

EMQT Tools' Box

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EMQT Questionnaire *and* Glossary

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INTRODUCTION TO THE EMQT QUESTIONNAIRE

As explained in detail in the introductory paper entitled *Presentation of EMQT*, the EMQT Questionnaire is made of a General Part, which asks for general context data, plus 6 Sections, each one dealing with the corresponding TF domain or dimension.

Along the lifespan of the EMQT Project, the Questionnaire was used in three different versions:¹

- a) first extended version for the EMQT Survey, used in the internal testing
- b) second extended version for the EMQT Survey, used in the external testing; this version overlapped with the previous one in 95% of the question fields (340 in total).
- c) shortened version which is the one presented here as a Tools' Box component. It consists of 110 questions and 222 question fields.

Versions a) and b) generated the *EMQT Mapping Report*, which appears in this same Brochure among the reference documents. The extended questionnaire is an essential part of the EMQT outcomes presented in this Tools' Box. The questions, as they were formulated therein, are repeated in the six Sections of the *EMQT Mapping Report*. Its electronic version is downloadable from the EMQT website or can be obtained upon request.

After collecting and analysing data received, the need to carry out some changes was deemed appropriate. On the one hand, some of the questions required rephrasing, grouping and simplification, few others were added and several ones were deleted as non relevant. Indeed, it was not to be ignored that the extended version was too long, with its 340 items or question fields. The shortened version c) was finally prepared, even though the importance of investigating all of the "original" questions should be acknowledged. The shortened version is the *EMQT Questionnaire* and is presented below.

In the shortened version, the questions corresponding to the indicators which appear in the List of Key Indicators – another component of this same Tools' Box – are highlighted in blue.

Finally, in order to reduce misinterpretation of the terms and initials appearing in the Questionnaire, the *EMQT glossary* is attached² hereby to the present shortened version too.

* * *

How to use the *EMQT Questionnaire*:

- a) The main aim of the *EMQT Questionnaire* is to enable willing institutions to carry out a self-assessment by providing a **checklist** of indicators and operational steps to be addressed when engaging in QA processes. Answers can also help to identify links with possible promotional actions and to get insight into possible improvements or changes of perspective.
- b) The answers given by the institution which engages in this self-assessment can facilitate the **positioning** in the landscape of the existing mobility practices described in the *EMQT Mapping Report* through several qualitative and quantitative indicators.

¹ See more details in the already quoted introductory paper entitled "*Presentation of EMQT*"

² See *ibidem* for more details

The EMQT consortium would like warmly to encourage the use of this tool for both the abovementioned aims. Of course, partners are well aware of the difficulties to be faced, the long time required to answer and the need for synergy and communication among different services operating within the institution.

For more detailed recommendations about the use of the EMQT Questionnaire, please do carefully read §4.1 of *the Presentation of EMQT* introductory paper.

Important notice

For the sake of possible comparisons with the practices described in the *EMQT Mapping Report*, when using the present shortened version and responding to its questions, please do remind that:

- the *EMQT Mapping Report*, in each of its six Sections, is organised following the order of the questions as they appear in the extended version. These questions are usually reported therein in their full text, numbering included;
- the numbering of questions in the shortened version is a new, sequential one, even though in many cases it coincides with the numbering of the extended version. Moreover, since the present version was mostly obtained from the extended version by erasing questions, the text of most questions remained unchanged;
- in front of the *EMQT Mapping Report* you will find a conversion table which enables you to pass from the numbering of the *EMQT Questionnaire* to the numbering which appears in the Mapping Report for each question & returns reviewed there.

EMQT Questionnaire

For those terms which seem unclear, we advise consulting the EMQT glossary. Initials and acronyms are also included in the glossary under the term "Initials".

The numbers you fill in should refer to the last academic year for which these are available, keeping in mind to fix that academic year for all the numbers. So, if for certain questions the last available data refer to the academic year 2008/2009 and for others these refer to 2009/2010, please keep 2008/2009 as the academic year of reference for all the questions, unless otherwise explicitly specified.

Part I - General Information

I.I. CONTACT PERSON / ADDRESS

Contact Person / Address

Please indicate the details of a **contact person** in charge of this questionnaire and the address of the structure/service of your Higher Education Institution (HEI) to which the contact person belongs.

Name of HEI: original name & (official) translation into English _____

ERASMUS ID code _____

Contact Person

Name of contact person _____

Department/Unit _____

E-mail-address _____

I.II. CENTRAL-LEVEL DATA

I.II.I Total number of staff in your HEI (in FTE - full time equivalents)

a) Academic staff (teachers and researchers)

b) Administrative and technical staff

I.II.II Number of offered Degree Courses & enrolled students

	Degree courses	Enrolled students
1 st cycle	a.	a.1.
2 nd cycle	b.	b.1.
One-tier degrees ³	c.	c.1.
3 rd cycle	d.	d.1.
Pre-Bologna organisation of studies	e.	e.1.

I.II.III Mobility**I.II.III.I Outgoing students**

	SMS (study)
1 st cycle (i.e. level I)	a.
2 nd cycle (i.e. level A)	b.
one-tier degrees (level I, A)	c.
3 rd cycle ⁴ (i.e. level D)	d.
Pre-Bologna organisation of studies	e.

I.II.III.II Total number of incoming students

SMS (study)

a.

I.II.IV. Duration of Stays

	SMS (study)
Average duration of stay of outgoing ERASMUS students (in months)	a.

I.II.IV.I Time Series⁵ over the last 5 years

Number of SMS outgoing students in year	a.	b.	c.	d.	e.
	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010

³ See Glossary⁴ See Glossary (under definition of "cycle")⁵ See Glossary

Can you provide an interpretation of the behaviour of the time series?

I.II.V. Total number of ERASMUS EC mobility grants for SMS outgoing students awarded

I.III. GOALS RELEVANT FOR YOUR INSTITUTION

I.III.I Which of the following goals does your institution consider relevant for your strategy regarding the ERASMUS mobility?

Dimension	Goals	Irrelevant	Somewhat relevant	Relevant	Very relevant
Institutional	Opening doors to other kinds of mobility and cooperation				
	Boosting reputation and increasing visibility of the HEI through ERASMUS				
	Enriching the institution's teaching offer and services by international mobility				
	Achieving institutional awareness of intercultural diversity				
Students' related	Allowing every student an ERASMUS mobility according to his/her academic needs				
	Achieving transversal competencies and awareness of intercultural diversity (links also to the society)				
	Ensuring the most successful stay with emphasis on academic achievement				
Social	Building awareness of European citizenship				
	Fostering interaction between HEIs and non-HEI organizations as well as the civil society				

Section 1: Organisational Models

1.1 Institutional backbone for ERASMUS mobility

1.1.1. Is mobility made explicit in the mission statement of your institution? yes no

1.1.2. Does your institution have a strategy on ERASMUS agreed upon at institutional level? yes no

1.1.2.1. If yes, is the ERASMUS strategy encompassing the following cycles?

a) 1st cycle (BA) yes no

b) 2nd cycle (MA) yes no

c) 3rd cycle (doctoral) yes no

- 1.1.3.** Does your institution have an office for the ERASMUS programme?
- a) As an independent unit yes no
- b) As part of an IRO yes no
- c) Either independent or part of an IRO but in strong synergy with other services (registrar office, career guidance service, computing centre, etc.) yes no
- d) No, but there is multi-task administrative staff taking care of ERASMUS yes no
- 1.1.4.** What is the total number of personnel; academics, administrative and technical staff involved at the ERASMUS programme management?
- a) Academic staff (i.e. ERASMUS Coordinators/Advisors⁶)
- b) Administrative and technical staff (ERASMUS Offices)
- 1.1.5.** Does your institution provide incentives for staff to get involved?
- a) Academic staff yes yes, in most cases yes, in few cases no
- b) Administrative and technical staff yes yes, in most cases yes, in few cases no
- 1.1.5.1.** *If yes, could you briefly describe them?* _____
- 1.1.6.** Management system on quality for the ERASMUS programme; Does your institution use a quality management strategy for the ERASMUS programme? yes no
- 1.1.6.1.** *If yes, are students included in this?* yes no
- 1.1.7.** Does your institution monitor the mobility of students according to numerical indicators? yes yes, in most cases yes, in few cases no
- 1.1.8.** Does your institution run regular satisfaction surveys related to ERASMUS with:
- a) Incoming students? yes no
- b) Outgoing students? yes no
- c) Academics? yes no
- d) Others: _____
- 1.1.9.** Does your institution draw on results from monitoring and surveys for quality improvement activities? yes yes, in most cases yes, in few cases no
- 1.1.10.** Does your institution communicate results of satisfaction monitoring with partners? yes no in some cases
- 1.1.10.1.** Does your institution set corridors on (some) key numerical indicators for improvement in respective value? yes no
- 1.1.10.2.** *If yes, on which indicators?* _____

⁶ *Ibidem*

Quality assurance methodology

1.1.11. Does your institution use a system / methodology to measure quality assurance for the ERASMUS programme? yes no

1.1.11.1. If yes, are students included in this?

yes, always yes, in most cases yes, in few cases no

1.1.12. Does your institution organize opportunities to exchange “best practices” with partner universities? yes no

1.1.13. Does your institution have a monitor system in place which regularly (once a year) checks whether structures are able to fit needs? yes no

1.1.14. Does your institution have a communication tool (e.g. meeting) bringing together:

a) Administrators and academics?

yes, always yes, in most cases yes, in few cases no

b) IRO and other administrative units?

yes, always yes, in most cases yes, in few cases no

1.2 Additional actions/facilities for:**• outstanding but economically challenged outgoing students**

1.2.1. What is the total EU ERASMUS funding⁷ spent by your institution for:

a) Student mobility grants (SMS, SMP)

b) OM⁸, STA and STT actions, EILC⁹, funds for disabled students, etc.

1.2.1.1. How does your institution use its organizational funds? (if needed , use ranking 1-6)

Language courses

Personnel

Accommodation services

Promotional activities

Monitoring visits

Others: _____

1.2.2. Does your institution devolve part of its own funding to mobility? yes no

⁷ *Ibidem*

⁸ *Ibidem*

⁹ *Ibidem*

1.2.3. Does your institution receive additional funding from third parties for mobility? yes no

- **students with special needs (such as students with disabilities and/or social disadvantages, students with children, political refugees etc.)**

1.2.4. Does your institution have (a) scheme(s) to support ERASMUS students with special needs (e.g. disabled, study with child, etc.) regarding respectively:

a) outgoing students yes no

b) incoming students yes no

1.2.4.1. If yes, please describe (financial aid, special counselling,...) _____

1.2.5. What is the total number of mobile students with special needs being taken care of in the last 5 years?

a) Outgoing students with special needs?

b) Incoming students with special needs?

1.3 Promotion of a culture of mobility

- **Support to/promotion of academic teaching staff (STA) and administrative and technical staff (STT) mobility**

1.3.1. What is the total number of:

a) Outgoing academic staff taking part in STA mobility?

b) Incoming academic staff taking part in STA mobility?

c) Outgoing staff taking part in STT mobility?

d) Incoming staff taking part in STT mobility?

- **Promotion of intercultural initiatives for incoming students, STA and STT**

1.3.2. What kind of intercultural activities does your institution offer to students/teachers/administrative staff? Please describe _____

1.4 *Involvement of outer world*

• *Provision of top-up grants for incoming ERASMUS study students*

1.4.1. What is the total number of ERASMUS incoming study students receiving top-up grants¹⁰ from private or public bodies?

Section 2: Language Preparation

2.1. *Provision of language course units*

2.1.1. Does your institution offer pre-departure/pre-arrival language course units¹¹ for:

a) Outgoing students? yes no

b) Incoming students? yes no

2.1.2. Does your institution offer semester/year-long language course units for:

a) Outgoing students? yes no

b) Incoming students? yes no

2.1.3. Does your institution offer language course units for specific purposes (subject-related courses: Medicine, Law, Engineering, etc.) for:

a) Outgoing students? yes no

b) Incoming students? yes no

2.1.4. Does your institution offer language course units for:

a) Mobile academic staff? yes no

b) Mobile administrative and technical staff? yes no

2.1.5. Are language course units free of charge at your institution? yes no in some cases

2.1.6. Does your institution offer tandem-language learning programmes? yes no

2.1.7. What is the percentage of mobile students attending the language course units at your institution and (successfully) taking the final exam?

a) Outgoing students?

b) Incoming students?

¹⁰ *Ibidem*

¹¹ *Ibidem*

2.2. **Actions to standardize language levels**

- 2.2.1.** Does your institution require proof of language proficiency for:
- a) Outgoing students? yes yes, but only for certain flows no
- b) Incoming students? yes yes, but only for certain flows no
- 2.2.2.** Does your institution offer language course units at different levels? yes no
- 2.2.3.** Does your institution use the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference)? yes no
- 2.2.4.** Does your institution set goals for development in language proficiency of your students? yes no

Section 3: Information and Orientation

3.1. **Information strategy addressed to all the relevant stakeholders (and potentially) based on ICT**

- 3.1.1** Does your institution provide general information about mobility programmes (e.g. calls for selection, deadlines, mobility grant, ERASMUS student rights, etc.) to:
- a. Incoming students? yes no
- b. Outgoing students? yes no
- 3.1.2** Does your institution set quality goals in your information strategy? yes no in some cases
- 3.1.2.1** *If yes, how?*
- a. Website yes no
- b. Brochures yes no
- c. Face to face yes no
- d. Innovative ICT tools yes no
- e. Social network tools yes no
- f. Academic counselling yes no
- g. ECTS course catalogue yes no
- h. Others: _____

3.1.3. How do you provide general & academic information on partner institutions to outgoing students?

- a. Website yes no
- b. Brochures yes no
- c. Face to face yes no
- d. Innovative ICT tools yes no
- e. Social network tools yes no
- f. Academic counselling yes no
- g. ECTS course catalogue yes no
- h. Others: _____

3.1.4. Does your institution have a check list of milestones¹² provided to exchange students?

yes no

3.2. ***Buddy system (peer tutors/mentors), with the potential involvement of families and the wider social network of local students***

3.2.1. Does your institution have a buddy system in place for:

- a) Outgoing students? yes no
- b) Incoming students? yes no

3.2.2. What is the total number of:

a) Buddy/peer tutors¹³?

b) Mentors¹⁴?

3.2.3. Is there a specific coaching for local students engaging as buddies?

yes no

3.2.3.1. If yes, please describe _____

¹² For an extensive definition, see Glossary.

¹³ *Ibidem*

¹⁴ *Ibidem*

Section 4: Performances and Recognition

4.1. Assessment of Bilateral Agreements (BAs)

4.1.1.0. Which is the policy followed at your institution in establishing / confirming a Bilateral Agreement?

	SMS	STA	STT
As a prerequisite for mobility			
On demand by students/staff			
Other (please specify)			

4.1.1.1. What is the total number of institutions with which there is a BA in place?

4.1.1.2. Do you monitor "sleeping" BAs?

yes no

4.1.1.3. Do you take consequent actions with "sleeping" BAs?

yes no

4.1.2. What is the total number of exchange places available for outgoing students in 2008/2009 (sum over all BAs)?

Please describe your policy in establishing/confirming BAs:

4.1.3. Does your institution

a) evaluate geographical distribution of your BAs?

yes no

b) assess whether there is reciprocity in your BAs?

yes no

c) assess if the agreed field of study is suitable for most outgoing students?

yes no

d) assess the number of credits agreed upon in the Learning Agreements (LAs) of the outgoing students moving under the BA concerned?

yes no

e) assess the number of credits achieved by the outgoing students moving under the BA concerned?

yes no

f) assess the number of credits recognised to the outgoing students moving under the BA concerned?

yes no

4.2. **Management of career documents of the mobile students (LAs, ToRs, etc.¹⁵)**

- 4.2.1.** Mark in each case which is the academic body responsible at your institution for the approval of Bilateral Agreements (BAs), for the assessment of BAs, for the approval of Learning Agreements (LAs) and for the recognition of credits achieved abroad (please tick off the relevant box for both columns)

	BAs approval	BAs assessment	LAs approval	recognition
A single body at central institutional level				
A single body at department/faculty level following the same institutional procedures				
A single body at department/faculty level following different procedures				
Several bodies following the same institutional procedures (please specify)				
Several bodies following different procedures (please specify)				

4.3. **Monitoring and recognition of performance**

- 4.3.1.** Does your institution require that the LA is signed by host institution before the departure of your students? yes no

- 4.3.2.** What is the percentage of outgoing students who leave with a LA approved by the home institution?

Learning Agreements procedure

- 4.3.3.** Percentage of outgoing students having their LAs approved by host institution prior to departure.

- 4.3.4.** Percentage of LAs (already agreed and signed) modified along stay abroad.

Learning Agreement recognition

- 4.3.5.** Average number of credits agreed per semester

- 4.3.6.** Average number of credits recognised per semester out of the achieved ones

- 4.3.7.** Average number of credits achieved (fully recognised without extra work) per semester out of agreed ones?

¹⁵ For these and other initials/acronyms, see Glossary

4.4 **Transparency and flexibility in recognition**

- 4.4.1. Does your institution evaluate recognition procedures for mobile students through questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, etc? yes no
- 4.4.1.1. *If yes, please describe:* _____
- 4.4.2. Do you offer tailored-made options for students on ERASMUS mobility programme (e.g. suggesting a mobility window, a plan of studies abroad for that given institution, etc,...)?
 yes no in few cases in many cases
- 4.4.2.1. Does your institution assess satisfaction of ERASMUS mobile students based on academic experience?
 a) Outgoing students yes no in some cases
 b) Incoming students yes no in some cases
- 4.4.3. Does your institution allow flexibility in the recognition of achieved credits? yes no
- 4.4.3.1. *If yes, please describe the procedure:* _____

Section 5: Reception of ERASMUS incoming students

5.1. **Orientation and support services to ERASMUS incoming students**

- 5.1.1. Does your institution offer any of the following to your incoming students?
 If yes, please tick off in the relevant box(es):

	Yes	No	during stay
5.1.1.1. ECTS guide and course catalogue			
5.1.1.2. Information on course timetables and examination schedules			
5.1.1.3. Welcome package			
5.1.1.4. Orientation days			
5.1.1.5. Academic counselling (e.g. support in finalising students' plans of study, see LA)			
5.1.1.6. Peer tutoring/mentoring			
5.1.1.7. Individual counselling			
5.1.1.8. Information on visa and residence legal issues			
5.1.1.9. Information on health insurance			
5.1.1.10. Information on financial issues			
5.1.1.11. Support in finding accommodation			
5.1.1.12. Support in enrolment/registration			
5.1.1.13. Social activities			
5.1.1.14. Other (please specify.....)			

5.2. Specific measures to ensure smooth integration of ERASMUS incoming students

5.2.1. Are there local student organisations at your institution which incoming students could join?

yes no

5.2.2. Does your institution (or IRO) cooperate with the local student organisation involved in supporting mobility and mobile students (ESN etc.)?

yes no

5.2.2.1. *If yes, please describe* _____

5.2.3. How is the academic counselling for incoming students organized at your institution?

Mainly by administrative staff

Mainly by academic staff

Combination of administrative and academic staff

5.2.4. What is the total number of staff involved in academic counselling for incoming students?

5.2.5. Does your institution monitor the academic performance of your incoming students?

yes no

5.2.5.1. *If yes, please describe* _____

5.2.6. Does your institution offer discipline specific courses other than language preparation courses which provide credits and are specially tailored to incoming students?

yes no

5.2.6.1. *If yes, please describe* _____

5.2.7. What is the total number of course units taught in English (excluding language courses)?

5.2.8. What is the total number of degree programmes¹⁶ entirely taught in English?

5.2.9. Are course units taught in English open to all students (exchange and local students)?

yes no in some cases

¹⁵ See the Glossary.

¹⁶ See the Glossary.

Section 6: E-Coaching

6.1. Virtual support to outgoing & incoming students BEFORE ERASMUS Mobility

- 6.1.1.** At the website of your institution, do you offer online administrative support to:
- a) Outgoing students (application, grant acceptance, online LA, etc.)? all many few no
- b) Incoming students (registration, online LA, etc.)? all many few no
- 6.1.2.** Does your institution offer online academic support to:
- a) Outgoing students (access to partners' website, counselling, etc.)? all many few no
- b) Incoming students (counselling, orientation, degree courses information, etc.)? all many few no
- 6.1.3.** Does your institution offer online language training units for:
- a) Outgoing students? yes no
- b) Incoming students? yes no
- 6.1.4.** Does your institution offer online cultural training units and activities for:
- a) Outgoing students? yes no
- b) Incoming students? yes no

6.2. Virtual support to outgoing & incoming students DURING ERASMUS Mobility

- 6.2.1.** Does your institution offer online administrative support other than email counselling to:
- a) Outgoing students (online modification /approval of the LA, etc.)? yes no
- b) Incoming students (preparation/updating of ToR, etc.)? yes no
- 6.2.1.1.** If yes, what is the total number of:
- a) Outgoing students using this support?
- b) Incoming students using this support?
- 6.2.2.** Does your institution offer online language training units for incoming students? yes no
- 6.2.3.** Does your institution offer online cultural training units and activities for incoming students?
- 6.2.4.** Do ERASMUS incoming students have access to the same online platforms as the local students? yes no

6.3. **Virtual support to outgoing & incoming students AFTER ERASMUS Mobility**

- 6.3.1. Does your institution offer online administrative support (ToR, etc.) to:
- a) Outgoing students? all many few no
- b) Incoming students? all many few no
- 6.3.2. Does your institution monitor the feedback from mobile students online?
- a) Outgoing students at their return all many few no
- b) Incoming students at the end of their stay all many few no
- 6.3.3. Does your institution keep actively in contact with alumni (e.g. through maintaining mailing lists, organizing online activities, offering online platform,... etc.) yes no

6.4. **Provision of virtual teaching offer (either single course units or full degree courses**

- 6.4.1. Are e-coaching and virtual support to students an integrated part of the mission of your institution? yes no in some cases
- 6.4.2. Does your institution have a strategy (based on a strategic document) to integrate ICT in the support to mobile students? yes no in some cases
- 6.4.3. Does your institution provide an ICT/online platform for e-coaching? yes no in some cases
- 6.4.4. Does your institution have an ICT support and training competence centre of support for mobile students? yes no in some cases
- 6.4.5. What is the number of eLearning course units offered at your institution?
- 6.4.6. What is the number of fully online degree courses offered at your institution?
- 6.4.7. What is the number of ERASMUS-like eLearning students¹⁷?
- a) "Outgoing" students
- b) "Incoming" students

Should your institution have a best practice in place with reference to any of the Sections, a short description below or a link to the appropriate website would be highly appreciated, indicate the number of the Section before description.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*

EMQT Glossary

Academic: a person belonging to an [academy or] institution for higher education, where they carry out teaching activities and/or research.

