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QUALITÄTSSICHERUNG DURCH
AKKREDITIERUNG VON
STUDIENGÄNGEN E.V.

FINAL REPORT

REDESIGNING THE POST-INDUSTRIAL CITY (M.SC.)

OFFERED BY

UNIC EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

FORMED BY

ERASMUS UNIVERSITY ROTTERDAM (THE NETHERLANDS)

KOÇ UNIVERSITY (TURKEY)

RUHR-UNIVERSITY BOCHUM (GERMANY)

UNIVERSITY OF LIÈGE (BELGIUM)

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK (IRELAND)

UNIVERSITY OF DEUSTO (SPAIN)

UNIVERSITY OF OULU (FINLAND)

UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB (CROATIA)

October 2023

Assessment following the European Approach
for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes



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**DECISION OF THE AQAS STANDING COMMISSION
ON THE STUDY PROGRAMME
“REDESIGNING THE POST-INDUSTRIAL CITY” (M.SC.)
OFFERED BY THE
UNIC EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY
FORMED BY**

- **ERASMUS UNIVERSITY ROTTERDAM (THE NETHERLANDS)**
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Based on the report of the expert panel, and the discussions of the AQAS Standing Commission 18th meeting on 21 August 2023, and the circulation procedure of 18 October 2023, the AQAS Standing Commission decides:

1. The study programme “**Redesigning the Post-Industrial City**” (**Master of Science**) jointly offered by **Erasmus University Rotterdam (The Netherlands), Koç University (Turkey), Ruhr-University Bochum (Germany), University of Liège (Belgium), University College Cork (Ireland), University of Deusto (Spain), University of Oulu (Finland), and University of Zagreb (Croatia)** is accredited according to the Standards defined in the European Approach for Quality Assurance for Joint Programmes.

The accreditation is conditional.

The study programme essentially complies with the requirements defined by the criteria and thus the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) in their current version. The required adjustments can be implemented within a time period of twelve months.

2. The conditions have to be fulfilled. The fulfilment of the conditions has to be documented and reported to AQAS no later than **30 November 2024**. The confirmation of the conditions might include a physical site visit within the time period of twelve months.
3. The accreditation is given for the period of **six years** and is valid until **30 November 2029**.

Conditions:

1. The learning outcomes defined in official documents on the programme, such as the Diploma Supplement, Examination Regulations, and the Student Handbook, must be harmonized and described in identical manner.
2. All descriptors in the module descriptions need to be revised, where appropriate, to include the following criteria:
 - a. the description of the content and learning outcomes must be clarified and harmonised;
 - b. details on the teaching formats used must be included;
 - c. details on how the learning outcomes will be assessed must be provided for each module as well as information on resit options;
 - d. descriptions of the distribution of each module's workload must be included and be detailed specifically for the city lab modules (also see conditions 4 and 5),
 - e. the impact of students' mobility within or between semesters on their overall workload and assessment must be made clear in the module handbook.
 - f. Furthermore, the module handbook must clarify where and how aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals are meaningfully addressed in the course programme over and above the current badging exercise.
 - g. It must be made transparent that the programme focusses on urban transformation of cities in Europe and the Global North.
3. It must be made clear how the programme's learning outcomes are reflected at module level and can thus be achieved by the programme with its different tracks, e.g., by a matrix.
4. The timeline of the first and second semester of the programme must be defined and depicted in a clear way due to its complex structure. The timeline must clearly show how the programme's sequence will be organised ensuring that the workload from the first semester does not overlap with the beginning of the second semester of year one. Such a timeline will also include the following:
 - a. An outline of the specific time windows spent in Bochum and Cork in the first semester of year one, plus concrete information on the time periods (including dates) of all sub-elements of the semester, itemising the distribution of the workload, teaching and assessment activities and coursework, mobility requirements of students and opportunities to resit exams within the semester;
 - b. more detailed information on the tracks available at the different partner universities in the second semester of year one taking into account the differing semester/term dates of the partner universities.
5. The concept of both City Labs must be described in a clear way in this timeline or in a separate document, providing information on the placement in the course of studies, the distribution of workload, how the ILOs are to be achieved within the allocated time, which stakeholders will be involved and how, details on coursework and assessment (including preparatory literature reading and resitting options for examinations).

