

# Joint programmes: Quality Assurance and Recognition of degrees awarded (JOQAR)

Dr Mark Frederiks  
NVAO Coordinator Internationalisation  
ECA & JOQAR Coordinator

Lisbon, 14 November 2013

# Content

- Introduction of NVAO, ECA, JOQAR
- Definitions
- Recognition of joint degrees
- Accreditation of joint programmes
- Coordination Point for Joint Programmes
- Information on joint programmes

# NVAO

- Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO)
- Bi-national organisation
  - Pre-funded by the Netherlands & Flanders
  - HEIs pay for procedures
- Approx. 50 FTE
- Programme accreditation and institutional audits
  - Each year about 700 procedures
  - Accreditation necessary for funding, recognition, students grants
  - 900,000 students at 4,000 programmes at 140 HEIs

# European Consortium for Accreditation in higher education (ECA)

- 16 agencies from 12 European countries; founded in 2003
- Aims:
  - Mutual recognition of accreditation & QA decisions
  - Mutual learning and dissemination of good practices
  - Information on quality and facilitation of internationalisation
- Results:
  - mutual recognition agreements
  - code of good practice, QA principles, publications, projects
- New services:
  - Internationalisation Certificate
  - Coordination Point for Joint Programmes
  - Trainings

# JOQAR: background

- JPs are on top of the European HE agenda
  - Stimulating mobility, international/intercultural competences, partnerships HEIs
- Estimated total number of JPs: 4,000
- Obstacles for HEIs in organising JPs
- Problems with recognition of qualifications
- Challenges in the accreditation/QA of JPs

# JOQAR : essentials

- Joint programmes: Quality Assurance and Recognition of degrees awarded (JOQAR)
- ECA+ project (Nov. 2010 – Oct. 2013)
  - 10 QA agencies + 4 ENIC-NARICs project partners; NVAO project coordinator
- EU Erasmus Mundus Action 3 funding
- Overall aim:  
to ensure that joint programmes are facilitated in two specific areas: accreditation and recognition



# Joint programme and degree - Definitions

- **Joint programme:** „An integrated curriculum coordinated and offered jointly by different HEIs and leading to a double/multiple/joint degree“
- **Joint degree:** „A single document awarded by HEIs offering the joint programme and nationally acknowledged as the recognised award of the joint programme“

# Joint degree: example



Single document

Signed by the competent  
authorities of the  
institutions involved in the  
joint programme

Replaces the separate  
(institutional/national) degrees



# Multiple degree - Definition

**Multiple degree:** „Separate degrees awarded by HEIs offering the joint programme, attesting the successful completion of this programme.“

(If 2 degrees are awarded by 2 institutions, this is a „double degree“)