Benchmarking: a standardised method for collecting and reporting critical operational data in a way that enables relevant comparison of the performances of different organisations or programmes, often with a view to establishing good practice.

Source LLP 2007-2013 Glossary

Bilateral Agreement (BA): in the framework of the EMQT project, the phrase refers to the Erasmus Bilateral Agreement between two partner HEIs.

Buddy: the same as PEER-TUTOR (see below)

CEFR – “Common European Framework of Reference: Learning, Teaching, Assessment”: reference document of the Council of Europe for the 6 levels of language preparation. For further reference, see <http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/Portfolio/>

Competences: A dynamic combination of cognitive and metacognitive skills, knowledge and understanding, interpersonal, intellectual and practical skills, ethical values and attitudes. Fostering competences is the object of all educational programmes. Competences are developed in all course units and assessed at different stages of a programme. Some competences are subject-area related (specific to a field of study), others are generic (common to any degree course). It is normally the case that competence development proceeds in an integrated and cyclical manner throughout a programme.

See: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/ects/guide_en.pdf

Corridor of values: some numerical indicators monitor the time-development of a given institutional policy. For example, in the case of the policy regarding the “*promotion of a higher percentage of female students enrolled in a given university, starting from a situation in which that percentage is very low (e.g. 20%)*”, a useful policy tool might then consist in fixing a corridor of values for the indicator, i.e. an interval within which the indicator is thought to be “positive” in the perspective of a progressive improvement. In the example above, the percentage of female students might be expected to be positive if it ranges from 25% to 30% after one year (in which a promoting action was taken) and so on in the following years. If the indicator does not fall into the fixed range of values, then additional action has to be taken to achieve the fixed objective. Once a good regime is achieved (in the example provided it might be a percentage in the *regime* corridor ranging from 45% to 55%), then the corridor may serve to tell policy leaders to take action if the indicator value is outside the corridor. In other words, if the indicator lies within the fixed corridor, policy makers are satisfied and no further action is needed.

Coarse-Grained Indicator: an indicator having a coarse nature, wanting in refinement, for example the old ECTS grading scale (i.e. A, B, C, D and E) which “*summarises [according to a definite rule]*” the value of the marks awarded to students in those institutions where the grading scale is much finer than 5 values. The opposite is a fine-grained indicator (see there).

Coordinator: see ERASMUS COORDINATOR

Course Unit: A self-contained, formally structured learning experience. It should have a coherent and explicit set of learning outcomes, expressed in terms of competences to be obtained, and appropriate assessment criteria (see *ECTS user’s guide*). Within the framework of the EMQT context, *units* also refers to the concept of *units especially designed for ERASMUS/exchange students* (see

in this respect the EMQT Questionnaire). For the purposes of the project, the EMQT project used the terms “course unit” and “module” interchangeably.

Credits: in the framework of the EMQT project, reference is made to ECTS credits as defined in the *ECTS user’s guide*: in the case of ECTS, a credit is a unit used to measure the student’s workload in terms of time. It is based on the general assumption that the global workload of an academic year of study is equal to 60 credits. The 60 credits are then allocated to course units or modules to describe the proportion of the student’s workload required to achieve the related learning outcomes.

From the point of view of the recognition procedure, credits may be:

1. Agreed in the LA – Learning Agreement by the student, the home and the host institution
2. Achieved by the student while abroad and certified by the ToR (Transcript of Records)
3. Recognised by the home institution in the student’s home career

Credit mobility: see MOBILITY

Cycle: any of the three Bologna cycles which characterises the EHEA (European Higher Education Area), i.e. 1. first cycle or bachelor level, 2. second cycle or master level and 3. third cycle or doctoral level.

See: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/ects/guide_en.pdf

Degree / Diploma: the term Degree describes the qualification awarded by a higher education institution after successful completion of a prescribed study programme. In a credit accumulation system, the programme is completed through the accumulation of a specified number of credits awarded for the achievement of a specific set of learning outcomes.

Source *Glossary of terms used in the Tuning project*

(<http://tuning.unideusto.org/tuningeu/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=165&Itemid=192>)

Degree course: the set of course units and educational activities leading to the degree awarding after successful completion by the student. In the framework of the EMQT project, “degree course” and “degree programme” are used as synonyms.

Degree programme: see DEGREE COURSE

Degree mobility: see MOBILITY

Degree-seeking student (see INTERNATIONAL STUDENT)

e-coaching (from *electronic-coaching*): It includes all activities, done through technology (i.e. electronic means, e.g. the Internet/chat/e-mail), aimed at guiding students towards their learning goals and it indicates the human aspect of e-support (as do e-tutoring, e-moderating, etc.).

e-learning platform: an integrated set of online tools to create an electronic learning environment.

EQF-European Qualification Framework: see QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK

Erasmus coordinator: in the Erasmus practice there are at least the following levels of coordination:

- a) Bilateral flow coordinator: main tasks are counselling outgoing and incoming students, cooperating in writing the LA and in some HEIs also taking care of the recognition procedure.
- b) Degree-course coordinator (Departmental coordinator in those Departments which only offer one degree-course): main tasks are coordinating the flow coordinators referring to the flows of interest for the given degree course, assuring uniformity and transparency in the recognition administrative acts, erasing not-viable BAs and promoting new appropriate BAs.

- c) Faculty/Departmental coordinator: main task is Erasmus policy coordination at the level of a given Department or Faculty, which often offer many degree-courses in large HEIs.
- d) Institutional coordinator: main task is institutional representativeness in all matters concerning Erasmus.

Erasmus funding: it may be categorized in different ways according to:

1. *Funding source:* we distinguish between EU Erasmus funding (which comes via LLP National Agencies under specific funding items), institutional additional funding (i.e. institutional own funding) and other additional funding (e.g. received from third parties).
2. *Specific use:* we distinguish between
 - a) Student mobility (usually by far the largest amount): often, but not everywhere, the *EU monthly mobility grant* (yearly fixed by each LLP National Agency according to its own policy and thus quite varying across Erasmus countries) is supported by the student's home institution through additional funding (e.g. monthly additional contribution, travel expenditures, etc.)
 - b) Organisational funds, STA and STT actions, etc.: again the EU "seed" funding is often supported by institutional additional funding and/or other additional funding received from third parties.

ERASMUS-like eLearning students: Students who are not mobile at all, but take e-learning courses either at foreign HEIs ("*outgoing*" students) or at the HEI from their residence abroad ("*in-coming*" students).

Erasmus year: the period during which the Erasmus funding can be used; at present it lasts 16 months and goes from June 1st till September 30th of the following year.

European Qualification Framework (EQF): see QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK

Exchange places: the places which are listed in the Bilateral Agreements to be used by the exchange students in each given academic year.

Exchange student: a student, coming from her/his home institution, who stays at a host institution for a period, during which s/he can carry out activities awarding academic credits, which are then recognized in the home career.

Fine-grained Indicator: an indicator expressed by a number which can vary in a given range of values either continuously or in very small steps.

Flow coordinator: see COORDINATOR

Funding: see ERASMUS FUNDING

Full-time equivalent (FTE): a way to measure a worker's involvement in a project (or a student's enrolment at an educational institution). An FTE of 1.0 means that the person is equivalent to a full-time worker; while an FTE of 0.5 signals that the worker is only half-time. FTE can be defined as the ratio of the total number of paid hours during a period (full/part time etc.) by the number of working hours in that period Mondays through Fridays.

With specific reference to academic staff, a full-time equivalent (FTE) attempts to standardise a full-time teacher's teaching load against that of a part-time teacher. The basis for the calculation is the "statutory working hours" and not the "total or actual working hours" or "total or actual teaching hours". The full-time equivalence of part-time educational personnel is then determined by calculating the ratio of hours worked by part-time personnel over the statutory hours worked by a full-time employee during the school year.

Source Education at a Glance, OECD, Paris, 2002, Glossary

Good practice: a good practice is an exemplary project (including results or processes) which has exerted a good influence on systems and practices through its activities and results. Consequently, these good practices are worth transferring to and exploiting in different contexts and environments by new users or entities.

Source LLP 2007-2013 Glossary

Grant: according to the context, the term may refer to:

- a) EU funding provided to an institution to implement its own Erasmus mobility project; it includes several funding items: SMS and SMP mobility, organizational funds, STA, STT, IP support, etc.);
- b) Student's EU mobility grant
- c) Additional mobility grant (i.e. additional contribution to the EU mobility grant from non-EU funding)

Indicator: there are different types of indicators:

- a) *Numerical indicator:* it is expressed by a number. Possible examples are:
 - absolute value → *total number of enrolled students in the master cycle*
 - ratio → *total number of enrolled students in the master cycle over the total number of enrolled students*
 - percentage (ratio multiplied by 100)
 - *percentage of enrolled students in the master cycle over the total number of enrolled students*
 - rate (ratio multiplied by 100, 1000,...)
 - *the mobility rate per year of first cycle students is 12.5 students out of 1000 students*
 - time series (of absolute values or ratios or)
 - *a set of numerical data each one relating to a given year (or month or day ...) in a sequence.*

A numerical indicator lends itself to established concepts such as THRESHOLD VALUE (see the relevant item in the Glossary) and CORRIDOR OF VALUES (ibidem).

- b) *Qualitative indicator:* the answer to a question with a fixed number of possible returns: e.g.
 - yes/no
 - One value from a discrete set on a scale [e.g. a scale from 1-scarce or no quality to 5-optimal quality]
- c) *Composite indicator:* an indicator consisting in a set of qualitative indicators (usually of the yes/no type)
- d) *Development/growth indicator:* an indicator for which it is possible/appropriate to set or adjust corridors in a given development/growth policy (see also CORRIDOR OF VALUES).

See also FINE-GRAINED and COARSE-GRAINED INDICATOR

INITIALS (see also ref 2)

BA	according to the context, it may refer to: 1. Bachelor (or 1st cycle) qualification, 2. Bilateral Agreement, 3. Bachelor of Art
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference (for languages)
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
EILC	Erasmus Intensive Language Course
EQF for LLL	European Qualification Framework for life-long learning
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
IP	Intensive Programme (a short residential school, at least 10 days in duration)
LA	Learning Agreement
LLL	Life-Long Learning
MA	Master (or 2 nd cycle) qualification
NQF	National Qualification Framework
OM	Organization of mobility
QF for EHEA	Qualification framework for the EHEA-European Higher Education Area
SM	Student Mobility (study and work placement-combined)
SMS	Student Mobility for Study
SMP	Student Mobility for Placements
ST	Staff mobility (teaching and training)
STT	Staff mobility for training
STA	Staff mobility for teaching assignments (the former "TS")
ToR	Transcript of Records

International Student (also named DEGREE-SEEKING STUDENT): a student who is regularly enrolled for an entire learning cycle and whose access to the involved institution relies on a qualification achieved in another country. International students are also named DEGREE-SEEKING STUDENTS since they aim at successfully completing a full degree-course at the host institution, thus being awarded with the corresponding local final degree (or qualification).

Learning Agreement: The ECTS Learning Agreement was originally developed for mobile students in order to provide a binding agreement before the mobility experience. When used for mobile students, Learning Agreements contain the list of course units or modules or other educational components the student is planning to take at the other institution, together with the code numbers and the ECTS credits allocated to the components.

See: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/ects/guide_en.pdf

Learning Outcomes: Statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and be able to do after successful completion of a process of learning.

See: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/ects/guide_en.pdf

Levels: it may be used in different contexts:

- a) for language preparation, see CEFR;

- b) for degree-course: see DEGREE-COURSE;
- c) in the bilateral agreement: see LEVEL (I,A,D)
- d) in EQF: see QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK

Level (I,A,D): I,A,D stand for Initial, Advanced, Doctoral; in the context of the EMQT project, it is the same as cycle (bachelor, master, doctoral cycle).

Mentor: An experienced individual who can help a student in academic and/or organisational issues, usually a person with a higher qualification than the one sought by the student concerned. (See also PEER-TUTOR)

Mobility: the following broad distinction is usually accepted

- a) **Degree mobility**, i.e. the mobility of international students, see INTERNATIONAL STUDENT
- b) **Credit mobility**, i.e. the mobility of exchange students, see EXCHANGE STUDENT

Module: A course unit in a system in which each course unit carries the same number of credits or a multiple thereof. (For the purposes of the project, the EMQT project used the terms “course unit” and “module” interchangeably).

See: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/ects/guide_en.pdf

Milestone: A milestone is a scheduled event signifying the completion of a major deliverable or a set of related deliverables. A milestone has zero duration and no effort: there is no work associated with a milestone. It is a flag in the workplan to signify that some other work was completed. A milestone is used as a project checkpoint to monitor the project progress and reconfirm its work schedule. (<http://www.mariosalexandrou.com/definition/milestone.asp>)

National Qualification Framework: see QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK

One-tier degree: it is a one-level degree structure (one-tier or one-cycle) where the single programme of study results in a final award, if compared to the two-tier degree structure, which offers a shorter degree programme and a choice of postgraduate programmes. A one-tier degree is for example a regulated degree in Medicine, Pharmacy, Architecture, etc. For most countries, the one-tier (=one-cycle) system is the one existing before the introduction and implementation of the Bologna system, i.e. two-tier (=two-cycle) degrees.

Peer-tutor: an experienced individual who can help a student in academic and/or organisational issues, usually a student looking for the same qualification as the student concerned (see also MENTOR).

Proxy: an indirect indicator, as those used in university rankings, both monotonic ones (*Shanghai* or *THE* or *Leiden World Ranking*), as well as those based on a multidimensional approach (e.g. the Lisbon Council ranking, the European funded U-multirank project) (see also INDICATOR).

Qualification: Any diploma or other certificate issued by a competent authority attesting the successful completion of a recognized programme/course of study. It is a wider concept than “degree”, which usually only applies to HE qualifications.

Sources: CoRe2 (<http://www.core-project.eu>); Coimbra Group glossary on Joint Degrees (<http://www.coimbra-group.eu/index.php?page=education-training-and-mobility-etm-task-force>).

Qualification Framework: it may be established at national or European level. We distinguish between:

- a) a national framework of qualifications, which is a single description, at national level or at the level of an educational system, which is internationally understood. The framework describes all

qualifications awarded in the system considered and relates them to each other in a coherent way. A very clear example is that of the Republic of Ireland (<http://www.nqai.ie/en/>)

Source CoRe2 (<http://www.core-project.eu>)

b) a European Qualifications Framework (EQF), which is an overarching framework that makes the relationship between European national educational frameworks of qualifications and the qualifications they contain transparent. It is an articulation mechanism between national frameworks (Source *Bologna Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks, 2005*). At present two EQFs have been established:

- **QF for EHEA:** it is the Qualifications Framework adopted by the Bologna Ministers in Bergen (2005); it encompasses three levels (first cycle or bachelor level; second cycle or master level; third cycle or doctoral level). Each Bologna country should adopt its own national qualification framework, made compatible with the QF for EHEA, within 2010.
- **EQF for LLL:** it is the Qualifications Framework adopted by the European Parliament (2008); it encompasses eight levels, which cover all levels of school education including vocational training; the last three levels are fully compatible with the three levels of QF for EHEA. Each EU country should adopt its own national qualification framework, made compatible with EQF for LLL, within 2012.

Rate: the rate of a particular phenomenon is the number of its instances which occur during a period of time (*Collins Cobuild dictionary*). As an example: rate (or percentage rate) of mobility students. See also under INDICATOR

Recognition of credit*: The process through which an institution certifies that learning outcomes achieved and assessed in another institution satisfy (some or all) requirements of a particular programme, its component or qualification.

See: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/ects/guide_en.pdf

Service-learning describes a method of learning, teaching and reflecting on results, that combines academic educational activities with meaningful community service, frequently youth service. Service-learning may take place in a wide variety of settings: schools, universities (e.g. offering “service modules”) and community-based organizations. By combining practical service activities and learning outcomes, a measurable change occurs in both the student and the community. As a learning/teaching methodology, it also falls under experiential education and aims to enrich the learning experience, foster civic responsibility, strengthen communities for the common good and encourage lifelong civic engagement, while also developing social entrepreneurship. (see <http://www.servicelearning.org/what-service-learning>)

Threshold Value: in the technical language, it refers to a lower limit. In general, it shows the value of a given quantity that must be exceeded for a certain reaction or phenomenon to occur. In the case of an indicator it may be used to show the value of that indicator which must be exceeded for a process to be assessed as adequate/positive/excellent.

Time Series: see under INDICATOR

Top up grant: A Top Up Grant is an additional rate of grant, allocated to students satisfying specific requirements – which can vary according to the institution concerned – and aimed at providing additional support to disadvantaged students. Eligibility is usually determined by reference, for example, to a lower income threshold to that in the ordinary maintenance Schemes, and, in addition to other requirements, to the inclusion of specified long-term social welfare payments in the reckonable income itself.

Transfer: The process of having credits awarded in one context recognised in another context for purposes of obtaining a qualification.

See: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/ects/guide_en.pdf

Tutor: its definition varies according to the country. According to ref. 9, “in the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and Dublin: A graduate (most often the fellow of a college), to whom the special supervision of an undergraduate (called his pupil) is assigned. Subsequently also used in other British universities and other further education establishments. Also, in Cambridge and some other universities and colleges, a member of the teaching staff assigned responsibility for the general well-being of a student”;

“in U.S. universities and colleges: *‘A teacher subordinate to a professor, usually appointed for a year or a term of years’*”.

Vertical mobility: it is practiced by those students who, having achieved a degree at a specific institution, go to attend another degree-course to another institution, in order to achieve the corresponding degree there. As an example “*bachelor at home, master abroad!*”.

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List of Key Indicators

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INTRODUCTION

The Key Indicators on Erasmus mobility are an essential component of the Quality Tools' Box, allowing a self-assessment of a given institution and constructive comparison with other institutions as well as a systematic improvement of quality in mobility.

The project partners agreed on a methodology for selecting the key indicators, using the following additive criteria:

- **Normative**
 - Link to priority goals of EMQT partnership
 - Link to priority goals of testing partners
- **Empirical**
 - The most used indicators
 - Advanced or good practice indicators (*seldom used* indicators)

A blending of methodology and personal academic experience of the EMQT people was used to identify key indicators for Erasmus mobility.

The method to identify the key indicators included the following steps:

- Indicators hint at the quality of institutional actions aimed at a certain mobility goal. The connection between goals, actions and indicators has been developed on the basis of an *a priori group* reflection.
- The indicators have then been translated into questions and included in the EMQT questionnaire. Through that, the most used indicators and seldom used indicators could be identified.
- Based on the agreed methodology a list of indicators (first selection) was proposed for reflection and debated within the Task Forces and then finalised (second selection).

And so, the maximum of 340 question fields appearing in the EMQT questionnaire, as used in the testing phases, was reduced to **37 indicators** from the Task Forces sections plus **4 general indicators**.

1. How to use the EMQT List of Key Indicators

The list of indicators provides you with a means to monitor and improve the quality of student mobility at your institution. Use the indicator for self-monitoring (comparison over time) or to compare your institution to others. The list is split up in six thematic fields, so it is possible to concern yourself with one field at a time. It is meant as a collection of the most important aspects and can be extended by further indicators that might be important for your specific situation or task.

2. The List of Key Indicators

General Part (*numbers are per academic year*)

1. Number of outgoing students for study mobility
2. Mobility rate for study (number of outgoing students out of 1000 enrolled ones¹)

¹ it is calculated as *the ratio between* number of outgoing students *and* overall number of enrolled students *multiplied* by 1000.

