act according to the respective university's or school's regulations.

The auditors found that the organisation and decision-making structures are suited to the implementation of the educational measures.

According to the consortium agreement, each partner is committed to providing the agreed teaching capacity for the modules within their scope of responsibility. The programme in question predominantly uses modules offered in other Second Cycle degree programmes.

The auditors considered the available **personnel resources** sufficient and their professional and didactic skills adequate for the successful implementation of the programme.

The sustainability of the programme is ensured by tuition fees. The distribution and the assignment of the revenues are governed by the consortium agreement. The Université de Poitiers is the co-ordinating institution and has the financial responsibility for the programme.

With regard to the **physical** and **technical equipment** and **resources**, part of the lecture halls and classrooms, the computer facilities, library and laboratories that are used for the programme are described in the self-report.

During the main on-site visit, the audit team visited lecture halls and laboratories at the Université de Poitiers. The auditors judged that the technical equipment and the facilities available at the Université de Poitiers are appropriate for the implementation of the French parts of the programme.

The auditors discussed the libraries' equipment with the programme co-ordinators and the students. According to the programme co-ordinators, the students have access to hard copy publications and electronic media including some journals at the university they are staying at. The students reported that access to electronic journals differs among the four sites and needs improvement in Poitiers. Also, there are not always an adequate number of copies of the literature recommended in the module handbook available in the libraries. The peers judged that it is necessary to improve the libraries' equipment in order to ensure the availability of an adequate number of copies of the most important literature.

With regard to the laboratories, libraries and computer equipment with reference to the programme in Norwich, Coimbra and Kiel, the peers do not have enough specific and up-to-date information to judge whether the equipment is appropriate for the implementation of the remaining parts of the programme. The auditors kindly ask the consortium to provide additional information about the above-mentioned equipment. They also ask for detailed information about online access to journals available to the students at the four sites. From the documents submitted, the peers saw that the laboratories', libraries' and computer equipment with reference to the programme at the Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel and at the University of East Anglia, is appropriate for the implementation of these parts of the programme. With regard to the equipment at the Universidade de Coimbra, the auditors continue having an uncertainty concerning the appropriateness of the equipment for the research-oriented programme. The peers saw that online access to relevant journals is available to the students at the four sites.

During the additional on-site visits, laboratories, libraries and lecture halls at the University of East Anglia and at the Universidade de Coimbra were visited. The peer judged that the tech-

nical equipment and the facilities available there are appropriate for the implementation of the respective parts of the programme. Overall, the peers noticed considerable differences in the laboratories' and libraries' equipment between the University of East Anglia and the Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel, on the one hand, and the Universidade de Coimbra and the Université de Poitiers, on the other hand. During the talks, the peers assured themselves that, independently of the quality of the equipment, the scientists involved work accurately with the material available and achieve reproducible results. Access and organization of the libraries were good at the University of East Anglia, the Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel and the Universidade de Coimbra. There are special rooms for graduate students and the most important international publications are either open to inspection or are available online. This also applies to the standard acts relevant for the degree programme. At this juncture, the predominance of francophone authors should be attenuated in favour of international journals and monographs.

Academic guidance of students includes the integrative period (P0) and administrative assistance with the application for visa and residence permits as well as bank account opening, accommodation, and health insurance. Each consortium partner has compiled useful information on the institution and country, from a cultural, logistic and academic point of view in a student handbook, specially designed for the students of the programme in question.

According to the students, the support offered during the integrative period is very useful, while academic counselling or information with a view to the strategic choice of elective modules could be intensified. The auditors found that the resources for the supervision, guidance and support of the students are adequate.

According to the self-report, the principal of gender equality as well as the concerns of students with special needs should be considered, amongst others, by the following measures: The possibility that the student may bring accompanying persons, companion or children, and that a person may have special needs, is taken into account when preparing their stay and special dispositions will be offered (accommodation in specifically equipped and/or more spacious apartment, assistance with the organisation of child care and school registration).

In the event that a student credibly demonstrates the inability, due to a chronic illness or a disability, to take an examination wholly or partially in the stipulated form or within the examination deadlines named in the regulations, the examination committee can extend the period of time for working on the thesis or the deadlines for taking the examinations or permit equivalent examinations in a suitable form.