The following **recommendations** are given for further improvement of the programme:

1. Making the full-time position of a RePIC Programme Manager permanent is recommended once the programme is established and running to full capacity, to ensure a continuous smooth delivery of the programme across the participating universities, and so that students have a specific contact person for questions and dealing with problems over the long run. The position will also be of central importance for the ongoing quality assurance of the programme.
2. The date of application and admission should be set earlier for students from Europe.
3. The options for taking extra-curricular courses such as language courses, courses on academic writing and integrity, etc. at the different universities should be made more transparent, e.g., in the Student or Module Handbook.
4. It is highly recommended having a whole programme review 12 to 24 months after starting the programme, which should be conducted in addition to the requirements of the planned QA system.

With regard to the reasons for this decision the Standing Commission refers to the attached assessment report.

**EXPERTS' REPORT
ON THE STUDY PROGRAMME
“REDESIGNING THE POST-INDUSTRIAL CITY” (M.SC.)
OFFERED BY THE
UNIC EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY
FORMED BY**

- **ERASMUS UNIVERSITY ROTTERDAM (THE NETHERLANDS)**
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- **UNIVERSITY OF DEUSTO (SPAIN)**
- **UNIVERSITY OF OULU (FINLAND)**
- **UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB (CROATIA)**

Visit to the university: 19 & 20 June 2023

Panel of experts:

Prof. Dr. Kerstin Krellenberg	Wien University (Austria), Department of Geography and Regional Research, Head of the Department of Geography and Regional Research, Head of the working group Urban Studies,
Prof. Dr. Enda Murphy	University College Dublin (Ireland), School of Architecture Planning and Environmental Policy
Prof. Anthony O’Sullivan	Editor in Chief at Urban Studies Journal, Glasgow, & honorary professor at Glasgow University at the School of Social & Political Sciences (GB) (representative of the labour market)
Florens Förster	RWTH Aachen (Germany) (student expert)
Coordinator: Ninja Fischer	AQAS, Cologne, Germany

I. Preamble

AQAS – Agency for Quality Assurance through Accreditation of Study Programmes – is an independent non-profit organisation supported by more than 90 universities, universities of applied sciences and academic associations. Since 2002, the agency has been recognised by the German Accreditation Council (GAC). It is, therefore, a notified body for the accreditation of higher education institutions and programmes in Germany.

AQAS is a full member of ENQA and also listed in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) which confirms that our procedures comply with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), on which all Bologna countries agreed as a basis for internal and external quality assurance.

AQAS is an institution founded by and working for higher education institutions and academic associations. The agency is devoted to quality assurance and quality development of academic studies and higher education institutions' teaching. In line with AQAS' mission statement, the official bodies in Germany and Europe (GAC and EQAR) approved that the activities of AQAS in accreditation are neither limited to specific academic disciplines or degrees nor a particular type of higher education institution.

II. Accreditation procedure

This report results from the external review of the study programme “Redesigning the Post-Industrial City” (RePIC) offered jointly by the UNIC European University which is formed by Erasmus University Rotterdam (The Netherlands), Koç University (Turkey), Ruhr-University Bochum (Germany), University of Liège (Belgium), University College Cork (Ireland), University of Deusto (Spain), University of Oulu (Finland), and University of Zagreb (Croatia).

1. Criteria

The programme is assessed against the criteria defined by the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes. The criteria are based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) 2015.

2. Approach and methodology

Initialisation

The university consortium mandated AQAS to perform the accreditation procedure in February 2022. The university consortium produced a self-evaluation report (SER). In November 2022, the consortium handed in a draft of the SER together with the relevant documentation on the programme and an appendix. The appendix included:

- the module descriptions,
- the examination regulations,
- an example of the diploma supplement,
- the student handbook,
- the CVs of the teaching staff/supervisors.

AQAS checked the SER regarding completeness, comprehensibility, and transparency. The accreditation procedure was officially initialised by a decision of the AQAS Standing Commission on 27 February 2023. The final version of the SER was provided in May 2023.

Nomination of the expert panel

The composition of the panel of experts follows the stakeholder principle. Consequently, representatives from the respective disciplines, the labour market, and students are involved. Furthermore, AQAS follows the principles for the selection of experts defined by the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA). The Standing Commission nominated the aforementioned expert panel in March 2023. AQAS informed the university consortium about the members of the expert panel, and the university consortium did not raise any concerns against the composition of the panel.

Preparation of the site visit

Prior to the site visit, the experts reviewed the SER and submitted a short preliminary statement including open questions and potential needs for additional information. AQAS forwarded these preliminary statements to the university consortium and to all panel members in order to increase transparency in the process and the upcoming discussions during the site visit.

Site visit

After a review of the SER, a site visit to the Ruhr-Universität Bochum took place on 19 and 20 June 2023. On site, the experts interviewed different stakeholders, specifically management representatives of the higher education institutions involved in the consortium, the programme management team, teaching and other staff, as well as students, in separate discussion rounds, and consulted additional documentation. The visit concluded by the presentation of the preliminary findings of the group of experts to the consortium's representatives.