3. Number of incoming students for study mobility
4. Average duration of stay of outgoing students

Task Force a: Organisational Models

1. Having a strategy on Erasmus agreed upon at institutional level
2. Functioning of the Erasmus Office
 - As an independent unit
 - As part of an IRO
 - Either independent or part of an IRO but in strong synergy with other services (registrar office, career guidance service)
 - No Erasmus office, but there is multi-task administrative staff taking care of Erasmus
3. Having a quality management system for Erasmus
4. Providing incentives for staff to get involved
5. Monitoring the mobility of students according to numerical indicators
6. Using the results of the monitoring process for strategic decisions
7. Total number of academic, administrative and technical staff (FTE) involved in counselling and in managing Erasmus student mobility
8. Total number of Erasmus incoming study students receiving top-up grants from private or public bodies
9. Total number of mobile students with special needs being taken care in the last 5 years
10. Total EU Erasmus funding received by the institution
11. Receiving additional funding from third parties for mobility

Task Force b: Language Preparation

12. Offering pre-departure / pre-arrival language course units to incoming students
13. Offering semester / year-long language course units to outgoing and incoming students
14. Requiring proof of language proficiency for outgoing and incoming students
15. Using the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages CEFR

Task Force c: Orientation and Information

16. Providing general information about mobility programmes (e.g. calls for selection, deadlines)
17. Providing general and academic information on your institution to incoming students via
 - Website
 - Innovative ICT tools
 - Social network tools

18. Providing general and academic information on each partner institution to outgoing students via
 - Innovative ICT tools
 - Social network tools

19. Having a check list of milestones provided to exchange students

Task Force d: Performances and Recognition

20. Evaluating the ratio of actual mobility over the total number of exchange places
21. *Composite indicator*
 - Number of academics involved in student mobility over number of Erasmus exchange students
 - Number of academics involved in student mobility over number of Bilateral Agreements
 - A single body at central institutional level responsible for the approval of BAs, Learning Agreements and recognition
 - Several bodies responsible for the approval of BAs, Learning Agreements and recognition, following the same institutional procedures or the their own rules

22. *Composite indicator*
 - Number of achieved credits in relation to agreed credits in LA (as an average)
 - Number of recognised credits in relation to achieved credits (as an average)
 - Number of recognised credits in relation to agreed credits (as an average)
 - Number of recognised credits per months abroad

Task Force e: Incoming Students Reception

23. Supporting students in finding accommodation
24. Offering academic counselling and monitoring the academic performance of your incoming students
25. Providing a buddy system
26. Cooperating with local student organisations & student representatives
27. Time at which the institution provides an up-to-date ECTS Guide & Course Catalogue to incoming students

Task Force f: E-coaching

28. E-coaching and virtual support to students being an integrated part of the mission of your institution
29. Having a strategy to integrate ICT in the support to mobile students

30. Offering online language training units for outgoing students
31. Offering online cultural training units for outgoing students
32. Offering online language training units for incoming students
33. Offering online cultural training units for incoming students
34. Providing a structured information platform (e.g. website)
35. Erasmus incoming students having access to the same online platforms as the local students
36. Offering online administrative support to outgoing/incoming students
37. Offering online academic support to outgoing/incoming students

Suggestions for Good Practices in Erasmus Mobility

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INTRODUCTION

In 2011, the implementation of the action lines of the Bologna Process beyond its first decade still pays key attention to ensure the quality of Erasmus mobility programmes, since one of Bologna's most relevant pillars and at the same time advantages is MOBILITY. Therefore, this document focuses on the Good Practices (GP), which were identified on the basis of the EMQT Survey.¹ This latter investigated in general "practices, which occur in *exchange mobility for study*".

The Survey was conducted among 65 European Higher Education Institutions² (HEIs), from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Rumania, Spain, Sweden and Turkey, considering six dimensions of exchange mobility. These latter are detailed below. Six dedicated EMQT Task Forces took care of each dimension separately. The Survey was carried out at the end of 2010 and data were processed in 2011.

This component of the EMQT Tools' Box, called *Suggestions for Good Practices*, has been created to summarise part of the the work done, with a big effort, by all the partners involved in the Erasmus Mobility Quality Tools Project (EMQT), and also direct and indirect stakeholders participating in it.

Relying on this document is thought to be essential in order to detect Good Practices regarding Erasmus mobility which will help, somehow, all stakeholders involved in the Erasmus Mobility Programme: HEIs, students, academics, National Agencies, administrative staff, etc.

A positive follow-up for most HEIs participating in the EMQT project has been the reading of these Good Practices as a first self-evaluation document. It has showed them in depth their situation regarding Erasmus Mobility within their own institution.³ The information they have obtained will serve them to start working on the improvement of their weak points, where necessary, or to achieve excellence in this interesting field.

This is an open reflection, a first step in the contribution to the enrichment of quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area, and also of the Erasmus Programme, with the aim of using it to incorporate new Good Practices in the future.

Hopefully in the near future other HEIs will also be able to benefit from this document and from the rest of the tools developed by the EMQT Project.

The present tool consists of three parts. Part I presents the most relevant Good Practices detected for each dimension by ANECA, the National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation of Spain, which is an EMQT partner.

The following Part II includes two detailed examples of Good Practices for each dimension, describing particular implementation strategies, as selected by the Chairs of each Task Force.

Part III describes an operational approach in 8 phases to possible *implementation strategies or ways to use* the EMQT tools, which are offered in the present Brochure. The operational template is complemented by a short report from an EMQT partner on "*How to use the EMQT Tools*".

¹ See the introductory document to this Brochure entitled *Presentation of EMQT*, §§2.2, 2.3, 3.1.

² In the EMQT data processing, data from the internal and external questionnaire were merged to provide more complete information (see *Presentation of EMQT*, §3.1, the EMQT Survey).

³ Regarding academics' opinions, see also the report on Academic Quality in exchange mobility, another component of the EMQT Tools' Box.

Finally, the Appendix includes additional relevant information obtained from the EMQT Mapping Reports⁴ and further Good Practices.

I. Good Practices

opening remarks

Part I is based on a previous document prepared by ANECA and named⁵ *Results Report EMQT Project*. The document provides a description of the work performed in order to analyse the EMQT data sources. These latter were organised according to six dimensions, mirroring the structure of the EMQT questionnaire.⁶

More precisely, the Survey covered the following dimensions:

- General organisational models within HEIs
- Language preparation and related issues
- Information and orientation
- Students' performances and recognition
- Reception of host students
- Virtual support: e-Coaching⁷ or ICT⁸ mobility tools

The document entitled *EMQT Mapping Report*⁹ contains a full description of the practices in place in each dimension; the corresponding work of data analysis and interpretation was carried out by each of the six Task Forces.

On the basis of the analysis conducted in the ANECA Report mentioned above, the identified Good Practices are presented here below. They are key actions, “*detected as Good Practices across the dimension as a whole*”, which means that “*most of the answering HEIs satisfied a large extent of them*”. Each action is listed following the structure of the questionnaire (the six dimensions).

⁴ See *Presentation of EMQT*, §5.2, and the reference document named *Mapping Report* in this same Brochure. A short summary on the analysis of the data carried out by each of the six Task Forces is also given in the paper quoted below: *Results Report EMQT Project* by ANECA (see next footnote).

⁵ For complete information on this document please visit the EMQT webpage: www.emqt.org.

⁶ See *EMQT Tools' Box* in this same Brochure.

⁷ From *electronic-coaching*: it includes all activities, done through technology (electronic means namely through technology, e.g. the Internet/chat/e-mail), aimed at guiding students towards their learning goals and refers to the human aspect of e-support (e-tutoring, emoderating, e-coaching).

⁸ Information and Communication technology (ICT).

⁹ See among the *EMQT reference documents* in this same Brochure.

Task Force a:

General organisational models within HEIs

For this dimension, the strategy of the university regarding Erasmus mobility is analysed as well as the resources the institution allocates to the students involved in this mobility.

Good Practices:

- GP1.1. The institution has mobility explicitly mentioned in its mission statement.
- GP1.2. The institution has a strategy on Erasmus agreed upon at institutional level.
- GP1.3. The institution has a quality management system for Erasmus.
- GP1.4. The institution uses the results of the monitoring process for strategic decisions.
- GP1.5. The institution runs regular satisfaction surveys related to Erasmus among students and academics.
- GP1.6. The institution has one or more schemes to support outgoing and incoming Erasmus students with special needs (disabled, study with child, etc.).
- GP1.7. The institution provides financial aid for outgoing and incoming students with special needs.
- GP1.8. The institution offers service learning¹⁰ modules.
- GP1.9. The institution offers intercultural activities to incoming students, teachers and administrative staff.

Task Force b:

Language preparation and related issues

For this dimension, both the provision of language courses by the institution and the actions the institution takes to standardise the different language levels are analysed.

Good Practices:

- GP2.1. The institution offers pre-departure language units for outgoing students and incoming students.
- GP2.2. The institution offers semester/year-long language course units for outgoing students and incoming students.

¹⁰ Service-learning is a method of learning, teaching and reflecting on results, that combines academic educational activities with meaningful community service, frequently youth service. Service-learning may take place in a wide variety of settings: schools, universities (e.g. offering “service modules”) and community-based organisations. By combining practical service activities and learning outcomes, a measurable change occurs in both the student and the community.

- GP2.3. The institution offers language course units for specific purposes (i.e.: Law, Medicine, Engineering, etc.) for outgoing and incoming students.
- GP2.4. The institution offers language course units at different levels.
- GP2.5. The institution follows strictly the Common European Framework of Reference, CERF.

Task Force c:

Information and orientation

For this dimension, the strategy of the institution is analysed regarding the information and orientation provided to the students participating in the Erasmus programme.

Good Practices:

- GP3.1. The institution provides its own students with general information about mobility programmes (e.g. calls for selection, deadlines, mobility grants, Erasmus students rights, etc.)
- GP3.2. The institution provides incoming and outgoing students with general and academic information on the institution.
- GP3.3. The institution provides outgoing and incoming students with personalised counselling.
- GP3.4. The institution monitors satisfaction of outgoing and incoming students regarding previously received information and orientation.
- GP3.5. The institution communicates results of satisfaction monitoring to partners.
- GP3.6. The institution carries out actions related to results of satisfaction monitoring.
- GP3.7. The institution has a check list of milestones¹¹ provided to exchange students.
- GP3.8. The institution sets quality goals in its information strategy based on innovative ICT tools.
- GP3.9. The institution has a buddy system in place for outgoing and incoming students.
- GP3.10. The institution ensures specific coaching for local students engaging as buddies.
- GP3.11. The institution motivates local students to get engaged as buddies.

¹¹ A milestone is a scheduled event signifying the completion of a major deliverable or a set of related deliverables. A milestone has zero duration and no effort: there is no work associated with a milestone. It is a flag in the workplan to signify that some other work was completed. A milestone is used as a project checkpoint to monitor the project progress and reconfirm its work schedule.

Task Force d:

Students' performances and recognition

In this dimension the management of bilateral agreements is analysed, as well as the monitoring of performance of Erasmus students.

Good Practices:

- GP4.1. The institution assesses if the agreed field of study is suitable for most outgoing students.
- GP4.2. The institution assesses the number of credits agreed upon in the learning agreement.
- GP4.3. The institution assesses the number of credits achieved.
- GP4.4. The institution assesses the number of credits recognised.
- GP4.5. The institution sends the transcript of records of academic performance to the host institution.
- GP4.6. The institution offers special preparatory activities (discipline specific) to outgoing students.
- GP4.7. The institution evaluates recognition procedures for mobile students through questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, etc.
- GP4.8. The institution assesses satisfaction of Erasmus mobile students based on academic experience.
- GP4.9. The institution allows flexibility¹² in the recognition of achieved credits.
- GP4.10. The institution follows a policy in establishing / confirming a Bilateral Agreement.

Task Force e:

Reception of host students

This dimension analyses the operation of orientation and support services for Erasmus students.

Good Practices:

- GP5.1. The incoming students can join in the local students organisations of the institution.
- GP5.2. The institution cooperates with the local students organisations involved in supporting mobility and mobile students.
- GP5.3. The institution monitors the academic performance of incoming students.
- GP5.4. The institution offers discipline specific courses which provide credits and are specially tailored for incoming students.

¹² For more details about flexibility see the examples of Good Practices in this document, Appendix I.

Task Force f:

Virtual support: e-Coaching or ICT mobility tools

For this dimension, the virtual support the institution provides before, during and after Erasmus mobility and both to incoming and outgoing students, is analysed.

Good Practices:

- GP6.1. Before mobility the institution provides a structured information platform.
- GP6.2. Before mobility the institution offers online administrative support to outgoing and incoming students.
- GP6.3. Before mobility the institution offers academic support to outgoing and incoming students.
- GP6.4. Before Erasmus mobility the institution offers online language training units for outgoing and incoming students.
- GP6.5. Before Erasmus mobility the institution offers online cultural training units for outgoing and incoming students.
- GP6.6. During Erasmus mobility the institution offers online language training units for incoming students.
- GP6.7. During mobility the institution offers online administrative support other than email counselling to outgoing and incoming students.
- GP6.8. During Erasmus mobility the institution offers online cultural training units for incoming students.
- GP6.9. During mobility Erasmus students have access to the same online platforms as local students.

II. Cases of Good Practices

Part II highlights a variety of Good Practices, as identified by each of the Task Force Chairs. The methodology used to detect these Good Practices is the following: each Chair of the Task Force was asked to select or confirm two major Good Practices emerging from their own domain of work as well as the HEIs selected to exemplify the detected GP.

In order to obtain more detailed information, see the Mapping Reports¹³ documents by each TF.

¹³ *The EMQT Mapping Report*, to be found in this same Brochure, includes a General Part plus six Sections, one for each of the six TFs' domains or dimensions. Indeed each Section is the corresponding TF's Mapping Report.

Good Practices identified by Task Force 2

General organisational models within HEIs.

Community outreach and social engagement

In most European Countries, Community outreach and social engagement of HEIs is a rather new field, especially with respect to internationalisation. But in a globalised world and with respect to the whole European cohesion process, mobility is also a measure against xenophobia and a possibility for the local citizens to meet young people from abroad.

The institution offers *Service learning modules*.

Lumsa Service Learning Modules provides a point of entry for sustainable community engagement by actively involving students, higher education staff, teachers and a large variety of stakeholders. Within the framework of a Bilateral Agreement among Lumsa and two African countries, students from Maputo – Mozambique were accepted at our institution and enrolled for a degree course. In that context Lumsa Italian students organised a Charity Ball to gather funds to assign for the material assistance and sustenance. During the Ball the opportunity was given to National and International students (also the Mozambican) to prepare national or international traditional dishes to share among all the Academic Community. Moreover, Mozambican Students started a Portuguese Language Course for Italian Students, especially for those interested in spending their period of study abroad in Portugal.

This Higher Education Institution has involved 190 incoming students, 23 academics and 9 administrative staff.

➔ The Lumsa University (Italy)

The institution *offers intercultural activities to incoming students, teachers and administrative staff*.

The “Friends of Erasmus” in Berlin is a self-organised community of citizens of Berlin, mostly people who are already retired or out of work but interested in having contact with young people from all over Europe. This group invites the Erasmus students to participate in different activities, like visiting an arts exhibition in Berlin, short trips to the outskirts of Berlin or show them how festivities like Eastern or Christmas take place in Germany.

This Higher Education Institution has involved 119 incoming students.

➔ Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin (Germany)

Good Practices identified by Task Force b

Language preparation and related issues.

The institution *offers language course units for specific purposes* (i.e.: Law, Medicine, Engineering, etc.) for outgoing and incoming students.

The language instruction should be organised for appropriate fields of studies. The terminology used in every field of study varies in every language and culture. Learning a language is not only learning grammar and orthographic rules but also getting to know the culture of the countries and regions where the language(s) is (are) spoken.

If the aim of academic mobility is studying, students should be able to recognise and use the terminology, phraseology and so on of their particular field of study. As an example, imagine an Italian student who goes as an Erasmus student to the UK to study Law; they would need not only to know (general) English but also to be able to understand and use legal English and, of course, to know the differences between the Italian Legal System and the English (and Common Law) Legal systems.

Several universities defend this kind of language instruction, especially Medical universities, such as:

- ➔ The Medical University of Warsaw (Poland)
- ➔ Charité Universitätsmedizin Berlin (Germany)

The institution *follows strictly the Common European Framework of Reference, CERF.*

All language instruction should strictly follow the CEFR. The Council of Europe expressly states that “the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) provides a basis for the mutual recognition of language qualifications, thus facilitating educational and occupational mobility”. Using the CERF assures common criteria for language competence assessment.

For instance these HEIs are among the ones which identify what mentioned above as a good practice:

- ➔ The University of Pardubice (Czech Republic)
- ➔ The University of Granada (Spain)

Good Practices identified by Task Force C

Information and orientation.

This HEI stands out on practically all issues related to Task Force c. This University has an “Intercampus” Online portal for information, orientation and preparation of incoming and outgoing students and also for graduates and visitors.

The institution *sets quality goals in its information strategy based on innovative ICT tools.*

The institution *has a check list of milestones provided to exchange students.*

The institution *provides outgoing and incoming students with personalised counselling.*

[...]

This University offers Online tools which:

- Are provided with relatively individual guidance to big target group, reducing the amount of consultation a lot
- Are more accessible and appealing to young people
- Can be updated easily and on short notice, and thus save paper
- Enable to take over external tools (like Intercampus) thus possibly saving money
- Can be own tools (Onleila), which may fit internal structures and necessities better

ONLEIA: is an online service which helps international guest students who will study at the FSU Jena for one or two semesters and who are not pursuing a degree at the FSU to design individualised study plans or “Learning Agreements”.

➡ Friedrich Schiller University of Jena (Germany)

The institution *has a buddy system in place for outgoing and incoming students.*

Every year since 2007, on the Day of Europe (9 of May), this University organises an event Called "Day of Europe-Erasmus Day, the Greek and the guest Erasmus students meet and discuss". The events starts with awards presented to (a) local students and (b) guest students who during their stay in a host institution or in this University respectively have prepared a scientific piece of work which has been published later in a scientific journal or presented in a conference in Greece or abroad. They have to be proposed by their co-tutors and are selected by a special committee. The aim of the University is to enhance the scientific dimension of Erasmus.

The next step is that guest Erasmus students present their country and their university and the local students ask them questions related to the above (country and university). The event ends with a party in the university gardens.

It is a very successful event and has been considered a good practice example by the Greek National Agency for Erasmus, during a systems audit visit (November 2008)

➡ Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Greece)

Good Practices identified by Task Force d

Students' performances and recognition.

Assessment of Bilateral Agreements (Bas)

Bilateral Agreements are formal prerequisites for mobility, and are considered mandatory by all LLP National Agencies. However, the LLP National Agencies leave it up to the single institutions how to implement the procedure for the signing up of these inter-institutional agreements (when, how, by whom, for how long etc.); the only prerequisite is that a bilateral agreement has been signed before the person in mobility arrives at the partner university.

Therefore, bilateral agreements may be considered by one institution as annual contracts to be renewed as a preliminary phase for an annual internal Erasmus "call" (so before receiving applications from students), and by other institutions as paperwork to be signed after having received requests from students; and yet another institution may use the bilateral agreements in both ways (these two types of BA management are called, respectively, "renewal" and "on-demand" BA management).

The institution *follows a policy in establishing / confirming a Bilateral Agreement (BA).*

With reference to Assessment of Bilateral Agreements, the selection is made according to: Geographical distribution of BAs; Reciprocity ratio between the numbers of incoming and outgoing exchanges; Congruity between the level of study and the subject area fixed in the BAs and the real student mobility; Actual personal contacts between academic coordinators.

The following institutions are to be signalled:

- ➔ University of Turku (Finland)
- ➔ University of Granada (Spain)

The institution *allows flexibility in the recognition of achieved credits*.

The term “flexibility” may be interpreted in various way. For instance flexibility may mean recognising more or less credits than those achieved either on the total of each Learning Agreement or on the credits of each academic activity (upscale one and downscale another) or on the whole of the Learning Agreements approved in a given Degree-Course.

But *flexibility* might also mean to allocate units successfully taken abroad (even one single unit) to more than one learning outcome (LA) in order to fulfil the *required* (i.e. by the home degree course regulations) distribution of credits over the different Learning Outcomes (or over grouping of homogeneous learning outcomes).

As far as “flexibility in recognition procedure” is concerned, the benchmarks of selection were: Rounding up of achieved credits for the overall recognition; Compatibility between similar fields of study; Recognition of courses agreed in the LA as elective/optional courses in the home study plan, if congruity in recognition is not possible; Request of extra work to the student during his/her stay abroad or at the end of the Erasmus period at the home institution.

The following institutions are to be signalled:

- ➔ Mid Sweden University (Sweden)
- ➔ Palacký University, Olomouc (Czech Republic)
- ➔ EAL, Tietgen Business College (Denmark)

Good Practices identified by Task Force €

Reception of host Students.

The two Good Practices which follow now are in addition to the practice of offering a wide range of *orientation and information* services as summed up in the mapping report (TFe), which is self-evident and a MUST, but the EMQT consortium would like it to be mentioned in this document explicitly as good practice.

The incoming students can join in the local students organisations of the institution

The practice of a buddy/mentoring system is a common procedure at a large number of HEIs which already have a strong involvement of local student organisations in welcoming incoming Erasmus students. The good practice would thus focus on establishing a closer tie between the individual students, for example through peer-to-peer tutoring or tandem-language learning through the academic year. This can improve the integration of incoming students to the local student community and may encourage local students to go on exchange if they have not done so already.

These HEIs are examples of what has been mentioned above:

- ➔ University of Koblenz-Landau (Germany)
- ➔ Ca' Foscari University of Venice (Italy)
- ➔ Akademia Medyczna im Piastow Slaskich (Poland)
- ➔ Corvinus University of Budapest (Hungary)
- ➔ Mid Sweden University (Sweden)

The Institution *monitors the academic performance of incoming students.*

Achieving academic results is a key factor for a successful exchange experience and “no loss of progress” is one of the key criteria in Erasmus Student Mobility. Thus monitoring students academic performance in a systematic manner is a vital indicator for the high quality of exchange mobility. It is closely tied to the practice of individual academic counselling, either through Erasmus coordinators/advisors or Erasmus officers on administrative level. Another related factor is the integration of performance results such as achieved ECTS credits and grades in a data management system of the university.