The peers found that the principle of gender equality and the concerns of students with special needs are pursued through reasonable measures. Questions related to an interruption or drop out of the studies due to changes in a student's private situation were discussed in chapter B-2 (cf. page 7).

B-5 Attainment of Objectives

The consortium presented the following documents with regard to the attainment of objectives: number of students commencing the programme and drop-out rates (none up to now).

From the data available the peers noted that, due to the recent starting date of the programme, little information about the attainment of objectives is available. They particularly appreciate the drop-out rate of 0 %. From the talks, the auditors gained the impression that the programme co-ordinators aim at observing the attainment of objectives and, where necessary, taking actions.

During the on-site visit the consortium presented a number of Master's **theses** from the corresponding local degree programmes and model **exams**.

The peers judged that the level of the documents presented complies with the required Second Cycle level.

From the talk with the **students** the auditors perceived a generally positive attitude towards the choice of the universities and the studies.

During their talk with the auditing team, the students particularly appreciated the opportunity to get to know up to four different universities and countries as ecology is an international matter that does not stop at political borders. The students see some room for improvement in organisational matters (assistance with the bureaucratic paperwork) and concerning the collocation of the master's thesis within the programme (field work complicated as master's thesis must be done in winter). Further consequences from the discussion with the students were integrated in the respective sections of this report. The peers assume that the students are familiar with the study process and examinations including compensation for students with special needs.

B-6 Quality Assurance Measures

The **quality assurance** for the degree programme is based on the following measures: Both the organisation and the academic content of the programme are assessed by the students. The staff in Kiel is responsible for the organisation of the student surveys. The results of the student surveys will be compiled in an annual internal report and will be presented and discussed with the students during the farewell congress. The consortium partners are asked to relate organisational difficulties for this report. The Selection & Management Board is in charge of taking actions for improvement. The first internal evaluation of the programme is scheduled for October 2010. In addition to formal student surveys, difficulties can be directly discussed with the teaching staff. According to the self-report, graduate surveys will be implemented at each partner university. The results will be compiled and annually reported to the Selection & Management Board.

The peers gained the impression that quality assurance measures are planned and partially have already been implemented. They discussed the student surveys with the programme co-ordinators and with the students and learned that while for organisational questions a

specific questionnaire is used the academic assessment is carried out in the framework of the local Master's degree programmes' quality assurance concept. The peers discussed the possibility of using a standardised questionnaire specifically designed for the degree programme in question in order to facilitate the use of student feedback for improvements. The programme co-ordinators found this proposal interesting though difficult to carry out as the groups always consist of students from different degree programmes but the surveys must be anonymous.

The auditors recommended to enhance the quality assurance system and to use its results for continuous improvements. Graduates should be regularly surveyed and statistical data on graduate employment should be collected in order to demonstrate the successful realization of the educational outcomes at re-accreditation.

C Decision of the Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes on the necessity of additional audits (15.12.2009)

The Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes discussed the procedure. They asserted that the corresponding Second Cycle Degree Programmes offered by the Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel were accredited by ASIIN in 2006 and 2007. The corresponding Second Cycle Degree Programme offered by the Universidade de Coimbra was reviewed and approved by the Portuguese Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education. In Portugal an accreditation system equivalent to the German one is not yet in use. The corresponding Second Cycle Degree Programme offered by the University of East Anglia is subject to institutional audit procedures carried out by the British Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). This external quality assurance procedure is related to the institution, not specifically to a Degree Programme. QAA has not yet been included in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education EQAR.

The Accreditation Commission found that the corresponding Second Cycle Degree Programmes offered by the Universidade de Coimbra and by the University of East Anglia have not been accredited or undergone an equivalent external review in a way that the results of the review procedures could be recognised.

The Accreditation Commission establishes that

1. no additional audit is needed at the Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel.
2. an additional audit is needed at the Universidade de Coimbra.
3. an additional audit is needed at the University of East Anglia.