Reporting

After the site visit had taken place, the expert group drafted the following report, assessing the fulfilment of the criteria. The report included a recommendation to the AQAS Standing Commission. The report was sent to the consortium for comments.

Decision

The report, together with the comments of the university consortium, forms the basis for the AQAS Standing Commission to take a decision regarding the accreditation of the programme. Based on these two documents, the AQAS Standing Commission took its decision on the accreditation on 16 October 2023. AQAS forwarded the decision to the university consortium. The university consortium had the right to appeal against the decision or any of the imposed conditions, if applicable.

In November 2023, AQAS published the report and the result of the accreditation as well as the names of the panel of experts.

III. General information on the universities

“Redesigning the Post-Industrial City” (RePIC) is a one-degree master’s programme, leading to a diploma awarded by the eight universities of the consortium together (joint degree) which are University College Cork (Ireland), Universidad de Deusto (Spain), Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam (the Netherlands), Koç Üniversitesi Istanbul (Turkey), Liège Université (Belgium), Oulun yliopisto (Finland), Sveučilište u Zagrebu (Croatia), and Ruhr-Universität Bochum (RUB; Germany). The consortium forms the European University UNIC (European University of Post-Industrial Cities). Students enrol in the study programme at the eight RePIC universities at the same time. Within the consortium, different actors take over different roles and tasks. Students may attend lectures, seminars, research work at different campuses as if they were classrooms and labs at one university.

RUB acts as the coordinating university of the consortium, the others are indicated as beneficiaries. Thus, RUB bears the financial and legal responsibility for the delivery of the RePIC programme, besides organisational tasks related to the co-ordinating role.

Following the description in the self-evaluation report (SER), all universities involved are recognized as higher education institutions in their country according to the respective national legislation.

IV. Assessment of the study programme

1. Eligibility

1.1 The institutions that offer a joint programme should be recognised as higher education institutions by the relevant authorities of their countries. Their respective national legal frameworks should enable them to participate in the joint programme and, if applicable, to award a joint degree. The institutions awarding the degree(s) should ensure that the degree(s) belong to the higher education degree systems of the countries in which they are based.

1.2 The joint programme should be offered jointly, involving all cooperating institutions in the design and delivery of the programme.

1.3 The terms and conditions of the joint programme should be laid down in a cooperation agreement. The agreement should in particular cover the following issues:

- *Denomination of the degree(s) awarded in the programme*
- *Coordination and responsibilities of the partners involved regarding management and financial organisation (including funding, sharing of costs and income etc.)*
- *Admission and selection procedures for students*
- *Mobility of students and teachers*
- *Examination regulations, student assessment methods, recognition of credits and degree awarding procedures in the consortium.*

Description

The RePIC programme is part of the overarching UNIC partnership, which – according to the SER – includes the master’s programme in its content and administrative facets, joint research activities of the participating academics, Erasmus staff and student mobility, joint virtual lectures, and collaborative networks.

The consortium has concluded a partnership agreement for the master’s programme. This is also intended to be in accordance with a multi-beneficiary grant agreement with the European Commission, within the framework of the EU’s Erasmus+ funding scheme Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters. In the agreement, the consortium agrees to run the RePIC programme with or without Erasmus Mundus Joint Master’s funding. The agreement identifies that it supplements the overall cooperation agreement which the partners concluded when founding the UNIC network.