These HEIs are examples of what has been mentioned above:

- ➔ Academy of Economic Studies of Bucharest (Romania)
- ➔ Aarhus University (Denmark)
- ➔ Friedrich Schiller University of Jena (Germany)
- ➔ Mid Sweden University (Sweden)
- ➔ Tiedgen Business College (Denmark)
- ➔ University of Koblenz-Landau (Germany)
- ➔ University of Akureyri (Iceland)
- ➔ University of Warsaw (Poland)
- ➔ University of Coimbra (Portugal)
- ➔ University of Leon (Spain)

Good Practices identified by Task Force f

Virtual support: e-Coaching or ICT mobility tools.

Before and during Erasmus mobility the institution *offers online language and cultural training units for outgoing and incoming students.*

This HEI has developed the Distributed Campus, a web-based information and communication tool offering a coaching environment to assist international students and scholars participating in study or research programmes abroad in Germany. Since 2008 the platform was offered as “Open Distributed Campus” (Open DC) for use at other universities. While certainly not all German universities are using this system it might have raised awareness among institutions of the importance of online support, possibly explaining the high performance of the German universities in this respect. (<http://distributed-campus.org/>)

➔ Freie Universität Berlin (Germany)

Regarding the provision of a virtual teaching offer (either single course units or full degree courses) this HEI can be considered as an example of GP:

➔ Mid Sweden University (Sweden)

This HEI showed very high performance regarding the virtual support of both incoming and outgoing students before and during Erasmus mobility, including the provision of online language and cultural training units.

➔ Sakarya University (Turkey)

This HEI stands out on practically all issues related to e-coaching, which means virtual support to outgoing and incoming students during and after Erasmus mobility, as indicated in the TF f Mapping Report. For this reason this HEI is considered as an example of GP on this dimension.

➔ EAL Tietgen Business College (Denmark)

III. Use of EMQT products: template and example

Template

In the following an implementation strategy for the use of the EMQT Tools' Box is proposed, based on 8 interrelated steps or phases, for the benefit of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) willing to improve the quality of exchange mobility of their students.

Nevertheless, do remind that HEIs are responsible for the quality of the courses they offer and therefore it is their own responsibility to define and design the implementation strategy that best suits their necessities regarding mobility.

These steps will help HEIs to enhance the quality of mobility, by using the proposed tools and following the work phases below:

Phase 1:

In-depth study of the components included in the EMQT Tools' Box in general and particularly the one(s) regarding the phase on which a HEI chooses to focus.

Phase 2:

Self-assessment of the HEI. All questions proposed in the *Questionnaire* have to be answered, in order to reflect on which actions have already been taken and which ones are still pending, prioritising those referring to the chosen improvement areas.

Two different approaches may be adopted: a) use the whole *Questionnaire*; b) use only the *Questionnaire* section(s) corresponding to the dimension chosen for improvement plus the *Questionnaire* General Part.

Phase 3:

Study of the *Suggestions for Good Practices* document. The purpose is to identify which Good Practices correspond to the existing improvement areas. Consequently, a roadmap should be established prioritising the actions to be performed, depending on the necessities of each HEI. If necessary, the *EMQT Mapping Report* document can be helpful, as it includes more detailed descriptions of practices and possible Good Practices.

Phase 4:

Appointment of people in charge of performing the activities defined in the roadmap and establishment of an appropriate agenda, suitable for the HEI.

Phase 5:

State the changes. Once the strategies are implemented they must be put into practice, reviewed for efficiency and then adjusted as needed. Therefore, all changes which have taken place should be explained, backing up each of them with solid reasons explaining why the change occurred.

Phase 6:

Regular comparison with the internal quality assurance system of the HEI.

Phase 7:

List performance indicators. Performance indicators are the ways in which strategy objectives are evaluated in order to determine the success of the implemented plan. In this phase, indicators should be listed and briefly described, and the results should be explained in relation to the initial project targets. Use the *indicators*¹⁴ recommended in the Tools'Box and add possible new ones which have been found useful.¹⁵

Phase 8:

Reference to funding issues. Funding often comes from an outside source rather than from the HEI implementing the plan. Therefore, it is extremely important during the present QA exercise to outline exactly how funding has been used, as well as the areas in which more income may be needed. Those areas in need must be referenced throughout a report in order to demonstrate the necessity for further income. Any other limiting factors, aside from funding, should also be noted in this phase.

Example

A report, apt to illustrate a possible use of the EMQT tools, was provided by the EMQT Partner: *Charité Universitätsmedizin Berlin; time: November 2011.*

Ideas for workshops using the Quality Tools' Box

As soon as the first draft of the questionnaire was available, we – i.e. Charité International Cooperation – started to involve the departments of our faculty and the “mother” universities. This was quite helpful for our working tasks in the EMQT project, but also for the internal assessment process. Below we have listed some suggestions of how the Quality Tools' Box can be applied to promote discussion within the institution and subsequently to improve the quality of mobility. The subjects of the workshops listed below correspond to the Sections in the EMQT Questionnaire, which proved to be a good structure.

¹⁴ see, e.g. List of Key Indicators

¹⁵ an inspiring list is shown in the Mapping Report document in this same Brochure, Section 1, open question 1.1.12.1

Workshop 1: General organisational models within HEIs

Preparation/research/data collection:

- Number of Incoming and Outgoing Students, Teachers, Staff.
- Overall amount of actual funding (mobility grants, overhead means).
- Staff involved in the Erasmus exchange.

Participants:

- Charité International Cooperation
- Working group: “Development of an International Strategy”

Discussion:

- Is Erasmus exchange included in the International Strategy? If not, why?
- What is the role of the partner universities, how do we identify them and conclude/extend bilateral agreements (student demand, “strategic” partners, according to study offers?)
- Is the organisational structure sufficient for managing the Erasmus programme?
- Are there any resources to develop the Erasmus programme? Personnel, money?
- Do we intend to increase or decrease the number of Incoming and Outgoing Students, Teachers, Staff? Why? How are we going to do this?
- Can we re-allocate the funds or apply for additional funds?

Workshop 2: Language issues

Preparation/research/data collection:

How many language courses do we offer (intensive, semester)? Are they full? What is the percentage of Erasmus students taking part in the courses for outgoing students? Are there any online courses available?

Participants:

Charité International Cooperation, Charité International Academy (provider of language training)

Discussion:

- Outgoing: Do the students meet our requirements (B2 level upon departure) and prove this satisfyingly? If not, what can we do? Do the Erasmus students use the offer of special language courses? Do we need more courses or additional languages?
- Incoming: Do the students meet our requirements (B2 level upon arrival) and prove this satisfyingly? If not, what can we do? Do we satisfy the demand? Should we offer additional levels?
- General: How do we recruit the teachers (of not permanently employed)? How do we train the teachers? Is the fee for the courses adequate? Which sources of additional funding do we have?

Workshop 3: Information & orientation

Preparation/research/data collection:

What kind of material do we have as information for outgoing and incoming students?

Participants:

Charité International Cooperation, student employees, International Office of the “mother” universities

Discussion:

Incoming: (discussed under Action 5)

Outgoing: Which sources are available for outgoing students? Do we need more material, more detailed information on the website? Do we need an information event in time before the application deadline?

General: Is the material up to date? Which questions are asked by prospective incoming and outgoing student? Do we answer them in our material? Can we find a centralised system to answer standard questions (phone, email)? Is the organisation of the personal counselling (i.e. office hours) sufficient?

Workshop 4: Students’ Performances & Recognition

Preparation/research/data collection:

Number of recognised credits (outgoing students) or number of credits achieved by incoming students.

Participants:

Charité International Cooperation, student employees, examination office, department of student affairs

Discussion:

Incoming: How many credits do we expect the incoming students to achieve? Is the real number of credits achieved sufficient? Do we know why? What can we do? Do we have an evaluation system in place (student evaluate their courses and internships)? Is the Transcript of Records completed in time? If not, what are the obstacles? What can be improved?

Outgoing: Do the responsible departments agree on the recognition procedures? Are the students informed about the recognition procedures? Are these procedures up to date (changes in the curriculum)? What are the main problems during recognition? How many credits do we expect the outgoing students to bring home? Are there any consequences, if they don’t? How do we monitor the academic quality of the host institution?

General: How important is the Learning Agreement? What is the role of the Departmental Coordinator and who should this be? Do we provide sufficient academic counselling?

Workshop 5: Reception of host students

Preparation/research/data collection:

Description of the procedure from first contact to arrival.

Participants:

Charité International Cooperation, student employees, department of student affairs

Discussion:

- Do we provide the ECTS Information Package according to the EU guidelines? If not, what do we have? Can we edit the material to achieve a regular ECTS Information Package?
- Do we have sufficient online information? Is the online information up to date? Who is responsible for this?
- What are the frequently asked questions before arrival? Do we answer them appropriately and in a timely manner?
- Do we provide sufficient academic counselling?
- Can we meet all requests for courses? If not, can we offer any special study programmes for Erasmus students?
- Is the Learning Agreement signed in a timely manner? If not, what are the obstacles? Can we do anything about this?
- What kind of social programme do we have? How do incoming students react to the programmes? Are there any ideas for more?

Workshop 6: e-Coaching or ICT mobility tools

Preparation/research/data collection:

Which kind of online tools do we use?

Participants:

Charité International Cooperation, student employees, e-learning department

Discussion:

(applies to both incoming and outgoing students)

- Do we use an online application system? If not, what is the reason? Can we introduce such a system?
- Do we offer online information for nominated students? Do the students make good use of the online tools? If not, what seems to be the reason?
- Are there any incentives for the students to use the tools?
- Can we improve the online tools or the way we use them?

APPENDIX I

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING Good Practices

The complete information and examples included in this Appendix are contained in the Mapping Reports (from a to f). This appendix intends to summarise valuable information, comments, reflections, open questions and further examples of Good Practices extracted from the mapping reports.

Mapping Report for TF a: General organisational models within HEIs

2. Amount of staff involved

2.2. Incentives to staff.

1.1.6 Does your institution provide incentives for staff to get involved?

Graph 2: comparison of incentives for Academics vs. Administrative and Technical Staff.

3. Quality aspects

3.1 Quality measures

1.1.7.1. Description of Quality Management Systems (Open Question).

Question: 1.1.12.1. description of key numerical indicators for improvement in respective value.

3.3 Overview of quality aspects (most used quality measures of the sample).

Question 1.2.1.1: use of organisational funds, column “others”.

4. Students with special needs

Open question: 1.2.4.1a & 1.2.4.1b: description of support schemes for students with special needs.

5. Mobility of staff and intercultural training

1.3.4 What kind of other intercultural activities does your institution offer to students/teachers/ administrative staff?

Mapping Report for TF b: Language preparation and related issues.

2.1. Provision of Language course units.

Question 2.1.2. Does your institution offer semester/year-long language course units to: Outgoing students? Incoming students?

2.2. Actions to standardise language levels

Question 2.2.1. Does your institution requires proof of language proficiency for: outgoing students / incoming students / outgoing placements / incoming placements / outgoing staff / incoming staff?

Open question on best practices in this section

Mapping Report for TF c: Information and orientation

3.2 Buddy system

3.2.3. Is there a specific coaching for local students engaging as buddies? Open question 1.3.4. What kind of other intercultural activities does your institution offer to students/teachers/ administrative staff?

Open question: description of Good Practices in this section

Mapping Report for TF d: Students' performances and recognition

4.1. Assessment of Bilateral Agreements (BA)

4.1.3. What is the total number of exchange places for outgoing students in 2009/10 (sum over all BAs)? Description of Good Practices

4.3. Monitor performance during mobility and recognition after mobility

Open Question: How does your institution ensure that students leave with a previously approved LA?

4.4. Ensuring transparency in recognition

4.3.1. Before sending out your selected Erasmus students, do you usually send their ToR to the host institution?

Open question 4.4.1.1. Description of how the institution evaluates recognition procedures.

Open question: How does your institution ensure that L.O. at other institutions are comparable to the home L.O.?

4.5. Ensure flexibility in recognition

4.4.3. Does your institution allow flexibility in the recognition of achieved credits?

4.4.3.1. Description of flexibility procedures

Open question on best practices in this section

Mapping Report for TF e: Reception of host students

5.2. Specific measures to ensure smooth integration of Erasmus incoming students.

Open question 5.2.2.1.: The universities were asked to describe how they cooperate with local student organisations

Open question 5.2.4.1.: Institutions were asked to give feedback on any incentives for academic staff offering academic counselling to incoming students

Open question 5.2.5.1.: Descriptions on how institutions monitor the academic performance of the incoming students

Open question 5.2.6.1.: Does your institution offer discipline specific courses which provide credits and are specially tailored to incoming students?

Open question on best practices in this section

Mapping Report for TF f: e-coaching or ICT mobility tools.

6.2. Virtual support to outgoing & incoming students During Erasmus mobility

Open question 6.2.4.1.: Explain how the Erasmus incoming students get access to the same online platforms as the local students.

Open question on best practices in this section

Academic quality in exchange mobility

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Introduction

This tool summarises the EMQT findings about the academic quality of Erasmus exchange mobility. It consists of two parts:

- i) The EMQT position paper entitled “*About the Quality of Academic Outcomes of Erasmus Study Mobility*”, in its latest version (November 2011), which also embodies some findings from the EMQT Mapping Report
- ii) A summary report of the main findings as extracted from 85 interviews with academics from the 14 EMQT member universities, care of the local EMQT teams. While the local EMQT teams mostly count administrators, the interviews try to get the point of view of academics on exchange mobility issues.

This tool can serve two important tasks:

- Firstly, to make clear what academic quality in mobility means for those who are experts in this field: the academics themselves.
- Secondly, to provide International Relations experts with a “shortcut” to something like the state of mind of the academics, with whom they work together without always having the opportunity to exchange ideas on why and how mobility should work.

The tool is therefore meant to introduce the mobility experts to the academic way of thinking and, as such, offers a first step on how to improve the cooperation between academics and International Relations experts at their own institutions.

In order to enrich the EMQT products with opinions from academics, a working paper entitled “*About the Quality of Academic Outcomes of SMS (Erasmus Study Mobility)*” was prepared in July 2010; this paper circulated among partners getting useful feedback. As a follow-up, at the 3rd EMQT general meeting in Leuven in September 2010, the decision was taken that each partner university should interview some representatives and Erasmus-experienced academics, five academics per institution on the average. The EMQT Managing Committee asked for this additional effort (not foreseen in the original application) in order to fill in a gap, which became apparent while preparing the EMQT questionnaire: indeed this latter mostly dealt with the quality of academic/administrative procedures; moreover, the participation of academics in the MC and in the foreseen Task Forces was limited.

In January 2011, guidelines and a template with 20 questions were set up, identifying four homogeneous blocks of possible questions, i.e. questions related respectively to: 1) institutional aspects; 2) exchange coordinator aspects; 3) recognition; 4) problems and future. The interview Template, which is shown in the Appendix, was meant to suggest possible topics rather than being a prescriptive document, with the sole exception of the final question which was compulsory and asked for listing *“the main ingredients which contribute to a student exchange mobility of high academic quality”*.

As a whole, 85 persons with expertise in the academic aspects of exchange mobility, were interviewed (83 teachers/professors and 2 administrative staff). Their opinions were collected during *ad hoc* interviews carried out in February 2011 at the 14 EMQT partner universities, mostly by people who were part of the local EMQT teams.

The distribution of the interviews over the EMQT partners and over the subject areas is given in the following table:

institutions		SUBJECT AREA								
University	short name	Humanities	Social sciences	Engineering	Natural Sciences	Agricultural Sciences	Health Sciences	admin	unknown	row total
Padova	UNIPD	2		1	1	1				5
Bologna	UNIBO	2	2	1			1			6
Graz	KFUG	4	2		1					7
Åbo Akademi	AAU	1	1		1					3
Aarhus	AU		1	1	1					3
Granada	UGR	2	1				1			4
Deusto	UD	3	5	4					1	13
K.U.Leuven	K.U.Leuven	2	1	3			1	2		9
Paris Sud	UPS			2	6		1			9
Iași	U A.I.C.	3	4							7
Leipzig	UL		3		1					4
Thessaloniki	AUTh	2	2	3	1					8
Jena	FSU	1	3							4
HUMBOLDT-Charité	Charité	2	1							3
<i>column total</i>		24	26	15	12	1	4	2	1	85
<i>percentages</i>		28%	31%	18%	14%	1%	5%	2%	1%	100%
32%										

The percentage of participating academics is comparable in the subject areas of Humanities, Social Sciences and Natural Sciences/Engineering; the only under-represented subject area is Medicine.

Most of the interviews were recorded and then transformed into a written report. Reports are overall very detailed and full of experience, interesting ideas, comments, criticisms and proposals. They give a surprisingly vivid image of how academics from the EMQT partner institutions look at Erasmus, sometimes in a quite different manner. The interview reports are presented together in *A Compendium of Interviews with Academics*. Each report is presented in its original form, respecting some differences in the chosen reporting format. The Compendium consists of 211 pages and can be found on the EMQT website (upon request).

The summary report of this quite rich material is presented in the second part of this brochure. It is the result of an exercise aimed at summarising in an organic manner the opinions and issues raised by the academics in the above interviews. Whenever needed, the interviewees are quoted through their *home university* – either in full name or through the short name, see table above – plus a progressive number and/or their *disciplinary areas*. In the summarising exercise, we acknowledge the contribution provided by:

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The EMQT Coordination Team in Padova

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PART I

ABOUT THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC OUTCOMES of Erasmus Study Mobility

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1. Introduction

It is easy to find indicators which measure or characterise the extension and the intensiveness of the mobility phenomenon (e.g. absolute number of mobile students, mobility rate of a given HEI or of its Departments, average duration of stay, number of credits gained/recognised per moving student, etc.).

It is also relatively simple to find indicators regarding the quality of the process (i.e. transparency, reliability and accountability of involved procedures): main examples are those indicators which reveal the existence and the standards of key services (e.g. general orientation & information, language preparation, well structured website for the teaching offer, accommodation services, students data bank(s), administrative management of the LA, administrative inclusion of the ToR into the student's academic career, etc.).

It seems however much more difficult to identify indicators which hint at the academic quality of the mobility experience, i.e. which are able to hint at answers to questions like:

- What is the quality of the learning/teaching environment at the host institution?
- Is the mobile student academically prepared to insert her/him-self fruitfully in the new learning environment?
- Are the subject specific competences achieved at the host institution and their characterisation in terms of learning outcomes "comparable" or even "complementary, but at a comparable level" to those which would be achieved during a similar period at the home institution?
- Is the academic environment of the host institution able to promote the intellectual curiosity of the guest student and to challenge and enrich their academic preparation in a profitable way?

2. Pre-requirements concerning academic preparation

An important preliminary aspect affecting the academic quality of a mobility experience is the academic preparation which a student needs in order to perform successfully at the guest university. There are at least two main issues involved here:

- (i) General academic preparation: its importance is well established, but the appropriate pre-required Learning Outcomes may strongly depend on the subject area. As an example, a degree course in hard sciences usually shows a progression of the studies which is almost compulsory and some LOs are then a needed prerequisite further to progress. In other cases, the general profile of the degree course at the guest institution and its scheduled development across the academic years may require that the guest student broadens some competences appropriately prior to the departure (e.g. their knowledge and understanding of some subject areas). As a confirmation of this whole aspect, some HEIs *still* send their own

Erasmus students abroad equipped with a ToR regarding their home career before departure. This was the common practice in the early ECTS pilot scheme and it is still crucial and time saving when students from different years and from degree-courses with different, although similar, profiles move under the same Bilateral Agreement. It is widely accepted that the main responsibility for granting appropriate preparation lies in the Director of Study/Council of Teachers, having heard the host institution coordinator, together with the concerned flow coordinator at home.

Possible indicators

- Number of institutions sending the home pre-departure ToR to the host HEI (it may often be implicit in the two institutional signatures out on the student's LA).

The returns to the EMQT questionnaire¹ show that a pre-departure ToR is sent to the host institution by 67% of the institutions.

- Number of institutions offering special preparatory activities (discipline specific) to:
 - a) Outgoing students
 - b) Incoming students

The returns to the EMQT questionnaire² show that the percentage number of such institutions is 24% in the case of outgoing students and 29% for the incoming ones.

(ii) Language preparation: there are several options here, depending on the guest institutions, on the subject area and on the study plan of the mobile student. In several cases, the country language is a *must*; an increasing number of countries/HEIs now offer course units or most often entire degree-courses in English; in the case of students carrying out their thesis work, a vehicular language is often quite enough. In all these cases, however, a threshold level of language preparation is necessary and, again, the responsibility for respecting it is shouldered by the sending institutions. Some among them practice a long-term preparation (e.g. in the year preceding the mobility year) and they exclude not-successful students from Erasmus. Some others require internationally accepted certifications of language competence. The experience, however, shows that compromises are often made, based on the fact that all student questionnaires show a huge improvement of the language competence during the stay. Moreover, a short-term practice is often adopted in the case of students lacking the needed level, by asking them to attend the appropriate course units at home, between selection time and scheduled departure time: but short-term and good language preparation are somewhat contradictory. Obviously, the actual context is more favorable to the short-term preparation of incoming students. As a conclusion, and within the context of increasingly demanding numerical targets, the language preparation issue has not yet found general and workable solutions. For the time being a possible way to improve the situation might be the choice of a sufficiently meaningful numerical indicator (e.g. the percentage of outgoing students with level B2, see CEFR), identifying corridors and related actions for a positive development.

¹ See *EMQT Mapping Report*, Section 4, §2.2.4.

² See *ibidem*.

Possible indicator:

the percentage of outgoing students with level B2 linked to an improvement policy action (e.g. fixing and updating corridor values).