D Modification of the structure of the centre for ecology at the Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel

The peers received the information that the centre for ecology (cf. page 15) at the Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel had been closed. In the proclamation of the decisions made by the University's Convent on May 20th, 2009 (available at <http://www.mathnat.uni-kiel.de/protokolle/bp-20090520>, recalled on December 17th, 2009) it is said that the Vice-Chancellor, the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences and the Faculty of Agricultural and Nutrition Science agreed on the closure of the centre for ecology that used to be a joint institution of the two Faculties by the end of the semester. In both Faculties new institutes shall be founded. Following a recommendation by the Budget and Planning Committee, the Convent decided unanimously to close the centre for ecology.

From the application the peers had gained the impression that the centre for ecology is of vital importance for the parts of the degree programme that are taught in Kiel. Due to the information about the closure of the centre for ecology the auditors had an incertitude concerning the availability of the resources in terms of staff, machines, material and finances of the centre for ecology. The peers found it disconcerting that this important issue had not been mentioned in the application and during the talks in Poitiers. They found it necessary to ask the Vice-Chancellor of the Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel for a comment on how the resources needed for the degree programme are assured.

On January 7th, 2010, the Head of the Department for Structural and Development Planning of the Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel submitted the following comment:

The "closure" of the centre for ecology only concerns a modification of its structure, not a diminishment of structures. The heretofore existing centre for ecology will be converted into two institutes which will be incorporated into the Faculties. Teaching will be continued jointly by both institutes – i.e. by all persons involved hitherto. This can be assured for the entire accreditation period. A formal letter by the Rectorate with the same content will reach you soon. (Translated from German)

During the audit talks, the peers learned that the students have not noticed negative alterations since the structure of the centre for ecology was modified.

Before definitely judging the modification of the structure of the centre for ecology and its implications on the resources in terms of staff, machines, material and finances for the degree programme the peers kindly ask the Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel to submit the letter by the Rectorate.

E Additional information

In order to be able to give their final assessment the peers asked the consortium to provide, together with their comment, the following information that was missing:

Formal letter by the Rectorate of the Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel on the modification of the structure of the centre for ecology.

F Comment by the Institutions of higher education (25.02.2010)

“Comments compiled by Wilhelm Windhorst, member of the EMAE selection & management board, Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel

Comment to R1 (p6):

Though the auditors saw the necessity to adapt the name of the degree programme in a way, that it specifically reflects the educational objectives and contents, the EMAE consortium has strong doubts that this would be easily possible and effective. The main reasons are:

- In the provided information about EMAE the students are clearly informed that they will stay the 2nd year of the programme at one of the four EU universities and that they will be awarded with a Master- degree from this universities. The focus of all universities is clearly indicated in the information. Furthermore, details of the provided modules in the respective streams of specialization are available too. This means that the EMAE programme has already four subtitles specifying to a certain extent the areas of expertise acquired by enrolling for it.
- As part of the selection procedure the Selection & Management board has to evaluate whether the applicant is suited for the final stream indicated by the candidate in the application. Especially the good candidates provided in their applications clear evidence that they had thoroughly studied not only the EMAE homepage, but also had looked for information available from the web presentations from the local universities. The majority justified their choice by referring to special courses or activities of the university where they want to do their master project. This indicates clearly that potential students are well informed about what they have to expect. Concerning future employers it has to be acknowledged that the alumni of the EMAE programme will be awarded with existing degrees issued at Poitiers, Coimbra and Norwich. In this case future employers will see the degrees according the local names which reflect the above mentioned focus of the respective university. Only Kiel will issue the MSc in the programme called “European Master in Applied Ecology”. This certificate will clearly indicate all universities at where students of the EMAE programme have attended which courses. Hence future employers can identify at a first glance which areas of applied ecology have been elaborated during the studies.

- Finally, it should be considered that traditional disciplinary curricula like Biology, Geology, Geography, Environmental Sciences etc. are covering huge topical areas as well. This kind of broad branding of a programme is a very suitable strategy to keep the name for a long time period and to accommodate new developments in the respective area as well.

Comment to B-2 Objectives and Demand (p8)

The consortium agrees that the communication on the availability of the module handbook could be intensified. The selection & Management board decided during the last meeting in February 20010 to update and improve the homepage accordingly.

Comment to B-3 Educational process (p10)

The consortium agrees that the request to decide on the final specialisation before the start of studies is suboptimal. Though difficult due to structural limitations the consortium will search for options to allow more flexibility also during the first year.

