BAUHAUS4EU
European University Alliance

REPORT - EXISTING METHODOLOGIES AND ELEMENTS TO CREATE JOINT EDUCATIONAL OFFERS

Version 1.0

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Work Package 3: Conceptual framework for BAUHAUS4EU education & training formats
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ALLIANCE AND CONSORTIUM

BAUHAUS4EU – A European University for Resilient, Sustainable, Inclusive and Beautiful Regions

The BAUHAUS4EU Alliance brings together 10 member universities and 67 associated partners from across Europe, forming a shared European campus and a vibrant learning community of 124,000 students and 10,000 staff. Guided by a common strategy, the partner universities are committed to deepening their transnational cooperation through joint educational offers and to fostering a European identity rooted in the principle of unity in diversity.

Firmly anchored in the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the European Green Deal, and the New European Bauhaus initiative, the Alliance works hand in hand with regional ecosystems to bridge diverse territories, combine strengths, and transform challenges into opportunities for growth.

By enhancing employability, promoting lifelong learning, and empowering students and staff to tackle the defining issues of our time, BAUHAUS4EU is pioneering a new model of European higher education — one that strengthens regional ecosystems, sparks innovation, and builds a sustainable future for all.

Table 1 Full Partner Universities in the BAUHAUS4EU Consortium

BUW	BAUHAUS-UNIVERSITAET WEIMAR	DE
BTH	BLEKINGE TEKNISKA HOGSKOLA	SE
UNIBG	UNIVERSITA' DEGLI STUDI DI BERGAMO	IT
UACEG	UNIVERSITET PO ARCHITEKTURA STROITELSTVO I GEODEZIJA (UASG)	BG
UEKAT	UNIWERSYTET EKONOMICZNY W KATOWICACH	PL
IPCB	INSTITUTO POLITECNICO DE CASTELO BRANCO	PT
UPJV	UNIVERSITE DE PICARDIE JULES VERNE	FR
ULL2	UNIVERSITE LUMIERE LYON 2 (LYON2)	FR
POLIS	UNIVERSITETI POLIS SHPK	AL
UOM	UNIVERSITY OF MACEDONIA	EL

Document Overview

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Abbreviations

EA	European Approach
EC	European Commission
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ESG	European Standard Guidelines
MC	Micro-Credentials
MS	Milestone
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
QA	Quality Assurance
WP(s)	Work Package(s)

Executive Summary

This report, prepared under Work Package 3 (WP3): Conceptual Framework for BAUHAUS4EU Education and Training Formats, Task 3.1, represents a key milestone (MS6) toward the creation of a common framework for joint and flexible European curricula within the BAUHAUS4EU Alliance. It consolidates the findings of a comprehensive mapping exercise conducted across the ten partner universities of the alliance, aimed at identifying institutional, regulatory, and academic compatibilities essential for developing joint degrees and training offers at the Bachelor, Master, PhD, and micro-credential levels.

Anchored in the principles of the New European Bauhaus, the European Green Deal, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, BAUHAUS4EU seeks to foster a shared European higher education space grounded in resilience, sustainability, inclusiveness, and aesthetic value. The alliance envisions an integrated European campus that bridges regional ecosystems, supports lifelong learning, enhances employability, and accelerates the transition to sustainable and equitable development through education, research, and innovation.

The methodological approach combined quantitative and qualitative data collection through two structured questionnaires. The first mapped the organisational, legal, and academic frameworks of partner institutions; the second explored regulatory and practical mechanisms surrounding micro-credentials. Responses were analysed through institutional matrices using a number-coded system to quantify the level of compatibility among each institution with the other 9 alliance partners (range 0-3) and visualized as network clusters, revealing areas of high compatibility and points requiring harmonization.

Findings show a medium-to-high level of compatibility across the consortium. Academic calendars, ECTS structures, and quality assurance frameworks are largely aligned, enabling the development of joint programmes with manageable adjustments. The strongest convergence was found at Master's level, where two-year, 120-ECTS programmes and common thesis requirements provide a solid foundation for integration. At Bachelor's and PhD levels, feasibility is high though constrained by differing national accreditation procedures and legal frameworks for diploma issuance. Micro-credentials present a flexible, scalable opportunity for collaboration, though regulatory definitions and quality mechanisms remain heterogeneous and yet under-developed.

The report concludes that the BAUHAUS4EU partners share a solid operational and philosophical basis for advancing joint academic offers. Success will depend on targeted alignment of regulatory procedures, harmonized quality assurance, and structured capacity-building among institutions. The report provides a list of actionable recommendations to overcome the identified challenges.

By combining complementary strengths and leveraging shared European values, BAUHAUS4EU positions itself as a pioneering model for transnational higher education collaboration and a catalyst for regional transformation.

1 Introduction

This chapter aims to ease the intake of the information provided in the subsequent chapters by providing background information on the goals of the alliance and a glossary of the terms used in the analysis of the existing methodologies and elements of joint academic offers. A common understanding of the concepts and consistent use of the terminology across the different national contexts is imperative, therefore reference is made to common European sources. Finally, the chapter outlines the purpose and scope of the report.

1.1. Background Information on BAUHAUS4EU

BAUHAUS4EU is a strategic alliance that aims to create new formats of teaching, increase fully fledged cooperation and establish a truly European University Alliance between regions that promotes resilience, sustainability, inclusion, and aesthetic excellence across regions.

The goals of the alliance are:

1. Establishment of a comprehensive European University Alliance with joint, innovative education programmes and enhanced student/staff mobility.
2. Development of a future-proof European University Alliance fostering regional resilience and sustainability transitions.
3. Fostering inclusion, social justice, and democratic values, thus making the Alliance a true European citizens institution.
4. Building an internationally attractive and structurally sustainable Alliance securing long-term collaboration.

The BAUHAUS4EU alliance builds on the New European Bauhaus (NEB) initiative, embracing its core values of sustainability, aesthetics and cooperation. Through a shared strategy, the partner universities deepen transnational inclusion, digitalization and collaborative academic culture. The Alliance positions itself as a driving force for systematic transformation in higher education and territorial development. This encompasses adaptive and socially meaningful curricula, creative pedagogy, and widespread co-operation with regional partners and researchers from all disciplines characterized by an entrepreneurial mindset.

BAUHAUS4EU is committed to deep transnational collaboration by creating a joint European campus, by offering joint innovative educational programmes that integrate research and teaching, and by facilitating seamless mobilities for students and staff on all levels. BAUHAUS4EU will therefore deliver research-based joint Bachelor, Master, and PhD programmes directly reflecting and contributing to the Regional Innovation Smart Specialization Strategies (RIS3) of the alliance's regions.

As depicted in **Figure 1**, the geographical coverage is extensive and underlines the Alliance's commitment to bring together diverse territories and pooling regional competencies for mutual innovation.

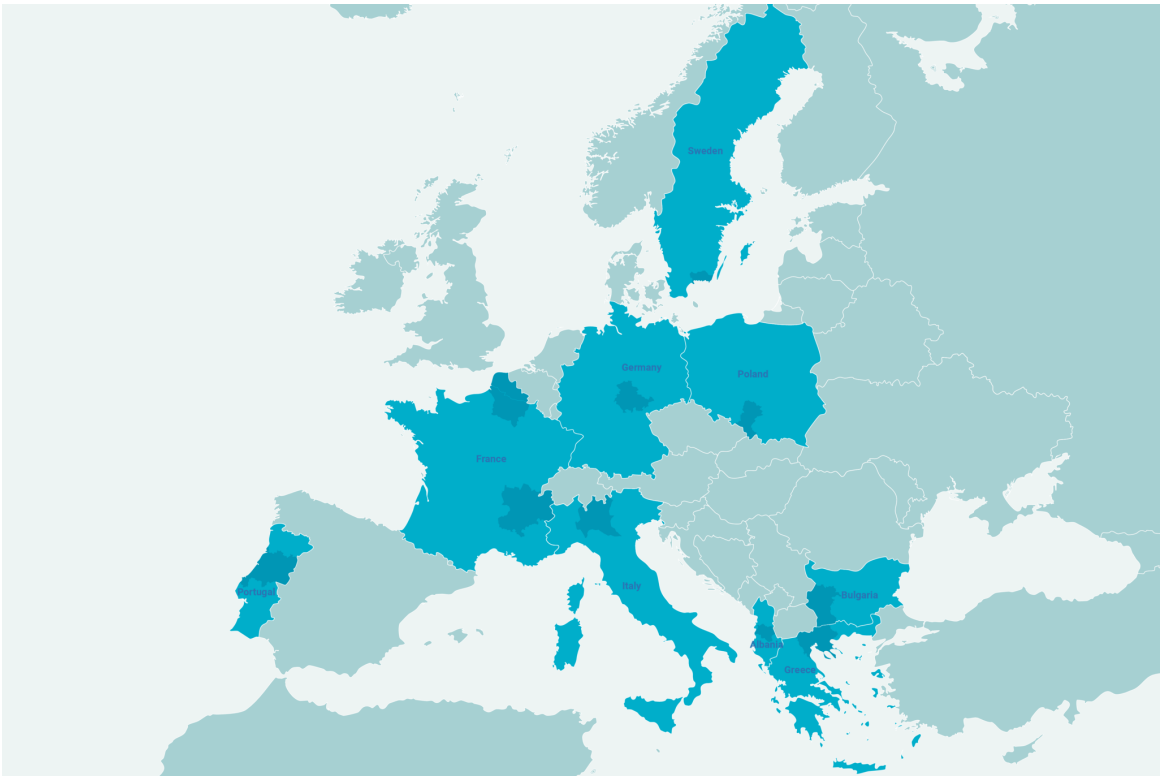


Figure 1 Geographical distribution of the BAUHAUS4EU Alliance

The **BAUHAUS4EU learning programmes** are centred around several key focus areas that reflect the Alliance's vision of supporting the sustainable and inclusive development of its regions through innovative education.

a. Climate & Environment
- Climate-neutral development
- Climate-resilient development
- Sustainable energy and resource use
- Material, building and technology innovation

b. Built and Cultural Heritage
- Built heritage as a cultural and material resource from the past for the future
- Cultural heritage as a community resource supporting a sense of belonging

c. Territorial development and Infrastructure
- Sustainable use of territorial resources and regional value chains
- Sustainable business-models and circular economy
- Sustainable & inclusive infrastructure development

d. Social and demographic development
- Demographic transition, migration, segregation
- Counteracting anti-democratic tendencies and erosion of public debate due to misinformation
- Fostering European values and citizenship

As an answer to the critical questions of our era, BAUHAUS4EU is a driving force that not only responds to pressing social, environmental, and technological challenges but also actively adapts to future needs as well. By fostering resilience, innovation, and inclusion, the partnership aims to equip learners, researchers, and local partners with knowledge, skills, and collaborative capacities to co-develop sustainable solutions in collaboration with regional and European stakeholders. This future focus ensures that BAUHAUS4EU produces a contributory input to the European higher education area while strengthening the social impact and global competitiveness of its regions.

Achieving this goal will rely on the development of a framework for flexible and joint European BAUHAUS4EU curricula and training offers. The alliance's readiness to provide such joint offers requires a solid grasp of the academic and regulatory frameworks under which the 10 universities operate, as well as an assessment of their compatibility. A primary step in this assessment is ensuring that there is a common understanding of the main concepts, therefore a glossary of terms is provided in section 1.2 below.

1.2. Glossary of terms

There are many definitions of joint degree programmes at different levels: national, European and international, e.g. within UNESCO. The following paragraphs outline the most relevant terms and distinctions.

Joint study programmes have several aspects:

- include integrated studies offered by two or more universities under a joint accepted curriculum, typically approved by national or state accreditation bodies.
- They may result either in single joint degrees or in separate national degrees, each of which makes it clear that the programme is a joint training programme conducted in more than one university in one or more countries.
- Level of training: bachelor's, master's or doctoral.
- They may also include short-term training periods at one, two or more universities leading to micro-credentials or certificates for upskilling and lifelong learning.

The latter is particularly relevant in view of the dynamic development of the labour market and the need for retraining and upskilling existing staff using a lifelong learning approach.

Joint study programmes are closely related to the development of the Bologna Process, which established a single framework for higher education. They involve:

- Establishing common criteria for the development of higher education at three levels: Bachelor, Master and Doctorate.
- Effective implementation of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).
- The establishment of a common system for accreditation of higher education.

Within the European Union, the Erasmus+ programme imposes effective definitions for joint programmes, joint diplomas and joint training. When countries outside the European Union are included, we can rely on the definitions used by the Erasmus Mundus programme. UNESCO also provides its

own definitions for the effective development of joint training throughout the world.

The accumulated experience of existing European university alliances complements traditional joint training and degree programmes, as documented through conferences, educational platforms, and academic associations, while also fostering new forms of academic cooperation. Shorter training courses are emerging as the most effective, easy-to-organise and accessible formats. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the dual form of training (face-to-face and distance learning) remained essential.

The European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes defines a "Joint Programme" as "an integrated study programme coordinated and offered jointly by different higher education institutions from countries within the European Higher Education Area and leading to a double/multiple degree or a joint degree"[1].).

This is the most formal definition of a joint programme, although it is clear that such a programme can also be offered by institutions from different countries, regardless of whether (some of) these institutions are located within or outside the European Higher Education Area.

The "jointness" of a programme refers to the extent to which the programme has been developed collaboratively by all participating partners, the level of integration of the programme between the partner institutions, including the design of curriculum, quality assurance, marketing, selection and admission processes, management, examination rules and funding of the programme.

In the context of international academic cooperation, the use of consistent and clearly defined terminology is essential to facilitate mutual understanding, ensure transparency, and support effective implementation of joint initiatives. The following definitions provide a foundational reference for key concepts relevant to joint and multiple degree programmes, qualification recognition, and credit transfer systems. Establishing a common understanding of these terms is critical for building a shared framework among participating institutions, enabling coherent policy development, programme design, and institutional collaboration across national and institutional contexts.

Double degree/multiple degree[2]
(At least) two separate degree certificates awarded to a student upon successful completion of a joint programme. A double degree is a specific type of multiple degree. Each degree must be signed by the competent authority of the institution concerned, and recognised officially in the countries where the different awarding institutions are located.

Joint degree[2]
Single degree certificate awarded to a student upon successful completion of a joint programme. The joint degree must be signed by the competent authorities of two or more of the participating institutions jointly and recognised officially in the countries where those participating institutions are located.

[1] European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education. (n.d.). *Definitions – Joint programmes*. Retrieved October 21, 2025, from https://www.eqar.eu/kb/joint-programmes/definitions/
[2] European Commission. (n.d.). *Glossary of terms – Higher Education*. In Erasmus+ Programme Guide. Retrieved October 28, 2025, from https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-d/glossary-higher-education

Diploma Supplement[2]
An annex to the official qualification documentation, which is designed to provide more detailed information on the studies completed according to an agreed format, which is internationally recognized; a document accompanying a higher education diploma, providing a standardised description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies completed by its holder. It is produced by higher education institutions according to standards agreed by the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO. In the context of an international joint study programme, it is recommended to deliver a diploma supplement, covering the entire programme and endorsed by all the degree awarding universities.

Higher education institution[2]
A higher education institution is an institution which, in accordance with national law or practice, offers recognised degrees or other recognised tertiary level qualifications, regardless of what such an establishment is called, or a comparable institution at tertiary level which is considered by the national authorities as eligible to participate in the programme in their respective territories.

Joint programmes[2]
Higher education (study or research) programmes jointly designed, delivered and fully recognised by two or more higher education institutions. Joint programmes can be implemented at any higher education cycle, i.e. Bachelor, Master or Doctorate or even short cycle. Joint programmes can be national (i.e. when all universities involved are from the same country) or transnational/international (i.e. when at least two different countries are represented among the higher education institutions involved).

ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System)[2]
A learner-centred system for credit accumulation and transfer, based on the transparency of learning, teaching and assessment processes. Its objective is to facilitate planning, delivery and evaluation of study programmes and learner mobility through the recognition of qualifications and periods of learning. A system that helps to design, describe and deliver study programmes and award higher education qualifications. The use of ECTS, in conjunction with outcome-based qualification frameworks, increases the transparency of study programmes and qualifications, making it easier to compare and recognise them across institutions and countries.

European Qualifications Framework (EQF)[3]
A common reference framework of eight levels of qualifications, expressed as learning outcomes with increasing levels of proficiency. They serve as a translation device between different qualifications systems and their levels. The purpose of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF) is to improve the transparency, comparability and portability of people's qualifications (OJ 2017/C 189/03).

Micro-credential[3]
A micro-credential is a recognized proof of the learning outcomes that a learner has achieved follow-

[3] European Commission. (n.d.). *Glossary of terms – Common terms*. *Erasmus+ Programme Guide*, Part D. Retrieved October 28, 2025, from https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-d/glossary-common-terms

ing a short learning experience, according to transparent standards and requirements and upon assessment. The proof is contained in a certified document that lists the name of the holder, the achieved learning outcomes, the assessment method, the awarding body and, where applicable, the qualification framework level and the credits gained. Micro-credentials are owned by the learner, are shareable, portable and may be combined into larger credentials or qualifications.

1.3. Purpose and Scope of this Milestone Report

This report serves as a milestone in the achievement of WP3 objectives: namely to create a common framework for flexible, joint European curricula and training offers within the BAUHAUS4EU framework. It outlines the guidelines and official procedures for developing joint education and training opportunities within the alliance.

Specifically, the report aims to collect, analyse, and document information on regulatory frameworks (national and pan-European) and institutional practices that can inform the creation of joint educational offers. The analysis covers different levels of the European Qualification Framework (Bachelor's, Master's and PhD), as well as micro-credentials.

Based on the gathered data, results and insights, the report aims to shed light on the most feasible matchmaking schemes among the alliance partners for various joint educational offers.

Finally, the report includes a list of actionable recommendations to promote joint programmes, together with mitigation measures to overcome the identified challenges in implementing such programmes.

2 Methodology

This chapter discusses the methodology adopted to assess the compatibility of the regulatory frameworks and institutional practices of the alliance partners to set up joint educational offers. It outlines the process followed to design appropriate instruments to gather, process and interpret data relevant for the capability to set up joint programmes and Micro-credentials. The chapter explains the scope and structure of the methodological instruments as well as the data gathering and analysis approach.

2.1. Purpose and Rationale

Joint programme initiatives require more than shared academic interest; they depend upon a high degree of compatibility in legal frameworks, curriculum design, quality assurance standards, student mobility infrastructure, and institutional experience. Any misalignment in these domains can create significant barriers to implementation. Consequently, it was deemed essential to design a data collection instrument capable of capturing comprehensive, accurate, and comparable information from all partner institutions.

A questionnaire was developed with the overarching aim of mapping the academic, administrative, and legal environments of the ten BAUHAUS4EU partner universities. This mapping exercise represents a crucial step in evaluating which institutions are most prepared to participate in the design and delivery of joint degree programmes.

The questionnaire (**Appendix 1**) was conceived not only as a survey but as a diagnostic tool. Its function extends beyond fact-gathering: it enables a structured comparison across institutions, identifies operational bottlenecks, and reveals institutional capacities that could support or hinder the development of joint academic programmes.

Finally, as a result of the collaborative work carried out across the partner institutions, the need to investigate the regulatory framework for micro-credentials was later identified. Thus, a short second questionnaire (**Appendix 2**) was created as an additional diagnostic tool to address this gap.

2.2. Development Process

The design of the questionnaires followed an iterative and collaborative methodology, ensuring both its comprehensiveness and relevance across diverse institutional contexts.

Polis University, as the lead institution for Task 3.1 in Work Package 3, prepared the initial draft of the questionnaire. This version was informed by the alliance's objectives, existing European higher education frameworks (such as, but not limited to the Bologna Process, European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System – ECTS, and European Qualification Framework – EQF), and recognised challenges in joint degree implementation. The draft aimed to cover both regulatory requirements and operational practices, acknowledging that discrepancies between policy and practice often influence programme feasibility.

Recognising that joint educational offers extend beyond joint degree programmes, gathering additional information was deemed important. Challenge-based courses that address RIS3 priorities as well as courses that foster future skills are already part of the academic offers of the BAUHAUS4EU alliance universities. A mapping of these courses is conducted under Task 3.2. However, it was considered important to examine the regulatory aspects for these offerings as well, especially for micro-credentials which constitute a recent development in the European Higher Education landscape. In order to better understand the capability of the alliance members to design and deliver Micro-credentials, a second questionnaire was developed that gathered information on the national frameworks and institutional practices on Micro-credentials and their quality assurance.

The first draft of both questionnaires was circulated to all partner universities for review. Institutions were invited to comment on the clarity, applicability, and completeness of each question, with particular attention to ensuring that terminology and concepts would be interpreted consistently across national contexts. This feedback stage was critical in refining the instrument's scope, reducing the risk of ambiguous responses, and ensuring that the questionnaire addressed context-specific realities.

Following partner input, POLIS University incorporated the suggested changes, which included refining question wording, expanding certain sections to capture previously overlooked dimensions, and removing redundant items. As the last step, the revised version was then recirculated for final consideration before deployment. This multi-stage process promoted shared ownership among partners and encouraged full and accurate participation during the succeeding data collection.

2.3. Structure of the Questionnaires

The two following questionnaires aim to collect information on the regulatory frameworks governing joint degree programmes and micro-credentials within the BAUHAUS4EU partner institutions and their national contexts.

Questionnaire 1 - Mapping Regulatory Frameworks for Joint Programmes

This questionnaire was designed to capture a comprehensive institutional profile, organised into thematic sections that collectively address all dimensions relevant to the feasibility of joint degrees. The sequence of sections moves from general institutional alignment with European standards to detailed operational procedures, ensuring logical progression for respondents. The questionnaire consists of 92 (ninety-two) questions in total, organised into 11 (eleven) sections that address different aspects of institutional, academic, and legal frameworks.

The structure combines both closed and open-ended questions in order to capture comparable data while also allowing for elaboration where needed. A significant proportion of the questions are designed as closed ones, requiring respondents to provide straightforward answers such as yes or no, to select a single response from a set of options, or to choose multiple responses from a predefined list. The use of closed questions serves to ensure standardisation across all submissions and enables systematic comparisons of responses between institutions. Alongside these closed questions, the survey also includes open-ended questions that invite respondents to provide elaborations, explanations, or additional details. These questions are included in areas where fixed answer categories

would not capture the full complexity of institutional practices or where further clarification is needed to understand specific national or organisational contexts.

Section 1 - General Institutional Information.
The first section captures the identity of the responding institution, ensuring responses are attributed correctly and allowing for tracking across multiple submissions if necessary. Institutions have been asked to select their name from a predefined list of alliance partners; a measure designed to maintain uniformity and prevent typographical discrepancies. This section provides the foundational contextual information necessary for interpreting subsequent responses within the correct institutional framework.

It examines whether the institution's systems are aligned with key European higher education frameworks, which are essential for enabling effective collaboration on joint degrees. Respondents are asked if their institution operates according to the Bologna Process, which standardises degree structures and promotes comparability across European universities.

Under the first section, the questionnaire also asks whether the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is in use and requests the number of hours equivalent to one ECTS, as this can vary between countries. Alignment with the European Qualification Framework (EQF) is another important point, as the EQF ensures that qualifications have comparable learning outcomes and levels.

This section also asks whether the legal framework in the respondent's country allows the awarding of joint programmes at all study levels. This is a decisive factor: even when institutions are eager to collaborate, a lack of legal basis or framework alignment can prevent such programmes from being implemented.

Another aim of this section is also to understand how each institution structures its academic year and manages the process of creating or revising programmes. Respondents have been asked to describe their academic calendar, including whether they operate in semesters, the starting dates for the academic year, the main holiday periods, and when examinations are held.

The section goes deeper about the official steps and the time required to open a new study programme or to reorganise an existing one, from the initial application to final approval and student enrolment.

Finally, institutions have been asked to indicate how flexible their curriculum is once it has been launched, since some universities can introduce changes quickly, while others are bound by fixed structures for several years. Understanding these elements helps determine whether timelines across different institutions can be matched in the context of a joint programme.

Section 2- Student Enrolment, Progression, and Assessment.
This section focuses on how students are admitted, how they progress in their studies, and how their academic performance is measured. It asks whether market research is required before a new programme can be approved or an existing one reorganised, which can affect how quickly new joint programmes could be introduced. It also asks at which level; national, university, faculty, or department, the admission criteria for Bachelor's, Master's, and PhD programmes are set.

The questionnaire collects the specific admission requirements for each study level and whether different criteria apply to international students. Recognition of foreign qualifications is another key area, and institutions are asked how long this process usually takes. The section also examines how students register for courses and assessments, how matriculation numbers are issued, and whether there are conditions that can cause a student to lose their right to continue studying. Finally, the grading and assessment systems are recorded, as variations here can affect the comparability of student performance in joint programmes.

Sections 3, 4 and 5- Curriculum Design and Delivery.
These sections gather information on how programmes are structured at the Bachelor's, Master's, and PhD levels, as curriculum compatibility is a central factor in creating joint degree programmes. Respondents are asked for the total number of ECTS credits and the allowed timeframe to complete them. The questionnaires also ask about the mandatory language or standard duration of programmes, as well as any limits to the maximum time languages of instruction, which is an important consideration when planning shared courses between institutions. Institutions are asked to indicate if there are any legal restrictions on offering online or blended learning, which could limit flexibility in delivering parts of joint programmes.

The sections further inquire whether there are fixed rules for how many credits must be allocated to different types of courses, such as foundation courses, discipline-specific courses, electives, internships, and theses. Respondents are asked to specify the ECTS value of elective courses and internships if applicable. Collecting this information helps determine whether course structures can be aligned and whether joint programmes can accommodate varied weights of formation activities.

Sections 6, 7 and 8 - Graduation Requirements.
These sections examine the academic and procedural requirements for students to successfully complete their degrees. They ask how many ECTS credits are assigned to theses or dissertations, the time allocated for their completion, and any specific criteria that must be met for them to be accepted.

The questionnaires also ask whether anti-plagiarism checks are mandatory, and if so, which software is used. Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) ownership of the theses is another important issue, as policies can differ significantly between institutions. Respondents are asked whether external or foreign supervisors and reviewers can be involved in the thesis processes, which can be useful in a joint programme context. Legal restrictions on the design or format of diplomas and diploma supplements are also covered, along with the identification of the officials authorised to sign them. These details are crucial for ensuring that degrees awarded jointly can meet the legal and procedural requirements of all partner institutions.