This indicator is not easily recorded and difficult to collect. Thus the actual questions put in the EMQT Questionnaire were simpler ones:

- Does the institution offer pre-departure/pre-arrival language course units to:
a) Outgoing students? b) incoming students?

The returns to the EMQT questionnaire³ show that the percentage number of such institutions is 42% in the case of outgoing students and 64% in the case of the incoming ones.

- Does the institution offer language course units for specific purposes (subject related courses: Medicine, Law, Engineering, etc.) for: a) Outgoing students? b) incoming students?

The returns to the EMQT questionnaire⁴ show that the percentage number of such institutions is 54% in the case of outgoing students and 46% in the case of the incoming ones.

3. Academic quality during the stay abroad

This aspect of a mobility experience depends again on at least two main factors, i.e. the nature/mission of the guest institution and the individual commitment of the moving student. These factors are intertwined. They may become apparent in many contexts, e.g. in the following ones, which represent possible key examples (but – as usual – reality is richer!):

- a) Students in a given subject area, going from a given institution to a guest one in another country, come back home having achieved (objective rules in the translation of marks being respected) an average mark, in the assessments taken abroad, which is higher than the one achieved by the same cohort of moving students earlier on when still at home;
- b) Outgoing students from a given institution only privilege a fraction of all mobility partners listed in the official call for the mobility grant, while at the same time a large part of the incoming students towards that same institution come from partners which never receive its outgoing students;

³ See *EMQT Mapping Report*, Section 2, Table 2.

⁴ See *ibidem*

- c) When the students of a given HEI express their own *academic satisfaction* (e.g. through the widespread questionnaire at the end of stay, scale 1 to 5), we may find that the academic satisfaction regarding the guest institutions of a given country or even – in some meaningful cases – a single guest institution, is lower or higher than the average academic satisfaction (i.e. averaged over all outgoing students).
- d) When the Council of teachers/Board of Supervisors of a given degree course at the home HEI agrees upon a joint supervision of the MA thesis to be carried out by its student at some guest HEIs, this implies a genuine recognition of the quality of the research environment at the guest HEI. The process is often triggered by the personal curiosity and entrepreneurship of the mobile student. When the process is on, it moreover implies new interpersonal links among researchers at both sides and often provides potential for new joint research activities.

Of course, the leadership of a given HEI might say “let’s try to send our students to those institutions which we think are the best or at least comparable to us!” The real risk here is that only a limited number of HEIs will result as being partners of that institution. While this situation might be appropriate for an institution which exchanges a limited number of Erasmus students, it may not be workable at all when an HEI has to send out hundreds (even thousands!) of students. More specifically, the statement “let’s limit our partners to the best/comparable ones” has two important counter-arguments: (i) Erasmus is supposed to be a mass phenomenon (European citizenship goal); (ii) The European Commission strongly recommends a reciprocity principle, i.e. a balance – as far as possible – between outgoing and incoming students in a given institution (n.b. reciprocity does not need to be at the “one-to-one HEI” level, but is rather an “overall reciprocity”).

The quality issue regarding the standard of the partner institution was felt in Erasmus since its beginning in the late ‘80s – early ‘90s and was operationally solved in the following manner: each HEI is free to choose the HEIs where to send its own students (do remind, e.g., the subject related “clearing-house” meetings of the ECTS pilot phase). The underlying assumption was that a given HEI (through its representatives in the different degree courses) would only have sent its own students to those HEIs, where the learning/teaching standard was comparable: this very word involved personal knowledge between the HEI representative (usually a professor, i.e. flow coordinator) with the representative at the other institution, reputation of the partner institution as perceived/accepted in the home academic environment, etc.

According to Erasmus – this being a really distinctive feature – the comparability and the mutual trust among partners as well as the quality of the achievable learning outcomes is embedded and codified in the LAs of the students exchanged under the concerned bilateral agreement. Thus the LA and its correct management are at the heart of the academic quality issue in exchange mobility. The LA is the “treasure chest” of the academic quality reserved to and sought for by that particular student. Consistently, the LA’s management involves the main actors of the overall process, i.e. students, academics of both home and guest HEIs and administrators.

Now the question arises: which are the appropriate indicators in order to unveil the above aspects of the Erasmus academic quality? This paper tries to give an answer, but at present such an answer is quite open to discussion. Some possible elements are pinpointed below:

1. Consistency between the number of credits agreed in the LA and the duration of stay (e.g. one semester stay implies at least 30 ECTS credits);

- *possible indicator: average number of credits per LA over average stay duration.*

This indicator could not be extracted from the returns to the EMQT questionnaire. Among other difficulties, the concept of “agreed credits” is at present ill defined.

2. Number of students carrying out a master thesis at the guest institution;

- *possible indicator: itself.*

The EMQT questionnaire put a related question,⁵ i.e. “Does your institution send out students to go abroad to do exclusively research under ERASMUS?”, getting a 66% of positive answers.

3. Distribution of partners into three categories according to the use of the corresponding Bilateral Agreement (BA): (i) BAs used by both outgoing and incoming students, (ii) BAs only used by outgoing students; (iii) BAs only used by incoming students.

- *Possible indicator: to be decided, but perhaps corridors could be fixed and aimed to, as a consequence of an active policy about partners choice, characterisation and validation.*

This indicator was not further discussed in the EMQT documents. From the returns to the EMQT questionnaire, however, the percentages of occurrence of the 3 categories above are found to be 62%, 9% and 10% respectively.⁶

4. Percentage of ToR credits which are recognised at home and which are considered essential to get the qualification;

- *possible indicator: itself; but clarifying discussion still needed.*

The EMQT project approached this issue in the Tools’ Box component “Report on the Recognition Process”.

5. Transparency and registration policy of receiving institution: How many percent of students have to change their learning agreement after arrival at the host institution? (i.e. could not register for the courses listed in the LA)

From the returns to the EMQT questionnaire⁷ it is found that modified LAs amount to 62%.

⁵ See *EMQT Mapping Report*, at the end of Section 4, §2.2.3. See also therein the inspiring box for the open question 4.3.9.1.

⁶ See *EMQT Mapping Report*, Section 4, §2.2.1, description of returns to question 4.1.2. The remaining percentage, i.e. 14%, accounts for “sleeping” BAs.

⁷ See *EMQT Mapping Report*, Section 4, §2.2.3, description of returns to question 4.3.5.

4. Conclusion

As a conclusion to this working paper, we feel that, even if EMQT was able to identify a limited number of key indicators which really hint at the academic quality of the mobility experience, nevertheless this is a first step, which will hopefully contribute to improve the existing practice, to define new protocols and to inspire new improvements.

PART II

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE INTERVIEWS TO ACADEMICS

The suggested Template for the interviews can be seen in the Appendix

1. Report on the answers to questions 1 – 6: Institutional Aspects

The questions related to Institutional Aspects (IA) are six. The feedback by a number of institutions was given as an overall report while some other institutions submitted both an overall report and the specific replies. In the case where the overall report only summarised the individual replies, no tick-numbers have been given to it. In the case where the report represented the replies of a specific number of respondents, this number has been used as a tick.

Although the majority of the six questions related to IA could be considered as “closed” and be replied by a “yes” or “now”, most of the interviewees have taken the occasion to expand to very interesting ideas, positions, proposals etc. The attempt was made to register and codify them.

Question 1: Does the group/Council of Teachers of the degree course where you teach encourage student mobility, explaining its values and planning appropriate mobility schemes?

Sometimes pointing out that a Council of Teachers does not exist in their institution, 91% of the responders said that they do encourage student mobility including as added values credits, personal experience, new skills, diversity, cultural aspects and learning another language. For most of them (65%) this is done at the Degree Course level. A 21% said that this is done at the Faculty or University level. In addition to the above, several concepts were related to the encouragement of student mobility which were mentioned by more than one person. Among them, the first one, listed below and regarding the role of professors in mobility, obtained a significant 39%:

- Mobility depends on how much professors believe on its importance

Padova: Agricultural Biotechnology, Padova: English Germanic & Slavic Philology, Padova: Electrical Engineering, Padova: Pure and Applied Mathematics, Bologna: Business, Bologna: Pharmacy, Graz: Social & Business Studies, Graz: Humanities, Aarhus Report: Geology, Informatics, Business, Granada Report: Arts, Medicine, Business, Translation, Deusto: Telecommunications, Deusto: Industrial Technologies, Deusto: Tourism, Deusto: Engineering, Paris Sud: report, Iași: Orthodox Theology, Thessaloniki: Architecture, Charité Report: Philology, Social Sciences, History.

- The administrative staff is involved in the promotion of mobility

Padova: Agricultural Biotechnology, Aarhus Report: Geology, Informatics, Business, K.U.

Leuven report, K.U. Leuven: Sports & Revalidation, K.U. Leuven: Arts, Leipzig: Economics and Business Administration, Leipzig: African Studies

- The Faculty website is used for the promotion of mobility
Bologna: Pharmacy, K.U. Leuven: report, K.U. Leuven: Arts, K.U. Leuven: Law, Leipzig: Economics and Business Administration, Leipzig: Political Sciences, Leipzig: African Studies
- In addition to the general information, the procedure and criteria for the Erasmus selection are explained to students
Padova: Agricultural Biotechnology, Bologna: Philosophy, Bologna: History (Pol. Sc.), Bologna: Languages (French), Aarhus Report: Geology, Informatics, Business, Deusto: Social and Human Sciences, K.U. Leuven: Engineering-Computer Science, K.U. Leuven: Engineering, K.U. Leuven: Sports & Revalidation, K.U. Leuven: Arts, K.U. Leuven: Law, Iași: Centre for European Studies, Leipzig: Economics and Business Administration
- Mobility is perceived as almost needed and as an integral part of the didactic path
Padova: English Germanic & Slavic Philology, Languages & Literatures, Bologna: History (Pol. Sc.), Deusto: Engineering, Deusto: Philosophy, Deusto: Euroculture, Leipzig: African Studies
- The Degree Course and/or Study Cycle influence mobility
Padova: Pure and Applied Mathematics, Bologna: Engineering, Graz: Translation/ Interpreting, Deusto: Philosophy, Leipzig: African Studies
- Problems with compatibility of courses
Bologna: Engineering, Graz: Translation/Interpreting,

Some interesting ideas have also been identified, only mentioned by one respondent:

- Foreign language might be an obstacle
Padova: English Germanic & Slavic Philology, Languages & Literatures
- The family and social background might influence mobility
Padova: English Germanic & Slavic Philology, Languages & Literatures
- International Degrees could include Erasmus as a fixed part of their normal course programme
Bologna: Engineering
- Last year mobility might be co-financed with faculty funds
Bologna: Pharmacy

- Local students present the existing partner universities and the exchange possibilities
Graz: English Studies
- Create a professors' committee on mobility in each Department
Aarhus: Geology, Informatics, Business
- Institutions should have a holistic approach to outgoing student mobility recognising that the cultural encounter and the intercultural understanding are important aspects as well
Aarhus Report: Geology, Informatics, Business
- Encourage the participation of Erasmus alumni in the info session
Leipzig: Political Sciences

Question 2: Do you look at exchange mobility as a way to enrich the teaching offer for the students of the degree course where you teach?

The majority of the interviewees (91%) replied that they do consider exchange mobility as a way to enrich the teaching offer for the students. Of the additional concepts related to Question 2, the one that was pointed out by a large number (24%) of respondents was the one considering mobility as a tool to understand the differences between various HEI systems and teaching methods:

- Mobility as a tool to understand the difference between various HEI systems and teaching methods
Padova, English Germanic & Slavic Philology, Languages & Literatures, Bologna: Philosophy, Åbo: Business, Aarhus Report: Geology, Informatics, Business, Deusto: Law, Deusto: Philosophy, K.U. Leuven Report, K.U. Leuven: Engineering-Computer Science, K.U. Leuven: Engineering, K.U. Leuven: Law, Iași: Letters, Iași: Economics & Business Administration, Iași: Centre for European Studies, Iași: Orthodox Theology, Thessaloniki: Architecture
- Incoming students add an international perspective to courses
Bologna: History (Pol. Sc.), Deusto: Tourism
- Offer of mobility trajectories abroad semi-defined beforehand
K.U. Leuven: Engineering-Computer Science, K.U. Leuven: Engineering
- Additional added value from the extra-curricular activities
K.U. Leuven Report, K.U. Leuven: Engineering-Computer Science, K.U. Leuven: Engineering, K.U. Leuven: Sports & Revalidation, K.U. Leuven: Arts, K.U. Leuven: Law, Iași: Economics & Business Administration, Iași: Centre for European Studies, Thessaloniki: Architecture

The ideas suggested by one person only were:

- Competences need to be ensured both for incoming and outgoing students

Deusto, Philosophy

- Exchange mobility ensures a transfer of expertise which is necessary to enhance the quality in higher education. It represents an excellent opportunity to compare programmes, accurately locate the teaching offer in the European educational system and labour market, improve bibliography and update teaching methods

Iași: Report

- "... to me the most important gain is changing the atmosphere, dealing with different academic cultures and new people, both professors and students"

Iași: Economics & Business Administration

Question 3: Do you assess the compatibility of the Learning Outcomes of the units taken abroad and of the competences developed therein with the aims of the degree? How do you link this to the recognition issue (role of single academics versus role of Academic Committees) in assessing the compatibility; recognition of Erasmus study single learning units versus groups of learning units with a view to the overall learning outcomes and competences; focus on 1. achieved competences, 2. stated Learning Outcomes, 3. both)?

Because of the existence of a number of answers referring not to the assessment of Learning Outcomes and Competences but to Course Content, the replies to the main question have been divided in two respective columns. Further, since some of the respondents did not reply clearly but gave an indirect answer, those answers have been "translated" according to the general sense of the reply. Yet, the answers of 12 respondents could not be categorised and for this reason have not been number-ticked.

In the total, 67% of the respondents replied that they assess Learning Outcomes and Competences. Further, an 18% pointed out that they are assessing the compatibility of the Course Content, 25% that the compatibility is assessed by single academics and 9% that the compatibility is assessed by an Academic Committee. 19% replied that they recognise the Erasmus study single learning units with a view to the overall LOs and Competences while 18% replied that they recognise Erasmus groups of learning units.

28% replied that they focus on achieved Competences and 31% that they focus on stated Learning Outcomes. Out of the above, 13 institutions (15%) are focussing on both Competences and Learning Outcomes.

Finally, a non-negligible 13% stated that they focus on course content.

The only interesting statement related to Q.3 and suggested by one person was:

- The personal experience and growth is more important than learning outcomes

Graz: Humanities

Question 4: Has students' exchange mobility as occurred so far contributed to improve your degree course planning and maintenance and the overall organisation of studies (including administrative aspects)?

In Question 4, the percentages are below the 50% threshold. Generally, the question was not replied in a very consistent way by many interviewees, in the sense again that many of the answers were not exactly relevant to the question asked. Further, since – in some of the answers – the part related to the administrative aspects was separated from the one related to the rest of the question, the two parts have been registered separately. The percentage of the answers replying positively to the question whether students' mobility improved degree course planning and maintenance as well as overall organisation of studies was 46%. A 41% replied positively to the question whether students' mobility improved administration aspects. The ones that replied in a positive way in both questions are 31 (35%). One other interesting subject that came up in a few replies was on “*whether we should design study courses having in mind only local students or both local and incoming students*”. Six persons supported the first opinion and nine (only) the second.

The interesting statements for Question 4 were:

- Student exchange has contributed to a higher visibility of the Faculty
Padova: Agricultural Biotechnology
- Erasmus has contributed to the attraction of more foreign students
Padova: Agricultural Biotechnology
- Erasmus students tend to continue their studies (through Masters, Doctorates etc.)
Padova: English Germanic & Slavic Philology, Languages & Literatures

Question 5: Brain drain/Brain gain: does mobility promote brain drain of your smartest students? Are the best incoming students encouraged to stay longer at your university?

Here again the answers have been split into three groups, separating *Brain drain* from *Brain gain* and from the *encouragement of the best incoming students to stay longer*.

27% of the respondents replied that there is *Brain drain* in their institution, 19% that there is *Brain gain* and 31% that their institution is *encouraging the best incoming students to stay longer*.

Considering replies in an inverse way and not including two blank ones, this means that 72% of the institutions do not have to worry about *Brain drain* but also that 81% of them do not enjoy any *Brain gain*. As to *encouraging the best incoming students to stay longer*, in 69% of cases, either responding HEIs do not try to or their incoming students are not interested.

Question 6: Which criteria do you refer to in order to establish and maintain the asset of bilateral flows related to “your” degree course? Do you also count asymmetric flows (only incoming flow or outgoing flow)?

The majority of respondents (82%) accept asymmetric flows even if they say that they would prefer them to be balanced or that officially they do not exist. Two replied that they try to maintain symmetric flows and only three replied negatively.

The criteria, not necessarily to establish and maintain the asset of bilateral flows, but mostly in order to start/maintain an agreement are:

- Academic standards
- Assistance and supervision at host university
- Attractiveness of the institution/degree course for students
- Clear system of information
- Combining two languages at the partner university
- Compatibility of degree course
- Competence recognition
- Complementarity of degree course
- Content of the course curriculum
- Country and city of location of university
- Credit recognition
- “*Liveliness*” of a contract
- Personal contacts and already existing cooperation between professors
- Language issues
- Quality of the host institution
- Research cooperation
- Students’ quality

The pearl of INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS is “TRUST”

- Yet, there is no assessment of the Learning Outcomes and no instrument to monitor the compatibility. **It is a question of “trust”**

Padova: English Germanic & Slavic Philology, Languages & Literatures

- The competences offered by K.U.Leuven are comparable to those of the other institutions and recognition is based on the belief that courses are equivalent. **We trust our partner universities.**

K.U. Leuven Report

- We send our students to places where we know the quality is good, **to partners that we trust.**

K.U. Leuven: Arts

- Recognition is based on the belief that the courses are equivalent (‘gelijkwaardigheid’). **We trust the partner universities.**

K.U. Leuven: Law

2. Report on the answers to questions 7 – 10: Exchange Coordinator Aspects – 1

Question 7: Which criteria do you take into account when setting up a new Erasmus agreement/maintaining an Erasmus agreement?

Not very surprisingly, the aspect of course compatibility is mentioned most (29 on 74).

A bit less obvious is the importance given to the “*contact person*” (18 times mentioned). Taken together with the “*sufficient information*” aspect (10 scores) this leads to a total score, for these two “communicative” aspects, which almost equals the aspect of course compatibility. This might be interpreted as the importance of “*trusting*” the other institution.

Interestingly as well, there is a very low score of “*symmetry in/out*”: apparently, flows are determined looking at effective needs rather than bent to formal conventions of “*bilateralism*” (or “*reciprocity*”).

Another interesting point regards the “*reputation*” of the university: a considerable number of 21 academics mentioned *rankings or official reputation* while 5 mentioned the reputation based on hearsay from colleagues. This is a considerable score for rankings and official reputation which might be placed under the same heading of “*trust*” as the communicative aspects (see above).

A last thing which might be worth mentioning is that academics from 4 different universities (on 14 universities in total) referred to the *differences* in courses as interesting aspects which could make them decide to set up agreements (different types of learning or assessment, or different approaches to contents). This may seem to be unconventional, and (at first sight) contrary to the much acclaimed *adagium* of course compatibility, but it may as well be considered the (academic) added value of Erasmus. (see the quoted comment from Leuven to Question 8.) An outcome, in short, which can inspire further reflection. In some comments, *compatibility* and *differences* were even juxtaposed as equally favourable elements. Notably, in 5 out of the 6 quotes, the academic was from the subject area of Science, who, notably, tend to be more rigid on the recognition issue. Quotes:

- *Agreements with some Spanish universities have not been established, for example, because the didactics seemed to be differently organised. Yet, whenever differences are perceived as interesting (as is the case with one partner in Denmark), differences are welcome (Padova – subject area: Science)*
- *The partner should give complementary education to our students (Åbo – subject area: Science)*
- *We look at the courses given and try to find partners that have programmes with courses we cannot offer (Åbo – subject area: Social sciences)*
- *Similar contents or sometimes modules of great interest that we don't have here (Deusto – subject area: Science)*
- *The school to have interesting and different courses from ours (Thessaloniki – subject area: Science)*
- *The expectation that my students will have a creative encounter with other educational cultures (Thessaloniki – subject area: Science)*

Question 8: How do you evaluate the course units of the partner universities in terms of: 1. suitability of the mobility action in relation to the aims of the degree, 2. compatibility for relevant Learning Outcomes or for study load?

Most of the interviewed academics prefer to evaluate the course units of the partner universities in more precise terms of compatibility of learning outcomes and study load (42 out of 74 entries) rather than in a more global sense of suitability to the aims of the degree (17 out of 74 entries).

As for compatibility of learning outcomes, interviewed academics intend the compatibility with the course unit content. As for compatibility of study load, they mostly consider the number of ECTS and study hours.

Degree-course goals, instead, seem not to be considered relevant as learning outcomes when evaluating course units. This might be due to the fact that they are conceived as the “overall umbrella” of the degree programme and, as a consequence, they could not really be a significant evaluation criteria for course units.

Despite this high concern for compatibility, a considerable number of interviewed academics have encountered difficulties in evaluating course equivalences. This is a well known problem, usually tackled with “flexible” solutions which are reported in 13 interviews. A very creative solution, to our view, is represented by Leipzig which set a fixed amount of credits to be achieved in a semester or an academic year with a commonly agreed amount of 10 credits for “rounding up”. Quote:

- *The amount to be achieved for single units never fits. We apply the bigger picture, namely the whole semester and recognize the sum, 30 credits and list the correct courses under this sum. We use modules for key qualification (field relevant) and electives, and reach 100% successful recognition (Leipzig – subject area: Science)*

Other academics prefer to recognise courses chosen abroad within the group of free elective courses.