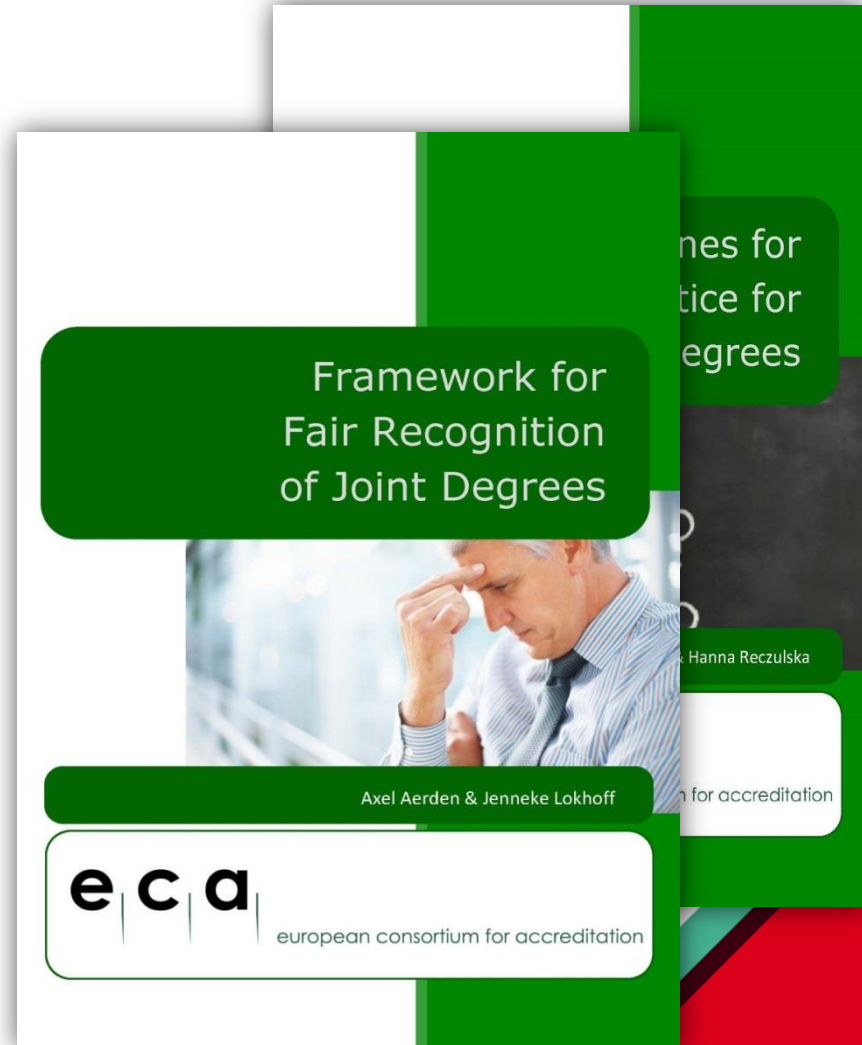
# Recognition of joint degrees

1. Awareness-raising in HEIs about ENIC-NARICs' expectations regarding joint degrees
  - Degree design
  - Diploma supplement
  - Legal frameworks
2. Establishment of a common ground among ENIC-NARICs regarding the recognition of joint degrees
  - Legal principles
  - Consortium cooperation and programme offering
  - Degree awarding




## *Overcoming challenges...*

Guidelines for Good Practice  
for Awarding Joint Degrees


Framework for Fair Recognition  
of Joint Degrees



## Guidelines for Good Practice regarding the Joint Degree

- 3.1. The joint degree is awarded in accordance with the legal frameworks governing the awarding institutions and is recognised as a joint degree in the higher education systems of the awarding institutions;
- 3.2. The joint degree includes reference to all relevant (sub)national legal frameworks in accordance to which the degree was awarded; 
- 3.3. References to higher education institutions (logos and/or full names) are limited to the awarding institutions/authorities, i.e. only the institutions that award this joint degree;
- 3.4. The joint degree is only signed by the competent authority/-ies representing the awarding institutions; 
- 3.5. The joint degree includes the qualification's full name(s) as recognised in all the relevant legal frameworks; 
- 3.6. If the consortium has agreed on one responsible institution (such as a coordinating institution or a contact point), this is indicated on the joint degree (e.g. next to the name of that institution).

## Guidelines not clear?

3.5. The joint degree includes the qualification's full name(s) as recognised in all the relevant legal frameworks; 

### - Examples can help...

3.5. The joint degree includes the qualification's full name(s) as recognised in all the relevant legal frameworks;

**Example:** *If a German, a Polish and an Italian higher education institution issue a joint master's degree, it should normally include the following qualifications:*

- *'Master xxx' (which is the German qualification),*
- *'Magister xxx' (which is the Polish qualification) and*
- *'Laurea Magistrale xxx' (which is the Italian qualification) on the joint degree.*

*“...looking for evidence to **PROVIDE**  
rather than **DENY** recognition.”*

*“As you will learn from this document, the best way to deal with joint degrees is (a) to accept you don’t need to know everything, and (b) to know when the information and/or evidence gathered is sufficient to recognise or recommend recognition.”*

Framework for  
Fair Recognition  
of Joint Degrees



Axel Aerden & Jenneke Lokhoff

e | c | a

europaen consortium for accreditation

# Challenges in accreditation of JPs

- Joint programmes are confronted with different national QA regimes
- There is no single QA/accreditation procedure
- Multiple procedures, frameworks, visits, panels, reports
- Decisions may only have an influence on national system

Source: ECA Conference on joint programmes, Graz, June 2010

# JOQAR solutions for accreditation JPs

Multilateral Agreement on the Mutual Recognition of Accreditation Results regarding Joint Programmes (MULTRA)

Coordination Point for Joint Programmes

Single Accreditation Procedures for Joint Programmes

ECApedia

The screenshot displays the ECA website interface. At the top, the header reads "european consortium for accreditation" with a green star logo. Below the header is a navigation bar with tabs for "Portal", "Discussion", "Read", "View source", and "View history", along with "Go" and "Search" buttons. The main content area is titled "Portal: Joint programmes". It features a large green box with the "JP JOINT PROGRAMMES" logo and the text "The Joint Programmes Portal". Below this, a paragraph defines a joint programme. A link "Click to refresh selections below" is present. The page is divided into two columns. The left column, titled "Selected definition", contains an "Accreditation" section with two common definitions and links to "Read more" and "More definitions". The right column, titled "Selected quote", contains a quote about awarding two degrees and a citation for Jane Knight. At the bottom, there is a section titled "Selected higher education system" with a snippet about Austria, and another "Selected definition" section. The footer features the "eca" logo and the text "european consortium for accreditation".