Section 9 - Quality Assurance.
This section collects information on the systems and standards used to ensure programme quality and to secure accreditation. Respondents are asked whether the European Degree Approach has been adopted in their country and whether their national quality assurance system complies with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). The questionnaire also asks if the national authority is a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). Institutions are asked to describe the normal timeframe for programme accreditation and whether it is legally possible to obtain accreditation from a foreign agency that is an ENQA member. If so, they are also

asked how long it takes for such accreditation to be recognised nationally. These points are important because quality assurance alignment is essential for mutual recognition of joint degrees.

Section 10 - Resources and Mobility.
This section addresses the resources and infrastructures that can support the delivery of joint programmes and student mobility. It examines whether there is a minimum number of students required to start a programme, and if so, what that number is. The section also collects information on tuition fees, administrative fees, and the availability of scholarships. Respondents are asked whether there are funds available to support student mobility and whether blended or virtual mobility options are possible. Accommodation resources are also covered, including the availability of dormitories in general and specifically for international students. These elements help assess whether the institution can offer the necessary support for students participating in a joint programme, particularly when mobility between countries is required.

Section 11 - Experience with Joint/Double Degrees.
The final section focuses on the institution's past and current experience with joint or double degree programmes. Institutions are asked whether they have been involved in such programmes before, and if so, to list the programmes and describe the main benefits they provided. They are also asked to identify the main challenges they encountered, which may include administrative, legal, or academic difficulties. The section ends with an open question inviting respondents to share any other information they consider relevant for assessing their capacity to deliver joint degrees. This section provides valuable insight into institutional readiness, as previous experience often means there are already established processes and contacts that can make future collaborations easier.

Questionnaire 2 - Mapping Regulatory frameworks for Micro-credentials

An additional questionnaire was designed and deployed to gather information specifically on micro-credentials. The second questionnaire is more concise, comprising 14 questions, predominantly closed-ended, with the option to provide additional details if needed. Its objective is to assess the perspective of the respondents on micro-credentials, as well as the legal frameworks and quality mechanisms currently in place at all ten partner institutions. Unlike the first questionnaire, the present one is not divided into sections. However, the overall questions can be interpreted to capture two dimensions:

Dimension 1 – Regulatory context of Micro-credentials
This first dimension addresses matters such as the existence of any legal provisions in the institution or in the respective national regulatory framework of a study program. Respondents are also asked to reflect on the requirements of approval of micro-credential, differentiating cases between different groups of the Alliance, such as students, administrative staff, academic staff and regional stakeholders.

Dimension 2 – Practices and Quality Mechanisms
This dimension includes questions that are related to the way micro-credentials are perceived by each institution (e.g. as standalone short courses or as part of larger credentials), and as to how micro-credentials are currently recognized, for matters such as upskilling/reskilling, for lifelong learn-

ing, as a part of formal qualifications, etc. There are also questions related to the quality assessment that is currently made – either internal or external.

2.4. Data Collection Approach

The questionnaires were distributed and completed by using Google Forms. This digital format made it possible for respondents to coordinate internally, allowing them to consult with different departments or administrative units before submitting their answers. Google Forms automatically collects and stores responses in a central database, reducing the risk of lost data and ensuring all information is captured in the same format. The system also allows for easy export of data into spreadsheets or other analysis tools, which will be important for the next stages of the project. Using an online platform also ensured that updates and clarifications to the questionnaires could be made quickly if needed, and that all partners had access to the most up-to-date version.

Given that the questionnaires cover a wide range of aspects and require detailed institutional data, the designated respondent at each university collected the necessary information internally from the respective responsible units. Still, in order to facilitate data processing and maintain consistency, each institution submitted a single consolidated response on behalf of the university as a whole.

2.5. Analytical Application

Once all responses have been collected, the information is reviewed and analysed in two main phases. The first phase involves creating a descriptive mapping of the systems, policies, and practices reported by each partner institution. This mapping highlights similarities, differences, and areas where there is clear alignment between institutions, as well as any areas where significant gaps exist.

The second phase focuses on assessing readiness for joint degree participation. This involves looking at legal, organisational, and academic capacities as reported in the questionnaire, and identifying which institutions have the necessary frameworks, resources, and experience to move forward with joint programme development. The analysis also considers potential challenges, such as differences in academic calendars, curriculum structures, or accreditation processes, which may require special arrangements between partners.

In parallel with the aggregated interpretation of findings, each partner university has completed an Individual Matrix to document institution-specific details. The designated respondent compiled the entries by consulting the responsible internal units and transcribed the validated information into the matrix fields that mirror the first questionnaire (e.g. academic framework and legal compliance; calendar and programme approval; student enrolment and assessment; curriculum requirements) and the second questionnaire on Micro-credentials (e.g. regulatory context; practices and quality mechanisms). The process followed a structured, multi-step methodology as described below:

Step 1: Assessment

Each institution submitted one consolidated matrix assessing their compatibility vis-à-vis the other

alliance members for each of the aspects mentioned above. All entries follow a numerical value/colour intensity coding, which is then, to make the findings more readable, converted into a graph.

While ascribing numbers, limitations that impact the organisation of joint programmes / micro-credentials are considered as follows:

3 = if there are no such limitations, the aspect is considered an enabler;
2 = if the limitations are at institutional level and can be overcome, the aspect contains constraints;
1 = if there are legal limitations that impede the organisation / delivery of joint degrees / micro-credentials and cannot be overcome, the aspect contains barriers;
0 = where it is impossible to assess a compatibility level.

Step 2: Data Processing and Heat Map Visualization

The collected data were processed to generate a heat map, which visually represented the degree of compatibility among universities. This analysis allowed for the identification of both high and low compatibility relationships, highlighting potential areas for collaboration or further alignment. Darker shades represent higher compatibility values, indicating strong alignment in curricula and academic systems. Lighter shades represent lower compatibility, suggesting potential areas for future alignment.

Step 3: Cluster Formation and Network Analysis

To identify patterns of collaboration, the compatibility data were further analysed using ForceAtlas2 algorithm, which allowed the creation of a network visualization of universities based on their connection strengths. The software automatically positioned institutions according to their level of interaction and mutual compatibility, revealing core, moderately connected, and peripheral nodes. The core cluster represents institutions with the strongest potential for joint educational offers.

Step 4: Network Visualization and Refinement

The identified clusters were further explored through network analysis, which facilitated the visualisation of inter-university connections and compatibility intensity. The resulting network graphs were then refined and visually enhanced using Adobe Illustrator, to create visual clarity and emphasizing the core cluster of universities with the highest compatibility averages. The lines that connect the institutions mirror their compatibility level:

high compatibility = bold lines
medium compatibility = continuous lines
low compatibility = dotted lines

All resulting charts and graphs are presented in **Appendix 3**.

By using this comprehensive process, the project can base future decisions on clear, comparable evidence and ensure that any joint degree initiatives are built on a realistic understanding of each partner's context.

3 Organisational and Regulatory Framework Compatibility

This chapter highlights the main findings on the compatibility of the regulatory frameworks and institutional practices across the 10 alliance partners with regard to the design and delivery of study programmes in Bachelor, Master and PhD level as well as Micro-credentials. The corresponding subchapters (3.1. - 3.4.) analyse the results obtained by the questionnaires and interpret them to highlight areas of high compatibility as well as discrepancies that require attunement. They all conclude by presenting a synthesis of the comparative analysis and the main takeaways.

3.1. Bachelor's Programmes

This section examines the extent to which the organisational and regulatory frameworks of the ten partner universities align for the purpose of developing and delivering Bachelor-level programmes (including potential joint/dual arrangements), and where the most significant differences lie. The focus is on structural and rule-based conditions that enable or constrain collaboration at Bachelor level: academic calendars and programme structures; accreditation and internal approval procedures; degree recognition and diploma issuance; flexibility for curriculum adaptation; prior experience with international/joint provision; and perceived incentives and barriers.

The goal is to provide a clear, evidence-based view of where partners already operate compatibly and where targeted alignment or bespoke solutions will be required. Where relevant, we distinguish between what is legally mandated at national level and what is governed by institutional policy or practice. Proceeding thematically, we first address the main compatibility domains one by one (3.3.1–3.3.3), before synthesising an overall compatibility assessment and concluding with implications for implementation (3.4).

3.1.1. Programme Structure

Across the ten universities, there is a broad baseline of compatibility in several organisational dimensions. As illustrated in **Figure 2**, all universities operate within a two-semester framework, with academic years beginning in the early autumn (September–October). While precise semester lengths vary slightly (typically 13 –16 weeks), this level of similarity suggests that mobility windows and coordinated programme delivery are feasible with minimal disruption. For instance, POLIS, IPCB, and UPJV each have semesters of roughly 15 weeks, with minor differences in examination arrangements.

Figure 2 Academic Calendars of Alliance Members

All partner institutions operate on a semester-based system, which provides an essential foundation for compatibility. The dominant model across the consortium is a two-semester year beginning in September or early October and running through late spring or early summer.

Semester lengths are generally comparable, mostly falling between 13 and 16 weeks of teaching, followed by assessment periods and, in some cases, additional catch-up or resit sessions in June. For instance, UOM specified a pattern of two 13 or 14-week semesters, while UPJV reported semesters of 14 weeks with additional examination blocks and BTH reported 20-week semesters including examination blocks. While precise start and end dates differ, the overall rhythm of the academic year shows a strong alignment.

Differences appear in how semesters are subdivided and how assessments are integrated. BTH, for example, operates four shorter study periods within its two-semester year, a structure distinct from the more standardised systems at POLIS or UACEG. Others emphasised continuous assessment alongside end-of-term examinations, as noted by UPJV. Such internal variation does not prevent collaboration but requires careful coordination when planning mobility or synchronised teaching delivery.

A further area of divergence concerns flexibility within the semester calendar. UACEG described nationally mandated semester start and end dates with little flexibility. This could affect the ability to introduce harmonised intensive courses, block teaching modules, or coordinated mobility windows.

Table 2 summarises the main findings from the comparison of academic calendars across the partner universities, focusing on key aspects relevant to the coordination and alignment of joint programmes.

Table 2 Main Findings of the Comparison of Academic Calendars

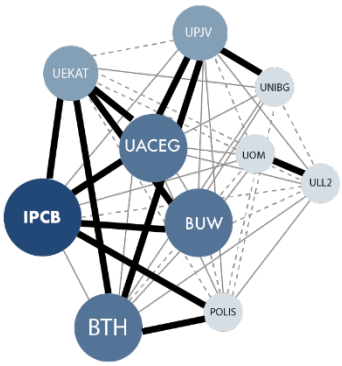
Structure	Most institutions operate on a 2-semester system, often named Autumn/Winter and Spring/Summer semesters. A few mention further study periods within semesters.
Start of Academic Year	Typically starts in September or October. Some institutions start in early September, others in late September/October.
Semester Duration	Generally, each semester lasts 13 to 16 weeks.
Examination Periods	Exams typically take place at the end of each semester (e.g., January/February and June/July). Re-examination/catch-up sessions often held in September.
Holiday Breaks	Common holidays include: - Christmas (Dec–Jan) - Easter (Mar–Apr) - Summer (July–Aug) - Some mention Carnival or other local holidays.
Special Notes	- Some universities allow flexibility in semester/exam scheduling. - Quiet months: July or August typically see minimal or no academic activity.

Overall, the academic calendars and programme structures of the partner universities show a high

degree of convergence, particularly in comparison to collaborations that span very different educational traditions (e.g., semester vs. trimester systems). The identified differences are of a scale that can be addressed through planning and scheduling rather than requiring structural reform. This compatibility provides a strong foundation for the subsequent discussion of regulatory and accreditation processes.

3.1.2. Curriculum Design

There is an upper medium compatibility (1.93 out of 3 - last table in **Appendix 3**) of the curriculum design elements for Bachelor's programmes such as standard duration, ECTS allocation to formation activities (core courses, electives, thesis, internship), timeframe for students to complete the programme, etc. The institution with the strongest connection to the others is IPCB (as shown in **Figure 3**). It has high compatibility with BUW, BTH, UACEG, UPJV and UEKAT and medium compatibility with the rest.



	Bachelors									
UNIVERSITIES	Curriculum design									
	ULL2	UACEG	UOM	BTH	UPJV	UEKAT	IPCB	BUW	UNIBG	POLIS
POLIS	2	2	1	3	2	1	3	1	1	n/a
BTH	2	2	1	n/a	3	3	2	2	2	3
UOM	3	2	n/a	1	1	1	2	2	0	1
UEKAT	1	3	1	3	1	n/a	3	3	2	1
IPCB	2	3	2	2	2	3	n/a	3	2	3
BUW	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	n/a	2	1
UNIBG	1	2	0	2	3	2	2	2	n/a	1
ULL2	n/a	2	3	2	2	1	2	1	1	2
UACEG	2	n/a	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	2
UPJV	2	3	1	3	n/a	1	2	2	3	2

Figure 3 Cluster Network - Curriculum design for Bachelor's programmes

Not only is the compatibility of curriculum design in Bachelor level encouraging to set-up of new joint programmes, but the responses to questions on curricular flexibility are generally positive, with all institutions confirming that some degree of modification is possible once a programme has been launched. The extent and speed of these adaptations, however, differ considerably between universities.

At one end of the spectrum, certain partners report that curriculum changes can be introduced relatively quickly. UACEG described an internal system where committees can approve adjustments at short notice, while BTH highlighted the possibility of implementing changes even after a programme has begun. In these contexts, programme committees or faculty-level boards typically exercise the authority to approve changes, allowing institutions to respond dynamically to evolving needs. At the other end, some partners like UEKAT and IPCB described highly formalised processes where even modest adjustments must pass through multiple layers of approval, including central university governance and, in some cases, external accreditation bodies. UPJV, for example, emphasised that even renaming a course requires approval at multiple levels. This creates a heavier administrative burden

and lengthens the time required to enact changes. Institutions in such systems acknowledged that, while change is possible, it is often perceived as cumbersome and therefore undertaken cautiously.

Another difference relates to the scope of permissible change. POLIS reported that modifications of up to 20 % of a programme can be classified as adjustments, whereas larger revisions trigger re-accreditation. This threshold-based approach was not universal but illustrates the diversity of practices that could affect the planning of joint curricula. Overall, flexibility exists across the consortium but is unevenly distributed.

For joint Bachelor's programmes, this means that while some partners can adapt swiftly to collaborative needs (such as BTH), others (like UPJV) will require longer lead times. Effective planning will therefore need to take into account the slowest approval environments to ensure that changes can be implemented synchronously across all participating institutions.

Accreditation and Approval Procedures

The approval and accreditation of new programmes emerged as one of the areas with the greatest variability across institutions. Considering that accreditation and the internal quality assurance system is subject to detailed analysis under WP10, Task 10.1 and the results are part of the respective deliverable due in M26 (partly also in MS22, due in M18), the focus in this report is mainly on the approval of changes to existing programmes and the introduction of new ones.

Several universities reported that the creation of new tracks or modifications to existing programmes can be accomplished relatively quickly through internal procedures, sometimes within a year. UNIBG indicated that in some cases a new programme could be approved within a year, 12–24 months for POLIS, while BTH reported a timeframe of 1.5–2 years. UOM noted a minimum of two years for programme approval, and UPJV emphasised that new disciplines are almost never developed outside of France's five-year evaluation cycle. This, of course, has implications for ULL2 as well. This divergence poses potential challenges for synchronising the launch of joint Bachelor's programmes.

In practice, most institutions, like BUW operate under a dual system: minor curriculum adjustments can be handled internally and implemented at short notice, whereas substantial changes require approval at faculty, university, and sometimes even national levels. The extent of external involvement varies in some countries, ministerial or national agency approval is mandatory for any significant change, while in other universities they enjoy greater autonomy provided that quality assurance processes are respected.

Another layer of divergence concerns the procedures for programme modification once established. While all partners affirmed that changes are possible, some described this as a relatively smooth process. POLIS, for example, stated that up to 20 % of a programme can be modified without triggering full re-accreditation. Others reported complex bureaucratic pathways even for modest alterations, such as renaming a course, a challenge mentioned by UPJV. The ability to adapt programmes dynamically therefore differs, with consequences for the responsiveness of joint initiatives.
Despite these differences, the overall picture is not one of incompatibility but of uneven flexibility. Where one institution faces lengthy external accreditation cycles, partners may need to align joint activities with that timeframe or pursue phased approaches, such as starting with double degrees before moving toward fully integrated joint degrees. The willingness of most universities to navigate

these procedures, as shown by BTH and UOM, suggests that regulatory delays, while significant, are not insurmountable obstacles.

Experience with International / Joint Programmes

Most partner institutions reported existing experience with internationalized degree provision, but not necessarily at Bachelor level. The nature of the experience on which to draw is therefore uneven, particularly given that some partners, such as ULL2 and UNIBG, cited dozens of existing international programmes across multiple disciplines, but usually concentrated at postgraduate level rather than at Bachelor level. Furthermore, UPJV acknowledged difficulties in sustaining Bachelor level joint programmes under French law, though it expressed interest in doing so. A few institutions noted that while they had not yet implemented a joint Bachelor's programme, they were actively prepared to pursue such opportunities (as indicated by UACEG).

The benefits of these experiences were consistently highlighted. BTH stressed international exposure and the development of intercultural skills, while POLIS emphasised the higher quality and international relevance of such initiatives. At the same time, challenges were also noted: UPJV pointed to legal constraints, UACEG to difficulties reconciling national requirements, and BTH to limited integration time for students in host countries.

Consequently, it should be noted that most partners are not approaching international joint programmes from a standing start. Collective experience constitutes a valuable resource that can be mobilised in designing and implementing joint Bachelor degrees. Nevertheless, differences in depth of experience mean that capacity-building and knowledge-sharing will be essential to ensure that less experienced institutions (such as UOM) can participate on equal footing with those that already have well-established international frameworks.

Incentives and Barriers

There is a strong consensus regarding the incentives for developing joint Bachelor's programmes. Nearly all universities emphasised the opportunity to enhance their international profile and attractiveness to prospective students.

POLIS noted the prospect of increasing its global visibility, while BTH and UOM referred to the value of international exposure for their students. Respondents pointed to the growing demand for globally oriented education, where mobility, intercultural learning, and exposure to multiple academic traditions are seen as added value for students entering competitive labour markets. For some institutions, participation in joint programmes was also framed as part of a broader internationalisation strategy, strengthening ties with European partners and aligning national or regional policy priorities, as highlighted by UACEG.

Additional incentives identified include the possibility of enriching curricula through complementary expertise, improving quality and innovation in teaching, and expanding professional and research networks. UPJV suggested that such programmes could bolster attractiveness, while POLIS mentioned enhanced institutional reputation. Several institutions noted that joint programmes can foster long-term institutional partnerships, which often extend beyond education into joint research projects and collaborative outreach activities.

Alongside these incentives, however, several barriers were highlighted. The most common challenge concerns administrative and regulatory complexity. UPJV referred explicitly to the burden of navigating French national requirements, while BTH emphasised the challenge of aligning calendars with multiple partners. Legal constraints — such as nationally mandated diploma formats or rigid accreditation cycles — were also frequently cited as obstacles that limit flexibility in establishing joint programmes.

Other challenges mentioned include the additional workload placed on staff, the difficulty of synchronising academic calendars and mobility windows, and the potential financial burden for both institutions and students. UOM raised concerns about sustainability without external funding, while UACEG highlighted the risks of limited student demand. A few institutions expressed concerns about the sustainability of such programmes if student demand proves insufficient or if external funding is not available.

Overall, the balance of responses suggests that the perceived benefits of joint Bachelor's programmes are considerable and widely recognised. Yet the barriers, while not insurmountable, are substantial enough that careful planning, resource allocation, and targeted policy support will be necessary to translate enthusiasm into sustainable practice.

3.1.3. Graduation and diploma issuance

Questions relating to degree recognition and the practicalities of diploma issuance revealed both shared intentions and notable constraints. In principle, all universities expressed openness to awarding double or joint diplomas as part of international cooperation. However, the extent to which this is possible in practice varies considerably, largely due to national legal frameworks.

One of the most striking examples concerns institutions operating under French law, ULL2 and UPJV, where the issuance of national diplomas is bound to highly specific regulations, including the requirement that official diplomas be printed on paper produced exclusively by the national printing office. This makes the creation of genuinely joint diplomas difficult, leading institutions to rely instead on dual or double diploma arrangements. Other partners, such as UACEG and POLIS, reported no such restrictions, with existing experience of joint degrees at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

The survey also highlighted the distinction between double and joint diplomas. While many institutions have existing double degree programmes (for example, BTH noted several ongoing initiatives), fully joint diplomas, where a single credential is co-signed and co-awarded – remain rare. For some universities, this is a matter of institutional choice, while for others it is a legal limitation beyond their control.

Recognition of partner institutions' degrees does not appear to be a major barrier within the consortium. UOM, for instance, referred to established recognition procedures, while POLIS mentioned that it has successfully implemented joint PhDs, suggesting that degree recognition mechanisms function effectively. The main issues therefore lie less with recognition and more with the administrative and legal processes of issuing a single document that meets the requirements of multiple national systems.

Taken together, these findings suggest that degree recognition is not a major source of incompatibility, but the mechanics of diploma issuance will require careful consideration. In some cases, the most feasible pathway may be dual diplomas, at least initially, while longer-term efforts to establish joint credentials proceed in parallel.

3.1.4. Conclusions

Looking across the various domains, academic calendars, programme structures, accreditation procedures, diploma issuance, curricular flexibility, and prior international experience, a clear pattern emerges. The partner universities share a broadly compatible foundation for collaboration.

Where differences emerge, they tend to stem from national regulatory environments rather than institutional preferences. For example, UOM noted that new programmes typically take a minimum of two years to approve, while UACEG and POLIS indicated that in some cases approval can be achieved more quickly, especially for modifications rather than entirely new programmes. By contrast, UPJV highlighted the long French national accreditation cycle as a major factor for the introduction of new programmes. This has direct implications for synchronising the launch of joint programmes.

Similarly, while most universities are legally able to confer double or joint diplomas, in practice some are constrained by bureaucratic or legislative requirements (e.g. stipulations regarding diploma printing or state recognition procedures, as noted by UPJV and ULL2).

On matters of international engagement, the majority of partners have existing experience with joint, double, or partnership-based degrees. BTH, for example, pointed to multiple double degree collaborations, while POLIS highlighted joint PhD initiatives. This indicates a general institutional willingness to engage and a reservoir of practical knowledge to build upon. At the same time, a few institutions signaled caution, either due to the administrative burden involved or the limited flexibility allowed within their national systems.

Overall, the survey responses suggest a medium-to-high level of baseline compatibility. Core academic structures are aligned, and there is a shared orientation toward international cooperation. The main challenges arise from differing regulatory procedures and national legal frameworks, which may slow or complicate harmonization. These findings provide the context for a more detailed thematic analysis as follows:

<u>Areas of high compatibility.</u>
Academic calendars and semester structures are strongly aligned across the consortium, providing a predictable framework for joint delivery and student mobility. UOM, UEKAT, POLIS, each reported broadly similar academic calendars, while BTH's modular study periods can be mapped onto the same overall rhythm. All institutions also demonstrated a willingness to engage in international collaborations and, in most cases, have already built practical experience with double or joint programmes. Curricular modification is possible everywhere, even if the processes differ in speed and complexity, as illustrated by POLIS (relatively rapid changes) compared to UPJV and ULL2 (lengthy approval cycles).

<u>Areas of divergence.</u>

The most significant challenges lie in accreditation and approval procedures, which vary from highly flexible to tightly bound to national cycles lasting several years. Diploma issuance represents another area of divergence: while UACEG and POLIS have issued joint or double diplomas, French institutions and UNIBG remain restricted by legal requirements. The degree of administrative burden associated with modifying curricula and gaining approval for changes also differs considerably across the consortium.

Overall feasibility.
Taken together, these findings suggest that the consortium operates on a medium-to-high level of compatibility. The basic structures necessary for joint Bachelor's programmes are in place, and institutional openness is strong. However, the pace of implementation will likely be determined by the institutions and systems with the least flexibility, necessitating careful planning, phased strategies, and pragmatic compromises (e.g. dual diplomas as an interim solution).

The overall assessment is therefore cautiously optimistic: joint Bachelor's programmes are feasible, but their design and rollout will need to balance ambition with the practical realities of divergent national frameworks.

Summary of findings and main takeaways

In summary, the consortium partners share enough common ground to make joint Bachelor's programmes a realistic objective, though uneven regulatory processes and legal frameworks will demand pragmatic solutions. These findings provide a useful baseline: they highlight the structural opportunities and constraints specific to the Bachelor level as presented in **Table 3**.

The next section will extend the analysis to Master's programmes, where many partners already have broader experience, offering further insights into how collaboration might be deepened across degree cycles.

Table 3 Main Findings of the Comparison between Regulatory Frameworks on Bachelors

Calendar	• High degree of convergence: similar structure, semester duration and academic breaks across institutions. • Difference in flexibility: semester and exam scheduling vary in adaptability.
Accreditation and approval procedures	• Programme approval timelines vary widely: from under a year to needing alignment with France's five-year evaluation cycle • Flexibility in modification: from allowing 20 % changes without re-accreditation to challenges in renaming a course • Uneven flexibility, not incompatibility: despite differing approval timelines, institutions can align joint activities through phased approaches and adjust their timeframe accordingly.
Degree recognition	• Fully joint diplomas remain rare due to complex legal processes for issuing a single document that meets multiple nation systems requirements.

Curriculum adaptation	• Curriculum change flexibility varies: some institutions can approve changes quickly at faculty level, while others require multi-level approval even for minor adjustments; thresholds for re-accreditation also differ.
Experience with international programmes	• Uneven experience with joint Bachelor's programmes: most institutions have mainly experience at postgraduate level. • Knowledge-sharing is needed from the most experimented
Incentives and Barries	• Strong consensus on incentives: enhance international visibility, student attractiveness, and institutional reputation. • Key barriers: administrative complexity, legal constraints, staff workload, and financial sustainability. • Careful planning needed**:** enthusiasm is high, but success depends on resource allocation, policy support, and managing structural challenges.
Key Takeways	• The consortium operates on a medium-to-high level of compatibility. • The academic rhythm is strongly aligned across partners. • The biggest divergence lies in approval procedures: ranging from highly flexible to system bound to national cycles.

3.2. Master's Programmes

Within the European Higher Education Area, Master's degrees represent a cornerstone of academic and professional qualification, reflecting the principles of the Bologna Process and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). As higher education institutions adapt to evolving social, economic, and technological demands, ensuring coherence and compatibility among national frameworks becomes essential — particularly in the context of transnational alliances such as BAUHAUS4EU.