Comment 1 to B-3 Educational process (p12)

The consortium agrees with the peers' point that the operation of the EMAE scheme is challenging, but that the inherent risks are compensated by the options to generate synergistic benefits. Expected benefits cover hard and soft skills for students but also for the participating teachers and universities. However, it is especially for students difficult to identify this at an early stage of their studies. The benefits of single module provided will become obvious latest during the thesis work. Latest at this stage students will recognise that courses providing an understanding of population dynamics (Poitiers, P1) and the knowledge of major methods like GIS and approaches in community ecology (Norwich P1) are prerequisites to understand the dynamic of Ecosystems (Kiel P1 and P3b). Furthermore the courses provided by Coimbra (P1 and P3a) will generate a profound understanding of human caused releases of contaminants and the resulting impacts on ecological systems. Students of all specialisations will benefit from the periods P1, P2 and P3. Still the consortium acknowledges that the harmonisation of the overall programme is an ongoing process and has to be improved steadily.

Comment 2 to B-3 Educational process (p12)

To offer a harmonized teaching level meeting all expectations of students originating from varying backgrounds and recruited worldwide will not be achievable. But with time the teachers involved on P1 will gain more experience to better address the student's needs. This re-

fers to the teaching level for example in statistics as well for the organization of the schedule. Still the consortium agrees that the students need time to socialize as a unique group with joint interests and mutual responsibility. A cohesive group structure provides the best chances for each student to cope with the personal challenges inherent to the mobilities. Furthermore the social climate in the group will foster the efficiency of group work which is requested in modules offered in later periods.

As some students might feel unchallenged during P1, Poitiers University will enlarge the offer for students to improve their proficiency in French. Based on existing eLearning units students will have the chance to fill time gaps in the schedule in order to be better prepared for presentations given in French on field trips.

Concerning the number of English taught courses at Poitiers University it has to be stated that all EMAE courses in P1 are taught in English, though these courses were originally indicated in the EU-proposal to be taught in English or French.

As the consortium agrees that student's needs should be identified as soon as possible – especially at the start of the programme – it was decided to provide additional financial resources to administrate preferably this critical period.

Comment to B-4 Resources (p15)

At the Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel the EMAE programme rests besides the Ecology-Centre – which will go on to operate as platform for international studies – on modules provided by the Biology Centre (MSc in Biology) and the Leibnitz Institute for Marine Sciences –IfM-Geomar (MSc in Biological Oceanography).

At Coimbra, in the Department of Life Sciences, besides IMAR (the main Research Institute involved in EMAE), also the CFE (Centre for Functional Ecology), contribute with optional modules. The same occurs for the Department of Earth Sciences. Regarding the use of equipment, since within the Department of Life Sciences we a policy of sharing “heavy” equipment, when students need to use specific equipment on their research activity , especially in the field of molecular biology, equipment from other research Institutes, e.g., the Centre of Neurosciences, is available.

Comment to B-4 Resources (p16)

The consortium agrees that more modules taught in English at Poitiers would enlarge the choices of modules for students with limited French proficiency. However, students are informed latest in P1 of this situation. Still they have different options to react. They may i) take the opportunity free time slots during P1 to improve their French proficiency, ii) focus on the scientific stream offered by Poitiers University or iii) indicate in P1 their wish to switch to

another stream. The consortium is willing to provide alternative stream choices for the second year on an individual basis during P1.

Comment to B-4 Resources (p17)

The consortium acknowledges that the missing joint European System of accreditation cannot be fully replaced by a national procedure. This is especially true for a program which like EMAE involves universities from nations which did not join the Bologna Process. However ERASMUS MUNDUS programmes are only approved by the EU when at least three different countries are jointly offering the programme.

As the EMAE will not be able to issue a joint degree in the near future due to legal constraints in Schleswig-Holstein, the students will be awarded with a least two national degrees which all are recognised according the national legislation in place. In distinction to the other EMAE partners the Christian-Albrechts-Universitaet zu Kiel (CAU) applies for the accreditation of the EMAE programme according the German legislation. As the second EMAE year is fully taught at CAU, the programme at CAU would have to acknowledge courses of one year offered by other universities. The recognition would be based on the evaluation of single modules, provided the courses are part of programmes or offered by universities recognised according the respective national legislation. Though the EMAE consortium agrees that fully comparable accreditation schemes would be preferable. Hence the focus in this accreditation is limited to the quality of modules, the structure and the provisions established to run the international study programme.