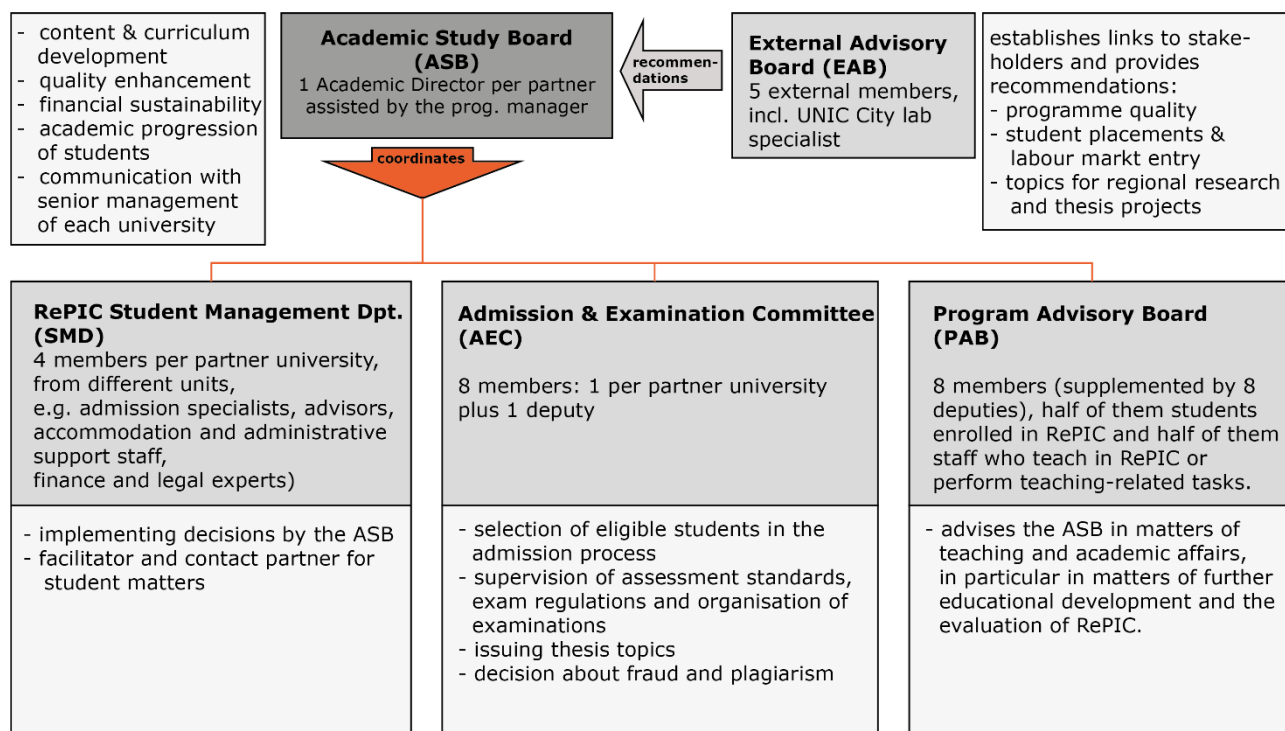
Among other things, the agreement lays down the degree and amount of credit points awarded, the roles and duties of the partner institutions, the governing bodies (such as Board of Directors, Admission Committee, Examination Committee, Quality Assurance Committee, etc.), the distribution of main fields of responsibilities, the programme’s learning outcomes as well as the contents framework and structure of the study programme including mobility paths of students, student application, selection and admission, services for students, as well as students’ rights and responsibilities, resource allocation, and aspects such as staff mobility, quality assurance, and financial management.

The agreement includes reference to the Examination Regulations as the underlying regulatory framework of the study programme. These and any supplemental or further regulations provided by the partner institutions shall not be in contradiction with national legislation and the partnership agreement. According to the agreement, all partner institutions shall ensure that their academic contributions to this study programme are correctly registered locally at their institutions, shall guarantee that their contributions are correctly accredited at national level, and shall jointly accredit the programme as a joint master’s degree.

Besides RUB being the coordinating institution, each partner university must appoint a RePIC Director. The RUB RePIC Director is also the overall Programme Coordinator, responsible for managing the implementation and operation of the whole programme. Together, these directors shall constitute the Board of Directors, the decision-making body of RePIC. Additionally, as coordinating institution, RUB has appointed an overall RePIC Programme Manager to be responsible for day-to-day operations. Each partner university is also supposed to appoint a RePIC Local Coordinator who shall assist their RePIC Directors and the RePIC Programme Manager and shall carry out day-to-day administrative and technical tasks concerning students, quality assurance, mobility, and general affairs at the local level.

The governance structure of RePIC is given as follows:

RePIC Governance Structure



Experts' evaluation

Eligibility requirements appear to be met since the consortium shows the legal basis of the study programme in the self-evaluation report (SER). As noted above, the Partnership Agreement documents the authorities under which the UNIC participating institutions will collectively offer RePIC as a joint MSc degree, recording their several frameworks of accreditation as HEIs, aspects of the national legal frameworks underpinning the proposed joint programme, terms and conditions under which the joint programme will be run (including staff mobility arrangements), respective institutional roles and duties. The Partnership Agreement also details governance, operational management and financial arrangements, student admission, selection, enrolment, service (including student care) delivery, and examination/award arrangements. Quality Assurance and programme promotion are also addressed, while a separate document formally detailing exam regulations for the programme across the participating institutions has also been agreed.