The analysis presented in this chapter examines the Master's degree programmes offered by the ten BAUHAUS4EU partner institutions, comparing their structures, credit systems, admission requirements, language policies, teaching modalities, and curricular organisation. It also explores key issues such as thesis requirements, academic integrity, intellectual property rights, and diploma regulations, identifying both areas of convergence and those shaped by national specificities. In the sections below, the main findings regarding the compatibility of Master's degree frameworks are summarised, emphasising the shared academic principles and regulatory differences that define the current landscape within the BAUHAUS4EU Alliance.

3.2.1. Programme Structure

One of the most fundamental aspects of master's degrees is their credit load and duration. A strong convergence is observed around the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS): the majority of institutions run programmes of 120 ECTS over two years, aligning with the Bologna Process framework (ULL2, BTH, UPJV, UEKAT, IPCB, BUW, POLIS, UNIBG). However, some universities also report offering 60 ECTS, one-year programmes (UACEG and UOM), or a combination of both.

UOM offers master's degrees with a study load of 60 ECTS, while POLIS, BTH, IPCB and BUW include both 60 ECTS Master's degrees and 120 ECTS courses in their catalogue. UEKAT, while aligned with the above, specifies that the duration of master's programmes ranges from 3 (in the case of programmes for students who have completed a seven-semester first-cycle engineering degree) to 5 semesters.

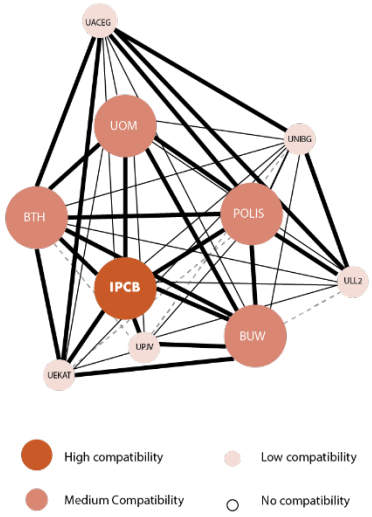
From a joint degree perspective, the dominance of the 120 ECTS, two-year format, provides a solid common ground. Nevertheless, the coexistence of shorter, 60 ECTS degrees may require careful structuring to ensure compatibility, particularly when considering mobility windows and thesis workload.

Regarding the maximum duration of studies, most institutions impose some form of limit, typically defined as double the standard length (e.g., four years for a two-year programme, in the case of POLIS). A smaller subset allows more flexibility, subject to departmental or national regulations. This indicates a general agreement that prolonged study periods should be restricted, ensuring programme efficiency and timely graduation.

Specific cases include the following: in the case of UACEG, if the course is funded by the Government, time limits do exist, whereas if the study programme is paid for by the student, there may be no time

constraints. For UOM, it depends on the regulations of the individual department/faculty. For UPJV, there are courses in which failure to pass the annual exam may force students to interrupt their studies. In the case of BUW, three additional semesters may be granted beyond the statutory duration of the course. As far as admission criteria are concerned, the standard requirement is the possession of a 1st cycle degree/Bachelor or three-year university diploma, or any other degree obtained abroad, recognised as suitable. In addition, each institution has additional requirements that may vary depending on the study programme. For example: i) possession of curricular requirements, in terms of a given number of ECTS related to specific disciplinary sectors, or completion of a specific or related study programme (UNIBG, UOM, UEKAT); ii) a minimum grade point average (GPA) from the bachelor's degree (UOM, UACEG); iii) standardised test scores such as the GRE, GMAT, or other relevant tests (UOM); iv) assessment of personal competencies and skills, or letters of Recommendation (UNIBG, UOM).

Based on the compatibility matrices drawn up using the questionnaires completed by the individual institutions, the following tables and graphs have been prepared, which focus specifically on the requirements that each institution has currently in place for the Enrolment and Progression of Students in Master's programmes (**Figure 4**).

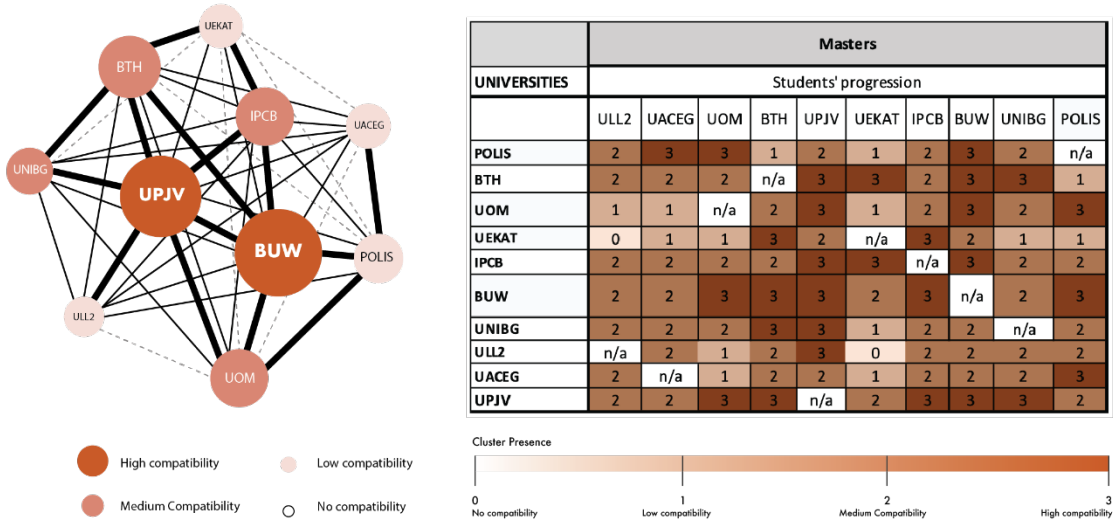


	Masters									
UNIVERSITIES	Student Enrolment									
	ULL2	UACEG	UOM	BTH	UPJV	UEKAT	IPCB	BUW	UNIBG	POLIS
POLIS	3	3	3	3	2	1	3	3	2	n/a
BTH	2	3	3	n/a	1	3	3	3	2	3
UOM	2	2	n/a	3	2	2	3	3	2	3
UEKAT	0	3	2	3	2	n/a	3	3	2	1
IPCB	2	2	3	3	3	3	n/a	3	2	3
BUW	1	2	3	3	3	3	3	n/a	2	3
UNIBG	3	3	2	2	1	2	2	2	n/a	2
ULL2	n/a	3	2	2	2	0	2	1	3	3
UACEG	3	n/a	2	3	0	3	2	2	3	3
UPJV	2	0	2	1	n/a	2	3	3	1	2

Figure 4 Cluster Network - Students' enrolment in Master's Programmes

As far as students' enrolment is concerned, the graph shows a densely connected network, with all partner institutions positioned in the core cluster, and without disconnected nodes.

The second graph (**Figure 5**), which focuses on students' progression, also provides a similar picture. Specifically, BUW and UPJV appear as the strongest hubs, with greater overall compatibility. BTH, IPCB, UNIBG, UOM, which form the core cluster, also show a great potential for integration. UEKAT, ULL2, UACEG and POLIS are moderately connected, and support the network, although with slightly weaker ties.



	Masters									
UNIVERSITIES	Students' progression									
	ULL2	UACEG	UOM	BTH	UPJV	UEKAT	IPCB	BUW	UNIBG	POLIS
POLIS	2	3	3	1	2	1	2	3	2	n/a
BTH	2	2	2	n/a	3	3	2	3	3	1
UOM	1	1	n/a	2	3	1	2	3	2	3
UEKAT	0	1	1	3	2	n/a	3	2	1	1
IPCB	2	2	2	2	3	3	n/a	3	2	2
BUW	2	2	3	3	3	2	3	n/a	2	3
UNIBG	2	2	2	3	3	1	2	2	n/a	2
ULL2	n/a	2	1	2	3	0	2	2	2	2
UACEG	2	n/a	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	3
UPJV	2	2	3	3	n/a	2	3	3	3	2

Figure 5 Cluster Network - Students' progression in Master's Programmes

3.2.2. Curriculum Design

Institutions vary considerably in the degree of prescriptiveness embedded within their curricular frameworks. In some cases, national or institutional regulations stipulate a specific balance among foundational courses, discipline-specific modules, electives, and thesis requirements. In contrast, other institutions grant full autonomy to departments in determining programme structures.

Electives and internships display the greatest variation across institutions. While a limited number of universities assign a fixed ECTS value to these components, the majority impose no formal requirements. These differences reflect divergent educational traditions: some systems emphasize flexibility and specialization, whereas others prioritize structured professional practice through mandatory internships. In the context of joint degrees, this lack of uniformity presents challenges for curricular harmonization; however, general flexibility may also serve as an advantage, allowing for the negotiation of mutually compatible frameworks.

Specific institutional examples illustrate this variation. At UACEG, programmes focus predominantly on regulated professions with substantial requirements in foundational disciplines, specialised coursework, and structured internships, including in-company training. Shorter master's programmes, however, follow a more flexible model oriented toward international career pathways. These programmes typically amount to 90 ECTS, with the precise distribution of courses determined by programme-specific requirements.

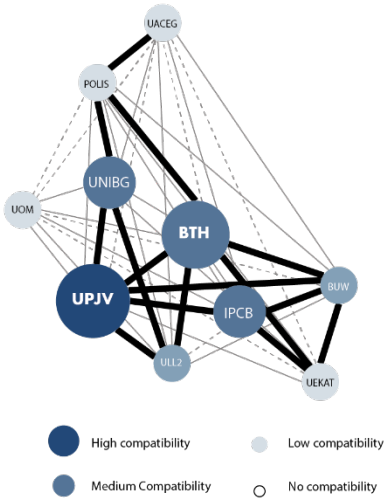
At POLIS, curricular guidelines established by the Ministry prescribe the following distribution: 5–10 % for foundational training activities, 50–60 % for discipline-specific activities, 12–20 % for integrative activities, 10 % for complementary activities, and 10–15 % for the thesis component. The situation is similar to that of the Italian higher education institution (UNIBG), where Ministerial Decree no. 1649 dated 19 December 2023 establishes the minimum weight for foundation courses and specific disciplines in terms of ECTS, then each higher education institution establishes its own distribution of disciplines according to the specific study programme and within the prescribed national thresholds.

At BTH, each one-year master's programme culminates in a degree project of at least 15 ECTS, while 30 ECTS must be allocated to progressive specialization in the primary field of study.

At IPCB, curricular approval lies with the competent governing body of the institution. The allocation of credits follows well-defined principles: i) Workload is measured in estimated student working hours and it includes all academic activities, such as contact hours, internships, projects, fieldwork, independent study, and assessments; ii) One academic year of full-time study corresponds to 1,500–1,680 working hours across 36–40 weeks. This workload equates to 60 ECTS per academic year; iii) For shorter study periods, credits are assigned proportionally; iv) A programme's total credits equal the product of its duration (in academic years or fractions thereof) multiplied by 60; v) A course unit appearing in multiple programmes within the same institution must carry identical credit values. Additionally, at least 25 % of the total credits must be allocated to the "fundamental training areas of the cycle." No specific rules apply to electives. The structure of master's programmes must include:

- A specialization component, consisting of a coherent set of course units (the "master's programme"), accounting for at least 50 % of the total credits; and
- A scientific dissertation, original project, or internship culminating in a final report, aligned with the objectives of the programme and accounting for a minimum of 30 ECTS, as stipulated in applicable regulatory provisions.

The following table and graph based on the compatibility matrices (**Figure 6**) show curriculum design compatibility among the partner institutions.



UNIVERSITIES	Masters: Curriculum design									
	ULL2	UACEG	UOM	BTH	UPJV	UEKAT	IPCB	BUW	UNIBG	POLIS
POLIS	2	3	1	3	2	2	2	2	3	n/a
BTH	3	1	2	n/a	3	3	2	3	2	3
UOM	2	1	n/a	2	2	1	2	1	2	1
UEKAT	0	1	1	3	2	n/a	3	3	2	2
IPCB	1	2	2	2	3	3	n/a	3	2	2
BUW	2	2	1	3	3	3	3	n/a	2	2
UNIBG	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	n/a	3
ULL2	n/a	2	2	3	3	0	1	2	3	2
UACEG	2	n/a	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	3
UPJV	3	1	2	3	n/a	2	3	3	3	2

Figure 6 Cluster Network - Curriculum Design_Master's Programmes

UPJV represents the strongest hub in the network. BTH, IPCB, UNIBG, ULL2 and BUW are in the core cluster and show a higher degree of compatibility, whereas POLIS, UEKAT, UOM, UACEG are moderately connected, supporting the network, although, after a preliminary analysis, the ties appear to be slightly weaker in comparison with the other institutions. There are no peripheral or disconnected nodes, indicating a general integration among the members of the network.

Language of Instruction

Language policy is an important factor for international cooperation. Institutions are divided between those with mandatory regulations (e.g., programmes taught fully in English or in the national language as stipulated by law or by Ministry's approval) (UACEG, POLIS, UPJV) and those with greater flexibility (leaving the choice to the department or individual programme). Where rules exist, they usually specify either English for international cohorts or the national language for local students.

The variation in language policies presents a potential barrier to joint degrees. However, the widespread adoption of English as the medium of instruction in many master's programmes (together with the numerous efforts made by the various partner institutions to promote multilingualism) provides a natural solution, particularly for programmes targeting international mobility.

Teaching Modalities

Data collected so far suggest that legal restrictions on the adoption of online or blended learning are relatively uncommon. Most higher education institutions explicitly permit such modalities, although some report encountering practical or regulatory challenges, particularly in relation to data protection and quality assurance. The prevailing openness to blended teaching provides opportunities for the development of shared courses and virtual mobility, which can serve as an effective mechanism for sustaining joint programmes when students' physical mobility is constrained.

In addition to concerns about data protection, UOM emphasizes potential technical difficulties associated with the implementation of distance learning. These approaches are deemed appropriate for courses and educational activities that do not require practical, laboratory-based, or clinical training, where physical presence remains indispensable.

IPCB further notes that accreditation of an online or blended study programme requires at least 75 % of the total credits in the study plan to be delivered through distance learning. Moreover, academic staff responsible for non-face-to-face curricular units or modules must demonstrate competence in several areas, with particular attention to evidence of professional development, including:

- Training in online teaching and learning methodologies, as well as in the application of digital mediation technologies, encompassing both theoretical knowledge and practical experience in organising, managing, and delivering non-face-to-face courses.
- Experience in implementing active learning methodologies in the context of distance education.

A portfolio of recent (within the last five years) publications or pedagogical activities directly related to digital mediation and non-face-to-face teaching methodologies, although this requirement may be partially met through an evolving curriculum vitae in the relevant area. In addition, technical, administrative, and management staff are expected to possess the necessary pedagogical and technological expertise to provide student support and to collaborate effectively with teaching staff in the design of curricula and learning materials.

Still on the topic of accreditation, UNIBG also reports that in Italy a recent Ministerial Decree (6 December 2024) establishes mandatory requirements and conditions for online and blended degree programmes.

3.2.3. Graduation and Diploma Issuance

The master's thesis constitutes the most consistent structural element across institutions. In nearly all cases, it is assigned a specific and often substantial ECTS value (commonly 30 or more), underscoring its central importance within the study cycle. Most institutions also stipulate formal criteria for thesis assessment, although the level of specification varies.

At institutions such as BTH, where one-year master's programmes are offered, the final thesis is weighted at 15 ECTS. By contrast, at UEKAT, students do not receive ECTS credits for the thesis itself but are awarded 20 ECTS for the completion of a seminar. At UNIBG, no legally mandated minimum is in place; instead, the ECTS allocation differs across programmes, though ministerial guidelines indicate that the master's thesis should carry a substantially higher weight than the bachelor's thesis. In practice, the thesis typically accounts for up to 20 ECTS, depending on the programme.

Time allocation for thesis completion also varies considerably. In some institutions, the thesis occupies a full semester or longer, while in others it is distributed more flexibly across the programme. Despite such variations, the shared recognition of the thesis as the capstone of the degree establishes a strong common ground for institutional collaboration.

Academic Integrity and Intellectual Property Rights

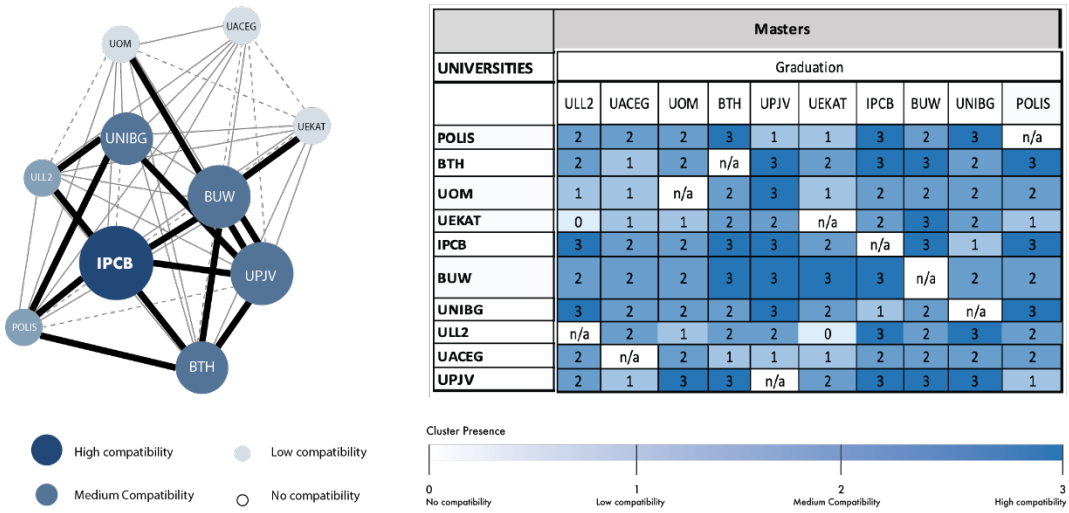
A clear consensus exists around the importance of plagiarism detection: virtually all institutions mandate antiplagiarism checks, using specialised software. This shared commitment strengthens academic trust across institutions, which is essential for any joint programme. The most common antiplagiarism software programmes used include: Compilatio, StrikePlagiaris, Turnitin, and Ouriginal.
Regarding intellectual property rights (IPR), practices diverge. Some institutions assign ownership to students, others to universities, and some adopt co-ownership models. While these differences reflect varying legal frameworks, they may require careful alignment or bilateral agreements in the context of joint degrees, particularly when research outcomes have commercial potential.

Graduation, Distinctions, and External Involvement

Several institutions offer distinctions or honors upon graduation, though others do not (POLIS, BTH, UPJV). While it is not essential to programme compatibility, these differences may affect how academic excellence is recognized in joint contexts.

There is broad agreement on the possibility of involving external or international supervisors and reviewers which is highly favorable for joint programmes. This flexibility indicates openness to shared supervision and collaborative evaluation of thesis, both critical elements of a transnational master's degree.

The outcome of the compatibility matrices for Graduation (**Figure 7**) shows high compatibility within the network, even if some of the partner institutions appear to have slightly weaker ties.



	Masters									
UNIVERSITIES	Graduation									
	ULL2	UACEG	UOM	BTH	UPJV	UEKAT	IPCB	BUW	UNIBG	POLIS
POLIS	2	2	2	3	1	1	3	2	3	n/a
BTH	2	1	2	n/a	3	2	3	3	2	3
UOM	1	1	n/a	2	3	1	2	2	2	2
UEKAT	0	1	1	2	2	n/a	2	3	2	1
IPCB	3	2	2	3	3	2	n/a	3	1	3
BUW	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	n/a	2	2
UNIBG	3	2	2	2	3	2	1	2	n/a	3
ULL2	n/a	2	1	2	2	0	3	2	3	2
UACEG	2	n/a	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
UPJV	2	1	3	3	n/a	2	3	3	3	1

Figure 7 Cluster Network - Graduation_Master's Programmes

Diploma Issuance

Some divergence exists regarding the format of diplomas and diploma supplements. Most institutions face legal restrictions on their content or even design, while UPJV enjoys more flexibility. Similarly, restrictions on the conferral of degrees are present in certain national systems, limiting options for issuing a single joint diploma.

Diplomas are usually signed by a combination of rectors, deans, and heads of department, though the exact signatories differ. While largely procedural, these variations may complicate the design of a unified joint degree certificate.

3.2.4. Conclusion

Overall, the analysis reveals a high level of convergence in key academic principles:

- Master's programmes are predominantly 120 ECTS, two years in duration.
- The thesis is universally recognized as a cornerstone, with substantial weight.
- Institutions are broadly open to blended teaching and external supervision.
- Plagiarism detection is mandatory across the board.

At the same time, several divergences could pose challenges:

- Language of instruction varies between rigid regulations and programme-level flexibility.
- Internship and elective structures are inconsistent.
- Intellectual property rights differ significantly across systems.
- Diploma formats and degree conferral rules are subject to national legal constraints.

Implications for Joint Degree Development

The strong convergence observed in fundamental academic dimensions – such as programme duration, credit allocation, thesis requirements, and academic integrity – provides a robust basis for the development of joint degree initiatives.

Many institutions already possess experience in joint and/or double degree arrangements. For example, BTH participates in a Master's programme in Computer Science/Electrical Engineering/Software Engineering (3.5+1.5 model, with the final 1.5 years at BTH). In addition, BTH offers integrated programmes that combine elements of double and joint degrees, though it does not currently award joint degrees. BUW has experience with double degrees through its programmes in European Media Culture with ULL2 and the recently introduced European Urban and Planning Studies with BTH. Similarly, the University of Bergamo (UNIBG) offers double degrees in languages, international communication, tourism, and urban studies already in conjunction with ULL2.

Summary of main findings and key takeaways

The comparative analysis highlights substantial similarities in how the 10 institutions design and manage their Master's degree programmes, especially regarding duration, credit structure, and the centrality of the thesis. While differences exist in language policy, diploma regulations, and intellectual property rights, these are largely shaped by national legislation rather than institutional philosophy. The overall picture is encouraging: the institutions share enough common ground to make the development of joint master's degree pathways not only feasible but also strategically advantageous. With targeted negotiations on a few key points, these universities could align their policies to support an integrated, transnational model of graduate education. As key take aways, we conclude that:

- A strong convergence exists across the Alliance regarding the structure and duration of Master's degrees: the majority of programmes follow the two-year, 120-ECTS model established by the Bologna Process, providing a solid foundation for future joint degree initiatives.
- The master's thesis is universally recognized as a core component of the study cycle, generally accounting for 20–30 ECTS, and serves as a shared academic benchmark among partner institutions.
- Most universities explicitly allow online or blended learning, with few legal restrictions. This openness creates opportunities for virtual mobility and shared course delivery within joint programmes.
- There is broad alignment in academic integrity practices: anti-plagiarism checks are mandatory across all institutions, fostering trust and transparency in potential transnational collaborations.
- Despite these convergences, several divergences remain, particularly regarding the language of instruction, the structure of internships and electives, and intellectual property rights, which are influenced by national regulations rather than institutional choices.
- Diploma design and conferral procedures vary significantly across national systems. These differences may require bilateral or multilateral agreements to enable the awarding of joint or multiple degrees.
- The majority of institutions already possess experience in double or joint degree arrangements, which represents a strong starting point for deeper integration of Master's degrees within BAUHAUS4EU.
- Overall, the Alliance partners share sufficient academic and regulatory common ground to make the creation of joint Master's degrees both feasible and strategically beneficial, provided that targeted alignment is pursued in the few remaining areas of divergence.

3.3. PhD Programmes

The analysis of PhD programmes examines the degree of compatibility among the Alliance partners in relation to doctoral education frameworks and practices. It identifies key areas of convergence and divergence, including, programme structure, student admission procedures, languages of instruction, teaching and supervision modalities, thesis requirements, graduation processes, and diploma issuance. The section concludes with a summary of the main findings from the comparative analysis.

3.3.1. Programme Structure

Once PhD students start their training, the first-year programme includes coursework and ECTS credits in 60 % of the partners institutions. In 70 % of cases, the PhD programme generally lasts three years; however, in 30 % of the partner universities (BTH, BUW and UNIBG) there is no fixed or maximal duration for doctoral studies.

Overall, the duration of PhD programmes is adapted to the specific needs of each project, although 70 % of institutions set a maximum duration for completion. For instance, in France, the duration of the PhD study is adjusted according to the progress of the research project. Each year, students must present the advancement of their work to a thesis monitoring committee. Depending on the doctoral school, extensions of one or two years are not uncommon. In Poland, the standard duration is legally defined as three to four years but may be extended by up to two years if necessary. At UACEG, the total duration may also be affected by up to two interruptions, permitted only for justified reasons.

Admission Requirements

For 60 % of the partner universities, the admission criteria for the PhD are determined at institutional level while for the other 40 % (BTH, IPCB, UACEG and POLIS) the admission criteria for the PhD are national. When the university defines the admission criteria, there is a level of variability since the admission criteria can be different even within the PhD programmes of each university. In fact, the national law can provide a general basis, as in Italy, that consist only in the possession of a master's degree or equivalence but at the University level or even at the doctoral school level, there are more restrictive criteria for selecting candidates (e.g. possession of a specific type of degree, level of knowledge of a foreign language, etc.).