# Multilateral Agreement on the Mutual Recognition of Accreditation Results regarding Joint Programmes (MULTRA)

*The signing accreditation organisations agree to apply the ECA principles for accreditation procedures regarding joint programmes;*

*and confirm that within their competences they accept the results of the accreditation procedures of the other signing accreditation organisations when accrediting joint programmes*

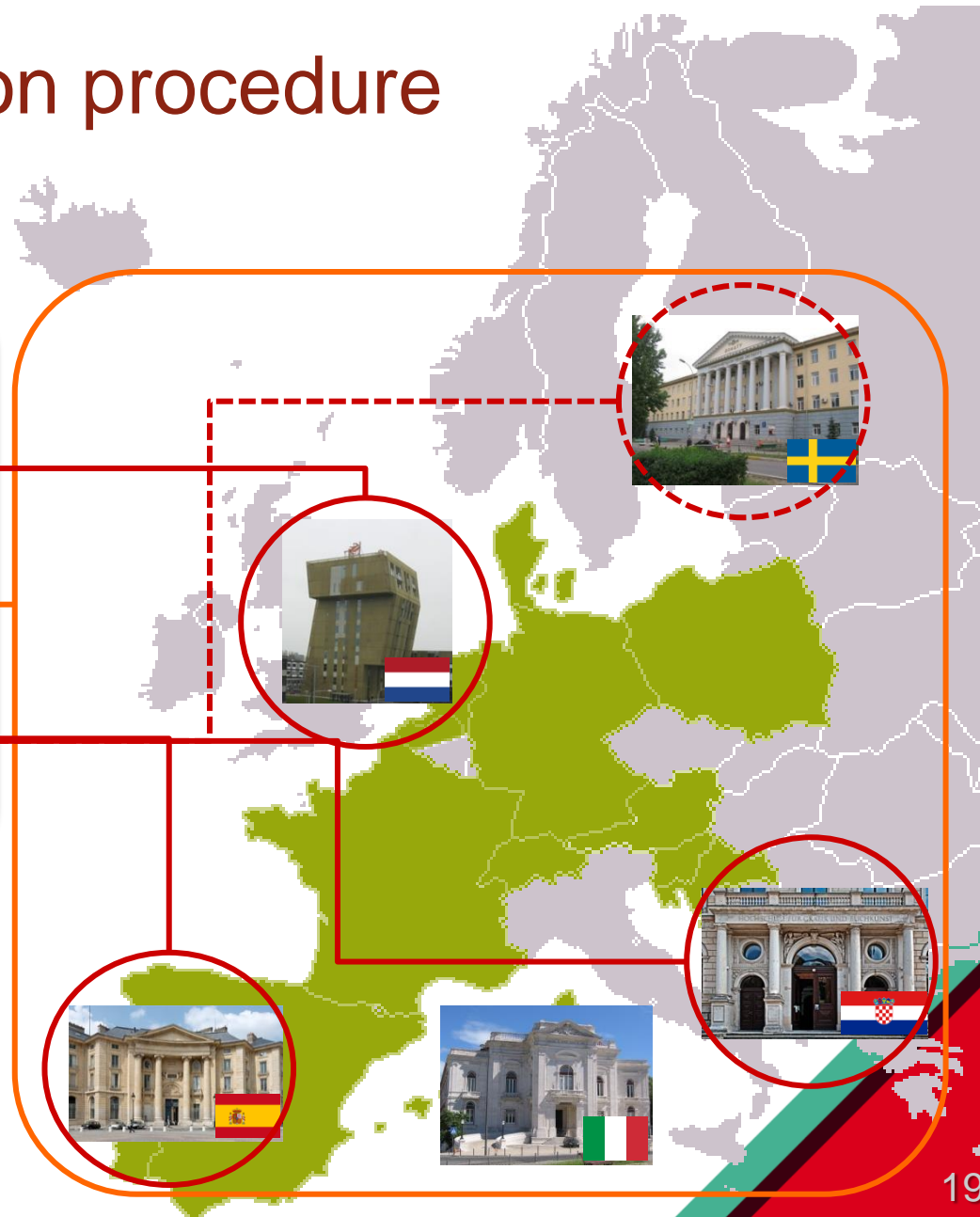
# MULTRA

- Signing of MULTRA possible after external review of agency and observation of procedure
- Observation report by 2 observers from MULTRA agencies: decision by MULTRA signatory agencies
- MULTRA signed by 12 agencies in Austria, Colombia, Denmark, France, Germany, Netherlands and Flanders, Poland, Spain; Costa Rica and Slovenia to follow
- Open for other agencies/countries

# Single accreditation procedure

## Single procedure

- Procedure by:
  - One agency
- Focus of procedure
  - Whole joint programme
- Result:
  - National accreditations in countries of JP consortium



# Single accreditation procedure

- 1 coordinating agency responsible for the procedure
- Agencies of other consortium countries can be involved:
  - Being informed on procedure and outcomes
  - Proposing additional national criteria
  - Proposing an expert for panel
  - Sending an observer to the site visit
- The totality of the joint programme is assessed
- 1 international panel; 1 site visit; 1 report

# Pilot procedures

## 1. European Master in Quality in Analytical Laboratories (EMQAL)

- University of Algarve , **Portugal**
- University of Barcelona, **Spain**
- University of Bergen, **Norway**
- University of Cadiz, **Spain**
- Gdansk University of Technology, **Poland**
- Central South University, **China**

Coordinating agency: AQU Catalunya (Spain)

# Pilot procedures

## 2. Erasmus Mundus Master of Science in Marine Biodiversity and Conservation (EMBC)

- Ghent University (**Belgium**)
- University of Bremen (**Germany**)
- University of Algarve (**Portugal**)