The degree title accurately reflects the field of study. The universities have a well-defined framework for coordinating and managing the programme's administrative and financial aspects. Each partner has clearly defined responsibilities and roles in overseeing the programme's operations, including financial management, resource allocation, and cost-sharing. The financial organization ensures transparency, accountability, and effective utilization of resources to support the programme's objectives.

The programme has a comprehensive and transparent admission process that adheres to established guidelines and regulations and which is adequately laid down in the agreement. The selection criteria consider the applicants' academic qualifications, relevant experience, motivation, and potential to contribute to the programme. The process aims to deliver fairness, equal opportunities, and diversity in the student body (for the timeline of the procedure etc. also see chapters 4 and 8). Mobility is the very core of the programme, and it requires student mobility among the different partners. Students thereby have the opportunity to study at different partner institutions, fostering cross-cultural experiences, knowledge exchange, and a broader perspective. The general framework for this is also laid out in the agreement.

The programme has established a comprehensive examination and assessment framework, ensuring evaluation of students' performance. The proposed assessment methods align with recognized approaches, while the mechanisms in place for the recognition of study credits earned at different institutions should facilitate seamless academic progression (cf. chapter 4).

In the experts' view, the governance procedures outlined in the documentation, and fleshed out during the site visit, are appropriate and reflect serious and substantive effort to create a truly collaborative programme. A particular strength of the developed arrangements is the creation of a full-time position of a RePIC Programme Manager. At this moment, that position is limited to a period of five years only. The experts thus recommend making it permanent once the programme is established and running to full capacity, to ensure a continuous smooth delivery of the programme across the participating universities, and so that students have a specific contact person for questions and problems over the long run. The position will also be of central importance for the ongoing quality assurance of the programme (**finding 1**).

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

2. Learning outcomes

- 2.1 The intended learning outcomes should align with the corresponding level in the Framework for Qualifications in the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA), as well as the applicable national qualifications framework(s).
- 2.2 The intended learning outcomes should comprise knowledge, skills, and competencies in the respective disciplinary field(s).
- 2.3 The programme should be able to demonstrate that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.
- 2.4 If relevant for the specific joint programme, the minimum agreed training conditions specified in the European Union Directive 2005/36/EC, or relevant common trainings frameworks established under the Directive, should be taken into account.

Description

The study programme aims at achieving level 7 according to the QF-EHEA and the following level of the respective national qualifications' framework: Germany: Level 7; Croatia: Level 7.1; Turkey: Level 7; Finland: Level 7; Belgium: Level 7; Ireland: Level 9; The Netherlands: Level 7, Spain: Level 3.

In the RePIC programme, students are to be supported and offered guidance to develop knowledge and understanding (theoretical and methodological approaches), intellectual, practical, and transferable skills ('hard' research methods and techniques skills as well as 'soft skills' such as intercultural and interdisciplinary communication), and professional values (research integrity and ethics). The main aims of the programme are to introduce students to multidisciplinary views of the post-industrial city and the differentiated impact of post-industrialism on urban societies, and to develop perspectives for the sustainable transformation of the post-industrial city through engaged research practices. Thus, the programme aims at achieving the following intended learning outcomes:

Academic research

- *Knowledge*: graduates are supposed to be able to explain urban transformation and urban design theories, analytical frameworks, and the appropriate use of research methods; they are supposed to be able to describe multidisciplinary views of the postindustrial city and the differentiated impact of postindustrialism on urban societies.
- *Skills*: graduates are supposed to be able to apply methodology and scientific methods correctly in practice and across different jurisdictions and research settings; they are supposed to be able to critically analyse and evaluate data found in the digital space and have insights into the foundation needed to apply data analysis to real-world post-industrial urban transformation challenges.
- *Responsibility & autonomy*: graduates are supposed to be able to study a research topic in-depth and to independently conduct and complete a suitable research project.

Context analysis & reflection

- *Knowledge*: graduates are supposed to be able to explain knowledge in advanced research, digital design, spatial analysis, and professional management aspects; they are supposed to be able to explain different dynamics and processes involved in the revitalisation of post-industrial cities from social science, sustainability, and circular economy perspectives.
- *Skills*: graduates are supposed to be able to conceptualise, interpret and critically analyse real-world post-industrial urban transformation challenges across different jurisdictions; they are supposed to be able to generate new interdisciplinary expertise to help solve complex urban transformation challenges in postindustrial cities; they are supposed to be able to apply sociological and cultural approaches towards

urban dynamics and actors, taking major local and global historical developments influencing urban settings into account.

- *Responsibility & autonomy:* graduates are supposed to be able to position their own research findings in the broader context of post-industrial urban transformation challenges; they are supposed to be able to acquire and locally adopt new knowledge and understanding about professional and academic developments in the post-industrial city.