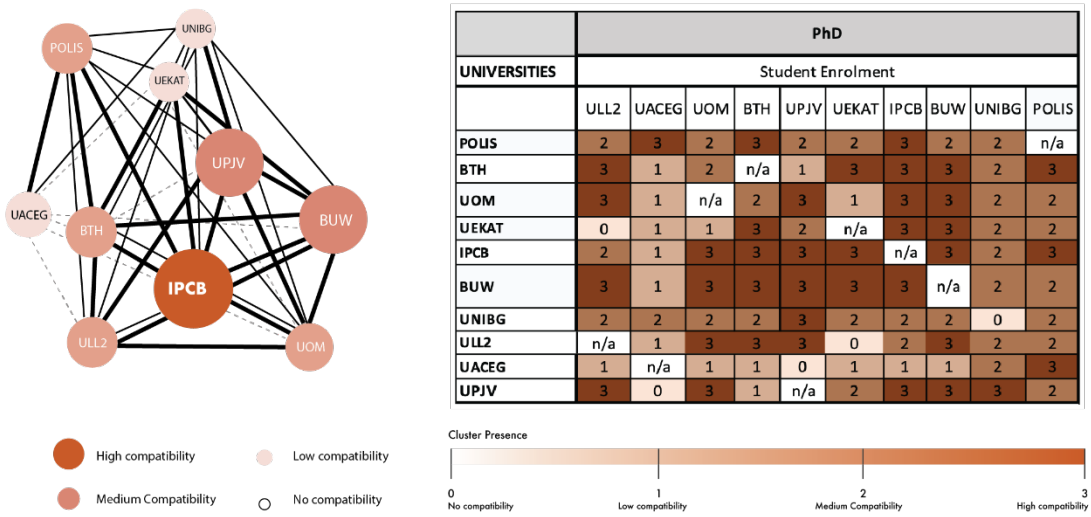
However, there is a number of commonalities among the alliance universities on the criteria applied for the admission in PhD programmes. Generally, to access doctoral studies, the applicant must have a master's degree with a profile assessed as "good" according to a grade or mention criterion which is specific to each doctoral school. For BUW, in case the minimum requirements are not met, some additional work determined by a Graduation Committee must be completed by the applicant. In other universities like UEKAT, the qualification procedure is based on a number of points obtained in two steps consisting of i) the evaluation of a file including in particular letters of recommendation, the research project and academic achievements and ii) an oral interview to assess the motivation, the knowledge and competencies of the applicant. The evaluation criteria that seem to be shared by most universities include language proficiency, a strong academic record, letters of recommendation, and the statement of purpose. It appears that the criteria may also vary between scientific fields and humanities and social sciences. Finally, standardised test scores are used in many programmes of

UOM. **Table 4** below summarises the main similarities in the admission criteria:

Table 4 Main Similarities for Admission Criteria in PhD programmes

Admission Criteria	Similarities (Common Across Countries)
Master's Degree (or Equivalent)	Required by all countries as the standard entry requirement. In Portugal and France, the option exists for direct entry from a Bachelor's in exceptional cases.
Research Proposal / Outline	A research proposal or outline is generally required to assess the relevance and feasibility of the research.
Academic Achievements	Previous academic performance (grades, publications, awards) is evaluated during the selection process.
Language Proficiency	Proof of language proficiency is mandatory in most countries for programmes taught in a non-native language (commonly English or the local language). - See **Table 5** for details
Letters of Recommendation	Almost all countries require 1–3 reference letters to assess academic potential and research aptitude.
Interview	A structured or semi-structured interview is part of the admission process in many countries to assess motivation, alignment, and research competence.
CV or Resume	All countries require a detailed CV, outlining academic history, research, work experience, and publications.
Professional Experience / Portfolio	Not mandatory, but considered valuable in some disciplines (e.g., design, architecture, arts, practice-led PhDs).
Admission Selectivity & Evaluation Process	Institutions evaluate candidates based on a combination of academic, research, and personal fit indicators. Admission is selective and competitive.
Alignment with Faculty / Supervisor	A good match with research supervisors is considered essential in nearly all systems.

The shared similarities described above make for a high compatibility among the BAUHAUS4EU universities with regard to the enrolment of students in PhD programmes (2.24 out of 3 - See last table in **Appendix 3**). More details on the compatibility of each institution are presented in **Figure 8** below:



	PhD									
UNIVERSITIES	Student Enrolment									
	ULL2	UACEG	UOM	BTH	UPJV	UEKAT	IPCB	BUW	UNIBG	POLIS
POLIS	2	3	2	3	2	2	3	2	2	n/a
BTH	3	1	2	n/a	1	3	3	3	2	3
UOM	3	1	n/a	2	3	1	3	3	2	2
UEKAT	0	1	1	3	2	n/a	3	3	2	2
IPCB	2	1	3	3	3	3	n/a	3	2	3
BUW	3	1	3	3	3	3	3	n/a	2	2
UNIBG	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	0	2
ULL2	n/a	1	3	3	3	0	2	3	2	2
UACEG	1	n/a	1	1	0	1	1	1	2	3
UPJV	3	0	3	1	n/a	2	3	3	3	2

Figure 8 Cluster Network - Student Enrolment_PhD Programmes

3.3.2. Curriculum Design

As explained in the previous section (3.3.1), in most institutions only the first year of the programme is organised with ECTS credits and includes coursework. Other curricular elements such as language requirements and teaching modalities are explored in the following sections:

Language requirements

In most of the partner universities there are mandatory requirements for the language of instruction (**Table 5**). At BUW the level of German or other language proficiency required is defined for each course by the Examination Regulations whereas it is determined in the act of approval by the Ministry in POLIS. It should be noted that in some doctoral programmes a sufficient level in the language of instruction is a prerequisite for entry into training. For English language programmes, an English C1 level is required as mentioned on the pages of each degree program. In UEKAT PhD programmes, the language of instruction is usually Polish but a second language, such as English, may be used only in predetermined programmes. In the same way, in UACEG, the language of instruction is specified in announcement for the doctoral programme and is typically Bulgarian or English.

Table 5 Summary of the Language Requirements in Partner Universities

University	Language requirements
BTH	No
BUW	Yes : Language proficiency (German or other) required; level defined for each course by the Examination Regulations.
IPCB	No
UACEG	Yes : Language (predominantly Bulgarian) requirements stated in the official programme announcement.

UEKAT	Yes : Usually Polish; a second language may be used in specific programmes
ULL2	Yes : Level in French
UNIBG	No
UOM	No
UPJV	Yes : Level in French
POLIS	Yes : Language requirements defined by the act of approval from the Ministry.

Teaching Modalities

In all but four partner Universities (IPCB, UEKAT, UNIBG and UOM), there are no legal barriers to online / blended modes of teaching. Nevertheless, protection of personal data as well as technical issues regarding the implementation of distance learning methods must be considered. In UEKAT, only physical attendance is allowed according to the rules and regulations of the doctoral school. In UOM, it is the Department Assembly which lists the courses and educational activities that can be conducted using distance learning methods. The Department Assembly's decision takes into account that practical, laboratory or clinical training of students necessarily require their physical presence.

Experience with International / Joint Programmes

Only one partner university (POLIS) has experience with joint PhD programmes, while four institutions (BTH, UACEG, ULL2 and UNIBG) have experience with co-tutorship schemes with international partners.

BTH is involved in a lot of co-supervision arrangements with international partners of foreign PhD students. UACEG has had a double degree with the Technical University of Vienna for more than 10 years. Around 10 % of all PhD candidates at ULL2 are enrolled in co-tutorship schemes with international partners, corresponding to approximately 100 students. UNIBG has several joint supervision agreements with European and non-European universities.

Since 2012, POLIS University has been delivering a joint PhD programme with the University of Ferrara, Italy. The programme is governed by a joint Academic Board and run by designated programme coordinators from both institutions. It has been developed jointly and all processes (admission, delivery of courses, students' supervision, graduation) are administered jointly. Upon the completion of the programme students are issued two diplomas (one by each university).

3.3.3. Graduation and Diploma Issuance

In 60 % of the partner universities specific criteria for the dissertation exist. The criteria may correspond to a number of ECTS (at least 120 ECTS for BTH), the form of the thesis (at IPCB, the PhD student must choose between the drawing up of an original thesis especially for this purpose, appropriate to the nature of the branch of knowledge or specialty or the compilation of a coherent and relevant set of research works or in the field of the arts, a work or set of works or accompanied by a written statement of reasons), a minimal number of pages (at UACEG, the thesis must explore a scientific problem in the specialty, have scientific contributions based on a scientific experiment or scientific research, and be at least 150 pages long), a number of publication in peer- reviewed journal (at UOM, as the dissertation should contribute original knowledge or insights to the field through new

research, a novel interpretation of existing data, or innovative methodologies).

In some programmes, there is a requirement for the doctoral candidate to have demonstrated participation in at least two or more peer-reviewed international conferences and at least one publication related to their dissertation topic in a reputable, peer-reviewed international journal which must be included in at least one of the accepted indexing systems and/or in the SCIMAGO and ABS lists). Some criteria are also determined by the law. **Table 6** summarises the main requirements across the consortium:

Table 6 Summary of Thesis Requirements for PhD programmes

Criteria Category	Requirements
Original Contribution	Across the alliance the dissertation is expected to provide new knowledge**,** innovative methodology**,** or novel interpretation.
Format Flexibility	In some cases, the thesis format is well defined (dissertation with a specific minimal number of pages as in Bulgaria) Some other countries show higher flexibility. The thesis can be: - Monograph - Collection of published articles - Artistic/design work - A coherent body of research work
Publications Requirement	Often include peer-reviewed journal publication and conference participations (indexed in SCOPUS, SCIMAGO, or ABS)
Independent Research	Candidate must show capacity for independent research**,** problem-solving, and deep theoretical knowledge.
Evaluation by External Reviewers	Evaluation by at least two external experts**,** often not affiliated with the awarding university is mandatory in countries like Italy, Portugal, Albania.
Oral Defense Requirement	Dissertation must be defended publicly in front of a university-appointed committee in most institutions.
Documentation of PhD Journey	Final thesis submission includes research report**,** activities log, publications list.
Ethics	In most institutions ethical clearance is required.

Academic Integrity and Intellectual Property Rights

For all the partner universities except BUW, IPCB and UNIBG, antiplagiarism checks are mandatory but the software used varies between universities. The software *StrikePlagiarism* has been purchased by the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science. In Poland, the software used is *Official Polish ministerial Uniform Anti-plagiarism System*. *Compilatio* is used by ULL2 and UPJV, and *Turnitin* is used by UOM and POLIS. The detection of plagiarism, scientific misconduct or fraud will result in the end of the process in UACEG.

The student holds the Intellectual Property Rights of the dissertation in all the universities except in France and Bulgaria where it is a co-ownership.

Graduation, Distinctions, and External Involvement

Distinction or honors still exist in different forms in most of the partner universities, but not in BTH, ULL2, and UPJV. In UACEG, the students of the graduating class distinguished by honors are announced every year when the diplomas are awarded whereas in UEKAT, students receive a letter of honors if the PhD Committee votes for a student distinction. In BUW, a different rating system may be used including qualitative classification, expressed by the following terms: magna cum laude (very good 1,0), cum laude (good 2,0), rite (passed 3,0), non sufficit (not passed 4,0). In POLIS, the only distinction given to thesis of outstanding quality is cum laude. In UNIBG, theses judged to be excellent have the possibility of being published in the Editorial Series of the PhD School. In UOM, the University may award scholarships and grants. Excellence scholarships are granted by the State Scholarship Foundation.

It is possible to engage external / foreign thesis supervisors / reviewers in all the partner universities (under conditions at UPJV) except UOM.

Diploma Issuance

Moreover, there are legal restrictions for the format of diploma and diploma supplements in all the partner universities except UPJV, UOM and UNIBG. These restrictions only apply to the elements except for UACEG and ULL2 for which these restrictions also concern the design. In addition, there are legal restrictions for the conferral of degrees in all the partner universities except UPJV and POLIS. BTH and UNIBG need to receive accreditation within a certain scientific area in order to confer the PhD title.

The diploma / diploma supplements are signed by the Rector / President in all the partner universities but also by the dean in IPCB and UACEG and by the head of department in UOM.

3.3.4 Conclusions

The comparison of PhD programmes across partner universities highlights a balance between harmonization and institutional/national specificity. While there is a clear convergence in core academic values such as the need for rigorous admission processes, structured doctoral training, thesis originality and integrity, significant divergences remain in terms of administrative practices, language policies, and recognition frameworks. These variations constitute an achievable challenge in the context of growing European cooperation, particularly for the establishment of joint programmes.

Across the partner universities, the main convergences that can be observed regarding PhD programmes are:

- **Admission criteria:** All institutions require a master's degree or equivalent for entry, often accompanied by a strong academic record, language proficiency, and other qualitative assess-

ments such as interviews or research proposals. While the exact criteria vary, most universities share a commitment to high academic standards.

- **Programme duration:** The most common basic duration is 3 years, and it can be extended when necessary.
- **Thesis requirements:** There is a shared emphasis on the originality and scientific contribution of the doctoral thesis. Most institutions require publications and participation in conferences. Criteria such as length, format, and publication requirements are generally defined by national or institutional rules.
- **Academic integrity:** Anti-plagiarism checks are mandatory in most universities, though different software is used.

However, there are divergences regarding the PhD that must be taken into account:

- **Level of admission control:** Even if the basic admission criteria are shared between the partner universities, it appears that precise admission criteria can vary. Even within institutions, criteria can vary by doctoral school or programme.
- **Language of instruction:** Some institutions have strict language requirements, while others allow flexibility depending on the programme.
- **Grading and distinctions:** Distinction systems differ significantly. While some universities provide honors or publish distinguished PhD, others have no formal distinction system. Grading systems also vary from qualitative to quantitative assessments.

3.4. Micro-Credentials

Europe's educational landscape is undergoing swift and undeniable changes, driven largely by the green and digital transitions. In this context aligning the regulatory frameworks that govern micro-credentials has become essential to fostering a more integrated and flexible learning environment, an objective emphasized by the European Council in its Approach to Micro-Credentials for Lifelong Learning and Employability (2022/C243/02). As is stated by this European Approach (EA), for micro-credentials to truly realize their potential, they must be built on shared standards, particularly around transparency and cross-border comparability.

Taking these aspects into consideration, it is important to acknowledge that the great majority of the ten higher education institutions that integrate into the present Alliance operate within distinct national regulations and academic conventions. Yet they are jointly committed to developing a coherent approach that enables learners to acquire and transfer micro-credentials seamlessly across borders. This collaborative initiative not only promotes transparency and mutual recognition but also lays the foundation for an ever more robust European framework that supports lifelong learning, innovation, and the modernization of European higher education institutions.

In the section below, we highlight the main aspects regarding the compatibility of the regulatory frameworks for micro-credentials – that is, the main points of convergence and those that constitute outliers within the BAUHAUS4EU Alliance members, based on data gathered via a dedicated questionnaire (**Appendix 2**).

3.4.1. Regulatory Context

Regarding regulatory matters, it can be said that MCs within the framework of the Alliance partners are still at a relatively early stage, since only two universities (BTH and UNIBG) have said that MCs are included in their respective National Qualifications Framework. It should be noted, however, that 6 out of the 10 responding universities stated that "there is" or that "it is expected soon to be" legal provisions for micro-credentials in their national regulatory framework (e.g. law, bylaws and normative acts), which indicates that common ground for joint work might be expected to surge in upcoming years.

In terms of each university's institutional framework, which is likely shaped by its national regulatory context, the majority of universities (around 70 %) reported having no institutional provisions for micro-credentials in place. Of those who responded that there are no legal provisions for micro-credentials, only one partner, the University of Macedonia (UOM), indicated that such regulations are expected to be introduced soon. On the other hand, BTH, IPCB, and UACEG claimed to already have legal provisions for MCs in their institutional normative acts.

When comparing the actors involved in approving micro-credentials (whether designed for students, academic or administrative staff, or regional stakeholders) no consistent pattern emerges. Instead, there is considerable variability in how each institution navigates the approval process. What does stand out is that some universities follow a distinctly hierarchical model, where micro-credentials – regardless of their target audience – require authorization from the Ministry or a National Agency. This is notably the case, in specific contexts (such as courses for students, courses for regional

stakeholders, and courses for academic and administrative staff, respectively) for UOM, as well as UACEG and POLIS (only for courses aimed at regional stakeholders). These miscellaneous forms of approvals reflect a spectrum from institutional autonomy to hierarchical oversight between the partners from the Alliance.

Regarding this matter, there seems to be a need to better identify and clarify situations where approval by the Ministry or National Agency is required, but there is no established regulation on a National Qualifications Framework. When setting up micro-credentials a closer look to what criteria or regulations the MCs approved are is needed.

3.4.2. Practice and Quality Mechanisms

The practical aspect, however, seems to overcome the relative lack of legal frameworks within the Alliance members, since 70 % of respondents said they had already had some kind of experience with micro-credentials. In the case of Polytechnic University of Castelo Branco (IPCB), for an example, even though Portugal has not yet included MCs in its National Qualifications Framework, the IPCB has been offering these kinds of courses to students, staff and general public since the academic year of 2022/2023, namely in Digital Skills and Protection of People and Property areas.

In addition, other institutions, such as ULL2 and BUW, which also do not have MCs on their National Qualification Framework, claimed to have this type of experience by offering short life-long learning courses for adult learners, BIPs or continuing education for external stakeholders, although none refers to them as MCs.

As for how MCs should be made available, 80 % of the respondents affirm that they will be set up as stand-alone short courses, which might translate into a positive aspect in terms of compatibility and expectations within the Alliance. It is encouraging that the majority of the partners appear to share a similar perspective on the format that MCs should adopt. This suggests that there has been a shared foundation upon which to develop these courses from the outset.

As for quality assessment matters (accreditation), most of the partners do not possess external processes of quality assessment, with only UOM and UACEG having responded affirmatively, even though not having any kind of national framework.

Taking this into account, the following question arises: how is external assessment carried out in the absence of any national regulatory framework? And in such cases, which actor is actually responsible for conducting the assessment? For this, it is important to take into account, again, the European Approach on micro-credentials, once it states that external quality assurance is to be conducted, where applicable, in line with mechanisms such as: the European Qualifications Framework Recommendation; the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area and the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework. These can offer some guidance on the issue and implementation of micro-credentials. On the other hand, regarding internal processes of quality assessment, the number of affirmative answers rises considerably, with half of the respondents having said to possess some kind of internal quality assessment.
When it comes to how MCs are currently recognized, most institutions don't see them through a single, narrow lens. In fact, the vast majority – 7 out of 10 – identify MCs primarily as tools for upskilling

and reskilling, empowering individuals to adapt to rapidly evolving professional demands. In the same way, 8 out of 10 institutions also view MCs as essential for lifelong learning and continuing professional development, underscoring their role in fostering a culture of constant growth and adaptability.

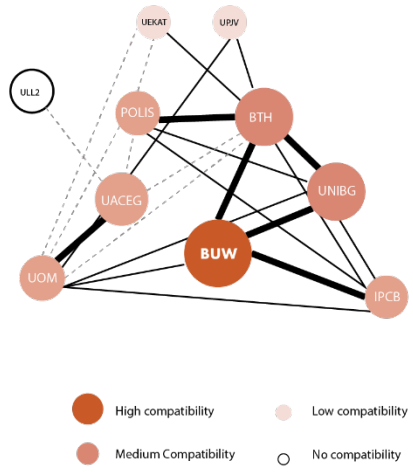
Additionally, only two of the respondents consider MCs part of formal qualifications. Although this is a clear minority, it also signals that micro-credentials might begin to blur the traditional boundaries between short-term learning and accredited education pathways. Also, 3 out of 10 institutions recognize MCs as catalysts for labour market mobility, illustrating their emerging value as portable, verifiable evidence of skills that can unlock new job opportunities. Overall, these perspectives reveal a dynamic landscape where MCs are not just a trend but an ever more valid instrument to reconfigure education and work – combining flexibility, relevance, and lifelong impact, maintaining the partner institutions as drivers of change in their respective areas of influence.

Following the completion of the compatibility matrices relating to the aspects addressed by the second questionnaire, cluster analysis revealed an average compatibility of 1.47 across the institutions regarding this matter, a result of the values presented in **Figure 9**. This value can be interpreted as indicating low-to-moderate compatibility, according to the parameter of values showcased in **Appendix 3** for this figure.

This suggests that, overall, the majority of universities do not establish particularly robust connections regarding micro-credentials, since only BUW has a high compatibility average, as shown in the related table regarding micro-credentials in **Appendix 3**. Yet a unifying element maintains the cohesion of the system, as there are no peripheral nodes. The conclusions that can be drawn from interpreting the compatibility table in **Figure 9** are entirely unexpected, given the general absence of regulation in the countries where these universities are based. This can be further compounded by their relative inexperience in creating micro-credentials compared to bachelor's or master's degrees.

The ten institutions can be divided into two clusters, as shown by the values in **Figure 9**: the initial segment comprises BUW and BTH. The mean compatibility score for this pair is above 2, thus indicating their role as the core cluster.

The existence of robust connections between the two universities might be explained by a common vision concerning the delivery and recognition of micro-credentials as standalone short courses, as well as the necessity for internal quality assessment. Additionally, as is shown by **Figure 9**, BUW and BTH also show strong compatibility with UNIBG and IPCB, meaning they have the highest compatibility average in the whole group (thus forming the core cluster).



	Microcredentials									
UNIVERSITIES										
	ULL2	UACEG	UOM	BTH	UPJV	UEKAT	IPCB	BUW	UNIBG	POLIS
POLIS	0	1	1	3	0	1	2	2	2	n/a
BTH	0	2	1	n/a	2	2	2	3	3	3
UOM	0	3	n/a	1	2	1	2	2	2	1
UEKAT	0	2	1	2	2	n/a	1	2	2	1
IPCB	0	1	2	2	2	1	n/a	3	2	2
BUW	0	2	2	3	2	2	3	n/a	3	2
UNIBG	0	1	2	3	1	2	2	3	n/a	2
ULL2	n/a	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UACEG	1	n/a	3	2	1	1	1	2	1	1
UPJV	0	2	2	2	n/a	2	2	2	1	0

Figure 9 Cluster Network - Micro-credentials

It is worth highlighting that the presence of links between universities in **Figure 9** does not inherently imply that they belong to the same cluster. Notwithstanding, even in circumstances where universities do not form part of the same cluster, it is possible for them to sustain pertinent connections with one another. The determining factor for the assignment of subjects to a particular cluster is their average compatibility.

Most universities, however, have moderate connections with each other (with an average value of 1,5 – 2,0). These universities make up the second cluster, comprising the moderately connected universities (UNIBG, IPCB, UOM, UEKAT, UACEG, UPJV and POLIS). It is worth noting, nevertheless, that the overall compatibility value presented is somewhat affected by the disconnected node (i.e., ULL2), once the respective respondents have considered that due to lack of regulation and practices in place the compatibility could not be assessed.

In spite of that, it can be said that the partner institutions are somewhat compatible with regard to micro-credentials. As mentioned earlier, this does not need to be perceived as a barrier to the development of micro-credentials within the Alliance. In other words, there may be common ground on which to build and develop micro-credentials for future courses that the Alliance will make available.

3.4.3. Conclusions

Even though regulatory frameworks for micro-credentials across the BAUHAUS4EU Alliance remain diverse and often underdeveloped, the practical implementation and institutional initiatives shown by most of the partners demonstrate a growing momentum toward compatibility and mutual recognition. Once again, the European Council's 2022 statement on this subject must be considered, as it urges member states to facilitate the development of micro-credentials in formal learning environments to foster an ecosystem for them. The document also explicitly cites European university alliances as an important factor in this regard.

To achieve this goal, there are some practical questions that need to be clarified regarding, mostly,

the way through which the process of approval of an MC is done when there is a national regulatory gap. The importance of this question lies in understanding what the actual freedom that each institution has to create and make these kinds of courses available to the Alliance students in the short term, since a key principle for making micro-credentials effective within the alliance is the mutual institutional recognition of learning.

This requires aligning learning outcomes with the European and National Qualifications Frameworks (EQF/NQF), ensuring a clear match between acquired skills and qualification levels. With this in mind, and since there is strong alignment among respondents on how MCs will be structured and recognized (mostly as standalone courses), a crucial step toward achieving the objectives is to clarify how approval and quality assurance can be managed in the absence of national regulations.

As key take aways, we conclude that:

- Even though universities use different designations – and despite legal gaps - most of the partners (70 %) have some experience with what can be regarded as micro-credentials. Others run short courses but do not label them as MCs.

- Only two partners claim to have a National Qualifications Framework dedicated to micro-credentials (BTH and UNIBG). Those frameworks, along with the European Approach, might serve as a useful pathway to find common ground for creating and assessing micro-credentials within the Alliance.

- External quality assessment seems to be somewhat limited for micro-credentials. Only UOM and UACEG claim to have it, but there is no clarity on how it works without national frameworks. However, according to the European Approach on this matter, this type of external assessment should align with mechanisms such as the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area and the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training.

- The answers on the form show that there are very different levels of hierarchy within each university, which may determine the pace at which micro-credentials from each institution are made available on the Alliance platform.

- Where possible, common ground for the development of MCs within the Alliance should be found in good practices already in place among Alliance members and in the adoption of the European Approach recommendations.

- The lack of practice in this area should not prevent the implementation of MCs. The approach should be based on co-construction and joint provision, embodying the principles of collaborative internationalization that have already been established by the European Approach to this matter.

Table 7 presents the main findings from the comparison of regulatory frameworks on micro-credentials across the partner countries, highlighting key similarities and differences.

Table 7 Main Findings on the Comparison between Regulatory Frameworks on Micro-credentials

Regulatory Context	• Micro-credentials (MCs) are still at an early stage in most Alliance universities. • Only 2 universities (BTH & UNIBG) have MCs in their National Qualifications Framework (NQF). • 6 of 10 universities report having or soon expecting legal provisions for MCs. • 70 % of universities have no institutional provisions for MCs. • Approval processes vary some are institution-based, while others require Ministry/National Agency authorization (e.g., UOM, UACEG, POLIS)
Practice & Experience	• Despite legal gaps, 70 % of institutions already have experience with MC-like initiatives (short courses, BIPs, continuing education). • Example: IPCB offers MCs from 2022/23 in areas like Digital Skills and Protection of People and Property. • ULL2 and BUW offer short lifelong learning courses but don't label them as MCs. • 80 % of institutions plan to set up MCs as stand-alone short courses.
Quality Assurance	• External quality assessment is uncommon: only UOM and UACEG claim to have it (though unclear how, given no national framework). • European guidelines (EQF, ESG, EQAVET) are reference points for future alignment. • Internal QA is more common: about 50 % of institutions have processes in place.
Recognition and Roles	• 7/10 institutions see MCs as tools for upskilling/reskilling. • 8/10 institutions see MCs as essential for lifelong learning & professional development. • Only 2 institutions view MCs as part of formal qualifications. • 3/10 institutions see MCs as tools for labour market mobility.
Conclusions	• Frameworks are diverse and often underdeveloped, but practical initiatives are growing. • Key issue: how MCs can be approved and quality-assured without national regulation? • Alignment with EQF/NQF and European Approach is essential. • Strong consensus that MCs will be structured as standalone courses.
Key Takeways	• Experience exists across partners, even if not under the label "micro-credentials." • Only BTH & UNIBG have MCs in national frameworks. • External QA is still unclear. • Different levels of hierarchy in approvals may impact implementation speed. • Best practices and European Approach should guide future harmonization. • Lack of regulation should not block implementation, collaboration and co-construction are key factors in this process.