Comment to B-4 Resources (p18 & 19)

Based on the discussion with the audit team during the on-site visit in Poitiers, the responsible teachers at the Poitiers University checked the availability of literature published in English. At present at least 50 books covering all relevant areas are accessible for the students. However, Poitiers University is willing to upgrade this stock. Accordingly the EMAE students will be requested to indicate the respective shortcomings. Furthermore Poitiers Universities asked all students at present in the second year concerning the accessibility of scientific journals. Though these students raised no additional demands, this issue will be monitored carefully. Reports of limitations will initiate activities to improve the situation.

Comment to B-5 Attainment of objectives (p20)

The period to perform the six month master project starts at each university not earlier than March. Hence, only the preparation of the project falls into the winter time.

Comment to D Modification of the structure of the Ecology Centre (p22)

As confirmed in the name of the President of the Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel it was at all times agreed that the international curricula at the Ecology Centre will not be affected by organisational changes at CAU. Hence there was no evidence at any time to raise this issue, especially as at time of handing in the EMAE self report the decisions on the changes to be finally implemented were not taken.

Comment to E Additional Information (p22)

The requested letter was obviously lost. A new letter should be received by ASIIN in the time as requested.”

On February 17th, 2010 the ASIIN head office received the following letter by the Head of the Department for Structural and Development Planning on behalf of the Rectorate of the Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel:

With reference to the ERASMUS MUNDUS degree programme “EMAE – European Master in Applied Ecology” being under accreditation review I assure you that the ”closure“ of the centre for ecology only concerns a modification of its structure, not a diminishment of structures. The heretofore existing centre for ecology will be converted into two institutes: the Institute of Ecosystem Research within the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences and the Institute of Nature and Resources Protection within the Faculty of Agricultural and Nutritional Sciences. Teaching will be continued jointly by both institutes – i.e. by all persons involved hitherto. Staff resources are not affected by this [modification]. This can be assured for the entire accreditation period. (Translated from German)

G Final assessment by the peers (05.03.2010)

On the award of the seals of ASIIN and the German Accreditation Council

Particularly **positive** aspects of the degree programme are the co-operation between the 4 universities and contacts to other universities, the broad ecological education, the good set of methods, the interesting opportunity to get to know up to four different universities and countries, the opportunity to do the master’s thesis outside Europe, and the assistance for the students (housing, ...).

Room for improvement was seen with regard to the organisation of the integrative period in Poitiers, the name of the degree programme, the co-ordination of the contributions from the universities involved (avoidance of unintended overlaps, establishment of a theoretical connection between the parts offered at different places, better structuring), the choice of the specialization, the quality assurance measures, especially the use of student feedback for improvements, and the library equipment.

As a first, internal assessment, the peers had formulated requirements concerning the following aspects: the organisation of the integrative period in Poitiers, the name of the degree programme, the co-ordination of the contributions from the universities involved, and the library equipment.

The peers found that the universities had submitted all **additional information** asked for.

The auditors draw the following conclusions from the **comments** by the Institutions of higher education:

- Generally, the auditors found the improvements already made or planned positive.
- The peers took note of the universities' arguments against a modification or amplification of the name of the degree programme. They agreed with the co-ordinators that applicants are sufficiently informed about the focuses of the universities. However, the auditors still saw a need for adjustment as, from their point of view, the current name does not reflect adequately the objectives and contents of the degree programme and could, therefore, be misleading for potential employers who probably need to manage a huge number of applications and would benefit from a precise name. Just as the co-ordinators, the peers assumed that the programme will be refined according to the state of the art. Nevertheless, such necessary adaptations would, in their opinion, not require a modification of the name. Only changes in the entire profile and objectives could require changes in the name.
- The auditors took note of the universities' statements concerning the teaching language in Poitiers. Whereas, according to the universities' comment, the modules of the integrative period are taught exclusively in English, not all modules of the specialised study period in Poitiers are offered in English. They had learned from the students that making available English language courses in Poitiers seemed to be particularly challenging for the responsible persons. The peers found that the universities' comment contradicted the students' impression. The auditors took the problems reported by the students' very seriously and still found that more courses in Poitiers needed to be taught in English, especially at the beginning of the studies.
- Taking into consideration the additional information and the comments by the Institutions of higher education, the peers saw no reason to modify the requirements and recommendations they had formulated after the on-site visits.