Leadership

- *Knowledge:* graduates are supposed to be able to explain knowledge in the various sub-disciplines of the field; they are supposed to be able to explain opportunities and threats of current trends in urban transformation and design.
- *Skills:* graduates are supposed to be able to communicate, translate and mediate between the spheres of experts and laypersons, academia, businessmen and citizens in order to bring together different perspectives and to work in transnational teams.
- *Responsibility:* graduates are supposed to be able to think beyond disciplinary boundaries and explore and generate new ideas that can be applied to current and emergent needs.

As stated in the SER, the programme has a multidisciplinary approach that is explained as being premised on the understanding that real world problems cross traditional academic boundaries. The programme's main aim is to introduce students to a multiscale and multidisciplinary view of the post-industrial city and the differentiated impact of post-industrialism on societies and cities. Thus, interdisciplinary aspects and qualifications of social sciences, journalism and information as well as engineering, manufacturing and construction are supposed to be combined. In intersecting strands of the programme, concepts such as historical institutionalist and comparative historical analysis to study post-industrial cities as institutions regulating land and property, planning, and governance are given as central. Drawing on insights from practice to theory, the question of how macro-structures and micro-agency interplay shall also be addressed. At the same time, the programme is supposed to enable students to engage in co-design, co-production, and co-creation processes for the sustainable transformation of the post-industrial city and to explore the city in visual cultures.

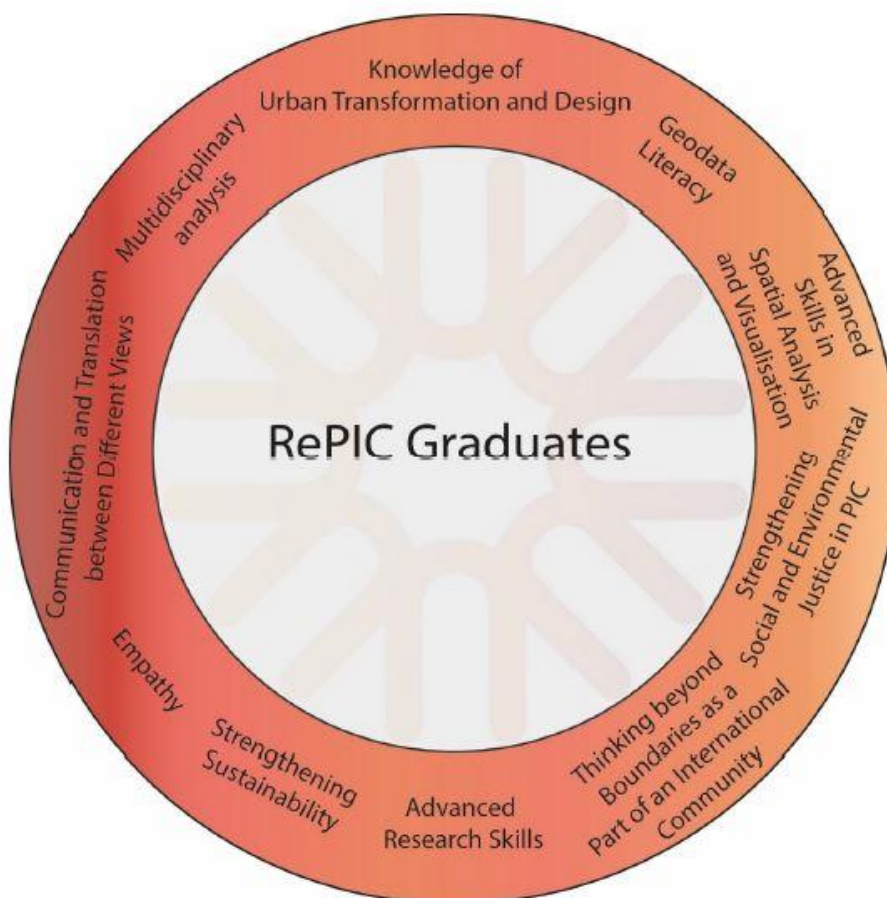
Throughout the study programme, collaborations involving community groups, academia, and specialist researchers are planned which are supposed to involve team-based practices and co-design approaches, aligning the curriculum with specific City Lab challenge areas and the Urban Agenda for the EU.

As explained in the SER, RePIC comprises three successive stages of learning (fundamentals, specializations, in-depth studies & master thesis), spread over four semesters. The achievement shall be demonstrated by students through different types of assessment, including written examinations, oral examinations, seminar contributions, presentations, essays, student projects, practical examinations, or colloquium lectures.