4 Case Studies

This chapter examines the feasibility of two selected potential joint degree programmes within the Alliance. Considering that the overall compatibility among the alliance institutions is the highest for Master's programmes (2.15 out of 3 - see **table 3.1** in **Appendix 3**), we selected two case studies pertaining to this level of qualification. Further, these two potential joint programmes are already under internal consideration and investigation at BUW (4.1) and BTH (4.2) respectively.

The Objectives of the Case Studies are to assess whether joint degree programmes are structurally feasible and examine their compatibility regarding the following criteria:

- Semester structure and programme duration
- Admission requirements and curriculum design
- Accreditation and degree recognition frameworks
- Identify potential administrative or regulatory barriers

The approach adopted for the assessment of their feasibility in this report can be replicated for the other potential joint degree programmes foreseen to be set up under Work Package 8 of the BAUHAUS4EU project – which is specifically dedicated to the implementation of joint degree programmes (scheduled to begin in January 2026).

4.1. Joint Master's Programme in Sustainable Transportation Planning

The establishment of joint degree programmes represents the most ambitious format of cooperation, which is why Bauhaus-Universität Weimar is grateful to be able to provide additional national funds to the participating faculties for curriculum development. The DAAD's EUN programme complements the EU funding by providing extra financial and organisational support to German universities within the European University alliances.

Between March and September 2025, preliminary concepts for two joint degree programmes, both involving the Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering, were developed internally, examining curricula, synergies and options for interdisciplinary collaboration. One of these, the *Master of Science in Sustainable Transport Planning (STP)*, was selected as a case study to explore the structural and institutional compatibility of potential joint degree development within the BAUHAUS4EU Alliance.

The degree programme covers the subject area of Sustainable Transport Planning. It is located at the intersection of engineering qualifications and sustainability research, specifically focusing on the planning and operation of environmentally conscious transport systems. It draws from fields such as urban planning, transport planning, civil engineering, geography, and environmental sciences. It addresses the significant and growing societal importance of sustainable transport planning, aiming to enable students to thoroughly understand its intricacies and links to other critical social issues. The programme directly responds to the urgent need for experts who can plan and evaluate transport

infrastructure through a sustainability lens, tackling real-world problems informed by ongoing research and active planning initiatives. It also fosters international exchange and collaboration as key elements for future global challenges in mobility.

The current feasibility analysis focuses on a joint degree programme with the following universities:

1. Bauhaus-Universität Weimar (Germany)
2. Blekinge Institute of Technology (BTH), Karlskrona (Sweden)
3. University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy (UACEG), Sofia (Bulgaria)

4.1.1. BUW, Weimar (Germany)

This feasibility study outlines the potential of a Joint Master of Science programme in Sustainable Transportation Planning (STP), developed by the Chair of Transport System Planning in collaboration with at least two partner universities from the BAUHAUS4EU Alliance.

Semester Structure:
The university typically operates on a winter and summer semester model (October to March and April to September). This aligns well with most European academic calendars.

Programme Duration:
Bachelor's programmes at the Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering are typically six semesters, while Master's programmes are four semesters. A joint programme could fit within a standard 3-year Bachelor and 2-year Master framework.

Admission Requirements:
National entrance standards apply. Additional language requirements (English) may be necessary depending on the language of instruction.
Formal requirements: Bachelor's degree or equivalent recognised first professionally qualifying degree (grade: depending on study programme).

Design of Master Curriculum:
In the case of significant changes (e.g. specialisation or admission to the degree programme) the concept of the degree programme can be reviewed, and reaccreditation can be triggered.
Non-substantial changes, such as the offering of electives, are not directly relevant to accreditation and typically do not require further consideration. Usually the last semester (up to 30 ECTS) is dedicated to the master's thesis.

Accreditation:
Programmes at Bauhaus-Universität Weimar are usually subject to national accreditation procedures. The European Approach has been partially adopted, and the national QA system is compliant with the ESG (European Standard Guidelines). Furthermore, the national authority is a member of ENQA.
A single accreditation process for joint degrees can be aimed for instead of separate accreditations in each country. The German Accreditation Council recognizes the decision if it meets the criteria. If positive, this decision is recognized in Germany.

Feasibility Summary:
A joint degree with Bauhaus-Universität Weimar is feasible in principle, particularly at the master's

level. Attention should be paid to the alignment of quality assurance and examination frameworks. BUW has experience with MSc programmes taught in English and the accreditation via European Approach is considered achievable

4.1.2. BTH, Karlskrona (Sweden)

The Master's programme in Sustainable Urban Planning / Strategic Urban and Regional Planning, offered by the Faculty of Spatial Planning presents a relevant academic framework for the development and implementation of a Joint Degree in Sustainable Transport Planning.

Semester Structure:
The academic year is divided into two semesters: Autumn (September to January) and Spring (January to June). The start date differs slightly but allows for alignment with minor adjustments.

Programme Duration:
Master's programmes are typically 1 or 2 years (60–120 ECTS). This matches the Bologna framework and offers flexibility.

Admission Requirements:
English is commonly the medium of instruction, especially in Master's programmes. Admission is handled centrally through Sweden's national system, which may require coordination for joint admissions. To be admitted, it is required that the applicant has basic eligibility and, in addition, the specific eligibility (decided by the university) that may be prescribed.
BTH does not charge any tuition fees for students with a citizenship within the EU/EEA and Switzerland.

Design of Master Curriculum:
BTH offers two types of master's programmes: a 1-year programme and 2-year programmes, the latter being particularly relevant for a Joint Degree. Each 2-year master's programme concludes with a degree project of at least 30 ECTS, while a minimum of 60 ECTS is devoted to progressive specialization within the programme's main field of study. This structure aligns well with the design of curricula at BUW.

Accreditation:
Programmes are accredited by the Swedish Higher Education Authority. Joint degrees would need to comply with both national regulations and European frameworks. The European approach is not adopted, but the national QA system is compliant with the ESG (European Standard Guidelines). Furthermore, the national authority is member of ENQA.

Feasibility Summary:
BTH offers a high level of compatibility, particularly in Master's programmes taught in English.
Semester timing would require coordination. Legal and academic frameworks support joint degree development.

4.1.3. UACEG, Sofia (Bulgaria)

The Master's programme in Civil Engineering / Transport Infrastructure, offered by the Faculty of Transport Construction, presents a relevant academic framework for the development and implementation of a Joint Degree in Sustainable Transport Planning.

Semester Structure:
UACEG follows a traditional academic calendar with two semesters: Winter (September to February) and Summer (February to July). This is largely compatible with the other institutions.

Programme Duration:
The Master's programmes of UACEG are of two types: long-term after secondary education with a duration of 9 semesters and short after a completed bachelor's or master's degree with a duration of 3 or 4 semesters. The first one concerns regulated professions and are not suitable for joint training, but the short ones, to which the one cited above belongs, are suitable. It lasts for 3 academic semesters and ends with the development of a master's thesis.

Admission Requirements:
Admission is regulated nationally, with instruction primarily in Bulgarian. However, selected programmes in English are available, which could serve as a basis for international joint degrees, the cited Master's in Sustainable Transport Infrastructure programme being one of them.
Admission is based on a ranking, which has predetermined criteria: grade from the bachelor's degree or another completed master's degree and specialty from the diploma.

Design of Master Curriculum:
The normal master's programme at UACEG is 4 or 5 years long with 9 academic semesters and development of diploma thesis. These Master's programmes at UACEG are for regulated professions. Short master's programmes are 1.5 or 2 years long. 2 or 3 academic semesters and development of diploma thesis. The proposed joint Master's programme is 2 years long - 3 academic semesters and development of diploma thesis (120 ECTS). There's no specified weight in ECTS for the internship, but there are predefined ECTS for elective courses.

Accreditation:
Programmes are normally accredited through the Bulgarian National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency. There is a special regulation for the accreditation of a new short Master's programme. If the last regular accreditation was excellent, and UACEG has an excellent rating, the training in the short master's programme begins immediately after its acceptance by the Academic Council of UACEG, Formal accreditation occurs during the subsequent regular accreditation process, every 5 years. The European Approach has been adopted, and the national QA system is compliant with the ESG (European Standard Guidelines). Furthermore, the national authority is a member of ENQA.

Feasibility Summary:
A joint degree programme with UACEG is plausible, particularly at the master's level.

4.1.4. General Conclusions and List of Potential Risks and Suggested Mitigation Measures

The feasibility analysis of the proposed Joint Master of Science in Sustainable Transportation Planning (STP) between Bauhaus-Universität Weimar (BUW) and selected BAUHAUS4EU partner universities indicates a generally favourable outlook, with several key strengths and some areas requiring further coordination. **Table 9** presents a summary of key findings related to the feasibility of the proposed Joint Master of Science Programme in Sustainable Transportation Planning.

Table 9 Summary of Findings on the Feasibility of the Joint Master of Science Programme in Sustainable Transportation Planning

	BUW	BTH	UACEG
Semester dates	A winter and summer semester model (October to March and April to September).	Autumn (September to January) and Spring (January to June).	Winter (September to February) and Summer (February to July).
Duration Master's programmes	1 or 2 years (in Engineering usually 2 years)	1 or 2 years	2 years
Admission	Specific eligibility for the programme	Specific eligibility for the programme	Based on ranking, specific eligibility for the programme
Design of Curriculum	Flexible in electives and online / blended modes of teaching, thesis up to 30 ECTS	flexible in online / blended modes of teaching, degree project of at least 30 ECTS	Curriculum contains compulsory and elective courses, flexible in online / blended modes of teaching. 30 ECTS per semester, ends with development of thesis (30 ECTS)
Accreditation	EA partially adopted. national QA system compliant with the ESG; national authority is member of ENQA	EA not adopted. national QA system compliant with the ESG. national authority is member of ENQA	EA adopted. national QA system compliant with the ESG. national authority is member of ENQA. The programme begins as soon as it is accepted by the Academic Council of UACEG.

The following table (**Table 10)** identifies potential risks associated with the implementation of the Joint Master's Programme and outlines proposed strategies for their mitigation.

Table 10 Potential Risks and Proposed Mitigation for the Joint Master of Science Programme in Sustainable Transportation Planning

Risk	Where it appears	Suggested mitigation
Duration Master's programme	Q31–32	Commit collectively to 120-ECTS
Curriculum: Design of Electives/Compulsory Electives	Q37	To ensure coherence, the partner institutions should adopt Joint Examination Regulations that include: • Unified Definition of Elective Categories: Clearly distinguish between fully optional and mandatory electives • Common Elective Catalogue: Create a joint pool of approved electives, with defined ECTS, learning outcomes, and eligibility requirements. • Governance Through Joint Programme Committee: should regularly review and update the elective offerings; ensure elective courses remain aligned with the programme's learning outcomes.
Curriculum: Blended modes of teaching	Q35	Keep core modules on-site. Use digital guest lectures, mentoring, joint seminars. Ensure assessment is compliant locally.
Semester dates, overlap of semesters	Q6	Place mobility at BTH in first or third semester (autumn semester)
QA/EA variation	Q73–75	Bind QA to ESG, reference ENQA membership, and include an internal joint QA handbook mapping to joint processes. Challenge: No European Approach adapted in Sweden.
Fee clarity for mobile students	Q80–81	Publish a fee and scholarship grid by path. Earmark mobility scholarships (Erasmus+/alliance funds).

The following key takeaways summarise the main conclusions drawn from the analysis of the structural and institutional compatibility of the proposed joint Master of Science in Sustainable Transport Planning.

- A joint degree programme appears structurally feasible with all three institutions, particularly at the master's level, where harmonization of programme lengths and content is more flexible.
- Semester timing requires moderate coordination but does not present a major barrier.
- Accreditation procedures vary, but existing European Higher Education Area (EHEA) frameworks provide a common foundation for joint programme approval. Since accreditation is

required every six years in both Sweden and Bulgaria, this provides a shared foundation for accreditation procedures. In accordance with the European Approach, the joint programme shall also be subject to periodic review every six years.

- Language of education and admission processes will need to be carefully aligned, requiring shared language policies and joint selection procedures.

A two-year Master of Science programme, comprising 120 ECTS credits, is recommended as a full joint degree. The proposed structure follows a rotational model, with students undertaking courses across the three partner universities and completing the programme with a master's thesis at one of the institutions.

Based on this compatibility analysis, the proposed joint-degree concept shows medium to high feasibility with BTH and UACEG. BUW's institutional experience and strong academic alignment provide a solid foundation for launching a joint MSc programme within the Alliance.

While BTH and UACEG have been selected as the focus of the present case study, other partner universities within the Alliance are also of interest for the proposed programme, depending on their thematic orientation and curricular profiles.

4.2. Joint Master's Programme in Software, Business & Management

This part of the report aims to explore the structural and institutional compatibility of a potential joint master's programme in Software, Business & Management involving BTH, UEKAT and UOM. The proposed joint master's programme combines Software Engineering (cloud-based software development, AI for SE, security, requirements, testing, architecture etc.) with Business/Leadership (business model design, value analysis, realization strategies etc.), with the goal of forming business-savvy technical leaders for software-intensive companies and organisations. The implication for the design of the programme is that the curriculum should include: (a) a strong technical core; (b) managerial/economic decision-making; (c) product/venture realization experiences; (d) a thesis that integrates both perspectives.

The purpose of this case study is to systematically identify and discuss potential obstacles to setting up the proposed joint master's programme. It is based solely on the "Questionnaire – Task 3.1" responses for BTH, UEKAT and UOM, focusing on master-level items (Q31–38 and Q55–64), cross-cutting institutional items (Q1–10), quality assurance items (Q73–78) and resources items (Q79–87). The question numbering follows the questionnaire's structure.

4.2.1. Baseline Compatibility (Systems, Legal, Calendars)

All three partners report Bologna/ECTS/EQF compliance (Q1–4) and that joint degrees are legally allowed (Q5). This removes the most fundamental barriers.

Academic calendars and approval lead-times

- BTH: 2 semesters (Sept. to mid-Jan. resp. mid-Jan. to early June). Approximately 1.5–2 years from establishment of a programme to first intake (Q6–7).
- UEKAT: The winter term begins roughly on Oct. 1, while the summer term begins roughly on March 1. There is a formal internal process with fixed autumn deadlines (Q6–7).
- UOM: There are two 13-week semesters (Sept.–Jan. resp. Feb.–June). It takes at least 2 years to open/reorganise a programme (Q6–7).

We note that the calendars are broadly compatible. The 2-year approval window at UOM sets a boundary to the pace. With consortium coordination and parallel internal work, the first feasible intake would be in the autumn of 2028.

Quality Assurance and Recognition

This part reviews the quality assurance frameworks across the partner institutions, assessing their alignment with European standards and identifying areas for joint quality governance development.

- EA (European Approach): BTH “No”; UEKAT “Partially”; UOM “Yes”.
- ESG compliance: BTH and UOM respond “Yes, fully”; UEKAT only “Partially”.
- ENQA membership: All involved partners respond “Yes”.
- Local QA cycles: All involved partners have regular internal/external evaluations and national accreditation cycles.

We note that the QA ecosystems of the involved partner universities are mature. A joint QA document should reference ESG compliance at all three and—where EA is partial/non-adopted—describe the joint-governance/assessment mechanisms explicitly.

Resources and Operations

The analysis of resources and operational conditions across the partner universities highlights key differences in tuition structures, scholarship availability, and housing provisions, all of which are essential for planning and supporting student mobility within the program.

- Tuition/admin fees: At BTH tuition fees only applies to non-EU students (approximately €10k–€15k/year) as well as a small application fee, but no fees for students from EU/EEA. At UEKAT tuition fees are paid by all students, and a small application fee of approximately €20. At UOM tuition fees vary by department, but no admin fees are reported.
- Scholarships: Available at all three partner universities.
- Housing: UEKAT and UOM report the existence of dorms (also for international students). BTH does not provide any dorms of their own.

This implies that one should establish transparent fee tables by mobility path and a scholarship pool earmarked for cross-border mobility (e.g. semesters 2 or 3). Also provide housing guidance, especially in Karlskrona.

4.2.2. Master-level Curriculum Compatibility

This chapter examines the compatibility of master-level curricula across the partner institutions, focusing on the ECTS of the programmes, duration and language of instruction. Moreover, it outlines

the predetermined curriculum structures, highlighting the differences in programme design requirements and their implications for joint degree alignment.

Size and duration (Q31-32)

- BTH: 60 or 120 ECTS, 1-year or 2-year programmes
- UOM: 60 or 120 ECTS, 1-year or 2-year programmes
- UEKAT: 120 ECTS, 2-year programmes

This implies that a single 120-ECTS joint degree is most suitable for full tri-lateral symmetry.

Predetermined curriculum structure and language of instruction

- BTH: A mandatory thesis and field specialization (1-year: At least 15 ECTS of thesis work and at least 30 ECTS in a specialization; 2-year: At least 30 ECTS of thesis work and at least 60 ECTS in a specialization).
- UEKAT: Determination of whether the programme has a:
  a. practical profile – in which case more than half of the ECTS credits must be assigned to courses developing practical skills, and a three-month internship included in the curriculum is required; or
  b. general academic profile – in which case more than half of the ECTS credits must be assigned to courses linked to the research activities.
- UOM: There are no predetermined structure rules (Q36).

Rules on the language of instruction:

- UEKAT: Polish is the default language of instruction, but if UEKAT defines the programme as being delivered in English, the entire programme, including teaching, course materials and student support services, will be provided in English.
- BTH and UOM: No mandatory language requirement flagged (Q34).

This implies that a programme delivered in English is viable if UEKAT formally designates it as such. BTH's rules about specializations and the thesis can be satisfied within a 120-ECTS skeleton.

Online/blended legality

- BTH: There are no legal barriers when it comes to online/blended teaching (Q35).
- UEKAT and UOM: Legal/organisational constraints are noted. UOM details data protection and distance-learning requirements (Q35). At UEKAT, in programmes with the general academic profile up to 75 % of ECTS credits may be earned through distance learning, and in programmes with the practical profile up to 50 %.

The implication of this is that the joint programme design should use on-site or bounded blended modes that respect Polish/Greek constraints (e.g., remote guest lectures are fine, but core assessment and some ECTS-bearing delivery should remain on-site).

Electives and internships

- BTH and UOM: There are no fixed ECTS weights for electives/internships.
- UEKAT: There is a specific weight for electives, but no requirement on an internship for a master's degree (Q37–38).

This implies that one should allow a narrow elective band that can absorb UEKAT's required weights without compromising core outcomes.

Thesis packaging (Q55–64)

A review of institutional frameworks reveals differing approaches to thesis crediting, supervision, and assessment, as summarised below.

- BTH: A thesis of at least 15 ECTS for 60-ECTS programmes, and a thesis of at least 30 ECTS for 120-ECTS programmes. The thesis is always scheduled in the final semester. Anti-plagiarism check is mandatory (*Ouriginal*). External supervisors are allowed.
- UEKAT: There are no ECTS for the "thesis" (diploma seminar model). The timeframe is 1-2 semesters. Anti-plagiarism checks are mandatory (national system). External supervisors are allowed.
- UOM: The department involved determines the number of ECTS for the thesis, but it is roughly one semester. Anti-plagiarism check is mandatory (*Turnitin*). External supervisors are **not** allowed.

This implies that the joint master's programme must codify a common credited thesis (of at least 30 ECTS) to meet BTH's rules and standard joint-degree expectations. UEKAT would need to credit its culminating work (e.g., reframe diploma seminar + project as a capstone + thesis module with ECTS). UOM should confirm if external supervisors can be allowed under a joint-degree framework or establish an internal formal co-supervisor.

4.2.3. Feasible Programme Architectures

Several feasible programme architectures have been identified to structure the joint master's degree, balancing academic coherence, institutional compatibility, and administrative practicality across the partner universities, with one model emerging as the most recommendable option.

Option A — 120 ECTS, 2 years, full joint degree (recommended and desirable)
Rationale: This format aligns with UEKAT and BTH, and it is the mainstream EU joint-master degree size. For UOM participation, they must commit to a 120-ECTS track.
Thesis: A unified 30 ECTS package with joint supervision. Where externals are restricted (UOM), appoint a local co-supervisor on record + international co-supervisor.
Delivery mode: On-site core with allowed digital guest seminars. Assessments and ECTS-bearing instruction delivered per each country's distance-learning rules.

Option B — Dual-exit with embedded double-degree
Rationale: If thesis crediting at UEKAT cannot be harmonized in time, run a joint spine of courses + local culminating modules, awarding a joint degree where possible and a double degree otherwise.
Risk: The implementation of joint and double degree may create an additional administrative workload due to the need for coordination, documentation, and degree management across institutions, and the resulting structure might not be as attractive to students.
Our recommendation is to pursue Option A and keep Option B as contingency.

4.2.4. General Conclusions and List of Potential Risks and Suggested Mitigation Measures

The feasibility analysis of the proposed Joint Master's Programme in Software, Business & Management, developed in collaboration between BTH and selected BAUHAUS4EU partner universities, indicates a generally positive outlook. The findings highlight several significant strengths, while also identifying specific areas that warrant further alignment and coordination. A summary of the key outcomes of the feasibility assessment is presented in **Table 11**.

Table 11 Joint Master's Programme in Software, Business & Management

	BTH	UOM	UEKAT
Semester dates	Autumn (September to January) and Spring (January to June).	Winter (starts last week of September); Spring (starts last week of January) both 13 to 14 weeks teaching period	Winter (starts on October 1) and summer (starts on March 1)
Duration Master's programmes	1-year or 2-year programmes; 60 or 120 ECTS	1-year or 2-year programmes; 60 or 120 ECTS	120 ECTS, 2-year programmes
Admission	Specific eligibility for the programme (completed undergraduate degree from an accredited institution, usually in a related field.)	Specific eligibility for the programme (completed undergraduate degree from an accredited institution, usually in a related field.)	Specific eligibility for the programme (completed undergraduate degree from an accredited institution, usually in a related field.)
Design of Curriculum	Degree project of at least 30 ECTS	No predetermined structure rules.	Programme-level structure rules apply.
Accreditation	EA not adopted. national QA system compliant with the ESG. national authority is member of ENQA	EA fully adopted. National QA system compliant with the ESG. National authority is member of ENQA.	EA only partially adopted. National QA system is only partially complicant with the ESG. National authority is member of ENQA.

The following table (**Table 12**) identifies potential risks associated with the implementation of the Joint Master's Programme in Software, Business & Management and outlines proposed strategies for their mitigation.

Table 12 Potential Risks and Proposed Mitigation for the Joint Master's Programme in Software, Business & Management

Risk	Where it appears	Suggested mitigation
ECTS size mismatch (UOM 60; UEKAT 120; BTH 60/120)	Q31–32	Commit collectively to 120-ECTS; UOM establishes/uses a 120-ECTS pathway; draft joint programme specification early and circulate for formal approval.
UEKAT thesis crediting (no ECTS/diploma seminar)	Q55	Redesign the culminating experience as Capstone (X ECTS) + Thesis (30 ECTS) to meet joint rules, and map outcomes to existing diploma-seminar expectations.
External supervision	Q61	Use local co-supervisors on record + international

limits at UOM		co-supervisors (documented in the joint thesis charter).
Blended delivery restrictions (PL/GR)	Q35	Keep core modules on-site. Use digital guest lectures, mentoring, joint seminars. Ensure assessment is compliant locally.
Calendar offsets (Oct. vs Sept. starts, exam weeks etc.)	Q6	Align academic calendars and assign assessment windows in the consortium academic plan.
QA/EA variation	Q73–75	Bind QA to ESG, reference ENQA membership, and include an internal joint QA handbook mapping to joint processes.
Fee clarity for mobile students	Q80–81	Publish a fee and scholarship grid by path. Earmark mobility scholarships (Erasmus+/alliance funds).
Housing for inbound students at BTH	Q86–87	Provide early housing guidance and priority application windows.

4.3 Next Steps for Implementing a Joint Degree Programme

Based on the analysis of the legal and regulatory framework, a detailed implementation plan will be developed within the scope of Work Package 8. This plan will outline a clear timeline and key milestones, and will address potential challenges through the establishment of appropriate mechanisms. The current analysis serves as a foundation for future planning and formal engagement with the identified partner institutions. Moving forward, the process will require more in-depth institutional dialogue. The subsequent steps include the following:

- Contacting partner universities: Formally contact the relevant partner universities to confirm their commitment and willingness to collaborate on the joint degree programme.
- Develop short-term joint courses: Create immediate joint teaching modules to encourage initial collaboration and exchange between the universities, e.g. Collaborative Online International Learning courses (COIL)
- Design a full curriculum: design a comprehensive and coherent curriculum for the entire joint degree programme
- Define joint admission, progression and graduation criteria
- Formalise resource allocation and joint governance bodies
- Define the quality assurance practices and accreditation of the programme
- Define requirements and measures for the mobility of students

5 Benefits and Challenges of Joint Degrees

Within the BAUHAUS4EU European University Alliance, joint degree programmes are emerging as one of the most powerful tools for deepening academic collaboration across borders. These programmes

go beyond simple exchange initiatives – they represent a shared commitment to building a more integrated, innovative, and inclusive European Education Area. Their potential is undeniable, and with careful planning, the challenges associated with their implementation can be effectively addressed.

5.1 Benefits of Joint Degree Programmes

Within the BAUHAUS4EU Alliance, joint degree programmes are seen as key instruments for fostering academic excellence, enhancing student mobility, and promoting the values of collaboration, inclusion, and sustainability that underpin the European Education Area. The following sections explore these benefits in greater depth, beginning with the curricular and structural advantages of joint degree design, before turning to their educational impact on students, institutional benefits for universities, and broader social and regional value.

Curricular Diversity and Structured Academic Framework

Joint degree programmes require partner institutions to establish a shared understanding of academic quality and to agree on a unified definition of the programme's learning outcomes. The curriculum is a co-developed programme with shared study regulations. The programmes are highly integrated, with a unified approach to course content and requirements across institutions.

The collaboration between institutions allows for a broader and more diverse curriculum. Students gain access to complementary academic perspectives and additional specialization opportunities offered by the respective partner universities.

Furthermore, many joint degree programmes allow for a single application process. One declared goal of joint degrees is the harmonized procedures and legal agreements, such as a single application process, which can simplify administration for both institutions and students.

Academic Advantage for Students

The most evident advantage of joint degree programmes is the distinct educational experience that they give students. Rather than learning in solitude in one university or country, students get to experience a sequence of diverse learning environments with varying academic cultures, pedagogical norms, and disciplinary knowledge.

