New Programme Design and Approval Policy

1.   Context

CHARM-EU is an alliance of European Universites (University of Barcelona, Trinity College Dublin, Utrecht University, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest and the University of Montpellier). Each university is recognised as a higher education provider by the relevant ministry and quality authorities of their own country at institutional and/or programme level, where different arrangement for Degree Awarding Authority applies. For example, Trinity College Dublin is a self-awarding body, in the Nederland's the Quality Agency NVAO lists the awards, while in other jurisdiction the Ministry is the final authorising body.

The Alliance partners, their respective Quality Agencies and Ministries have agreed to adopt the *European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes[1]* (October 2014) as it provides a framework for an integrated approach to initial accreditation and ongoing quality assurance for joint programmes. A decision at the European level on the arrangements for degree awarding authority for European Universities is expected at a future date and will trigger a revision of this policy.

Under current and future arrangements, the following framework documents apply:

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[1] https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/European-Approach-QA-of-Joint-Programmes_Yerevan-2015.pdf

- *European Qualifications Framework[2]* provides a common framework for interpreting learning outcomes and facilitates the transparency, comparability and portability of qualifications.

- *European Standards Guidelines for Higher Education in the EHEA[3]* (ESG 2015) provide a common framework for internal quality assurance for all alliance partners;

- *ECTS Users Guide[4]* is a tool for for making studies and courses more transparent and thus helping to enhance the quality of higher education.

2.   Purpose

2.1.   All programmes leading to an award from the CHARM EU Alliance partner universities are subject to a rigorous design and approval process.

2.2.   That the CHARM EU curriculum delivers on the CHARM EU education principles.

3.   Benefits

3.1   The policy sets out the programme design and initial accreditation processes for CHARM EU programmes leading to awards recognised by Quality Agencies and Ministries in each jurisdiction.

4.   Scope

4.1   This policy applies to all credit-bearing academic programmes delivered under the CHARM EU European University Alliance.

4.2   Non - credit bearing programmes are out of scope of this policy and will be subject to an alternate quality assurance process.

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[2] https://nfq.qqi.ie/qualifications-frameworks.html

[3] https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf

[4] https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/education/ects/users-guide/index_en.htm

5. Principles

5.1 The CHARM-EU curriculum is challenge-driven and built on trans-institutional research missions focused on solving global challenges.

5.1. CHARM-EU explores and implements technology that supports education, didactics, research and pedagogy.

5.2. Students are active partners in independent and collaborative learning and can exercise flexibility in location with regards to their learning experience.

5.3. CHARM-EU programmes are designed to provide consistent opportunity for the development of transversal skills such as critical and innovative thinking, inter- and intra-personal skills, global citizenship, media and information literacy, project management, problem-solving and entrepreneurialism.

5.4. CHARM-EU educational programmes provide students as well as academic and non-academic staff with transnational and intercultural learning opportunities through mobility and internationalisation 'at home.

5.5. CHARM-EU is committed to creating excellence in teaching and learning by providing the appropriate measures in policies and practices that remove barriers to success and support student and staff access and participation needs.

5.6. CHARM-EU is committed fostering an open, welcoming, safe atmosphere, where all forms of diversity are recognized, respected, and seen as a source of strength and benefit to the CHARM-EU community and beyond.

5.7. CHARM-EU educational programmes are designed to respect the diversity of students and are adapted to different students' learning needs and preferences taking into consideration their backgrounds or abilities.

6. Definitions

6.1 CHARM-EU – **CH**allenge-driven, **A**ccessible, **R**esearch-based, **M**obile **E**uropean **U**niversity.

6.2 Knowledge Creation Teams (KCTs) involve academics, non-academic actors and students in the development of module materials, the teaching and assessment of modules, collaboration in research projects and cross-institutional networks. KCTs can be expanded/updated as challenges arise that inform new specialisms within future academic programmes.

6.3 Transdisciplinary involves interactions that extend outside academia to solve problems of societal importance through integration of knowledge from different actors.

6.4 Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs) are statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate on completion of a process of learning.

6.5 Blended Learning is the 'integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online learning experiences' (Garrison and Kanuka (2004).

6.6 Hybrid Learning describes a learning situation where students may participate face to face and synchronously /or asynchronously by virtual means.

6.7. Inclusion refers to the practice of acknowledging the uniqueness of each individual. It means a shift in an organisational culture where different groups or individuals with diverse backgrounds, various circumstances, own lived experiences feel the sense of belonging, feel respected and valued, socially accepted, welcomed, and treated without discrimination.

6.8. Diversity is about the empowerment of people by respecting and valuing what makes them different. Diversity is normal.

7. Policy

7.1. Initiation

7.1.1. Ideas for new programme proposals arising from the Knowledge Creation Team should be submitted to the Academic Board for consideration as early as possible.

7.1.2. The Academic Board will consider the proposed title, level, length, aims, market analysis, target group and sustainability of the proposal and will ensure it aligns with

the strategic aspirations of CHARM EU Alliance Universities to address global societal challenges (e.g. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Green Deal).

7.1.3. The Academic Board will provide in principal approval for the design process to proceed.

7.2. Design considerations

7.2.1. New programme proposals should offer learning experiences based on the education principles, adopting a transdisciplinary approach to programme and curricula design combining the best European traditions in structuring curriculum through Knowledge Creating Teams (KCTs), with a flexible, skill oriented modular structure and mobility, and inclusion and diversity at its core (Refer 9.8 CHARM EU Toolkit).

7.2.2. The delivery paradigm should aim to foster the development of European identity and values, leverage the potential of transnational, inclusive and intercultural teaching and learning, and ensure integrated models of mobility, including virtual exchange opportunities.

7.2.3. Proposals for new credit bearing academic programmes should adhere to the European Framework documents outlined above (1-4).

7.2.4. Proposals for new course proposals should be supported by a market analysis to ensure sustainability.

7.2.5. New postgraduate programme should explain their added value and connection/possible exchange of modules to the existing programmes.

7.3. Approval Process

7.3.1. The current approval process follows the European Approach to Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes (refer current Approval Process Procedure). Key features of this process include the coordinating role played by a Quality Agency from one of the four jurisdictions (Spain, France, The Netherlands and Hungry) in coordinating the External Panel who conduct the external review of the proposal.

7.3.2. The Quality Agency initiates procedures in its jurisdiction to grant automatic recognition of the programme, once it does so the quality agencies and ministries in

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the other jurisdictions initiate automatic recognition of the programme and list the programme as eligible for recruitment.

7.3.3. Marketing cannot commence until the final proposal has completed all steps of the approval process.

8. Responsibility

8.1 Responsibility for oversight of this policy sits with the Rectors Assembly.

9. Related Documents

9.1 Addendum to the Collaboration Agreement

9.2. New Programme Design and Approval Interim Process

9.3. CHARM-EU's Inclusivity Plan.

9.4. European Standards Guidelines (2015)

9.5. ECTS Handbook

9.6. European Approach to Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes (2014)

9.7. European Qualifications Framework

9.8. Transnational and Intercultural Learning Toolkit Part I: Module design and mobility scheme development

10. Document Control

10.1 Date of initial approval: Academic Board 09/09/2021

10.2 Date policy effective from: September 2021

10.3 Date of next review: Academic Year 2022/2023