Professors from the RePIC staff, scholars and invited guest lecturers from various disciplines shall participate in the programme. In addition, representatives from city administrations, their subsidiaries, companies, NGOs, and regional organisations shall also be invited to present challenges they are facing and to discuss options to solve them, which may result in collaborative projects, suggestions for master's theses or topics for City Labs.

After successfully completing the RePIC programme, graduates are expected to be qualified to start careers in different areas of public and private sectors as well as in university and non-university research. As explained in the SER, the European Union Directive 2005/36/EC does not apply to the programme (so far).

The RePIC graduates' profile is depicted as follows:



Experts' evaluation

The Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) apply at two levels – the overall programme level (level 1) and the individual module level (level 2). Ideally, ILOs of level 1 should be specified identically across the programme documentation and ILOs of level 2 (together with module content, assessment etc. information) should be both consistent in terms of detail and specificity and, collectively, serve to demonstrate how the ILOs of level 1 will be met.

ILOs at the overall programme level (level 1), as documented in the SER, are appropriate and good. They appear to align with the QF-EHEA and national qualifications frameworks at suitable levels. Other statements of the ILOs of level 1 to be found in the programme documentation are broadly consistent with those in the SER, but with some unnecessary variations of terminology and substance. The ILOs of level 1 given in official documents on the programme, such as the Diploma Supplement, Examination Regulations, and the Student Handbook, must thus be harmonized and described in identical manner (**finding 2**) (cf. chapters 3 and 8).

The ILOs of level 1 specifications given in the SER encompass a comprehensive range of knowledge, skills, and competencies relevant to the field of study. These aspects are intended to equip students with a solid theoretical foundation, practical skills, and the ability to apply their knowledge effectively in professional contexts. It is worth emphasising that those articulated under “Context analysis and reflection” and “Leadership”, in particular, will, when achieved, certainly promote strong post-degree employability.

The Module Handbook identifies the ILOs of level 2 for each specific module, together with how the partner organisations expect to achieve these through detailed descriptions of curricula, teaching methodologies, learning activities, assessment strategies, and associated quality assurance mechanisms. The programme's detailed structure and content are explicitly designed to facilitate the acquisition and development of the knowledge, skills, and competencies outlined above.

There is much to commend in the module material provided, a conclusion reinforced by the constructive on-site discussions the experts participated in. Nevertheless, the intrinsic complexity of the programme places stronger requirements on the participating institutions to demonstrate core linkages than might usually be expected. In this context, the experts have concluded that there is unhelpful variation in the degree of specificity of ILOs of level 2 across modules, with some clearly more detailed than others, and some easier to relate to the supporting curricular etc. information than others. At module level, the descriptions and associated content of the ILOs of level 2 therefore need to be clarified and harmonised and provided at a consistent level of detail (**finding 3**) (cf. chapters 3 and 8).

It was also the experts' view that, given the (wholly appropriate) emphasis on sustainable urban transformations within the programme generally, sustainability should be given more prominence in relevant modules regarding the documentation of the ILOs of level 2 (cf. chapter 3 and 8).

Finally, the experts note that the breadth of subject matter, teaching approaches and assessment methods makes it intrinsically more challenging than might otherwise be the case to read across from a collection of the ILOs of level 2 (which can vary considerably depending on which track a student chooses to take through the programme) to the overarching ILO1. How the programme's ILO1 are reflected at ILO2 level and therefore how different combinations of modules taken serve to achieve ILO1 needs to be more simply and straightforwardly demonstrated, e.g., by the construction of a suitable matrix table (**finding 4**) (cf. chapter 3).

Conclusion

The criterion is partially fulfilled.

3. Study programme

3.1 The structure and content of the curriculum should be fit to enable the students to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

3.2 The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) should be applied properly, and the distribution of credits should be clear.

3.3 A joint bachelor programme will typically amount to a total student workload of 180-240 ECTS-credits; a joint master programme will typically amount to 90-120 ECTS-credits and should not be less than 60 ECTS-credits at second cycle level (credit ranges according to the QF-EHEA); for joint doctorates there is no credit range specified.

The workload and the average time to complete the programme should be monitored.