This immersion not only broadens their disciplinary knowledge but also encourages intellectual flexibility, a skill increasingly important in an era when complex challenges require solutions that are multidisciplinary. Students are more effectively educated within their discipline when it is situated within a broader intellectual framework, which contributes to the development of greater cognitive flexibility and adaptability as adult learners. Learning and staying in more than a single country also render the students more cosmopolitan in their worldview. Their language skills are naturally developed, and they are taught by first-hand experience to cope with new cultures and lifestyles. This integration of cultural sensitivity and learning outcomes is highly valued by employers.

International experience is more than studying in another country. It places students in real-life situations in which they must adapt, communicate, and collaborate with students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. It fosters personal resilience, tolerance, and international-mindedness -

attributes that are essential to succeed in the globalized societies and workplaces of the contemporary era. Students gain a heightened awareness of political, economic, and social realities other than their own, which sets them up to be not just better professionals but also better global citizens.

Besides, students typically have the advantage of a wider range of elective courses, extra-curricular activities, and research work than would be possible in a regular programme. They are able to tailor their learning to their own interests, undertake projects from other institutions, and expand their networks, scholarly and professionally. These offer them a foundation for better career opportunities, more specialised career paths, and a very good platform for worldwide working.

Institutional Benefits to Universities

For universities, joint degrees are not simply a status symbol — rather, they are transformational. Creating and operating a joint programme requires intense collaboration between institutions in course design, quality assurance, student services, and matters of governance. While it may be complex, the result is an integrated and aligned university partnership.

These programmes also facilitate sharing of resources. The institutions may share their academic experience, infrastructures, and support services to provide programmes that would otherwise be difficult — indeed impossible — to provide individually. Such collaborations not only increase the quality of education but often lead to new ideas in teaching and research.

An important part of this resource sharing is the sharing of pedagogical techniques and best practices. Partnering institutions can coordinate pedagogical techniques, co-design new pedagogic tools, and integrate new modes of assessment and learning design.

Pedagogic techniques can be acquired from each other's strengths by faculty members and implemented in their own contexts. Cross-fertilization of academic cultures supports continuous improvement and professional development, contributing to a more dynamic and future-oriented academic environment.

Strategically, joint degrees support universities in enhancing their international reputation. Offering such programmes sends a message of commitment towards internationalization and inclines more diverse student populations, offers new revenues, and strengthens institutional networks on the European and global stage.

Moreover, joint degree programmes lead to enhanced visibility and attractiveness. Offering such a study programme can increase the international profile of a university and make it more attractive to students seeking cross-institutional or international academic experiences.

Economic and Social Benefits for the Region and Beyond

The positive impact of joint degrees extends well beyond the universities involved. Cities and regions that host these programmes benefit economically and culturally. International students contribute to

local economies through housing, travel, and daily living expenses, while also bringing new perspectives and energy to campus and community life.

At a broader level, joint degree programmes contribute to the development of a shared European identity. By fostering cooperation between people from different cultural, linguistic, and social backgrounds, these programmes encourage mutual understanding and shared values — something especially important in today's Europe.

In many cases, joint programmes are developed in collaboration with industry partners, regional authorities, and employers. This ensures that students are learning skills that align with the real needs of the job market, reducing the gap between education and employment. It also allows regions to position themselves as centres of innovation and talent development.

5.2 Challenges in implementing joint degree programmes

While joint degree programmes offer clear academic, institutional, and societal benefits, their implementation remains complex and demanding. The process of designing and managing a truly integrated programme across national and institutional systems often reveals structural, administrative, and cultural barriers that can impede smooth cooperation.

This section analyses the main challenges universities face when establishing and operating joint degree programmes, drawing on the experience of European alliances and the findings of the BAUHAUS4EU feasibility studies. These challenges can be grouped into several interrelated categories — from regulatory and procedural constraints to financial, organisational, and cultural issues — each of which influences the sustainability and scalability of joint degree delivery.

The discussion begins with the institutional and regulatory challenges faced by universities, before addressing cultural and linguistic dimensions and broader questions of recognition and perception.

Identification of Challenges for Academic Institutions

Despite their clear benefits, joint degree programmes are not without significant hurdles. One of the biggest is the lack of alignment between national systems. Differences in how countries handle admissions, tuition fees, degree awarding, academic calendars, and legal requirements often complicate the creation and smooth operation of joint programmes.

Accreditation is another key issue. While efforts have been made to streamline recognition across borders, many countries still rely on their own national procedures. This can lead to delays or confusion — especially when it involves a question of verifying qualifications for businesses or professional associations.

On a more practical level, institutions may have differences in calculating credits (even within the ECTS system), study time, or what students must accomplish in order to graduate. These divergences are balanced out by effective institutional partnership and creative problem-solving.

In addition, joint degree programmes are resource-intensive — both in terms of finance and human resources. Coordinating academic staff across borders, managing joint administrative processes,

and delivering consistent student support services take considerable effort, which can test the capacity of universities, particularly smaller ones. Special personnel are also needed to manage communication between partners, coordinate teaching schedules, and ensure quality standards. Without long-term planning and secure funding, these resource demands can limit the scalability and performance of such programmes.

Cultural and Language Barriers

Even when organisational and academic structures are well aligned, cultural differences can remain a significant challenge. Although English is widely used as the main language of instruction, students may still encounter difficulties in everyday life if they are not familiar with the local language — for example, when communicating with the wider campus community or managing daily tasks outside the classroom.

Academic cultures also differ between institutions. Some universities place greater emphasis on independent learning, while others prioritise guided instruction, teamwork, or continuous assessment. Grading practices, classroom interaction, and feedback mechanisms can likewise vary. Without adequate preparation and support, these differences can lead to misunderstandings or frustration for both students and faculty.

Finally, joint degree programmes are still not universally recognised or fully understood. Employers, national authorities, and even some universities may be uncertain about what a joint degree represents or how to evaluate its quality. Building awareness and trust through transparent communication, shared standards, and consistent implementation is therefore essential to strengthening the credibility and acceptance of these programmes.

5.3 Summary of Benefits and Challenges in Implementing Joint Degree Programmes

Joint degree programmes bear witness to the vision of Europe towards building an open, cooperative, and future-oriented system of higher education. They offer students unique learning experiences, allow universities to build stronger partnerships, and bring genuine returns for regions and society.
But in order to realize their full potential, stakeholders will need to work together to overcome the legal, administrative, and cultural obstacles that still stand in the way. That means not only harmonizing policies but also committing to the people and processes that underpin collaborative degrees, from administrators and faculties to students and employers.

Implemented successfully, joint degree programmes are more than a gesture of European solidarity, they represent a real move toward a more cohesive and sustainable academic community.

6 Recommendations

This chapter provides guiding recommendations for developing the BAUHAUS4EU Alliance's joint programmes. It covers promotional strategies to increase awareness and attractiveness, as well as practical guidance for implementing programmes effectively and overcoming common challenges faced by partner universities.

6.1. Suggestions for the Promotion of Joint Programmes

The success of joint degree programmes depends not only on their academic and organisational quality but also on how effectively they are communicated and promoted. A coherent promotional approach ensures visibility, strengthens the Alliance's identity, and attracts students, staff, and external partners. This section outlines strategic recommendations for promoting joint programmes within the BAUHAUS4EU Alliance.

6.1.1. Promotional Strategy Framework

The promotional strategy for joint programmes within the BAUHAUS4EU Alliance has been developed with the aim of collectively enhancing the visibility and attractiveness of the educational offerings of ten partner universities across Europe. The implementation of this strategy is intended primarily to:

- Increase the prominence of member universities' educational offerings at the European and global levels.
- Build a common BAUHAUS4EU brand associated with innovation, interdisciplinarity, and high-quality education.
- Attract international students through an appealing, international study offer.
- Strengthen student and staff mobility by mutually promoting exchange programmes and joint degrees.
- Highlight the diversity and complementarity of programmes that address social and market challenges.
- Promote European values, including openness, multilingualism, cultural integration, sustainability, and social responsibility.
- Develop cooperation with external stakeholders by better aligning educational offerings with real-world needs, including those of the market.
- Build the Alliance's reputation as a centre of innovation in education, research, and social development.

In order to further refine this strategy and identify the key factors influencing its success, a SWOT analysis has been conducted to assess the internal and external conditions shaping the promotion of joint programmes within the BAUHAUS4EU Alliance.

6.1.2. SWOT Analysis of Joint Programmes Promotion within the BAUHAUS4EU Alliance

The following analysis outlines the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to the promotion of joint programmes, serving as a basis for planning future promotional actions within the BAUHAUS4EU Alliance.

Strengths:

- A strong and diverse network of 10 universities from different European countries, encompassing institutions with various profiles.
- International character and prestige of cooperation within a European alliance.
- Opportunities for mutual enhancement of educational offerings – interdisciplinary programmes, joint degree programmes, student and staff mobility.
- Shared values: innovation, creativity, sustainable development, European integration.

Weaknesses:

- Differences in the international recognition of individual universities.
- Language barriers and diversity of education systems, complicating unified promotion.
- Limited financial and human resources are allocated for joint communication and promotion.
- Low awareness of the BAUHAUS4EU brand outside the academic community.
- Challenges in developing a coherent promotional message that also highlights each university's unique strengths.

Opportunities:

- Possibility of creating a shared online platform presenting all Alliance programmes.
- Increasing importance of rankings and quality certifications that can enhance BAUHAUS4EU's prestige.
- Growing demand for soft skills and interdisciplinary competencies, which Alliance universities can jointly develop.
- Opportunities for collaboration with businesses and cities to promote innovative programmes linked to regional development.
- Ability to attract students from non-EU countries (e.g., the Balkans, Middle East, South America) thanks to the cultural diversity of partners.

Threats:

- Strong competition with other European university alliances and globally recognized universities.
- Geopolitical and economic changes (e.g., migration crises, conflicts, inflation) are potentially limiting student mobility.
- Reduction in external funding (e.g., due to shifting EU priorities).
- Risk of fragmented promotional activities without coordinated efforts.
- Potential difficulties in maintaining long-term interest in the offer if it is not innovative or regularly updated.

6.1.3. Competitor Analysis and Description of Joint Programmes Offerings

The BAUHAUS4EU Alliance operates in a dynamic and highly competitive academic environment. In the international education market, if it faces competition not only from other European university alliances but also from prestigious individual universities with established reputations, and as well as from the growing number of online educational platforms offering flexible learning formats. Regional and national universities remain additional reference points for many candidates due to cultural proximity and lower study costs.

As shown in **Table 13**: Competitor Analysis, examining competitors helps to better understand their strengths and limitations and identify areas where BAUHAUS4EU can build a competitive advantage. Key strengths of the Alliance – such as interdisciplinarity, geographic and cultural diversity, and the opportunity to gain international experience within a single network – provide a solid foundation for developing a unique brand image at the European level.

Table 13 Competitor Analysis

Competitor Type	Examples	Strengths	Weaknesses
Other European university alliances	EUTOPIA, CIVICA, UNA Europa, ENLIGHT, YUFE	- Longer experience, stronger brand - Unified visual identity and PR strategy - Often high rankings	- Less diversity of disciplines - Focus on large, prestigious universities, less accessible to average candidates - Limited local connections
Prestigious individual universities	Universities in the Netherlands, Scandinavia, France, UK	- High QS and THE rankings - Large budgets for international marketing - Extensive English-language programmes	- No network effect (single university only) - Less emphasis on cultural and regional integration - Higher study costs
Regional and national universities	Universities in countries outside the Alliance	- Cultural and linguistic proximity - Lower tuition costs for local students	- No international network - Limited mobility and interdisciplinarity opportunities

BAUHAUS4EU stands out due to its cultural richness, interdisciplinarity, and potential to create unique educational offerings, yet it requires stronger brand recognition and a wider range of international programmes. The competition is strong but allows room to establish a distinct position based on diversity, European values, and combining learning with local social and economic contexts.

The Alliance offers a broad range of study programmes, exchange opportunities, and educational initiatives conducted by ten partner universities across Europe. Its uniqueness lies in the combination

of tradition and innovation – from architecture, design, and arts programmes to technical and engineering disciplines, as well as economics and social sciences. This enables students to develop in an interdisciplinary environment that not only meets the contemporary labour market's needs but also prepares them for active participation in sustainable digital transformations.

The primary strength of this offering is its international dimension. Students choosing programmes within the Alliance gain access to inter-university mobility, the possibility of obtaining joint degrees, and participation in international projects. An additional value is the geographical and cultural diversity – students can study in Germany, France, Sweden, Portugal, Poland, Italy, Bulgaria, Albania, and Greece, fostering integration and a truly European academic identity.

Key features of the Alliance's joint programmes to highlight in promotional activities:

1. Network of 10 European universities – students have access to diverse educational offerings across nine countries within a single alliance.
2. Mobility and joint degrees – opportunities to study in different countries and obtain degrees from multiple partner universities, enhancing graduates' competitiveness.
3. European values and cultural diversity – students learn in an international environment, gaining exposure to various languages, cultures, and perspectives, developing social and intercultural skills.
4. Response to 21st-century challenges – educational and research offerings focus on digital transformation, innovation, and sustainable development.
5. Unique international study experience – unlike online courses or single universities, BAUHAUS4EU offers a comprehensive academic experience with mobility, networking, and student community engagement.
6. Soft skills development – students acquire not only professional knowledge but also intercultural communication and innovative thinking.
7. Access to global experts – students engage with faculty and researchers from various disciplines in smaller groups than at large mass universities.
8. Boundless career paths – graduates obtain degrees recognized in multiple countries and connections facilitating international careers.

6.1.4. Persona

Students of joint programmes at BAUHAUS4EU universities are typically aged 18-26 (slightly older for doctoral programmes). From an early age, they have had exposure to multiple cultures, fostering curiosity and interest in pursuing international professional or research careers.

Motivations and goals:

- Develop international competencies to work in international environments, e.g., international companies or multicultural contexts.
- Seek mobility – wish to spend part of their studies abroad, gaining diverse social and economic perspectives.
- Interested in sustainable development and the use of digital technologies in professional work.
- Look for universities and programmes offering a competitive edge through joint degrees or international project experience.
- Value opportunities to engage with regional innovation ecosystems and address local socio-

economic challenges in the regions where the alliance's universities are rooted.

Educational needs:

- English-language programmes to strengthen language skills.
- Programmes delivered by universities with differing profiles and contexts.
- Programmes supporting practical experience – internships, group projects, cooperation with potential employers and researchers.
- University support for adaptation abroad – accommodation, integration, mentoring.

Lifestyle and personality:

- Ambitious, career oriented.
- Enjoys travelling and learning about new cultures, with previous experience in youth exchanges.
- Active in student organisations, engaged in academic clubs and international university events.
- Values balance between study and personal life – interested in sports, travel, and social activities.

Potential barriers:

- Financial limitations – planning for living costs abroad.
- Concerns about language barriers in daily situations.
- Uncertainty about BAUHAUS4EU's recognition among employers.

Why BAUHAUS4EU?

- Enables international study without changing the home university.
- Offers opportunities to gain experience abroad and improve language skills.
- Allows combining chosen programmes with partner universities' specialised fields.
- Mobility and joint degrees enhance employability and career competitiveness.

6.1.5. Promotional Tools

Promotional tools are precisely tailored to specific target groups. Both traditional media and modern digital channels are employed. Tools focus on promoting English-language study programmes within BAUHAUS4EU, based on identified programme features and core promotional messages.

Examples of current and potential media and channels:

- University websites – professional programme description in English, highlighting key features and promotional slogan.
- Social media: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok – official university profiles and dedicated pages.
- Emails and newsletters directed at students, applicants, and partner schools.
- Electronic screens.
- Printed materials: leaflets, brochures, posters.
- Video productions showcasing opportunities for international experience.

Direct engagement:

- Promotional and informational stands.
- Webinars and meetings for candidates (including parents).
- Strengthened collaboration with secondary schools.
- Welcome Points as personal contact hubs for students, alumni, and applicants.
- Participation in national and international fairs.
- Events: Open Days, English-language Programme Days.
- Ambassador programmes, promotional packages for students on exchanges and Erasmus+ scholarships.
- International platforms for open student-teacher-business meetings (Global Minds – Open Talks).
- Seminars and webinars with invited experts and international lecturers conducting workshops and events.

SEO and Digital Marketing:

- Website SEO optimization.
- Paid campaigns via Google Ads, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok.

External advertising:

- Electronic screens.
- Transport advertising.
- Sponsored articles in press and online portals.
- Online portals.

Welcome Points and related offices:

- Centres providing support to international students, doctoral candidates, and staff – "Always Welcome" ethos.
- Programme coordinators for individual joint programmes.
- Maximum role in relationship-building and contacts with students, alumni, and applicants.
- Integrating study, learning, and student life with safety and visibility of opportunities at partner universities.

6.1.6. Target Groups and Tailored Activities

The promotional strategy precisely segments target audiences, detailing effective communication tools for recruitment to second-cycle programmes.

Table 14 Target Groups and Tailored Activities

Target Group	Segment	Preferred activities
Applicants with no prior university contact	Domestic candidates	Invitation to webinars on joint programmes, participation in fairs, promotion of English-language programmes, student advocacy (ambassadors), platform for in-

		ternational student meetings during integration events (Staff Week, Global Village)
	International candidates	Paid Facebook campaigns, viral marketing, international portal information, participation in international fairs
Applicants with prior university contact	Bachelor students	Emails inviting continuation to Master's programmes, meetings on studying in English in joint programmes
Students from other universities	Students with good English, lacking career prospects from their current programme	Personalized ads highlighting job opportunities after joint programmes, emphasis on prestigious partner degrees and modern teaching methods
International Master applicants	Students worldwide (Europe, Asia, Americas), adventurous and culturally open	Promotion on international portals, personalized Google Ads and social media campaigns, communication of potential discounts, advocacy reinforcement, dedicated presentation and materials on programmes

In addition to the promotional activities targeting students (and doctoral candidates) mentioned above, universities should also actively promote joint programmes among their staff. This should include encouraging the development of courses taught in English and the preparation of teaching materials in English. Moreover, academic staff themselves should play an active role in disseminating information about the opportunities and benefits of joint programmes, helping to raise awareness among students and colleagues and fostering a culture of international collaboration.

Without these fundamental steps, the potential for creating joint programmes will remain rather limited. It should also be emphasized that it is highly risky to base a course, as an element of a joint programme, on a single teacher, without the possibility of an immediate substitute if necessary. In this context, it is crucial to ensure the involvement of a large number of committed and positively motivated staff members.

6.2. General Approach to Implementing Joint Programmes and Overcoming Identified Challenges

The implementation of joint degree programmes is a complex, multi-stage process that requires strategic coordination, continuous evaluation, and strong institutional commitment. It involves navigating legal, administrative, and cultural differences while creating shared structures that uphold academic quality and align with European standards. The following subsections present a practical framework for implementation, addressing key areas such as alignment between national systems, accredita-

tion, academic requirements, resource management, cultural diversity, and recognition of joint degrees.

6.2.1. Implementation Framework for Joint Programmes

The implementation of joint degree programmes represents one of the most ambitious undertakings in the field of university cooperation within European academic alliances. While such initiatives bring numerous benefits, their practical realization faces several serious challenges identified above. These require both precise recognition and the adoption of appropriate measures.

Each design, implementation, and subsequent monitoring of a joint programme requires the establishment of a specialised team composed of representatives from the partner universities within the alliance (not only those intending to launch the programme). This team should carry out a thorough analysis of future-oriented competences and current conditions, including legal, administrative, and didactic aspects, as well as socio-economic needs of the surrounding environment, such as regional innovation strategies (RIS). It should be noted that this report presents the state of knowledge, including legal regulations, at a given point in time (2025), and that legislation, funding mechanisms, academic staff availability, and labour market needs may undergo dynamic changes.

It is also recommended that initiatives related to the development of joint programmes be openly communicated within the entire alliance, not only among universities directly planning their implementation. Milestones should likewise be shared with all partners, together with descriptions of any adjustments, encountered difficulties, and challenges. This approach ensures that:

- programme design can be enriched with feedback from a broader range of universities (that is, scientific and teaching teams, quality officers, etc.),
- mirror semesters may be introduced across different universities, which can expand both the number of joint programme partners and, most importantly, the student body,
- there will be a larger pool of potential visiting academics,
- the alliance as a whole will benefit from a richer base of experiences,
- partners will develop a stronger sense of co-responsibility for the success of initiatives undertaken across the alliance,
- existing joint programmes can be jointly improved.

Where possible, joint programmes should be designed in a modular way. This would allow individual components, such as semesters or courses, to be accessed by students from institutions not participating as full partners in a given programme. Documentation generated during the design phase should be collected in a shared alliance knowledge base, serving as a source of good practices and reference material for future initiatives.

When implementing joint programmes within the alliance, the needs of working students must also be taken into account. The alliance should be prepared for their increasing participation, bearing in mind that they will need to balance studies with professional obligations, which significantly limits or even prevents traditional mobility.

Furthermore, it is essential to establish long-term funding mechanisms and permanent evaluation frameworks, including regular assessments of the quality of education, the extent to which the objectives of joint programmes are achieved, and their alignment with evolving market needs. This will help

ensure the sustainability of joint programmes and their continuous improvement by enabling a timely response to changes in various conditions, including regulatory, economic, social, and staffing factors.

The following section presents six key areas of difficulty, along with proposals for actions to overcome them. It should be emphasized that these recommendations are of a general nature, not tailored to the context of specific joint programmes. When designing, monitoring, and improving a joint study programme, the team should identify similar initiatives already operating within other European alliances, as well as programmes developed with partners from the same countries. This can help overcome some of the difficulties encountered.

6.2.2. Lack of Alignment between National Systems

Differences in how countries handle admissions, tuition fees, degree awarding, academic calendars, and legal requirements often complicate the creation and smooth operation of joint programmes.

Guidelines:

- Engage university leadership in advocating for national-level solutions for European universities and joint degrees. Highlight, through evidence, the educational opportunities lost due to differences in legal regulations and suggest partial relaxation of national provisions for joint programmes in favor of contractual arrangements.
- Until a minimum level of alignment is achieved, prioritize establishing joint programmes with universities operating under similar legal frameworks and organisational assumptions, gradually expanding the group of partners.
- Develop a common set of general regulations within the alliance, covering admission criteria, tuition policies, study and examination rules – within the limits permitted by the national laws of partner countries.
- Agree on shared key dates. In the case of major differences in academic calendars, design flexible hybrid models.
- Hold regular meetings of legal and administrative representatives from the partner universities.
- Prepare comprehensive information packages for applicants and students in English as well as in local languages.
- Organise regular meetings across all alliances to share experiences and proposals.

6.2.3. Accreditation

While efforts have been made to streamline recognition across borders, many countries still rely on their own national procedures. This can lead to delays or confusion, especially when it involves verifying qualifications for businesses or professional associations.

Guidelines:

- In some countries, universities must obtain national accreditation – this situation may persist for a long time. If national accreditation also applies to joint programmes, the list of specific national requirements must be identified and discussed already at the design stage of a given programme, allowing partner universities sufficient time to prepare.
- If the national accreditation (or approval) process required to launch joint programmes is

lengthy, it is advisable to involve such a partner in another form of collaboration in the meantime, for example through double-degree programmes.

- The requirement for national accreditation should not prevent parallel efforts to obtain joint international and sectoral accreditation. To facilitate this, at least partial harmonization and standardization of processes and documents within the alliance is necessary.
- Build awareness among employers by organising industry meetings and publishing materials explaining accreditation issues in the context of joint programmes.
- While national standards and accreditation by the national authority is mandatory in most countries (it applies to Joint Degrees as well), the possibility for accreditation by a foreign agency, member of ENQA, is accepted in most cases (subject to formal validation by the national authority). It is therefore advised to opt for a single accreditation for the joint degrees by an ENQA member and for it to be recognized by the other countries involved. Particular attention should be paid also to the costs of accreditation as it shows a very high variance among the different countries / agencies (e.g. in Italy the costs are minimal while in other countries the accreditation costs go up to thousands of Euros (e.g. Portugal, Albania).
- The European Degree Label Resolution seeks to ease the quality assurance processes for Joint Degrees. It is imperative for both WP8 - Joint Degrees and WP10 - Quality Assurance to not only align among themselves but to align their guidelines / roadmaps with the European Degree Label as well.

6.2.4. Academic Requirements and Credit Systems

On a practical level, institutions may differ in calculating credits (even within the ECTS framework), study duration, or graduation requirements. These divergences can be addressed through effective institutional partnerships and creative problem-solving.

Guidelines:

- In cases where ECTS requirements per semester are incompatible, they provide opportunities for students to make up any deficit at their home institution or define a pool of elective courses that students can either drop (if the limit in their country is lower) or select additionally (if they need to meet a higher requirement).
- Alternatively, design a joint programme with the maximum number of semesters required by partner countries, allowing students from countries with longer programmes to spend the additional time completing appropriate components – for example, internships, seminars, or discussion-based courses – in line with their home institution's regulations.
- Prepare a common grade conversion scale to be applied within the alliance.

6.2.5. Resource Intensity

Joint degree programmes are resource-intensive in both financial and human terms. Coordinating academic staff across borders, managing joint administrative processes, and delivering consistent student support services require considerable effort, often challenging the capacities of universities, particularly smaller ones. Specialised staff are also needed to manage communication between partners, coordinate teaching schedules, and ensure quality standards.

Guidelines:

- Seek available EU funding and explore additional external sources of financing.

- Automate selected processes wherever possible and use digital solutions to simplify decision-making pathways.
- Assess whether certain resource-intensive processes in smaller institutions (particularly those related to student services in joint programmes) could be outsourced to another partner institution.
- Facilitate the exchange of good practices between departments managing resource-intensive tasks and processes – not only within the alliance but also among universities in the same country participating in different alliances.
- Develop a clear roadmap for obtaining both mandatory and optional accreditations for joint programmes within the alliance, since these processes often involve multiple university units and require significant preparation.
- Ensure that efforts to optimize resource use are not treated as temporary solutions. University leadership should be involved in designing and implementing these measures, as joint programmes represent a strategic institutional goal.

6.2.6. Cultural Differences

Cultural differences can still be a significant factor. Despite the widespread use of English as the main language of instruction, students may face difficulties in everyday life if they do not speak the local language, particularly when interacting with the broader academic community or dealing with day-to-day activities.