Some academics encourage diversity and consider this as an added value of the Erasmus programme. Quote:

- *The programme can/should never be exactly the same as in Leuven. It needs to be different because this is part of the added value of Erasmus (Leuven – subject area: Humanities)*

Question 9. What do you think is the role of the exchange coordinator in the didactic counselling for incoming students?

The most frequently given answer can be put under the heading “academic counselling and help with the Learning Agreement” (41 entries), but the “task of explaining the local system” is in almost equal measure (39) a considered task of the exchange coordinator. *The role as mediator* between the students and other professors is in less cases expected to be the coordinator’s task, but in any case for 14 academics it is, as is the case with the *task of giving moral support* (mentioned in 13 interviews).

Interestingly, 4 academics mentioned that the students should be monitored by the exchange coordinator during their stay as well. Apparently, usually this is not the case, not systematically at least. This could be an element to be taken into consideration when thinking of improving the academic performance of Erasmus students.

Another interesting outcome of the answers to question 9 regards the aspect of integrating the incoming students in the teaching programme, i.e. through letting them contribute to language lessons,

or in another manner, which may be considered a good practice. Quote:

The coordinator should intervene at this stage and incoming students should be involved more for them to cooperate with local students: the course unit in Language 1 has a first class group, with an email forum where students discuss problems concerning the English grammar. Professors sometimes insert Erasmus incoming students in the forum, for them to be able to provide their views on the topics discussed. This enables local students to experience how the language is really spoken. Incoming students thus feel to be more useful. In the University of St. Andrews, an Erasmus blog has been opened with the participation of their local students and of Italian students which offers information on Italy, such as pictures and so on, which is important as first approach to Italy (Padova – subject area: Humanities)

Question 10. How important is the feedback from students who have returned from Erasmus for the periodical assessment of the academic quality of the relevant exchange over the years? Do you assess and monitor the quality of your exchanges in any other way?

Many academics say that the feedback from students is important, but not many explain why. Only in 10 interviews this is explained further: 5 say that being informed about the academic quality of the exchange is important, and 5 state that ensuring the effectiveness of the exchange is important.

18 report that their students are obliged to hand in a written report after having finished their exchange period. 13 state that their students are obliged to report in some other way after having returned. If we add the number of cases in which it is said that students report but are not obliged to, we get (eliminating double answers): $18 + 8 + 12 = 38$ cases in which students are said to report in some way about their stay abroad. This number represents only half of the academics interviewed. If we could deduce from this that only in 50% of cases students report at their home university about their stay abroad, this would certainly be a not particularly significant result. But, of course, this is not the right methodology.

An interesting outcome is the number of universities which actively organise info sessions where aspiring Erasmus students can meet ex-Erasmus students. In 7 of the 14 universities this happens.

The University of Leuven seems to have an elaborate system in place for the assessment of student report, and it would be interesting to have a closer look into this aspect to see whether it could be considered a good practice for mobility follow-up.

3. Report on the answers to questions 11– 13: Exchange Coordinator Aspects – 2

Question 11: Do you “promote” the exchanges you are coordinating among students in any way, in order to motivate them to go on Erasmus? If yes, how?

In general most interviewed academics state that they promote the exchanges in multiple ways. Meetings and information sessions are organized on faculty, departmental or degree course level at least once a year, sometimes more often (42 out of 70 entries). In some cases meetings are jointly offered in cooperation with the central International Offices. At some faculties specific meetings are scheduled at different stages during the application process thus targeting different needs and questions of the students (5 entries each).

Many coordinators mention that they promote Erasmus in their classes and courses (21 entries). A

timely promotion at the beginning of the academic year or at the beginning of students' career path is an issue in several replies.

Individual counseling and information upon request is likewise given to students either in office hours, via emails or at different informal occasions (21 entries).

Other popular tools are mailing lists, newsletters and postings along websites and online portals. Market places and printed material such as brochures and posters are also widely used channels of communication.

Former Erasmus returnees are often recruited as a useful and authentic source of information. They are asked to give testimonies either via written reports on faculty intranets or to give account of their Erasmus experience in classes and mandatory course units (13 entries). In contrast the incoming students don't seem to formally engage in a similar role as they are not mentioned as often as mobility promoters (4 entries).

The importance of students' role as Erasmus promoters is underlined in the reply of one coordinator at K.U. Leuven: "...*Students themselves should also promote it more through official fora. Our students don't move enough, they are afraid and don't want to lose the links with the family/friends. [...] Virtual mobility can help, but cannot replace the intercultural experience.*" (K.U.Leuven-5)

Only few academics point at a mobility window as a compulsory element of the degree course (4 entries). Same can be observed for the cooperation with local student organizations as a possible way of promoting exchange (3 entries).

In general Erasmus exchange is estimated as beneficiary and enriching to students' career. One professor indicates how it opens doors to future vertical mobility in Europe: "*Most beneficiaries want to return after graduation to the university/country where they studied as Erasmus students to complete their education at a higher level.*" (UAIC -7)

One interviewee at Deusto University suggests introducing short mobility for students as part of the promotion procedure. This new possibility could serve as a teaser: "...*one pilot mobility project could be to make them go through a programme of one week abroad before applying, this would clarify the chance of full semester / one year ERASMUS mobility.*" (UD-7)

Question 12: Have you ever participated in the Erasmus programme as a visiting professor or within a monitoring/study visit in the framework of Erasmus Teaching Staff Mobility?

- If not, please describe why.

- If yes, please describe if this was a positive experience, why, and your suggestions for eventual approval of this sub-programme.

Nearly half of the interviewed partners (33 out of 70) reported having experienced Erasmus teaching mobility (STA) themselves and 28 deemed it a positive and interesting experience. Almost an equal number did not have this experience (29).

Most academics estimate staff mobility as important and rewarding but difficult to organize (33 indicate problems). One of the most frequent quoted obstacles is time constraints, followed by difficulties due to lack of academic synergies in terms of matching subject areas. Another problem is the overlapping of time schedules at the exchanging universities, as one of the interview partners at Padova University explains: "*It is however difficult to combine the professor's academic commitments in the home HEIs and the activities of the host HEI. Timing does not coincide.*" (UNIPD-1)

Further difficulties were reported in terms of finding replacement for the missed teaching hours and

coping with heavy teaching loads at home. As a solution to this problem some faculties at the K.U. Leuven are experimenting with teaching teams instead of individual professorships and thus hope to facilitate teaching mobility. Also family and personal reasons were stated as reasons for not having been on STA mobility (3 entries).

A possible approach of making STA more substantial is mentioned by an academic at Bologna University: *"We have even put together a "joint seminar" based on Teaching Staff mobility, i.e. Staff Teaching Assignment (STA). One year a professor comes here, another year I go there, etc., it is a regular course unit, and our travel and stay is financed with Teaching Staff mobility. It exists as from the AY 2002/2003 when it started with 2 universities (ours and another one) and now we are 4 universities. According to me the STA should focus on this kind of visiting teaching, more structural, and not for the occasional week abroad. STA is a good thing as well because it is simple and easy to use, from an administrative point of view. It is a good thing that for STA it is not needed to write a project etc...."* (UNIBO-4, Biotechnology)

This opinion is backed by a colleague at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki: *"Staff mobility has to be combined with a closer collaboration of the institutions in the in common development of educational experiences. Not just a short stay visit and lecture falling from the sky."* (AUTH – 8)

As an alternative to STA some of the academics use monitoring or study visits (8 entries) and deem this experience as rewarding in terms of getting to know their academic counterparts, establishing personal contacts, building academic networks, better understanding the partner university's structures and procedures and thus being able to counsel their students more efficiently. Five academics state that they would like to go on Erasmus STA or monitoring visit or that they plan to do so in the future.

Even if Erasmus STA mobility or monitoring visits are not as widely spread, many professors use other opportunities such as faculty agreements, conferences, research projects or other grants to visit partner universities and maintain personal academic ties. (10 entries) Other academic coordinators mention their own experience as (former) Erasmus students as beneficial for counselling students and connecting to their needs (5 entries).

Question 13: Do you think that visits to partner universities, either by going there as a visiting professor, or by meeting colleagues to discuss new or already existing forms of cooperation, may have a positive impact on Erasmus for students? Please motivate.

In general a high number of the interviewed academics underline the importance of staff mobility to foster exchange and judge visits to partner universities to have a positive impact (61 out of 70).

Visits are interesting and should be encouraged. They are seen as a trust building aspect in personal academic relationships, which strengthen and enhance relations and open doors to new cooperation. It is essential to have regular contacts to know the institution better and to discuss possible schemes and solutions. *"Meeting people always makes contacts easier but things are getting more complicated today when sometimes changes occur very rapidly."* (Paris Sud)

Teaching mobility is estimated as a fundamental way of enlarging students' learning experiences, as stated by one professor at Padova University: *"Incoming professors of partner universities are a great support, especially because students are exposed to different teaching methods, and this improves their learning."* (UNIPD-2).

Not only students but also teachers benefit from teaching abroad. STA can be an inspirational learning experience bringing new insights and allowing to experiment with new approaches as reported

by one academic at Åbo Akademi University: “When returning home I am freshly born and inspired with new ideas and new knowledge about recent trends. My students can recognise it.” (AAU-3)

As a recommendation one teacher suggests that STA should now go a step further than being a mere introductory stage by “... more engaging in terms of research and teaching practices. Think tanks in this respect should enrich the whole Erasmus process.” (UD-8)

Personal academic contacts are seen as a driving force for mobility which helps to evaluate the courses of the partner university. They help “[...] to raise the quality of the student mobility” (AUFh – 2) and are most effective when problems need to be solved. “Communication via email is OK, but [it is] good to see the partners face-to-face, especially with new partners.” (K.U.Leuven-9).

Finally a look back⁸ at the beginning of the Erasmus programme reminds that “The old meetings in the framework of networks were very useful for the amelioration of the Erasmus programs, because of the multilateral discussions with the presence of all the participants.” (AUFh – 5)

4. Report on the answers to questions 14 – 17: Recognition

Question 14: What do you think about the Learning Agreement procedure? Do you think it is useful? How do you ensure that it fits the overall aims of the degree course? How could it be improved in your view? Please distinguish between outgoing and incoming students.

This question touches upon a most basic recognition document and the comments of the interviewees emphasise many different aspects related to it. Their comments have been grouped in the following paragraphs:

- 4.1 How academics do perceive the LA procedure (pros and cons);
- 4.2 Steps in the LA procedure for outgoings;
- 4.3 Main aspects in the LA procedure for incomings;
- 4.4 The human factor: the role of actors;
- 4.5 Suggestions and simplifications of procedures

4.1. How academics do perceive the LA procedure

4.1.1. About 56% of interviewed academics explicitly state that the LA procedure is appropriate, by defining it as *useful, correct, fine, very good, very positive, very thorough and detailed, essential, fundamental, important, necessary, mandatory*.

These academics are well aware of the many roles played by LAs: it is a basic contract between the three stakeholders: home, host and student (UD-1); simple and clear tool which meets its roles (UAIC-6); strong instrument of recognition, control and guaranty (FSU-1); it helps to control the home qualifications (UD-5); essential basis for cooperation, individual negotiations and detailed preparation of the exchange (KULeuven-5); useful tool to guide students into a reasonable stay abroad (Charité); orientation to what can be recognised, even if the course units are not identical (KFUG-3).

⁸ See also at the end of the summary report for Q.15

Finally, the LA guarantees recognition and is flexible enough to allow for adjustments along way. The LA is a planning tool: LAs enable both students and academics to define the project more precisely and eventually get ready to make minor or more important changes later on (Paris Sud-report, UL-4, UD-7). It is not a lot of extra work or useless effort (UL-4). It offers orientation to what can be recognised, even if the course units are not identical (KFUG-3). It is also a good orientation for planning ahead of time, i.e. which units should be taken at home and which can be taken abroad (KFUG-3). It encourages the students to read about the new University and to know more about the study systems in other countries, to have a deeper look into the host university's curriculum (UD-2, Charité-report) and initiates a discussion with the student regarding possible recognition. It clears things up for the student foremost (Charité-report).

In one case possible modifications to the LA, which is a hot issue, see below, are explicitly and officially foreseen: *The students make a LA when they apply for selection. We keep that agreement until they arrive and allow for two rounds of corrections before we sign the final one* (KULeuven-4).

Some academics, even if they appreciate the LA procedure, point out nevertheless the following aspects to be taken care of:

- *Contents and course catalogue should be evaluated accurately. If the evaluation is well done, then the LA procedure works well* (UNIPD-1)
- *LA procedure is useful and effective only when universities regularly publish their study guides on their websites (it applies both to outgoing and incoming students as well)* (UAIC – report, UD-report)
- *It is a perfect instrument, as long as the partner universities have a stable (administrative) government. This might be a major obstacle and careful selection of your partners is thus of utmost importance* (KULeuven-6).
- *We still see that some universities accept learning agreements but don't really return them and don't give feedback. We should take the learning agreements more seriously* (KULeuven-report)

In this very context some interesting suggestions/practices are:

- *the LA needs to be flexible according to the timelines of the universities. There is no need to send it 6 months prior when nothing is certain about seminars etc. Yet, it helps to get the people involved with their project abroad rather than going there completely unprepared.* (UL-2)
- *US universities for example want the information one year in advance. This should also apply with the European universities, especially since the deadlines for students to apply are more strict today* (KULeuven-report)
- *The difficulty is in lack of relevant information ... as early as a year ahead of the exchange, when students start planning their study programme. On the other hand degree courses usually have regular cycles which give orientation. It's the responsibility of the students to set up their study programmes. It helps to connect returnees to prospective outgoings* (KFUG-4).
- *we try to simplify it and make it less bureaucratic. The students make a learning agreement when they apply for selection. We keep that agreement until they arrive and allow for two rounds of corrections before we sign the final one* (KULeuven-4)

4.1.2. About 21% of interviewed academics explicitly state their uneasiness / disappointment in front of the present LA procedure, which is perceived as *“far too complicated and rigid”* and thought to entail administrative procedures (e.g. the many changes needed or even the 4 signatures needed), which are extremely time-consuming and counter-productive. *The requirements of the International Offices/the EU are quite difficult to meet (i.e. deadlines etc.), changes are too much paperwork* (Charité-report). *Students should have more flexibility in the ultimate choice of units* (KFUG-1&2).

The trust issue on the level of the bilateral agreement should be sufficient to ensure academic recognition, *as the compatibility of the curricula is a primary criterion while starting the partnership.* (KFUG-1&2). An academic even proposes that the LA should be on a voluntary basis (UL-1)!

Other often quoted difficulties are linked to the lack of adequate course/course units' descriptions (either in English or in another known language) and to the fact that the curricula are constantly being adapted and that there are many changes all over (KFUG-4&7, AUTh-4, UAIC-2). An academic states: *“My impression is that sometimes students feel lost in setting up their LA due to insufficient information and transparency in terms of: a) course offer at host university and b) recognition possibilities* (KFUG-6)”.

Finally, also the signing of the LA is questioned, since it *“appears as an engagement for the recognition of the specific modules appearing in the agreement, which is not the case. The mobility must be under the responsibility of the student and his/her freedom to find the modules that attract the interest. The institutions have to offer information and to open opportunities, not just signing agreements* (AUTh-1)”.

As a conclusion, for these academics the LA's usefulness is limited and a simplification of the procedure should be sought for (FSU-4).

4.2. Steps in the LA procedure for outgoings

There is a lot of awareness among academics on the many – often converging – steps needed to prepare a “good LA”. Their remarks have been grouped according to the following steps: a) filling in the LA; b) the needed signatures; c) LA and students' selection procedure and d) the LA administrative path.

a) Filling in the LA

Filling in the LA document is a laborious, often complex, sometimes difficult, time committing, but rewarding process:

The process is usually carried out by the student, by the home exchange coordinator and by the host coordinator. A variety of approaches does exist, depending on institutions and faculties, usually inspired by a flexibility principle. Main aspects are: a careful preparation (*individual negotiations and detailed preparation of the exchange*, KULeuven-report); *a thorough study by the academic tutors of the programmes from each partner institution*, i.e. the host academic coordinator is also important (UD-6, UD-10). An academic stresses the role of the student: *the LA is a fruit of some student work on it*, i.e. communication with host HEI, motivations, any other useful info about the

host (UNIBO-1). Several respondents emphasise the orientating role played for the students by the process of choosing the units to be taken abroad.

A nice case of academic guidance is quoted at KULeuven: “...*The flexibility of our own home study programmes (i.e. Law subject area) is now so enormous, that it’s almost impossible to combine it with the flexibility needed for the Erasmus programme. Because of the enormous flexibility of our own study programmes (where a student can chose almost anything), we felt the need to structure the Erasmus programmes in a more strict way. Students do need guidance and we can’t make them responsible for endless choices. They appreciate very much the more rigid structure/choices we are offering now. Otherwise we spend endless time on ‘special cases’ and extreme individual follow-up* (KULeuven-4, from the introduction to the interview).”

Needed information is:

- detailed and updated course catalogue, credits, contents of units, access to the unit/activity (i.e. whether open to anyone or closed), course schedules, time tables & exam tables, didactic material (several respondents, “*We face the lack of current information*”, UD-4)
- *Our academic advisor looks at the level, aims, contents and the forms of assessment of the courses before making the final decision* (AAU-2).

About the amount of units and of credits:

- *30 required ECTS is too much for one study abroad semester. There should be more flexibility. The mere fact that students accomplish studies in a new academic environment and in a foreign language should be recognised as an added value. The high pressure on students to come back with 30 ECTS is not always effective. More flexibility would take off pressure and probably even lead to more efficiency in their studies* (KFUG-4, Q.2).
- *It could also be helpful to increase the (present) number of credits and state a mandatory amount of course units* (UNIPD-2).

Contents/syllabi versus learning outcomes

- *the students get the support of the Erasmus coordinator and coach when making the selection (of course units, editor’s note). You try for your students to get as close as possible to the content of the course units they would normally follow in their own university, but if there is a 60-70% match it’s already OK, because all the other aspects also count. Students and professors look at this match with the Erasmus coordinator and even if sometimes there is a conflict or a problem, we should try to be as flexible as possible* (KULeuven-2, Q.3).
- *Recognition is probably easier in areas where syllabi are more standardized and where there is little change. In less standardized programmes there are a lot of changes but at the same time this gives more flexibility in terms of contents. A higher flexibility in the contents of curricula again requires more changes in the LA* (KFUG-7).
- *... it is a bit “too cold” to select courses based on webpage information. We have to be sure that the content corresponds to the title of the course* (UD-11).

Academic flexibility and legal numerical constraints

- *It is not that difficult to identify sectors and areas where to insert exams taken abroad, as set forth by the Italian law. In the Faculty they always try to be flexible since there is never full equivalence (UNIPD-3).*
- *On our website we propose a separate procedure which could be adopted. We use the LA as mere proposal to give the students the proper direction but guarantee only the amount of workload not the content. We fix the recognition issue with the Transcript of Records when the student can describe the assessment abroad and can prove the learning outcome. Due to our flexibility, student will achieve full recognition, if (s)he studies appropriately.*
- *See <http://www.uni-leipzig.de/~politik/site/erasmus/anrechnung.html>, only in German (UL-2).*
- *We ensure LA fits the overall the aims by demanding that a minimum of 2/3 of the selected courses are compatible with our degree course (AUPh-3).*
- *LA creates possibilities for other subject options (FSU-2).*

b) Signatures on the LA

Here again several practices are at work. Usually the flow coordinators discuss the learning agreement with the students and at the end of the negotiation they sign the agreement. At the university of Granada the Vice-Dean for International Relations must validate it.

In other cases, signing is mostly done upon arrival because there are often small changes to be made (KULeuven-5).

A couple of academics comment on the occurrence of difficulties

- *I find it rather cumbersome with the signing procedures back and forth. I think they should have been made easier. e-mail agreements should be more widely used (AUPh-7)*
- *Too much effort for students (4 signatures, often twice (before departure, after arrival) (FSU-2).*

Someone regards additional signatures as a way to grant recognition. Two conflicting views on this issue are (in the same institution!):

- *More people should sign the LA i.e. every course unit should be signed for by the professor who is teaching the subject; presently we provide in this by having the students sign a letter for each course unit by the professor in charge of the unit, which have to be handed in together with the LA itself. It could be interesting as well to design an on-line system for the signing of the course units in the LA (UNIBO-3 and -5)*
- *A good thing that the Degree Course is the one that signs and not every single professor for each chosen course. We should, however, improve the communication between the Board of the Degree Course and the exchange coordinators, and we should resolve the privacy issue for which we cannot consult the individual student careers (UNIBO-4)*

c) LA and students' selection procedure

- *The evaluation of the course units chosen by the student is an important ingredient in the selection procedure (UNIBO-1)*

- *Students that are selected by us are then semi-automatically accepted by the host university (K.U.Leuven-3)*
- *The LA quality depends on the coordinator (K.U.Leuven-1)*

d) Administrative path (approval, etc.)

This aspect is quoted by some respondents:

- *The exact procedure depends on the faculty but all faculties at K.U.Leuven find this LA very important and prepare it in a very detailed way (Individual negotiations & detailed preparation of the exchange) (KULEuven-report).*
- *Outgoings check their LAs with the partner institution, and, if in doubt, with the head of the examination board at home (UL-1).*
- *The exchange coordinator prefers to collect himself the LAs (of his flows), send them all to the approval by the Council of Teachers of the Degree course, and afterwards to the administrative office in charge (UNIPD-4).*

4.3. Main aspects in the LA procedure for incomings

a. Information: some academics insist on the need of good and timely information, made available to the partner institution before the foreseen arrival; the importance of a good website is stated, but also personal contacts among *tutors* are recommended. Academics are also aware of difficulties, which are still there in the flow of information (UNIBO-1, UD-9 and UD-12).

b. Role and Quality of the LA: several comments deal with these important aspects. As to the role of the LA, it is useful because it creates a contact with the coordinator (UNIBO-2) and it is perceived as a basic document to insert the student in the appropriate course units (KFUG-4).