- University of Pierre and Marie Curie - Paris 6 (**France**)
- University of Oviedo (**Spain**)
- University of Klaipeda (**Lithuania**)

Coordinating agency: AQAS (Germany)

# Pilot procedures

## 3. European Master in Migration and Intercultural Relations (EMMIR)

- University of Oldenburg, **Germany**
- Ahfad University for Women, Omdurman, **Sudan**
- Makerere University Kampala, **Uganda**
- Mbarara University of Science & Technology, **Uganda**
- University of Nova Gorica, **Slovenia**
- University of South Bohemia, **Czech Republic**
- University of Stavanger, **Norway**

Coordinating agency: SQAA (Slovenia)

# Pilot procedures

## 4. Erasmus Mundus Master Course in Law and Economics (EMLE)

- Erasmus University Rotterdam, **The Netherlands**
- University of Gent, **Belgium**
- Hamburg University, **Germany**
- University Paul Cezanne, Aix/Marseille 3, **France**
- University of Bologna, **Italy**
- University of Vienna, **Austria**
- Haifa University, **Israel**
- Warsaw School of Economics, **Poland**
- Indira Ghandi Institute of Development Research (IGIDR), Mumbai, **India**

Coordinating agency: NVAO (Netherlands and Flanders)



# JOQAR assessment framework

## Shared European component

- Criteria and procedure agreed by coordinating agencies

## (Additional national components)

- Necessary (legal) criteria and procedural aspects added by other involved agencies

## Decision

- By coordinating agency
- Accepted by involved agencies

# Additional national components problematic

Too many national criteria and national requirements in external QA/accreditation of joint programmes

- Sometimes not about quality
- Not suited for joint programmes
- Contradict each other

## Very long list of examples:

- The assessment report (expert report) is required to be in the national language;
- National QA agencies which are not allowed to coordinate an international procedure / undertake a site visit abroad;
- Master thesis:  
“max. 30 ECTS credits” vs. “at least 35% of the total number of credits”;
- ...