Guidelines:

- Organise courses or seminars on intercultural issues at the beginning of the study programme. Such courses could be an integral, credit-bearing component of the joint programme.
- Develop “buddy” programmes by preparing student ambassadors who help integrate their peers into the local university and regional environment. These activities could potentially be awarded ECTS credits or at least be documented in the diploma supplement. Consider the introduction of tutoring schemes.
- Articulate clearly and systematically the distinctions between various teaching and assessment methodologies.
- Conduct student satisfaction surveys that include questions about the impact of cultural differences on the study experience and report the results within the alliance.
- Organise integration workshops and intercultural events, including city games or competitions during the initial mobility period. Over time, each partner institution will develop good practices in this area.
- Introduce English-language training for administrative staff (not only for teaching faculty) involved in joint programmes.

6.2.7. Limited Understanding and Recognition of Joint Degrees

Joint degrees are still not universally understood or fully appreciated. Employers, national authorities,

and even some universities may be uncertain about what a joint degree represents or how to appreciate its value. Building awareness and trust – through clear communication and consistent standards – is essential for broader recognition.

Guidelines:

- Conduct targeted information campaigns for external stakeholders.
- Promote success stories of joint programme graduates.
- Prepare, in cooperation with external partners, comprehensive descriptions of the distinctive competencies of joint degree holders.

7 Conclusions

The comparative analysis across Bachelor, Master, Doctoral, and Micro-credential levels confirms that the ten partner universities of the BAUHAUS4EU Alliance share sufficient structural and philosophical common ground to make joint and double-degree initiatives not only feasible but strategically promising. Despite the diversity of national systems, a clear convergence emerges around the values of academic quality, integrity, and innovation, reflecting the shared European commitment to openness and collaboration in higher education.

At the Bachelor level, alignment in credit systems, learning outcomes, and curricular design provides a workable foundation, though variations in legal frameworks and administrative procedures will require flexible, context-sensitive solutions. These challenges are not prohibitive; rather, they outline the parameters within which future collaboration must be shaped.

At the master's level, the prospects for integration are especially strong. Most partners already have experience with international master's programmes, and the high degree of compatibility in programme length, structure, and assessment creates an excellent environment for launching joint degrees. The case study confirms that a full joint Master's programme across partner institutions is both structurally and academically viable, provided that coordinated work continues on accreditation, language policy, and student mobility mechanisms.

The PhD comparison shows a nuanced picture: shared academic principles coexist with procedural differences in supervision, recognition, and language policy. Yet, the growing alignment with the European Approach to Quality Assurance and the Bologna Process provides a credible framework for addressing these divergences. The trend is toward gradual harmonization, supported by institutional goodwill and the Alliance's strategic ambition.

In the emerging field of Micro-credentials, the Alliance is still navigating diverse national and institutional regulations. Nonetheless, the commitment to experimentation and co-construction evident across the partners demonstrates strong potential for convergence. Building on the European Council's 2022 recommendations, BAUHAUS4EU can play a leading role in shaping a transnational ecosystem of micro-credentials grounded in mutual recognition and quality assurance.

The SWOT analysis underlines both the promise and the complexity of this undertaking. The Alliance's strengths lie in its diversity, creativity, and shared European values, while its weaknesses – chiefly administrative fragmentation and limited shared visibility – highlight areas where coordination and investment are most needed. The external environment offers abundant opportunities for innovation, inter-disciplinarity, and regional engagement, but also brings competition and financial uncertainty. Strategic coherence shared digital platforms, and clear communication will be crucial to realizing the Alliance's full potential.

Taken together, the findings point to a common conclusion: the BAUHAUS4EU Alliance stands at a pivotal moment where institutional diversity can be transformed from a barrier into an asset. By deepening dialogue, aligning key processes, and investing in joint governance mechanisms, the partners can move from pilot projects toward sustainable joint degrees and credentials at all levels. In doing so, they not only advance their own institutional missions but contribute to the broader European vision of a truly integrated, innovative, and inclusive higher education area.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Mapping of academic systems to assess compatibility for Joint Degrees

Bauhaus4EU Alliance. WP3. Task 3.1.

Section 1

Institution

Check all that apply.

- ☐ BUW
- ☐ BTH
- ☐ IPCB
- ☐ UNIBG
- ☐ UPJV
- ☐ ULL2
- ☐ UEKAT
- ☐ POLIS
- ☐ UOM
- ☐ UACEG

Co-funded by
the European Union

1. Do you operate in accordance with the Bologna System?

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

2. Do you use the ECTS system?

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

3. What is the equivalent in hours of 1 ECTS?

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ 25
- ◯ 25-30
- ◯ 30

4. Do you operate in accordance with the European Qualification Framework (EQF)?

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

5. Does the legal framework allow for joint degrees in all levels?

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

If not, elaborate.

6. How is the academic calendar organised? (no semesters, starting date, holidays, examination periods)

7. What is the timeline to open / reorganise a study program? (application, approval, student enrolment)

8. To what extent (if at all) can the curriculum change once initiated?

---

9. Is market research required for the approval of a new study program?

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

10. Is market research required for the reorganisation of an existing study program?

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Section 2 - Student enrolment, progression and assessment

11. In what level are the admission criteria for Bachelor programs determined?

Mark only one oval.

- National
- University level

12. What are the admission criteria for the Bachelor programs?

13. In what level are the admission criteria for Master programs determined?

Mark only one oval.

- National
- University level

14. What are the admission criteria for the Master programs?

15. In what level are the admission criteria for PhD programs determined?

Mark only one oval.

- National
- University level

16. What are the admission criteria for the PhD programs?

17. Are there different criteria for international students?

Check all that apply.

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Only for Bachelor
- [ ] Only for Master
- [ ] Only for PhD

18. How long does the procedure for the recognition / equivalency of foreign degrees (former degree - requirement to enroll) takes?

---

19. At what level is the matriculation number issued to students?

Check all that apply.

- [ ] National Agency
- [ ] University level
- [ ] Faculty level
- [ ] Department level

20. Are students required to register for each course they attend and get assessed for?

Mark only one oval.

- ( ) Yes, annually
- ( ) Yes, each semester
- ( ) No

21. Are there conditions / criteria, which when not met, lose the students the right to pursue their studies (register for the upcoming year / semester)?

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

If yes, elaborate

22. What is the assessment / grading system?

Section 3 - Curriculum design and delivery - Bachelor programs

23. How many ECTS do Bachelor Programs have?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ 180
- ☐ 240
- ☐ Other

24. What is the duration of Bachelor programs?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ 3 years
- ☐ 4 years
- ☐ Other

25. Is there a criterion for maximum duration of studies?

Mark only one oval.

Yes
No

If yes, elaborate

26. Are there any mandatory requirements for the language of instruction?

Mark only one oval.

Yes
No

If yes, elaborate

27. Are there any legal barriers to online / blended modes of teaching?

Mark only one oval.

Yes
No

If yes, elaborate

28. Are there any pre-determined criteria for the curriculum structure (specific weight for the formation activities - foundation courses, discipline specific activities, discipline related activities, electives, thesis)?

Mark only one oval.

Yes
No

If yes, elaborate

29. Is there a specific weight for the elective courses?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

If yes, how many ECTS

---

30. Is there a specific weight for the internship?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

If yes, how many ECTS

Section 4 - Curriculum design and delivery - Master programs

31. How many ECTS do Master Programs have?

Check all that apply.

- 60
- 120
- Other

32. What is the duration of Master programs?

Check all that apply.

- [ ] 1 year
- [ ] 2 years
- [ ] Other

33. Is there a criterion for maximum duration of studies?

Mark only one oval.

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

If yes, elaborate

34. Are there any mandatory requirements for the language of instruction?

Mark only one oval.

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

If yes, elaborate

35. Are there any legal barriers to online / blended modes of teaching?

Mark only one oval.

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

If yes, elaborate

36. Are there any pre-determined criteria for the curriculum structure (specific weight for

the formation activities - foundation courses, discipline specific activities, discipline related activities, electives, thesis)?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

If yes, elaborate

37. Is there a specific weight for the elective courses?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

If yes, how many ECTS

---

38. Is there a specific weight for the internship?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

If yes, how many ECTS

Section 5 - Curriculum design and delivery - PhD programs

39. Do the PhD programs have the first year organised in courses / ECTS?

Mark only one oval.

Yes
No

40. What is the duration of PhD programs?

Check all that apply.

3 years

Other

41. Is there a criterion for maximum duration of studies?

Mark only one oval.

Yes
No

If yes, elaborate

42. Are there any mandatory requirements for the language of instruction?

Mark only one oval.

Yes
No

If yes, elaborate

43. Are there any legal barriers to online / blended modes of teaching?

Mark only one oval.

Yes
No

If yes, elaborate

44. Do you have any experience with co-tutorship schemes with international partners?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

If yes, elaborate

Section 6 - Graduation - Bachelor programs

45. Is there a specific weight for the thesis?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

If yes, how many ECTS

46. Are there any specific criteria for the thesis?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

If yes, elaborate

47. Is there a specific timeframe for the thesis (eg. a full semester)?

Mark only one oval.

Yes
No

If yes, elaborate

48. Is antiplagiarism check mandatory?

Mark only one oval.

Yes
No

If yes, what software is being used?

---

49. Who holds the Intellectual Property Rights of the thesis?

Check all that apply.

Student

University
Co-ownership

50. Are there provisions for distinction / honors?

Mark only one oval.

Yes
No

If yes, elaborate

51. Is it possible to engage external / foreign thesis supervisors / reviewers?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

52. Are there any legal restrictions for the format of diploma and diploma supplement?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes, for the elements
- Yes, for the elements and the design
- No

53. Are there any legal restrictions for the conferral of degrees?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

If yes, elaborate

54. Who signs the diploma / diploma supplement?

Check all that apply.

- Rector / President
- Dean
- Head of Department

Section 7 - Graduation - Master programs

55. Is there a specific weight for the thesis?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

If yes, how many ECTS

---

56. Are there any specific criteria for the thesis?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

If yes, elaborate

57. Is there a specific timeframe for the thesis (eg. a full semester)?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

If yes, elaborate

58. Is antiplagiarism check mandatory?

Mark only one oval.

Yes
No

If yes, what software is being used?

_____

59. Who holds the Intellectual Property Rights of the thesis?

Check all that apply.

Student

University
Co-ownership

60. Are there provisions for distinction / honors?

Mark only one oval.

Yes
No

If yes, elaborate

61. Is it possible to engage external / foreign thesis supervisors / reviewers?

Mark only one oval.

Yes
No

62. Are there any legal restrictions for the format of diploma and diploma supplement?

Mark only one oval.

Yes, for the elements

Yes, for the elements and the design

No

63. Are there any legal restrictions for the conferral of degrees?

Mark only one oval.

Yes
No

If yes, elaborate

64. Who signs the diploma / diploma supplement?

Check all that apply.

Rector / President

Dean
Head of Department

Section 8 - Graduation - PhD programs

65. Are there any specific criteria for the dissertation?

Mark only one oval.

Yes
No

If yes, elaborate

66. Is antiplagiarism check mandatory?

Mark only one oval.

Yes
No

If yes, what software is being used?

_____

67. Who holds the Intellectual Property Rights of the dissertation?

Check all that apply.

Student

University
Co-ownership

68. Are there provisions for distinction / honors?

Mark only one oval.

Yes
No

If yes, elaborate

69. Is it possible to engage external / foreign thesis supervisors / reviewers?

Mark only one oval.

Yes
No

70. Are there any legal restrictions for the format of diploma and diploma supplement?

Mark only one oval.

Yes, for the elements

Yes, for the elements and the design

No

71. Are there any legal restrictions for the conferral of degrees?

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

If yes, elaborate

72. Who signs the diploma / diploma supplement?

Check all that apply.

Rector / President

Dean

Head of Department

Section 9 - Quality Assurance

73. Has the European Degree Approach been adopted in your country?

Mark only one oval.

Yes, fully

Partially

No

74. Is the national QA system compliant with the ESG (European Standard Guidelines)?

Mark only one oval.

Yes, fully
Partially
No

75. Is the national authority member of ENQA?

Mark only one oval.

Yes
No

76. What is the timeline for the accreditation of a study program?

77. Is it legally possible for accreditation by a foreign agency (ENQA member)?

Mark only one oval.

Yes
No

78. If yes, what is the expected timeline for the accreditation by a foreign agency to be recognized by the national authority?

Section 10 - Resources

79. Is there a minimum number of students for the program to initiate?

Mark only one oval.

Yes
No

If yes, how many?

80. Are there tuition fees?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

If yes, at what amount on average?

81. Are there administrative fees?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

If yes, at what amount on average?

82. Are there scholarships?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

83. Are there mandatory periods for international mobility?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

If yes, elaborate (for what level, how long)

84. Are there available resources to fund the mobility?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

85. Are there possibilities for blended / virtual mobility?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

86. Is there availability of dormitories?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

87. Is there availability of dorms for international students?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

Section 11 - Experience with Joint Degrees

88. Do you have former experience with joint / double degrees?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

89. If yes, list programs.

90. If yes, list main benefits

91. If yes, list main challenges

92. Is there anything else you consider relevant for the capacity of your university to deliver joint degrees?

Appendix 2

Mapping Regulatory Frameworks for Micro-credentials

1. Institution

Check all that apply.

- [ ] BUW
- [ ] BTH
- [ ] IPCB
- [ ] UNIBG
- [ ] UPJV
- [ ] ULL2
- [ ] UEKAT
- [ ] POLIS
- [ ] UOM
- [ ] UACEG

2. Are micro-credentials included in your National Qualifications Framework?

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ In process

3. If yes, please detail

4. Are there any legal provisions for micro-credentials in your national regulatory framework (law, bylaws, normative acts)?

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Expected soon

5. If yes, please detail

6. Are there any legal provisions for micro-credentials in your institutional normative acts?

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Expected soon

7. If yes, please detail

8. Do you have any experience with micro-credential courses?

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

9. If yes, please detail

10. How are (will be) micro-credentials set up?

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Standalone short courses
- ◯ Part of larger credentials (a course, an LLL course, etc)

11. Setting up micro-credentials for students requires approval by

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Ministry / National Agency
- ☐ University
- ☐ Department

12. Setting up micro-credentials for academic staff requires approval by

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Ministry / National Agency
- ☐ University
- ☐ Department

13. Setting up micro-credentials for administrative staff requires approval by

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Ministry / National Agency
- ☐ University
- ☐ Department

14. Setting up micro-credentials for regional stakeholders requires approval by

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Ministry / National Agency

- [ ] University
- [ ] Department

15. Is it possible for the credits obtained via micro-credentials to be transferred / recognized within the framework of a study program?

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Only as free electives

16. How are micro-credentials currently recognized or used in your country/organisation? (Select all that apply)

Check all that apply.

- [ ] for upskilling/reskilling
- [ ] as part of formal qualifications
- [ ] for labour market mobility
- [ ] for continuing professional development (CPD)
- [ ] for lifelong learning

17. Do micro-credentials have to undergo an external quality assessment (accreditation)?

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

18. Do micro-credentials undergo an internal quality assessment?

Mark only one oval.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

19. Do you have internal criteria, processes and practices to assess micro-credentials?

Mark only one oval.

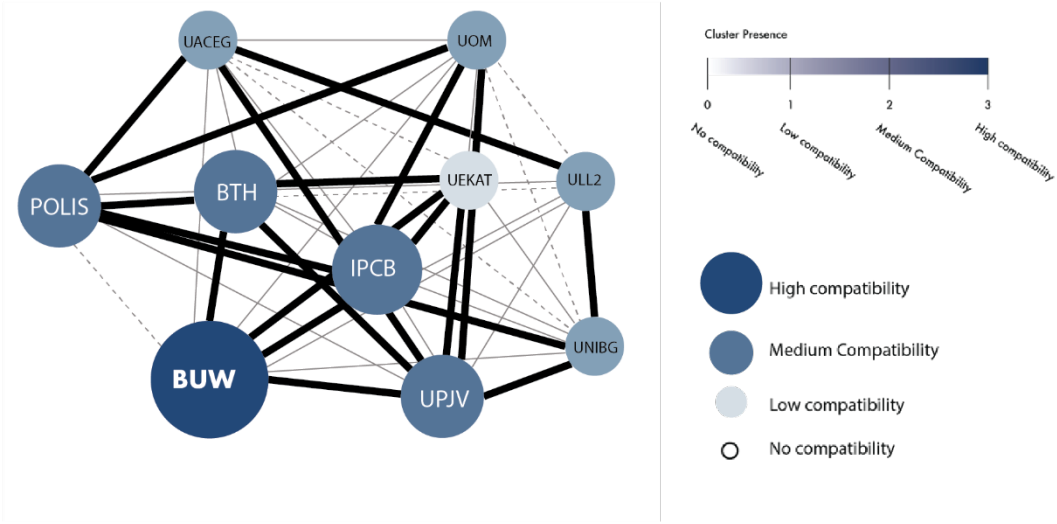
- Yes
- No
- In process

20. If yes, please detail

Appendix 3

	General features of the regulatory framework									
UNIVERSITIES										
	ULL2	UACEG	UOM	BTH	UPJV	UEKAT	IPCB	BUW	UNIBG	POLIS
POLIS	2	3	3	2	2	2	3	1	3	n/a
BTH	1	2	2	n/a	3	3	2	3	2	3
UOM	1	2	n/a	2	3	2	3	2	1	2
UEKAT	0	1	2	3	1	n/a	3	3	2	2
IPCB	2	2	3	2	2	3	n/a	3	2	3
BUW	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	n/a	2	1
UNIBG	3	1	1	2	3	2	2	2	n/a	3
ULL2	n/a	3	1	1	2	0	2	2	3	2
UACEG	3	n/a	2	2	3	1	2	2	1	3
UPJV	2	3	3	3	n/a	3	2	3	3	2

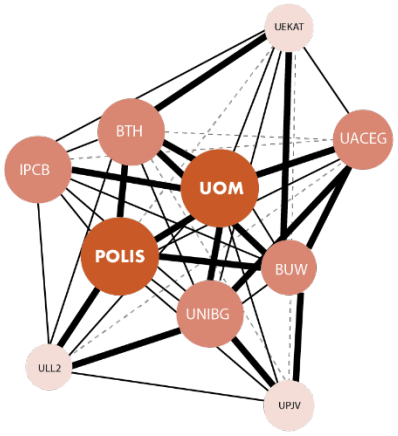
Highest average: BUW (2.5)	
Overall chart average score: 1.5	
Core Cluster (high compatibility, avg > 2) Dense central hub	POLIS - IPCB - UPJV - BTH - ULL2 - UOM - UNIBG
Moderately connected universities (avg ≈ 1.5–2)	
Peripheral node	
Disconnected node:	
Network cluster description POLIS is the central hub, with the highest average compatibility. BUW, BTH, UOM, IPCB, UNIBG, ULL2, UPJV form the core supporting cluster with strong mutual compatibility.	

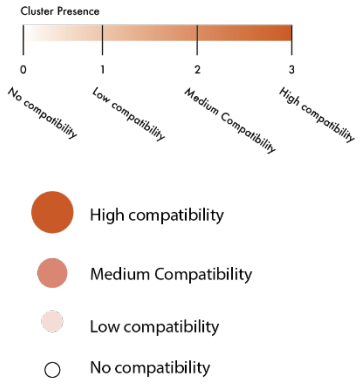


UNIVERSITIES	Bachelors Student Enrolment									
	ULL2	UACEG	UOM	BTH	UPJV	UEKAT	IPCB	BUW	UNIBG	POLIS
POLIS	3	2	3	3	2	1	2	3	2	n/a
BTH	2	1	3	n/a	1	3	2	3	2	3
UOM	2	3	n/a	3	2	2	3	2	3	3
UEKAT	0	2	2	3	1	n/a	2	3	2	1
IPCB	2	2	3	2	2	2	n/a	2	2	2
BUW	0	3	2	3	3	3	2	n/a	2	3
UNIBG	3	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	n/a	2
ULL2	n/a	1	2	2	2	0	2	0	3	3
UACEG	1	n/a	3	1	0	2	1	3	3	2
UPJV	2	0	2	1	n/a	1	2	3	3	2

Highest average: POLIS (2.33), UOM (2.33) Overall chart average score: 2.11	
Core Cluster (high compatibility, avg > 2) Dense central hub	POLIS - UOM - BTH - BUW - UNIBG - IPCB
Moderately connected universities (avg ≈ 1.5–2)	UEKAT - ULL2 - UPJV
Peripheral node	UACEG
Disconnected node:	/

Network cluster description
POLIS and UOM are the strongest hubs, closely followed by BTH, BUW, UNIBG, IPCB as core nodes. UEKAT, ULL2, UACEG, UPJV are moderately connected, supporting the network but with weaker ties.

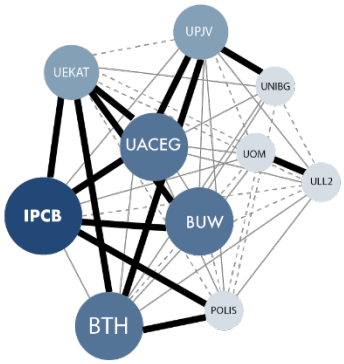


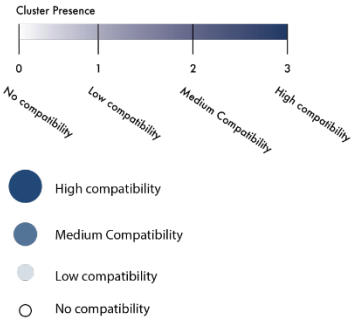


UNIVERSITIES	Bachelors Curriculum design									
	ULL2	UACEG	UOM	BTH	UPJV	UEKAT	IPCB	BUW	UNIBG	POLIS
POLIS	2	2	1	3	2	1	3	1	1	n/a
BTH	2	2	1	n/a	3	3	2	2	2	3
UOM	3	2	n/a	1	1	1	2	2	0	1
UEKAT	1	3	1	3	1	n/a	3	3	2	1
IPCB	2	3	2	2	2	3	n/a	3	2	3
BUW	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	n/a	2	1
UNIBG	1	2	0	2	3	2	2	2	n/a	1
ULL2	n/a	2	3	2	2	1	2	1	1	2
UACEG	2	n/a	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	2
UPJV	2	3	1	3	n/a	1	2	2	3	2

Highest average: IPCB (2.22) Overall chart average score: 1.93	
Core Cluster (high compatibility, avg > 2)	IPCB - BTH - UACEG - BUW - UEKAT - UPJV
Moderately connected universities (avg ≈ 1.5–2)	POLIS - UOM
Peripheral node	UNIBG - ULL2
Disconnected node:	/

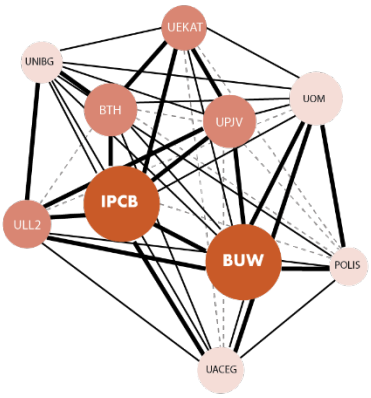
Network cluster description
The network is highly cohesive, with no disconnected or peripheral universities. BTH, IPCB, BUW, UACEG, UEKAT, UPJV form the core cluster, showing strong compatibility and likely acting as central nodes. POLIS, UOM are moderately connected, meaning they have solid but slightly weaker compatibility within the network.

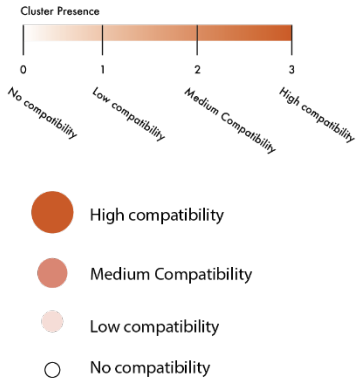




UNIVERSITIES	Bachelors Students' progression									
	ULL2	UACEG	UOM	BTH	UPJV	UEKAT	IPCB	BUW	UNIBG	POLIS
POLIS	2	2	3	1	1	1	1	3	2	n/a
BTH	1	2	2	n/a	1	3	3	2	3	1
UOM	1	3	n/a	2	2	2	2	3	2	3
UEKAT	0	1	2	3	1	n/a	3	2	2	1
IPCB	3	3	2	3	3	3	n/a	3	2	1
BUW	3	2	3	2	3	2	3	n/a	2	3
UNIBG	3	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	n/a	2
ULL2	n/a	2	1	1	2	0	3	3	3	2
UACEG	2	n/a	3	2	1	1	3	2	2	2
UPJV	3	1	2	1	n/a	3	3	3	2	1

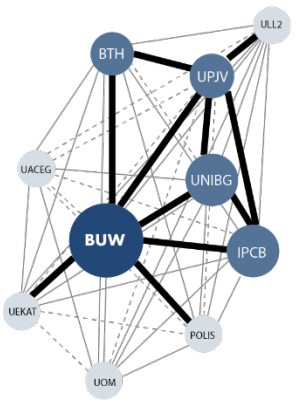
Highest average: BUW(2.56), IPCB (2.44) Overall chart average: 2.10	
Core Cluster (high compatibility, avg > 2)	BUW - IPCB - ULL2 - BTH - UEKAT - UPJV
Moderately connected universities (avg ≈ 1.5–2)	POLIS - UOM - UACEG - UNIBG
Peripheral node	/
Disconnected node:	/
Network cluster description BUW and IPCB are the strongest central nodes, with the highest averages in the network. BUW, IPCB, ULL2 , BTH , UEKAT, UPJV also belong to the core cluster, forming a dense and highly compatible network. POLIS, UOM, UACEG, UNIBG are moderately connected, meaning they have solid but slightly weaker ties with the core nodes. No universities are peripheral or disconnected, showing a well-integrated network overall.	

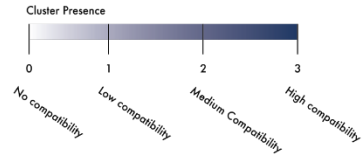


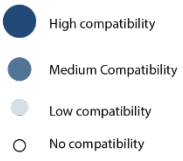


UNIVERSITIES	Bachelors Graduation									
	ULL2	UACEG	UOM	BTH	UPJV	UEKAT	IPCB	BUW	UNIBG	POLIS
POLIS	2	1	2	2	1	1	3	2	2	n/a
BTH	2	2	2	n/a	3	2	2	3	1	2
UOM	2	2	n/a	2	1	1	2	2	2	2
UEKAT	2	2	1	2	1	n/a	2	3	2	1
IPCB	2	1	2	2	3	2	n/a	3	3	2
BUW	2	1	2	3	3	3	3	n/a	3	3
UNIBG	2	2	2	1	3	2	3	3	n/a	2
ULL2	n/a	1	2	2	3	0	2	2	2	2
UACEG	1	n/a	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	1
UPJV	3	1	1	3	n/a	1	3	3	3	1

Highest average:BUW (2.67) Overall chart average: 2.04	
Core Cluster (high compatibility, avg > 2)	BUW - UNIBG - IPCB - BTH - UPJV
Moderately connected universities (avg ≈ 1.5–2)	UOM - UEKAT - ULL2 - UACEG - POLIS
Peripheral node	/
Disconnected node:	/
Network cluster description BUW is the strongest hub in this network.IPCB, UNIBG, BTH, UPJV, POLIS form the core cluster, strongly integrated. UOM, UEKAT, ULL2, UACEG are moderately connected, supporting the network but slightly weaker in compatibility. There are no peripheral or disconnected nodes, showing a well-connected network overall.	