As to the LA quality, several academics find it weak and adjustments are needed. In some cases *it is difficult to understand how the partner institution has worked the LA out and what will be done with the ECTS awarded* (Paris Sud-report). Sometimes the LA is even missing; a respondent states that he helps incoming students to prepare the LA from scratches, if needed (UNIPD-5).

Finally, sometimes the validation procedure (LA signature) is only a bureaucratic act, which in the case of large number of incomings is necessarily *superficial* (Granada-report).

c. Monitoring at arrival and assessment of prerequisites: Appreciation of prerequisites is quoted in some cases. For example: i) *We want to ensure that the students have a solid academic record and that they take course units that are on the right level. We also make sure that the students have the prerequisites for the courses* (AAU-2); ii) *LAs of incomings are compared to course units offered; if no match incomings have to check recognition issues with their home departments* (UL-1).

In one university, people are thinking *“about a double selection procedure and ask some universities to send them their best students not just all students”, in order to avoid a “no pass situation”* (KULEuven-3). *However other academics states that an Erasmus student is “never refused”, since*

recognition is dealt by the home institution. This is different in other exchange programmes, e.g. US PECS (KULeuven- report).

d. Check on the amount of credits: a couple of interesting comments are quoted

- *The recognition is dealt by the home institution. We only check the level, number of credits (30 credits per semester, we don't allow programmes with 10 credits for example), but then we are flexible. If the programme is OK for their home institution, then it's fine with us (KU-Leuven- report).*
- *...But 30 ECTS for one study abroad semester is definitely too high. Especially students from Spain and France are not allowed (from their home universities) to include language courses in their LA for the 30 ECTS and they often have difficulties with the language level (KFUG-4).*

e. Language related problems (incomings)

A limited number of academics quote that incoming students have to deal with language barrier, mainly when they have to attend specialized classes about the local language. Suggestions are also advanced, such as special attention to tutorial activities; offer of linguistic specialised modules (e.g. history, telecommunications); etc. (UAIC-2, UD-2).

4.4. Human factor: the role of different actors

The human factor is recalled in several interviews. These comments have been grouped according to:

- a. The role of mobile students
- b. The role of flow coordinator
- c. The role of Academic Committees

This latter point c. is treated under Q.15

a. The role of mobile students

Several comments focus on the fact that the *LA does put the responsibility in the student's own hands in order to both filling in the LA and checking course units' compatibility* before leaving (UNIBO-2, KFUG-4, AUTh-8). A further good aspect is that *the student is forced to contact the coordinator abroad and this has a didactical more than an academic value* (UNIBO-2).

In other words: *the LA is a very important piece of "contracting" both the development and the involvement of the student. The negotiation process is the most important. I see the procedure as having an instrumental value to center the Erasmus Exchange on the student. It is rather difficult to generalize or detect patterns; it defines a very personal equation to each incoming and outgoing student* (UAIC-5).

b. The role of the flow coordinator

Several academics are aware of the importance of their task in terms of responsibility and quality either alone or in cooperation with other academics. Their tasks are:

- *Go through the programmes in detail and look at the course units and the available information. This work is part of the LA made with the students and is intrinsic to the process guided by the Erasmus coordinator (KULeuven-2, Q.8).*
- *generally speaking, a team of academics are (each of them) responsible for a little number of destinations and have a knowledge about the academic offer of those destinations. They discuss the LA with the students and at the end of the negotiation they sign the agreement. Then, the vice-dean for International Relations must validate it (Granada U–report).*
- *we spend quite a long time helping students to find the relevant courses and although this is a time consuming task, it is unavoidable (Paris Sud-report).*
- *The quality of the LA depends on the coordinator (KULeuven-1).*
- *(this work) should be encouraged, both before and after grantees' arrival at the host institution, especially when online information about courses offered at partner institutions is scarce or has not been updated (UAIC-1).*

c.The role of the Academic Committee, this aspect is discussed under Q. 15.

4.5. Suggestions and Simplification of procedures

a) e-support: several interviewees suggest that some “*full online procedure for the LA*” (details not given) would help the process quite a lot (e.g. UNIPD-1, Granada U.-report). Moreover, doubling of “filling in” procedures by the students (i.e. hand written and electronic LA) should be avoided (UD-3)

b) Others: some academics remind that the LA should always be seen in the context of the whole procedure, which includes the pre-departure student's academic records (to be made visible in the LA itself according to UD-8) and the evaluation of the academic performance of the students at return (UD-1) and which should even include a qualitative system to value the experience of the student, as it could be the level of adaptation to the host center, to new educational system, to a foreign country (UD-6).

Other suggestions are:

- *in order to improve the LA (in future years, editor's note), ask the student's coordinator at the host institution to write and send to the home institution a short evaluation of the student's LA (UAIC -6)*
- *find more time to negotiate with partners (Granada U-report)*
- *The LA timeline is a bit difficult to meet. The student should rather have the time to prepare everything at home but then take it personally to the partner university, check it with the circumstances there and then return it after the programme has been fixed. Sometime it is so difficult to find the right person to sign the thing via e-mail. ... By giving the students proper timing for this document a lot of time could be saved to a lot of people in the administration as well as in the departments (UL-3)*
- *provocative good practice example: no filling out and sending of LAs before arrival at partner institution, it reduces paper work and several efforts of students to get signatures. LA must be flexible and should be simplified (FSU-3).*

4.6. CONCLUSION

The following quote nicely summarises the recognition aspect: *The LA is a tool of control of what the students are following, a commitment done by the student, by the host institution (you know what you are to expect on the Learning outcomes once the mobility experience is over) and it helps to know the departments at Host in which your student is following course units and helps to control the home qualifications (UD-5).*

Question 15: What do you think about the ECTS credits based recognition procedure (role of single academics versus role of Academic Committees; recognition of Erasmus study plan single learning units versus groups of learning units with a view to the overall learning outcomes and competences)?

a. ECTS credits based recognition procedure

Here we find an attitude of the respondents which differs from the previous question about the LA procedure. According to a rough statistics, about 41% of the respondents notices its usefulness, but as many as 35% state the difficulties of ECTS.

Strengths

Several academics make generic but enlightening positive statements, e.g. *The ECTS is one of the first tools which worked perfectly (UD-11), ECTS makes it possible to assess work load, which is crucial given the very different teaching/learning environments in partner institutions (UD-13), ECTS working groups in 2002-2003 streamlined the processes and they are now very well implemented by the faculties (KULeuven-report), In Denmark the ECTS credit system is implemented by law (Aarhus-report, but it is also the case of several other countries).*

Among the specific strengths of ECTS academics quote the fact that *ECTS credits make it possible to work on overall programs rather than one-to-one correspondences (UD-13) and that The ECTS credits relate the work load with the expected learning outcomes and competences (AUn-1&5). Somebody refers this strength to the new Bologna degree-courses: We need to experience the mobility within the new degree where we would need to have validation on competence rather than on content (UD-7). In this very context however some others warn that ECTS needs complementary information: ECTS credits are not the only basis for recognition. They can only be a guideline to how much workload is involved in a course (Charité-report).*

A couple of interviewees stress the role of academic committees: *Credit transfer is always entirely up to the Board of Studies in any department but the way the board of studies handles credit transfer varies from department to department (Aarhus-report)*

Weaknesses

In principle ECTS is a useful system, but realistically and practically it doesn't always work well (KFUG-3).

A quite often quoted weakness is that one ECTS means different workload in different countries, in different universities of the same country and sometimes within the same university. Concrete examples are given. As put by one among these interviewees *at the beginning ECTS seemed to be transparent, logical, comparable, BUT: a different understanding of ECTS occurred in different universities, this is confusing and leads to problems in terms of recognition. Coordinator wishes a harmonisation between the universities and a better detailed listing of work load (FSU-3). And: Even at our own university we have some discrepancies in terms of allocated ECTS, for example ECTS in the curricula for teacher training and the BA/MA English Studies (KFUG-3).*

Another weakness relates to the difficulty of joining credits to (learning outcomes and) competences: this criticism is less frequent but quite relevant in the Bologna perspective. This difficulty is accompanied by still diffuse awareness that ECTS only measures workload and that therefore, as such, *It doesn't play an important role for the quality of education (AUTH-6).*

A third quoted weakness is the lack of transparency in the ECTS conversion of grades (most respondents, as we shall see in Question 17, are not yet aware of the new ECTS users' guide; moreover at one institution – AUTH-7 – procedures are still under assessment). We quote one for all: *Problems usually arise at grading of returning outgoings. The grading systems of some countries offer such wide spans between grades, that equivalence tables do not really help. In tendency, grades in question favor the student (acknowledging his extra efforts and language barriers) but still there are protests when grade equivalencies differ from the student's perception (UL-4, Q.3).* As another example, in Paris Sud they tend to use a single translated grade for all the units taken abroad by a given student.

According to a list provided by the KULeuven-report there are still many problems with ECTS:

- *Some international partners, for example some eastern European partners, still don't recognise the credits and make their students take new exams upon their return. This is absolutely unacceptable because recognition is the basis for Erasmus. We see progress, because it's mainly a problem of beginning partners.*
- *Other problems that we see: a course is worth 3 credits in one country and more or less than that in another. Still very uneven. We try to be flexible.*
- *What we don't accept is: if a course unit is worth X credits for the local students and the same course unit is worthy Y credits for Erasmus students, with $Y \neq X$. The Erasmus students have to be treated in the same way as local students.*
- *In Germany it's just a complete chaos because they don't like ECTS & don't believe in it & don't accept it.*

Finally, other difficulties relate to mismatch in the national/institutional rules used to allocate number of credits to each single unit (e.g. allowed minimum, pooling of "foreign" credits; etc); this might lead to rounding up/down in several different ways. Problems also arise because some institutions use decimal credits.

Flexibility

This key word is often mentioned. At some institutions, it simply means awarding the returned student with some bonus credits (even 10 in some German universities).

In other institutions it relates to the identification of mobility windows in the schedule of the degree-course, within which *the compatibility of learning outcomes and recognition of course units are dealt with quite flexibly and pose no problems. The head of the examination board is in charge of all recognition issues. Modules can be split and combined where it makes sense to do so. The whole semester package amounting to 30 credits will be recognised, the group of learning units therefore! ... The result of recognition is 100% success (UL-1, business and UL-3, geography & geology). Prerequisite (for such a recognition) is the student receiving advice prior to the stay (UL-3). A precise procedure has been set up (see UL-3). Of course interdisciplinary degree-courses, rooted in diversity, can benefit most from this practice.*

An interesting flexibility tool is used at AU: *None of the coordinators would examine a student in a course unit taken abroad or add extra work to compensate for missing credits. They would, however, be willing to proctor (to supervise, to invigilate) a reexamination upon the student's return to Aarhus University (Aarhus-report)*

b. Recognition of Erasmus study plan: single learning units versus groups of learning units with a view to the overall learning outcomes and competences

The comments of the academics on this issue are almost evenly split among the two options. The first option “one-to-one” recognition seems to be preferred by scientific subject areas. On the other end *Most coordinators prefer the recognition of groups of learning units with a view to the overall learning outcomes and competences, instead of single learning units. It offers more flexibility on recognition (UAIC-report). In any case, even in a single university, practices differ according to the Faculty.*

A warning comes from (AUn-2, biology) *Recognition of Erasmus study plan based on a group of learning units with a view to the overall learning outcomes and competences is difficult when compared to the other option.*

The interviewees also list other important aspects and occurring practices of the recognition process:

- *When it comes to recognition, this is also influenced by the quality or reputation of the partner university (UNIBO-1).*
- *There is no appropriate way yet to label course contents of outgoing students returned. Therefore, all recognised course units are listed as “anerkannte Fremdleistung” (accredited external performance) which does not say anything about the unit's content (e.g. on a diploma supplement) (UL-4, African studies).*
- *After a special counseling regarding the recognition procedure within our institute, we set up a specific document that collects all of the proposed study course units abroad and equals them to the possible replacements at the University of Leipzig. This collection will be handed it for signature to the head of the examination Board of the faculty who is a very cooperative colleague. The transcript of records will then be compared to this specific document. And if it fits the proposal, an automatic recognition takes place by the examination board of the faculty (UL-3, geography & geology).*

c. Role of Academic Committee

Here again different practices are in place. Several answers remind that the recognition task via ECTS is usually carried out by single academic coordinators. However, the cross-check of a second person is sometimes felt as useful. Academic Committees are felt to be important on the basis of the following arguments (UD-12, UAIC-6, AUTH-3): i) recognition would be more objective and transparent, though the process could be more complex and less expeditious; ii) translation of workload would be facilitated by using common tables of recognition; iii) the description/use of learning outcomes could be based on better ground; iv) the image of the institution would be reinforced.

d. Suggestions

An interesting idea⁹ deals with reviving in the recognition perspective the ICP networks of the earlier Erasmus practice: *It might be an idea to improve the Erasmus mobility by developing 'all-in packages' with a limited number of fixed partners, with enough complementariness in their offerings. In this way we can provide our (incoming and outgoing) students an optimal international experience abroad and at home, in different educational settings (not only for courses, but also for lab sessions, practical work, and thesis research opportunities). Some faculties in our university have already a long-standing tradition in this respect, and good practices / lessons learnt can be shared with others (KULeuven-6).*

Question 16: How do you cope with minor discrepancies between awarded credits abroad and requested credits in your own course? Do you “round up” or do you arrange for extra work to compensate? Why?

• Answer to the question

What is striking here is the multitude of approaches, which are used, not only depending on the country or on the institution, but within the same institution among different faculties / degree courses.

A first important statement, shared by several answers, is a pragmatic one: **“one ECTS credit gained abroad is one ECTS credit at home”**; i.e. discrepancies or extra work due to different ECTS workloads – according to the country – are not considered.

As regards actual numerical discrepancies, some academics declare that they try to avoid them as much as possible since the beginning, when *a thorough study of the study programmes, credits, workload and objectives to be achieved is done by the academic tutors and academics* (UD-10).

However, modifications of the LA as well as failures at exams abroad may easily generate new discrepancies. Indeed, even if students usually come back with the necessary amount of ECTS (KFUG-3), it may very well occur that a student comes back with less credit than “agreed”. This aspect is rarely mentioned in the answers, but it clearly exists. A possible solution, according to UD-1, is: We do study deeply the cases of failures and we study the number of credits not overcome abroad in order to ask the student to take them at home the next semester.

⁹ See also at the end of the summary report for Q.13

However, *minor discrepancies should not prevent us from promoting student mobility. The intercultural experience of going abroad is equally important. We should not only focus on minor details related to the course content. ... Of course 120 credits are needed for diploma, but it can't be perfectly the same. We try to be very flexible about the rules because we feel it's the philosophy of the programme that counts, not the exact rules/points.* (KULeuven-report). *What counts is new experiences, knowledge which comes from different academic and cultural tradition, collaboration, interdisciplinarity (AUPh-8); At the University of Granada, the focus is on working on competences, that is, not being "obsessed" by number of credits but finding ways to take advantage of the mobility. However, the answers given by academics differ:*

- i) We try to work hard and find other similar subjects to compensate these discrepancies*
- ii) It does not matter to us small differences among credits.*(Granada U-report)

The actual healing of discrepancies can be made by using a) flexibility, b) rounding up/down; c) request for further work; d) bonus home credits.

a) **Flexibility:** possible tools quoted for matching the credits are: i) abroad credits are split into a few home course units (KFUG-3); ii) abroad credits are used for optional units (electives), this might sometimes lead to recognise extra credits, i.e. additional to those required for the home degree; iii) adopting full semester recognition, with a tolerance range (i.e. 28.5 to 31.5 abroad credits go into 30 home credits); iv) abroad credits are in some cases rounded up considering the fact that exams abroad have been taken in a foreign language (bonus recognition); v) by looking at the groups of units/the entire package, within which discrepancies are compensated.

A call for seriousness and coherence is also made: *flexibility at host or home should not ruin the academic level of the student study, since the student then returns to the home studies* (UD-6).

b) **Rounding up/down:** in practice rounding up is often allowed/used, even by faculty boards; nearly 40% of the respondents quote it, while 13% declare "no rounding up", in one institution being imposed by strict regulations (FSU). Only a few answers quote rounding down, in one case being connected to the healing of decimal credits. Rounding up is usually contained within 2-3 credits and sometimes it is considered as bonus credits. Several respondents also state that it is used rarely. Several justifications are quoted for rounding up (learning in a different language, student achieving other generic competences, competence oriented home coordinator, avoiding heavy administrative procedure needed to ask for extra work, use of good sense).

In this context some academics point out the issue of academic level: *If credits are missing they should be found-out somehow. One begins to experience certain perversions if we accept round-up criteria in general, the student has to realize that things have a background, work behind should be valued* (UD-7). *Similarly: The tendency is to "round up" to acknowledge the study abroad but decisions are made on a by-case basis. There is the idea to award extra credits simply for having tackled the studies abroad but there is also the fear to establish some "credit flat rate" not connected to issues of quality by doing so* (UL-4. African studies)

c) **Request for further work:** extra work (complementary studies, extra exams) is mentioned by 31% of the respondents. It is usually required when the above discussed discrepancies are not small

(e.g. the student does not achieve all planned credits) or when there are big differences in the home and host syllabus. The extra activity is usually asked for on student's return, but it is sometimes postponed till the next year. In case of doubt, the home coordinator asks colleagues for advice. One academic state that the extra work may be carried out at the host institution.

We quote one answer here. *We do both (rounding up and extra work). If the discrepancy is really minor, we round up, otherwise we arrange for extra work. BUT, the student is informed about this during the preparation of the LA (ATh-3).*

Some respondents (13%) explicitly state that no extra work is ever required.

d) Bonus home credits. The UL case is reported here: *As many as 10 credits are recognised as "flexible module" for the mere being abroad. This is a key qualification module, but the allocated grade will not be entered for the final calculation of study grade. The other 20 credits are recognised successfully due to the flexible study structure and the fortunate subject. But students still have to propose 30 ECTS in the Learning Agreement. Credits are systematically registered in the total semester amount (UL-1 and UL- 2, respectively business and political sciences)*

Editor's note: Finally a conclusive remark concerns the important role of computers in this area, which is characterised by administrative numerical data to be used in the student's academic records (e.g. credits and grades). Data input, following decisions taken to heal discrepancies, is not touched upon in these interviews: nevertheless the issue is clearly important. For instance, consider the case of recognition and inclusion in the home academic records of the units taken abroad, described as at host institution (same name and credits). Rounding up and impossibility to use decimal digits may make consistency and dialogue among existing data banks difficult.

• Particular cases and suggestions

- *None of the coordinators would examine a student in a course taken abroad or add extra work to compensate for missing credits. They would, however, be willing to proctor (to supervise, to invigilate) a reexamination upon the student's return to Aarhus University (Aarhus-report).*
- *If a student achieves higher number of credits than expected, great, we use the better achieved grades for his/her validation (UD-5).*
- *One of the basic skills as international coordinator should be this flexibility, it is essential. The difficulties on every course unit should be described; this would help the academic tutor in order to understand the effort done to overpass a course unit abroad. The description on the difficulty should be included within the information needed (UD-12).*

Question 17: Does your institution use the ECTS grading for the recognition of the grades obtained in the host institution? If yes, does it use the "two steps" (old ECTS guide) or the "one step" (new ECTS guide) procedure?

According to rough statistics, as many as 69% of respondents state that the ECTS grading is used in their own institution. The expected positive answers should be more. This "understatement" from the academics of the EMQT universities can however be explained by the methodology used in running the interviews (i.e. not all questions should be answered, but only those most relevant for the sensitivity of the respondent person). Surprisingly enough, 8% of respondents declare that the ECTS grading is not used in their own Faculty/Department. A revealing answer is: *None of the 3*

departments represented in the interview would transfer a grade from abroad. All exams taken at a foreign institution will be transferred with a “pass” grade (Aarhus-report).

As to whether the “two steps” (old ECTS guide) or the “one step” (new ECTS guide) procedure is in place, an explicit answer can be extracted from as many as 72% respondents, which can be split over:

✓ we use the “one step” procedure (new ECTS guide)	12%
✓ we use the “two steps” procedure (old ECTS guide)	25%
✓ we do not know	36%

In this respect, it seems that a delaying factor in updating from two-steps to one-step procedure is the satisfactory earlier implementation of institutional procedures, sometimes computer-based and/or following an institutional decision. We quote: *We have developed at institutional level a routine(*) for the automatic ECTS grading, using the two step method, as part of the software for the Diploma Supplement. This routine is also available for the automatic grading of Erasmus students by the Secretariats* (AUTH-report)

(*) See Crocker L. & Algina J. (1986) “Introduction to classical and modern test theory” New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch College Publishers

Another delaying factor seems to be the laboriousness of getting appropriate statistical information and the fact that updating is not done *every year for every course* (KULeuven report). Another factor is the progressive transition to the Bologna degree-courses (e.g. in Spain): only therein is the new ECTS adopted.

Nevertheless, the content of the interviews offers some interesting perspectives.