Based on the self-report by the Institutions of higher education and on the on-site discussions, the auditors recommend that the degree programme European Master in Applied Ecology jointly offered by the Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel, the University of East Anglia, the Université de Poitiers and the Universidade de Coimbra be accredited with reservation under requirements for one year. Upon fulfilment of the requirements within the set time, the accreditation is extended for the full period until 30 September 2015.

Requirements:

1. The name of the degree programme must reflect the educational objectives and the content being offered.
2. It is required to define scopes of responsibility with regard to contents for each university involved, to improve the co-ordination of these elements, and to establish a theoretical connection between them.
3. It is required that a suitable number of copies of the literature recommended in the module descriptions are available in the libraries.
4. It is required to reduce time losses, to improve administrative assistance and guidance, and to offer more courses in English during the integrative period at the Université de Poitiers.

Recommendations:

1. It is recommended that the flexibility for a change of the specialisation discipline after the commencement of studies be increased.
2. It is recommended that the quality assurance system be enhanced and that its results be used for continuous improvements. Graduates should be regularly surveyed and statistical data on graduate employment should be collected in order to demonstrate the successful realization of the educational outcomes at re-accreditation.

H Comments by the Technical Committees

H-1 Comment by the Technical Committee 09 – „Chemistry“ (05.03.2010)

On the award of the seals of ASIIN and the German Accreditation Council

The Technical Committee 09 – Chemistry discussed the procedure and agreed with the peers' recommendation.

The Technical Committee 09 – Chemistry recommends that the degree programme European Master in Applied Ecology jointly offered by the Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel, the University of East Anglia, the Université de Poitiers and the Universidade de Coimbra be accredited with reservation under the requirements listed in chapter G for one year. Upon fulfilment of the requirements within the set time, the accreditation is extended for the full period until 30 September 2015.

H-2 Comment by the Technical Committee 10 – Life Sciences (12.03.2010)

On the award of the seals of ASIIN and the German Accreditation Council

The Technical Committee 10 – Life Sciences discussed the procedure and agreed with the peers' recommendation.

The Technical Committee 10 – Life Sciences recommends that the degree programme European Master in Applied Ecology jointly offered by the Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel, the University of East Anglia, the Université de Poitiers and the Universidade de Coimbra be accredited with reservation under the requirements listed in chapter G for one year. Upon fulfilment of the requirements within the set time, the accreditation is extended for the full period until 30 September 2015.

I Decision of the Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes (30.03.2010)

On the award of the seals of ASIIN and the German Accreditation Council

The Accreditation Commission for Degree Programmes discussed the procedure and decided to adopt the suggestion made by the peers and the Technical Committees with an editorial revision of the requirement 2.

The Accreditation Commission decided to accredit the degree programme European Master in Applied Ecology jointly offered by the Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel, the University of East Anglia, the Université de Poitiers and the Universidade de Coimbra with reservation under the following requirements for one year. Upon fulfilment of the requirements within the set time, the accreditation is extended for the full period until 30 September 2015.

Requirements

1. The name of the degree programme must reflect the educational objectives and the content being offered.
2. It is required to define scopes of responsibility with regard to contents for each university involved, to improve the co-ordination of these elements, and to establish a connection between them.
3. It is required that a suitable number of copies of the literature recommended in the module descriptions are available in the libraries.
4. It is required to reduce time losses, to improve administrative assistance and guidance, and to offer more courses in English during the integrative period at the Université de Poitiers.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the flexibility for a change of the specialisation discipline after the commencement of studies be increased.
2. It is recommended that the quality assurance system be enhanced and that its results be used for continuous improvements. Graduates should be regularly surveyed and statistical data on graduate employment should be collected in order to demonstrate the successful realization of the educational outcomes at re-accreditation.