# Outcomes evaluation of pilots

- Evaluated positively by the joint programme coordinators, experts, coordinating agencies and ECA
- Joint programmes welcome: advantage of 1 procedure; recommendations are beneficial for them
- Many decisions taken; decision-making phase ongoing
- European criteria viewed positively
- Remove additional national criteria for JPs
- Role of Coordination Point should be strengthened
- Pool of trained experts for single procedures of JPs

# Coordination Point for Joint Programmes

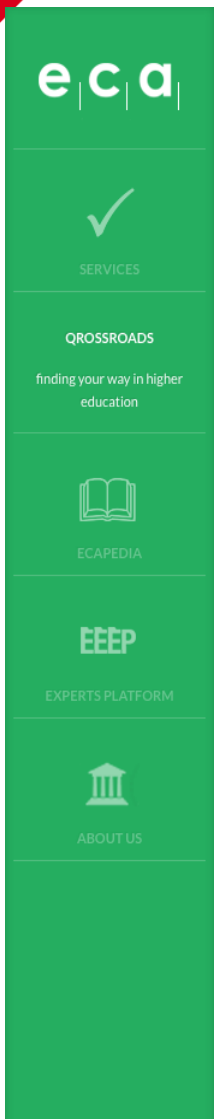
Conclusions of feasibility study:

- There is a demand amongst both the joint programmes and the QA agencies for a coordination point regarding joint programmes
- Main focus of the coordination point should be **the provision of information** and **the coordination of single accreditation procedures**
- ECA is prepared to provide the coordination point for joint programmes

# Inclusion of joint programmes on Qrossroads

- Qrossroads is a website driven database
- Lists all accredited institutions and programmes in several European countries
- Provides standardised information on accreditation results
- Search engine
- All Erasmus Mundus programmes available

# Joint programmes on Crossroads



[Search](#) [Map](#) [Programmes](#) [Institutions](#) [Countries](#) [Crossweb](#) [Joint Programmes](#) [Member Agencies](#)



[ECA](#) / [Crossroads](#) / [Joint Programmes](#)

## Joint Programmes

- [agriculture and veterinary](#)
  - [agriculture, forestry and fishery](#)
- [education](#)
  - [teacher training and education science](#)
- [engineering, manufacturing and construction](#)
  - [architecture and building](#)
  - [engineering and engineering trades](#)
  - [manufacturing and processing](#)
- [general programmes](#)
- [health and welfare](#)
  - [health](#)
- [humanities and arts](#)
  - [arts](#)
  - [humanities](#)
- [science, mathematics and computing](#)
  - [computing](#)
  - [life science](#)
  - [mathematics and statistics](#)
  - [physical science](#)
- [social sciences, business and law](#)
  - [business and administration](#)
  - [journalism and information](#)
  - [law](#)
  - [social and behavioural science](#)
- [to be provided](#)

### » Erasmus Mundus

The overall aims of the programme are to enhance the quality of European higher education and to promote dialogue and understanding through cooperation with Third-Countries.

## Launch of a knowledge base

- Wiki site: Joint Programmes Portal on ECApedia
- Information of QA/accreditation and recognition of joint programmes
- Stakeholders can write articles on joint programmes
- Will be integrated on the ECA website

# Joint Programmes Portal



european consortium for accreditation

HOME

ABOUT ECA

DOCUMENTS

NEWS

EVENTS

PROJECTS

WORK IN PROGRESS

CONTACT US

european consortium for accreditation

ECApedia

Home

Joint Programmes

Training experts

Quality Assurance

Glossary

Getting around

Help

Recent changes

Random page

Toolbox

What links here

Related changes

Special pages

Printable version

Permanent link

Portal

Discussion

Read

View source

View history

Go

Search

## Portal:Joint programmes



The Joint programmes portal provides information on the quality assurance of joint programmes, including accreditation issues, on the recognition of degrees awarded by joint programmes and on Erasmus Mundus. In addition, the portal provides a check-list for joint programmes.

### Terminology

A clear presentation of the joint programme terminology and its concepts, with background information and agreed upon definitions.

[Read more...](#)

### The Check-list

The Joint Programme Check-list provides a comprehensive list of issues to be taken into account when developing and managing joint programmes.

[Read more...](#)

### Quality assurance

Joint programmes require specific internal and external quality assurance and have to deal with varying national quality assurance regimes.

[Read more...](#)

### Erasmus Mundus

Everything you need to know about Erasmus Mundus, including an overview of all Erasmus Mundus programmes.

[Read more...](#)

### Recognition

Awarding degrees for joint programmes and the recognition of these degrees require specific information and documentation.

[Read more...](#)

### Article overview

All articles which have been added to the Joint programmes portal can be accessed alphabetically.

[Read more...](#)

The Joint programmes portal has been developed by the [European Consortium for Accreditation](#) in higher education with the support of the European Commission (Erasmus Mundus programme) of the European Union.







[m.frederiks@nvao.net](mailto:m.frederiks@nvao.net)

[www.nvao.com](http://www.nvao.com)

[www.ecaconsortium.net](http://www.ecaconsortium.net)