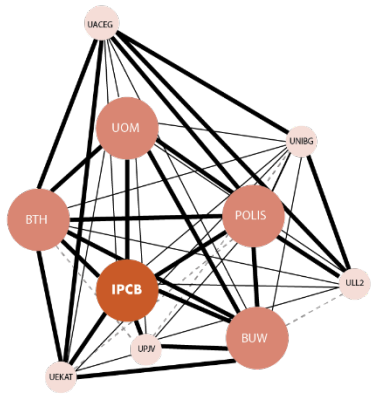


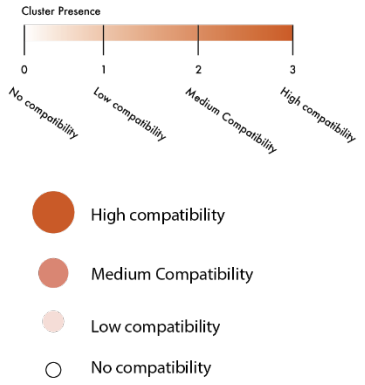


UNIVERSITIES	Masters Student Enrolment									
	ULL2	UACEG	UOM	BTH	UPJV	UEKAT	IPCB	BUW	UNIBG	POLIS
POLIS	3	3	3	3	2	1	3	3	2	n/a
BTH	2	3	3	n/a	1	3	3	3	2	3
UOM	2	2	n/a	3	2	2	3	3	2	3
UEKAT	0	3	2	3	2	n/a	3	3	2	1
IPCB	2	2	3	3	3	3	n/a	3	2	3
BUW	1	2	3	3	3	3	3	n/a	2	3
UNIBG	3	3	2	2	1	2	2	2	n/a	2
ULL2	n/a	3	2	2	2	0	2	1	3	3
UACEG	3	n/a	2	3	0	3	2	2	3	3
UPJV	2	0	2	1	n/a	2	3	3	1	2

Highest average: IPCB (2,67) Overall chart average: 2.31	
Core Cluster (high compatibility, avg > 2)	IPCB - POLIS - BTH - UOM - BUW
Moderately connected universities (avg ≈ 1.5–2)	UEKAT - ULL2 - UNIBG - UACEG - UPJV
Peripheral node	/
Disconnected node:	/

Network cluster description
Interpretation: IPCB is the strongest hub, followed closely by POLIS, BTH, UOM, and BUW. The network is densely connected, with all universities in the core cluster, and no moderately connected, peripheral, or disconnected nodes.

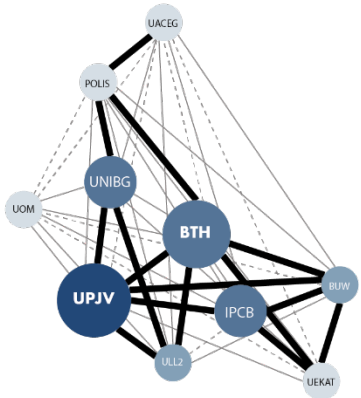


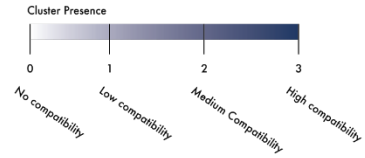


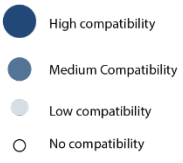
UNIVERSITIES	Masters Curriculum design									
	ULL2	UACEG	UOM	BTH	UPJV	UEKAT	IPCB	BUW	UNIBG	POLIS
POLIS	2	3	1	3	2	2	2	2	3	n/a
BTH	3	1	2	n/a	3	3	2	3	2	3
UOM	2	1	n/a	2	2	1	2	1	2	1
UEKAT	0	1	1	3	2	n/a	3	3	2	2
IPCB	1	2	2	2	3	3	n/a	3	2	2
BUW	2	2	1	3	3	3	3	n/a	2	2
UNIBG	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	n/a	3
ULL2	n/a	2	2	3	3	0	1	2	3	2
UACEG	2	n/a	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	3
UPJV	3	1	2	3	n/a	2	3	3	3	2

Highest average: UPJV (2.44) Overall chart average: 2.07	
Core Cluster (high compatibility, avg > 2)	UPJV - BTH UNIBG - IPCB - POLIS - BUW
Moderately connected universities (avg ≈ 1.5–2)	UEKAT - ULL2 - UOM - UACEG
Peripheral node	/
Disconnected node:	/

Network cluster description
UPJV is the strongest hub in this network. BTH, IPCB, UNIBG, POLIS, BUW, form the core cluster, showing strong compatibility. UEKAT, UOM, ULL2, UACEG are moderately connected, supporting the network but slightly weaker in ties. There are no peripheral or disconnected nodes, indicating a well-integrated network overall.

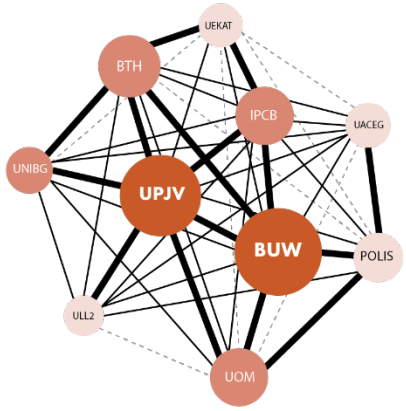


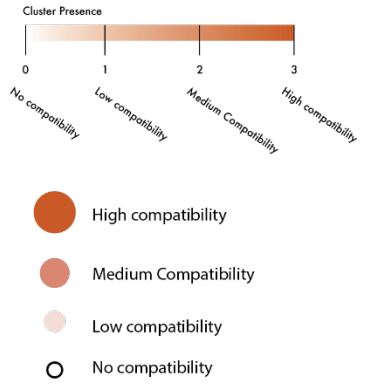




UNIVERSITIES	Masters Students' progression									
	ULL2	UACEG	UOM	BTH	UPJV	UEKAT	IPCB	BUW	UNIBG	POLIS
POLIS	2	3	3	1	2	1	2	3	2	n/a
BTH	2	2	2	n/a	3	3	2	3	3	1
UOM	1	1	n/a	2	3	1	2	3	2	3
UEKAT	0	1	1	3	2	n/a	3	2	1	1
IPCB	2	2	2	2	3	3	n/a	3	2	2
BUW	2	2	3	3	3	2	3	n/a	2	3
UNIBG	2	2	2	3	3	1	2	2	n/a	2
ULL2	n/a	2	1	2	3	0	2	2	2	2
UACEG	2	n/a	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	3
UPJV	2	2	3	3	n/a	2	3	3	3	2

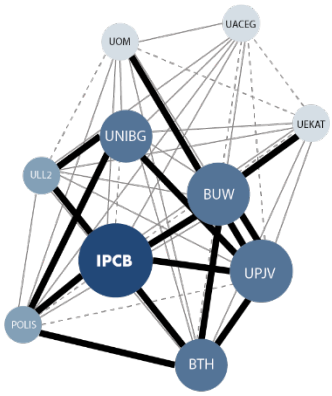
Highest average: BUW (2.44), tied with UPJV (2.44) Overall chart average: 2.10	
Core Cluster (high compatibility, avg > 2)	BUW - UPJV - BTH - IPCB - UNIBG - UOM
Moderately connected universities (avg ≈ 1.5–2)	UEKAT - ULL2 - POLIS
Peripheral node	UACEG
Disconnected node:	/
Network cluster description BUW and UPJV are the strongest hubs, showing the highest overall compatibility. BTH, IPCB, UNIBG, UOM form the core cluster, strongly integrated. UEKAT, ULL2, POLIS are moderately connected, supporting the network but with slightly weaker ties.	

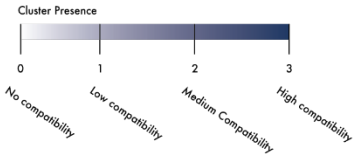


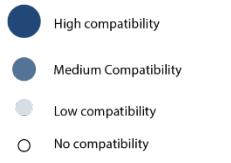


UNIVERSITIES	Masters Graduation									
	ULL2	UACEG	UOM	BTH	UPJV	UEKAT	IPCB	BUW	UNIBG	POLIS
POLIS	2	2	2	3	1	1	3	2	3	n/a
BTH	2	1	2	n/a	3	2	3	3	2	3
UOM	1	1	n/a	2	3	1	2	2	2	2
UEKAT	0	1	1	2	2	n/a	2	3	2	1
IPCB	3	2	2	3	3	2	n/a	3	1	3
BUW	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	n/a	2	2
UNIBG	3	2	2	2	3	2	1	2	n/a	3
ULL2	n/a	2	1	2	2	0	3	2	3	2
UACEG	2	n/a	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
UPJV	2	1	3	3	n/a	2	3	3	3	1

Highest average: IPCB (2.44) Overall chart average: 2.13	
Core Cluster (high compatibility, avg > 2)	IPCB - BUW - UPJV - BTH - UNIBG
Moderately connected universities (avg ≈ 1.5–2)	POLIS - ULL2
Peripheral node	UACEG - UOM - UEKAT
Disconnected node:	/
Network cluster description IPCB is the strongest hub in this network. BUW, UPJV, BTH, UNIBG, are also part of the core cluster, forming a highly compatible network. POLISand ULL2 are moderately connected, supporting the network with weaker ties.	



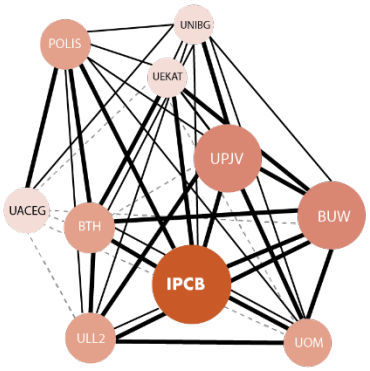


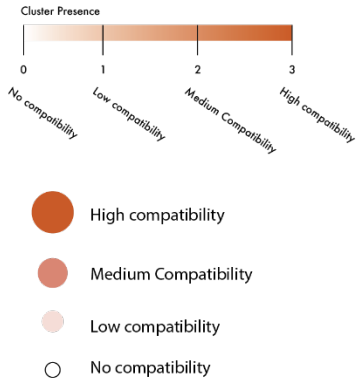


UNIVERSITIES	PhD									
	Student Enrolment									
	ULL2	UACEG	UOM	BTH	UPJV	UEKAT	IPCB	BUW	UNIBG	POLIS
POLIS	2	3	2	3	2	2	3	2	2	n/a
BTH	3	1	2	n/a	1	3	3	3	2	3
UOM	3	1	n/a	2	3	1	3	3	2	2
UEKAT	0	1	1	3	2	n/a	3	3	2	2
IPCB	2	1	3	3	3	3	n/a	3	2	3
BUW	3	1	3	3	3	3	3	n/a	2	2
UNIBG	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	0	2
ULL2	n/a	1	3	3	3	0	2	3	2	2
UACEG	1	n/a	1	1	0	1	1	1	2	3
UPJV	3	0	3	1	n/a	2	3	3	3	2

Highest average: IPCB (2.56) Overall chart average: 2.24	
Core Cluster (high compatibility, avg > 2)	IPCB - BUW - UPJV - POLIS - BTH - UOM - ULL2
Moderately connected universities (avg ≈ 1.5–2)	UEKAT - UACEG
Peripheral node	UNIBG
Disconnected node:	/

Network cluster description
IPCB is the strongest hub, followed by BUW and UPJV. POLIS, BTH, UOM, ULL2, are also part of the core cluster, forming a highly compatible network. UEKAT and UACEG are moderately connected, supporting the network but with weaker ties.

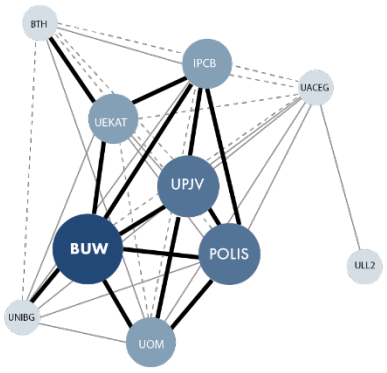


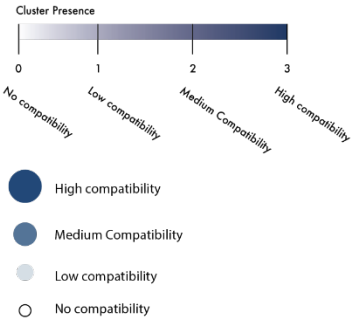


UNIVERSITIES	PhD									
	Curriculum design									
	ULL2	UACEG	UOM	BTH	UPJV	UEKAT	IPCB	BUW	UNIBG	POLIS
POLIS	0	2	3	1	3	2	3	3	2	n/a
BTH	0	1	2	n/a	1	3	2	0	1	1
UOM	0	2	n/a	2	3	1	1	3	2	3
UEKAT	0	1	1	3	2	n/a	3	3	2	2
IPCB	0	1	1	2	3	3	n/a	3	2	3
BUW	0	1	3	0	3	3	3	n/a	3	3
UNIBG	0	2	2	1	2	2	2	3	n/a	2
ULL2	n/a	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UACEG	2	n/a	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	2
UPJV	0	2	3	1	n/a	2	3	3	2	3

Highest average: BUW (2.22) Overall chart average: 1.71	
Core Cluster (high compatibility, avg > 2)	BUW - POLIS - UPJV
Moderately connected universities (avg ≈ 1.5–2)	UOM - UEKAT - IPCB
Peripheral node	UACEG - BTH - UNIBG
Disconnected node:	

Network cluster description
BUW is the strongest hub, followed by POLIS and UPJV. UOM, UEKAT, IPCB are also core members, forming a well-integrated subnetwork. BTH, UNIBG, UACEG are supporting the network with weaker compatibility.

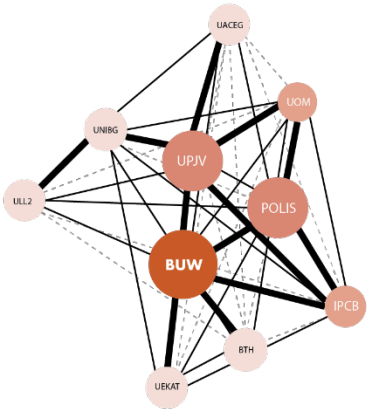


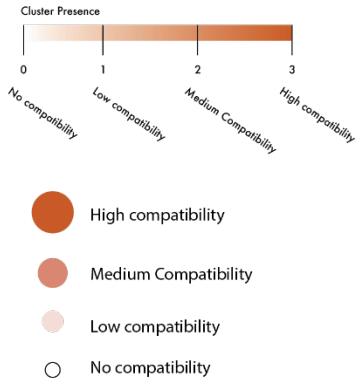


UNIVERSITIES	PhD									
	Students' progression									
	ULL2	UACEG	UOM	BTH	UPJV	UEKAT	IPCB	BUW	UNIBG	POLIS
POLIS	2	2	3	1	2	2	3	3	1	n/a
BTH	1	1	2	n/a	1	2	1	3	2	1
UOM	1	1	n/a	2	3	1	2	2	2	3
UEKAT	0	1	1	2	1	n/a	2	3	2	2
IPCB	1	1	2	1	3	2	n/a	3	2	3
BUW	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	n/a	2	3
UNIBG	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	n/a	1
ULL2	n/a	2	1	1	2	0	1	2	3	2
UACEG	2	n/a	1	1	3	1	1	1	2	2
UPJV	2	3	3	1	n/a	1	3	3	3	2

Highest average: BUW 2.44 Overall chart average: 1.93	
Core Cluster (high compatibility, avg > 2)	BUW - POLIS - UPJV - IPCB - UOM
Moderately connected universities (avg ≈ 1.5–2)	BTH - UEKAT
Peripheral node	UACEG - UNIBG - ULL2
Disconnected node:	/

Network cluster description
BUW is the strongest hub, followed by UPJV, POLIS, UNIBG, IPCB.
UOM is part of the core but slightly weaker. BTH, UEKAT, UACEG, ULL2 are moderately connected, supporting the network with weaker ties.

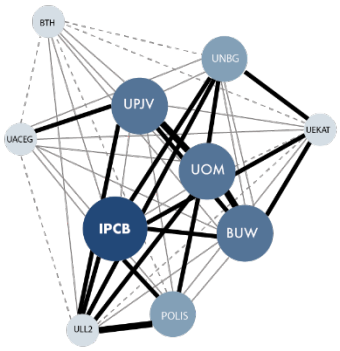


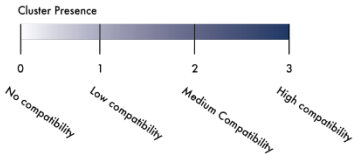


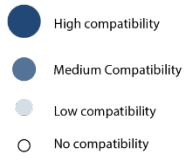
UNIVERSITIES	PhD									
	Graduation									
	ULL2	UACEG	UOM	BTH	UPJV	UEKAT	IPCB	BUW	UNIBG	POLIS
POLIS	3	2	3	1	2	2	3	2	3	n/a
BTH	2	1	2	n/a	2	1	2	2	1	1
UOM	3	2	n/a	2	3	1	2	3	3	3
UEKAT	1	2	1	1	2	n/a	3	3	3	2
IPCB	3	3	2	2	2	3	n/a	3	3	3
BUW	2	2	3	2	3	3	3	n/a	2	2
UNIBG	3	2	3	1	2	3	3	2	n/a	2
ULL2	n/a	1	3	2	3	1	3	2	3	3
UACEG	1	n/a	2	1	2	3	2	2	2	2
UPJV	3	3	3	2	n/a	2	2	3	2	2

Highest average: Overall chart average: 2.27	
Core Cluster (high compatibility, avg > 2)	IPCB - UOM - BUW - UPJV - POLIS - UNIBG - ULL2 - UEKAT
Moderately connected universities (avg ≈ 1.5–2)	BTH - UACEG
Peripheral node	BTH
Disconnected node:	/

Network cluster description
IPCB is the strongest hub, followed by UOM, BUW, and UPJV. POLIS, UNIBG, ULL2, UEKAT are also core cluster members, forming a highly integrated network. BTH and UACEG are moderately connected, supporting the network with weaker compatibility. No peripheral or disconnected nodes exist, indicating a strong overall network.



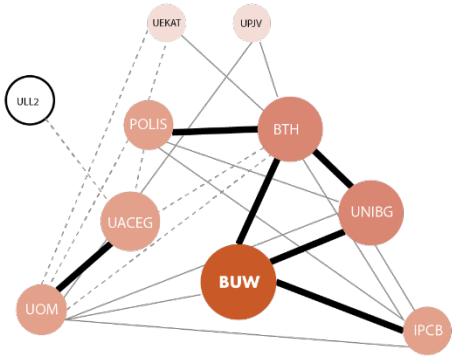


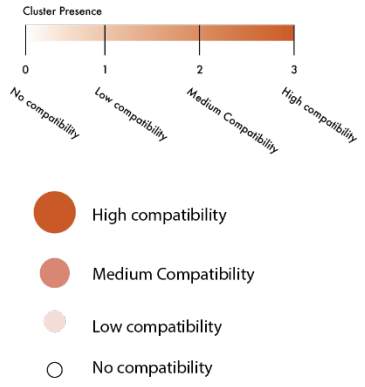


UNIVERSITIES	Microcredentials									
	ULL2	UACEG	UOM	BTH	UPJV	UEKAT	IPCB	BUW	UNIBG	POLIS
POLIS	0	1	1	3	0	1	2	2	2	n/a
BTH	0	2	1	n/a	2	2	2	3	3	3
UOM	0	3	n/a	1	2	1	2	2	2	1
UEKAT	0	2	1	2	2	n/a	1	2	2	1
IPCB	0	1	2	2	2	1	n/a	3	2	2
BUW	0	2	2	3	2	2	3	n/a	3	2
UNIBG	0	1	2	3	1	2	2	3	n/a	2
ULL2	n/a	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UACEG	1	n/a	3	2	1	1	1	2	1	1
UPJV	0	2	2	2	n/a	2	2	2	1	0

Highest average: Overall chart average: 1.47	
Core Cluster (high compatibility, avg > 2)	BUW - BTH
Moderately connected universities (avg ≈ 1.5–2)	UNIBG - IPCB - UOM - UEKAT - UACEG - UPJV -
Peripheral node	/
Disconnected node:	

Network cluster description
BUW and BTH are the strongest hubs, forming the core cluster.
UNIBG, IPCB, POLIS, UOM, UEKAT, UACEG, UPJV are moderately connected, supporting the network with weaker ties.

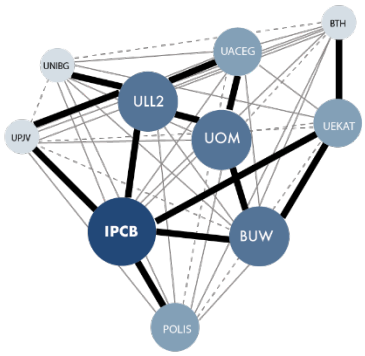


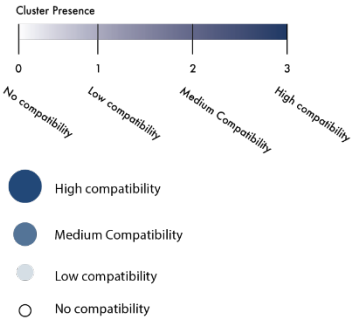


UNIVERSITIES	Quality Assurance / Accreditation									
	ULL2	UACEG	UOM	BTH	UPJV	UEKAT	IPCB	BUW	UNIBG	POLIS
POLIS	2	1	2	2	2	1	3	2	2	n/a
BTH	2	2	1	n/a	2	3	2	2	1	2
UOM	3	3	n/a	1	2	1	2	3	2	2
UEKAT	0	2	1	3	1	n/a	3	3	2	1
IPCB	3	2	2	2	3	3	n/a	3	2	3
BUW	2	2	3	2	1	3	3	n/a	2	2
UNIBG	3	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	n/a	2
ULL2	n/a	3	3	2	3	0	3	2	3	2
UACEG	3	n/a	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	1
UPJV	3	2	2	2	n/a	1	3	1	1	2

Highest average: Overall chart average: 2.04	
Core Cluster (high compatibility, avg > 2)	IPCB - BUW - ULL2 - UOM - UACEG
Moderately connected universities (avg ≈ 1.5–2)	POLIS - UPJV - UEKAT - UNIBG
Peripheral node	BTH
Disconnected node:	/

Network cluster description
IPCB is the strongest hub in this network. UOM, BUW, ULL2, UACEG are also core members, forming a well-integrated central network. POLIS, UEKAT, UNIBG, UPJV are moderately connected, supporting the network but with weaker ties.





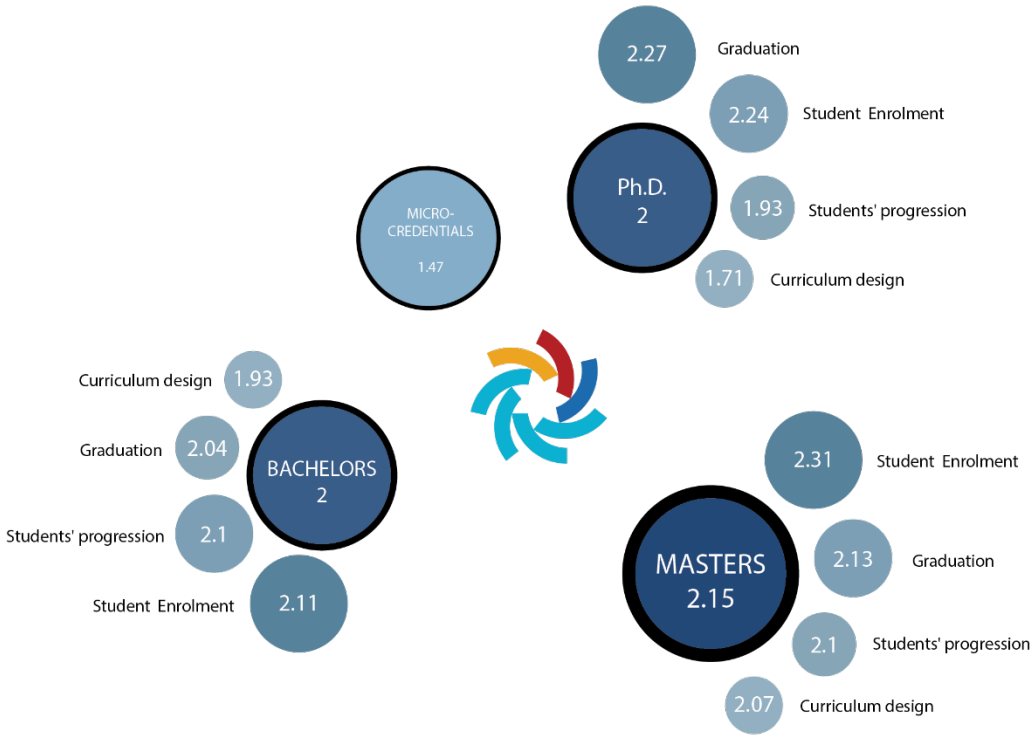


Table 3.1 Compatibility Score for joint educational programmes

Program and general features		Highest Compability Score per program	Highest Compability Score per program
General features of the regulatory framework		1,48	1,48
Bachelors	Student Enrolment	2,11	2
	Curriculum design	1,93	
	Students' progression	2,1	
	Graduation	2,04	
Masters	Student Enrolment	2,31	2,15
	Curriculum design	2,07	
	Students' progression	2,1	
	Graduation	2,13	
PhD	Student Enrolment	2,24	2
	Curriculum design	1,71	
	Students' progression	1,93	
	Graduation	2,27	
Microcredentials		1,47	1,47
Quality Assurance / Accreditation		2,04	2,04

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