About “How they do it”:

- After the exchange there is always a personal contact for the conversion of the grades. A way to build up knowledge about the institutions (KULeuven-1,Q.10)
- ECTS grades are recognised (i.e. converted) for each unit taken abroad (KFUG-1,2,4,7) or sometimes as one grade for the year (Paris Sud, Q.15)
- According to the KULeuven-report, pragmatic solutions include development of conversion tables (usually to be applied in a mathematical way, otherwise not objective), which seem to vary across the faculties:
 - Conversion table for each university (not only per country, also per university).
 - Conversion table based on statistical conversion (based on actual knowledge of the system in the other university)
 - Conversion tables per country and adapted not in a purely statistical way, but on the basis of our knowledge of the country. Of course done in the same way for all the students

- To me, recognition is both science and art (I admit these are big words). I take into account the competencies achieved, syllabus of each course, and also the partner for the grade level (generally in Germany and France high grades are more difficult to get than in Italy, Spain or Portugal; there are also differences within the same country – France, Portugal and others (UAIC-report, Q.3)

About Problems

Some problems arise from administrative delays [*some universities still don't use ECTS grades in their ToR!* (KFUG-7); grades are sent late to the home university and degree delivery may be postponed accordingly (Paris Sud report, Q.3)].

Some other problems are connected to the ECTS concept ... :

- Statistical basis for conversion (Faculty/Degree course/single course unit): *it would be more accurate to have a chart based on statistics referring to each course unit, since it is not fair to convert by considering the course unit on the one hand and the whole degree course on the other hand. ... The logic of the new ECTS guide is hence adopted on the basis of statistics of incoming students who have taken the same exams, otherwise the grading scale is distorted. It is not easy if the statistics for the degree course are used as point of reference, because the same unit can be assessed differently in two degree courses. This is a tricky issue which needs to be worked on (UNIPD-4).*
- *Example of problems with the grading scales: the University of Bordeaux does not recognise Italian grades under 24 as sufficient (in Italy grades above 18 are sufficient) because they believe that here in Italy we give too high grades, so the ECTS grading scale in this case did not work. We do not "give away" grades to anyone, neither to Erasmus students (UNIBO-5)*
- Distribution of local grades not Gaussian, but heavily peaked on the highest grades, which occupy levels A, B and C of the ECTS classifying scale (UNIPD-2)
- "Distinction grade (i.e. highest grade plus cum laude)": *The "distinction" is either at discretion of the flow coordinator or it corresponds to 31, hence the grading scale is altered (UNIPD-4).*

... but main difficulties are found in the daily practice:

- *ECTS grading remains difficult. One particular concern at the educational policy level is the harmonization of evaluations, especially the marks our students can get abroad. Even with conversion tables, communicated in advance with the students and teachers involved, there will be always room for interpretation. This causes always problems, for which the university has no overall solutions (KULeuven report)*
- *Grade conversion is an obstacle to academic quality. Erasmus is sometimes a way for students to escape the strict requirements & high standards of the faculty here at K.U. Leuven. They go abroad to obtain higher grades and that makes our professors suspicious. In many universities the Erasmus students are treated in a different (more positive) way than the local students, and are for example only allowed to special international units (Poland), not to the general ones of the local students (KULeuven-3, Q.18)*
- *Problems usually arise at grading of returning outgoings. The grading systems of some countries offer such wide spans between grades, that equivalence tables do not really help. In tendency,*

grades in question favor the student (acknowledging his extra efforts and language barriers) but still there are protests when grade equivalencies differ from the student's perception (UL-4, q.3).

- Besides, ECTS grading causes a lot of frustration when students get worse grades in Leipzig due to equivalence tables that cannot be perfect [the percentage variation between 'steps' in grading system being to high] (UL-4, q.15).
- System seems not reliable, since when grades are converted students get higher marks than what they should have obtained in the home HEI. The theory is correct, but the practice is not entirely good. ... We use the tables, even though we think that they do not depict the real scenario and tend to push to higher marks. We do not have a solution to this (UNIPD-5)
- There is not always an agreement between the Academic Committee and course holders; ... it is also difficult to negotiate with the course holders the acceptance of grades obtained during the mobility period; on a regular basis students attend certain exams upon return (UAIC-7, Q.3).

Suggestions

- Find solutions for the grade conversion. US pass/fail? but that causes other problems. Discussion about the idea of an 'international semester' ongoing. Could be part of a solution because then you could treat all students that same for that semester. Maybe make a distinction between undergraduate exchange (pass/fail) and exchange at master level (more specialised, personal cooperation, academic level,...)(Q.19, KULeuven report)
- Grading according to letters could make things easier but France does not use the full scale (very few grades over 16/20) which is not the case in other countries.(Paris Sud - report, Q.19)

5. Report on the answers to questions 18, 19 and 20: Problems and Future

Methodology

Questions 18, 19 and 20 were closely related between them as can be seen in the answers given. Question 18 asked about problems or obstacles related to the Erasmus programme (in terms of academic quality), while question 19 asked about ways of improvement of the Erasmus programme and question 20 asked for the ingredients needed for student exchanges of high academic quality.

Most answers to the three questions are tightly related and quite often the ways for improvement and the ingredients for exchanges of high academic quality are the solutions to the problems or obstacles detected.

A total of 70 answers have been analysed.

The answers to the questions have been listed and every time a respondent included a certain topic in the answer, that topic has been ticked (in a working Excel file). However, rather than just counting the total number of answers to a particular topic, analysing and commenting them is deemed to be far more useful. The list of topics mentioned can be found in the Excel file, in the pages below what have been perceived as the most relevant and interesting answers are going to be analysed and

commented. For that task, the topics listed have been organised in six groups, corresponding to the six Task Forces of the EMQT project.

Question 18. What are, in your view, the main obstacles or problems related to the Erasmus programme in terms of academic quality?

a. General organisation of the programme/general issues

Most of the problems mentioned belonged to the group of “general organisation of the programme”. One of the two main problems noted were the differences between HEIs as regards degree programmes, quality of teaching, level of teaching, teaching approaches, etc. This problem is mentioned by a total of 31 academics (out of 70). However, these differences are also noted as something beneficial and as one of the ingredients contributing to student exchanges of high quality, as students can benefit from all those things that cannot be found at home.

The other main problem is the need to better know the partners. This is also mentioned in question 20 as one of the ingredients contributing to student exchanges of high quality.

An aspect related to these ones is the need signalled by some respondents (9) to sign more suitable agreements, from similar HEIs with comparable degree programmes.

A considerable number of interviewees (14) also identifies the low amount of the Erasmus grants as one of the aspects preventing quality in mobility. It is interesting to note that some regional governments (such as the Andalusian regional government in Spain) have considerably increased that amount, a fact that (together with some other facts) has meant an increase in the number of outgoing students in those universities where students benefit from this initiative.

Paradoxically, the new concept of education in Europe (the EHEA) is, according to some interviewees, responsible for a decrease in mobility numbers (contrary to the philosophy of the EHEA), as the rigid schedule of curricula make students stay at home as they are afraid of losing time (this answer has been mainly given by respondents from German universities). This is also surprising when the EHEA insists on working by competences (opposite to the “old-fashioned” idea of total equivalence of course units), what links us to another problem mentioned by a few respondents: the difficulties to find similar subjects in the host HEI (obstacle mentioned within the framework of the differences found between HEIs).

Finally, very few respondents mentioned the internal opposition from some teachers to the programme (still!!!) and another one mentioned that barriers should not be imposed to the programme (such as charging money for language courses).

b. Language issues

In this group there were only two topics mentioned (quite often, though). One of them is the fact

that students do not always know the language of the host HEI well enough (mentioned by 25 respondents).

The other obstacle mentioned in this part is that most HEIs do not offer enough courses in English (HEIs from non-English speaking countries). This is somehow surprising as Erasmus should also be an opportunity to improve local languages, not just English!

c. Information and orientation

Two aspects have been mentioned in this part: the need for having more people in charge of coordinating and managing the programme at some HEIs (e.g. Padova, Granada, Charité) and the need for a better selection process. Even though this request has not been very popular in question 18, a better selection process has often been mentioned as one of the ingredients for higher quality (q.20).

d. Students' performance and recognition

There seems to be not too many problems related to students' performance and recognition. Only 4 respondents mentioned differences in the grading system at different HEIs, while only 2 mentioned changes in LAs due to late approval of course units. A few more insisted on the importance of working by competences and of having this as the core for recognition (especially Deusto).

e. Reception of host students

Only two problems were mentioned here, by very few respondents: the need for more control of incoming students (1 person) and some lack of integration (1 person).

f. e-Coaching or ICT mobility tools

Nobody mentioned anything related to e-Coaching or ICT mobility tools as obstacle or problem to quality in mobility.

It is also interesting to note that some academics see no problems or obstacles at all related to the Erasmus programme in terms of academic quality.

Question 19. How do you think the implementation of the Erasmus programme could be improved in general and specifically in our institution?

a. General organisation of the programme

The main ideas for improvement were as follows:

- Financial issues: some respondents demand more money for the sustainability of the programme (2 persons) and a few more (7) demand more money devoted to the grants given to students. This is connected to one of the problems mentioned in Q.18. One respondent (Pa-

dova 1) also mentions that grant payment should not be conditioned to academic success, as it is the case in some HEIs.

- Better structure, managing and advertising of the programme: some institutions think that the programme should be better structured, managed and advertised (15 respondents). In this sense, some of the interviewees (9) also ask for the elimination of unnecessary documents and paperwork.
- Clearer common rules for the programme in general are demanded in some cases (7)
- Some HEIs suggest the development of multilateral agreements or networks for a smoother relationship between the partners,¹⁰ as it was the case at the beginning of the Erasmus programme, when it was based in previous knowledge and experiences shared. This is suggested by 3 respondents.
- More exchanges between teachers are demanded by 9 interviewees, in order better to know partners. It is surprising that, according to the answers, teaching staff mobility is not promoted in some HEIs but the contrary.
- Finally, using the Erasmus programme as a “brain gain” for second cycle degree programmes was suggested by two respondents from Graz.

b. Language issues

Three main aspects were signalled as necessary improvements as far as language issues are concerned: the need to harden language requirements (this is a recurrent issue that will be brought up again as one of the ingredients for a better quality), the possibility of training teachers to teach in English (related to the demand of offering English classes at non-English speaking institutions) and, finally, some respondents (3) suggest that all information related to the Erasmus programme (at host HEIs) should be in English.

c. Information and orientation

More and better information is demanded for teachers and students, as well as better internal communication in some HEIs. In other cases, it is suggested that incoming students should do better use of information provided.

It is also suggested that teachers need to know the programme better.

Finally, and related to the problems signalled in question 18, a better selection process is suggested.

d. Students’ performance and recognition

Some ideas for improvement regarding students’ performance and recognition are as follows:

- There should be no limitation (=flexibility) in the time spent abroad. Some academics suggest including a compulsory year abroad whereas others suggest reducing the length of the stay to one semester or even less (even 3 or 2 months).
- Guidelines as to how to deal with late withdrawals.
- Establishing clear plans of studies to be carried out during the stay abroad.

¹⁰ See also footnotes 8 and 9.

e. Reception of host students

Some ideas for improvement regarding reception of host students are:

- Establishing a buddy programme.
- Organising a welcome week for incoming students.
- Link returnees to prospective outgoings.
- Organising an international week.

f. e-Coaching or ICT mobility tools

No ideas for improvement were suggested regarding e-Coaching or ICT mobility tools.

6. Report on the answers to question 20: Conclusion (compulsory question)

Question.20. Which are, according to you, the main ingredients contributing to a student exchange mobility of high academic quality?

Most of the ideas suggested as ingredients contributing to a student exchange mobility of high academic quality have already been suggested as ways for improvement of the programme. Therefore, the ideas are listed below, without further comments except for some cases.

a. General organisation of the programme

- Better resources
- Agreements between similar HEIs
- Better structure & managing of the programme
- Take advantage of the differences between universities

b. Language issues

- More offer of English course units
- Good command of the language for both students and teachers
- More administrative documents in English

c. Information and orientation

- Better communication and knowledge among partners
- Better selection system
- Raise awareness among teachers

- Good exchange of information & updating
- Awareness campaigns

d. Students' performance and recognition

- Better relationship between teachers and students
- Adequate and accurate LAs – good supervision
- Motivate students (this aspect has been signalled in many occasions: 13 cases)
- Improve the recognition process (generally, allowing for more flexibility)
- Performance based processes (quality)
- Improve quality in general (more time devoted to students, intercultural integration, etc.): 16 answers
- Development of a coordinator "job"

e. Reception of host students

- More support for incoming students

f. e-Coaching or ICT mobility tools

Virtual mobility was mentioned on one occasion as a complement to real mobility but not as a system for replacing the experience (Leuven 2).

Others:

- Development of international degrees
- Raising awareness among students and everyone involved in mobility that it is unique life/personal experience and it should be taken advantage of.

Some ideas that could be discussed:

- Involve companies to finance the programme. More and more companies are seeking graduates who have benefited from the Erasmus experience, therefore, companies should share the economic burden of mobility (Leuven 2).
- More involvement from counselling services in the preparation of the stay abroad.
- Development of databases with previous experiences on the same host HEI (Deusto 10).
- Development of a system of pass/fail for mobility, to avoid the problem of grades conversion.
- Still some academics see the Erasmus experience as a way to escape rigid requirements at the home university.

List of interviewed academics

Università degli Studi di Padova – UNIPD

1. **Mario Malagoli**, Agricultural Biotechnology; 2. **Alessandra Petrina**, English Germanic and Slavic Philology, Languages and Literatures; 3. **Matteo Santipolo**, Educational Sciences; 4. **Silverio Bolognani**, Electrical Engineering; 5. **Gilberto Filé**, Pure and Applied Mathematics.

Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna – UNIBO

1. **Chiara Orsingher**, Business and Economics; **Mariafranca Spallanzani**, History of Philosophy; 3. **Fabio Fava**, Industrial & Environmental Biotechnology; 4. **Stefano Cavazza**, History (Political Sciences); 5. **Anna Maria Mandich**, French Language and Literature; 6. **Patrizia Brigidi**, Pharmacy.

Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz – KFUG

1. **Edina Dragaschnig**, Translation/Interpreting; 2. **Ursula Stachl-Peier**, Translation/Interpreting; 3. **Martina Elicker**, English Studies; 4. **Christian Hirt**, Social & Business Studies; 5. **Ulrich Foelsche**, Physics; 6. **Heidelinde Luef-Kölbl**, Criminal Law; 7. **Helmut Eberhart**, Folklore & Cultural Anthropology.

Åbo Akademi University – AAU

1. **Ari Ivaska**, Chemistry; 2. **Tuija-Liisa Pohja**, Business and Economics; 3. **Ulrika Wolf-Knuts**, Folkloristics.

Aarhus Universitet – AU

1. **Niels Tvis Knudsen**, Geology; 2. **Per Jauert**, Information and Media Science; 3. **Niels Jørgen Relsted**, Economics and Management.

Universidad de Granada – UGR

1. **Encarnación Hidalgo Tenorio**, Arts; 2. **María Dolores Carretero Alférez**, Medicine; 3. **Francisco Montoro Ríos**, Business; 4. **Elvira Cámara Aguilera**, Translation and Interpretation.

Universidad de Deusto – UD

1. **Rebeca Cortázar Goikoetxea**, Engineering; 2. **Nekane Sáinz Bedoya**, Telecommunications; 3. **Ana Macarulla**, Industrial Technologies; 4. **Beatriz Salaverri**, Law; 5. **Mikel Larreina and Ricardo Aguado**, Business; 6. **Natalia Ojeda Del Pozo**, Psychology; 7. **Javier Martínez Contreras**, Philosophy; 8. **Asier Altuna**, Euroculture (Erasmus Mundus Master Course); 9. **Cristina Ortega**, Human & Social Sciences; 10. **Elena Lamarain**, Tourism (Business); 11. **Anselmo del Moral Bueno**, Software Engineering; 12. **María Jesús Pando**, Humanities; 13. **Jon Ortiz de Urbina**, Philology.

Katholieke Universiteit Leuven – K.U.Leuven

1. Yolanda Berbers and Anouck Brouwers, Engineering; **2. Martinus Buekers**, Sports & Revalidation; **3. Roger Janssens**, Arts; **4. Paul Schoukens and Veerle Timmermans** (coordinator), Law; **5. Elke Timmermans** (International Admissions); **6. Ludo Melis**, Vice-Rector for Educational Policy, and **Bart De Moor**, Vice-Rector for Internationalization.

Université Paris Sud 11 – UPS

1. Laurent Simard, Physics; **2. Arnaud Bournel**, Electronics; **3. Philippe Berdagué**, Chemistry; **4. Catherine Dreux**, Biology; **5. Dr Hermann Zeyen**, Earth Sciences; **6. Sylvie Ruette**, Mathematics; **7. Claudie Mory**, Applied Physics; **8. Chantal Escudié**, Engineering; **9. Agnès Vannereau**, Pharmacy.

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University Iași – UAIC

1. Dana BADULESCU, Letters; **2. Neculai BOLOHAN**, History; **3. Gheorghe-Ilie FARTE**, Philosophy and Social-Political Sciences; **4. Marin FOTACHE**, Economics and Business Administration. **5. Ovidiu GAVRILOVICI**, Psychology and Educational Sciences; **6. Gabriela Carmen PASCARIU**, European Studies; **7. Dan SANDU**, Orthodox Theology.

Universität Leipzig – UL

1. Erasmus departmental coordinator, Business; **2. Erasmus departmental coordinator**, Political Science; **3. Erasmus departmental coordinator**, Geography and Geology; **4. Erasmus departmental coordinator**, African Studies.

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki – AUTH

1. Constantin Spiridonidis, Architecture; **2. Maria Lazaridou**, Biology; **3. Aris Avdelas**, Civil Engineering; **4. Athina Sioupi**, German Language and Philology; **5. Amalia Miliou**, Informatics; **6. Nikolaos Intzesiloglou**, Law; **7. Ioannis Papageorgiou**, Political Sciences; **8. Nikos Maghioros**, Theology.

Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena – FSU

1. Mark Hoffmann, Economics and Business; **2. Markus Lang**, Political Science; **3. Dorothea Spaniel-Weise**, German as a Foreign Language; **4. David Strecker**, Sociology.

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Medizinische Fakultät Charité – Charité

1. Stephanie Trigoudis, Philology; **2. Karin Lohr**, Social Sciences; **3. Gabriele Metzler**, History.

APPENDIX I – Interview Template

INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS

1. Does the group/Council of Teachers of the degree course where you teach encourage student mobility, explaining its values and planning appropriate mobility schemes?
2. Do you look at exchange mobility as a way to enrich the teaching offer for the students of the degree course where you teach?
3. Do you assess the compatibility of the Learning Outcomes of the units taken abroad and of the competences developed therein with the aims of the degree? How do you link this to the recognition issue (role of single academics versus role of Academic Committees in assessing the compatibility; recognition of Erasmus study single learning units versus groups of learning units with a view to the overall learning outcomes and competences; focus on 1. achieved competences, 2. stated Learning Outcomes, 3. both)?
4. Has students' exchange mobility as occurred so far contributed to improve your degree course planning and maintenance and the overall organisation of studies (including administrative aspects)?
5. Brain drain/Brain gain: does mobility promote brain drain of your smartest students? Are the best incoming students encouraged to stay longer at your university?
6. Which criteria do you refer to in order to establish and maintain the asset of bilateral flows related to "your" degree course? Do you also count asymmetric flows (only incoming flow or outgoing flow)?

EXCHANGE COORDINATOR ASPECTS

7. Which criteria do you take into account when setting up a new Erasmus agreement/maintaining an Erasmus agreement?
8. How do you evaluate the course units of the partner universities in terms of: 1. suitability of the mobility action in relation to the aims of the degree, 2. compatibility for relevant Learning Outcomes or for study load?
9. What do you think is the role of the exchange coordinator in the didactic counselling for incoming students?
10. How important is the feedback from students who have returned from Erasmus for the periodical assessment of the academic quality of the relevant exchange over the years? Do you assess and monitor the quality of your exchanges in any other way?
11. Do you "promote" the exchanges you are coordinating among students in any way, in order to motivate them to go on Erasmus? If yes, how?
12. Have you ever participated in the Erasmus programme as a visiting professor or within a monitoring/study visit in the framework of Erasmus Teaching Staff Mobility?
 - If not, please describe why.
 - If yes, please describe if this was a positive experience, why, and your suggestions for eventual improvement of this sub-programme.

13. Do you think that visits to partner universities, either by going there as a visiting professor, or by meeting colleagues to discuss new or already existing forms of cooperation, may have a positive impact on Erasmus for students? *Please motivate.*

RECOGNITION

14. What do you think about the Learning Agreement procedure? Do you think it is useful? How do you ensure that it fits the overall aims of the degree course? How could it be improved in your view? Please distinguish between outgoing and incoming students.
15. What do you think about the ECTS credits based recognition procedure (role of single academics versus role of Academic Committees; recognition of Erasmus study plan single learning units versus groups of learning units with a view to the overall learning outcomes and competences).
16. How do you cope with minor discrepancies between awarded credits abroad and requested credits in your own course? Do you “round up” or do you arrange for extra work to compensate? Why?
17. Does your institution use the ECTS grading for the recognition of the grades obtained in the host institution? If yes, does it use the “two steps” (old ECTS guide) or the “one step” (new ECTS guide) procedure?

PROBLEMS AND FUTURE

18. What are, in your view, the main obstacles or problems related to the Erasmus programme in terms of academic quality?
19. How do you think the implementation of the Erasmus programme could be improved in general and specifically in our institution?

CONCLUSION (COMPULSORY!)

20. Which are, according to you, the main ingredients contributing to a student exchange mobility of high academic quality?