Description

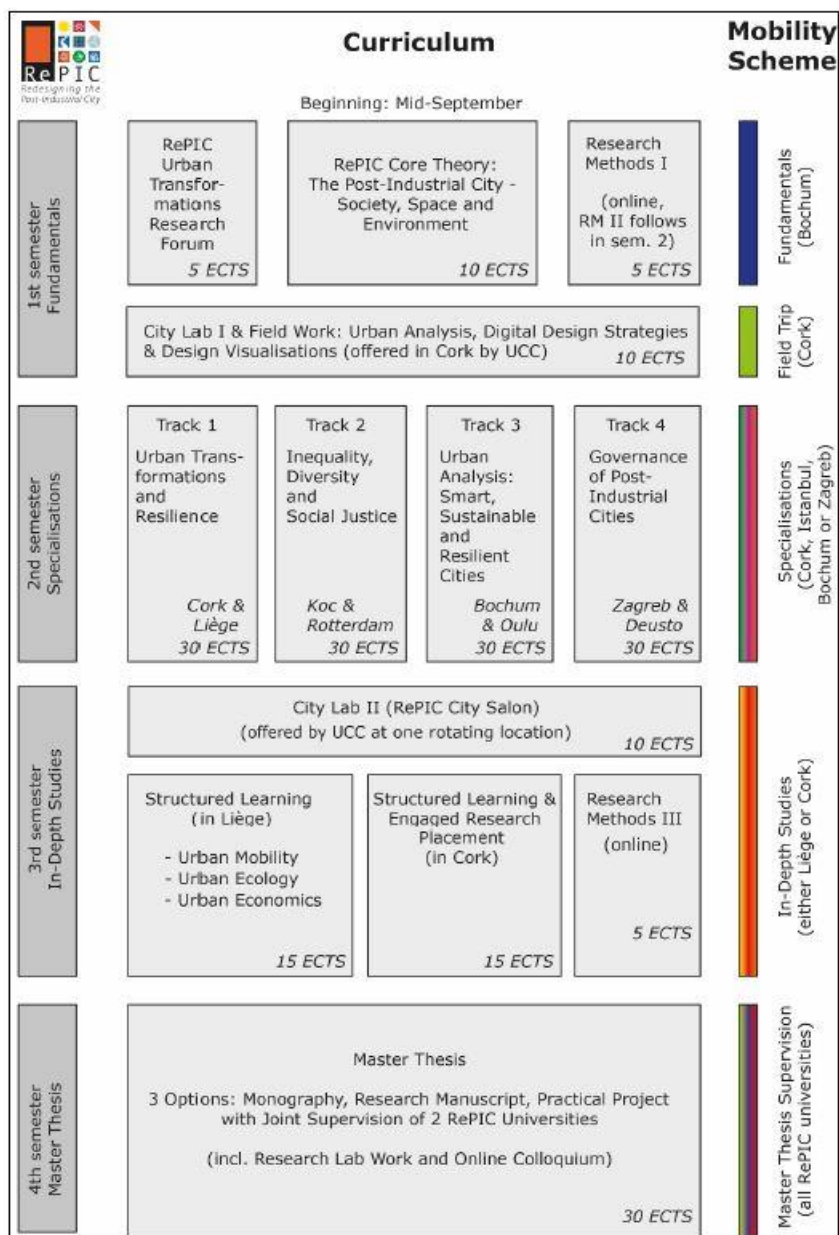
The RePIC master's programme comprises a standard period of study of four semesters and amounts to a total workload of 120 credit points (CP) according to the European Transfer System (ECTS). As explained in the SER, the curriculum has been composed using content and established structures from local master's programmes of each partner university, combined with newly designed modules. According to the SER, the estimated workload per CP is 27 hours of study.

As explained in the SER, RePIC understands the post-industrial city as a complex system that is characterised by physical, political, and historical development paths, limits, and dynamic social, economic, ecological, and cultural vectors. Viewing the city as an experimental living laboratory, RePIC students are supposed to explore the post-industrial city to act as a milieu for continuous civic immersion asking how it can be cultivated to inform debates around urban sustainable transformation and circular economies as well as the construction of social identities and experiences of cultural dissonance. Adopting participatory modalities that are supposed to foster public-private-academic-societal partnerships is given as one of the main aims so that the RePIC programme shall evolve a new network of urban thinkers with the capacity to contribute to future-oriented, avant-garde thinking on the revitalisation of the post-industrial city. This goal is supposed to be reached by physical and virtual student mobility experiences as well as learning and action practices including structured project collaboration, social design studios, digital storytelling, and immersive design fictions. As two distinct features of the curriculum, the SER names "Engaged Research" (ER) and "Blended Mobility" (BM).

ER is defined as different ways in which researchers interact or collaborate with community stakeholders over any or all stages of a research process (from shaping the research question, generating new knowledge by co-production to evaluation and dissemination).

BM is described as offering the combination of physical mobility with a virtual component to facilitate a collaborative online learning exchange and teamwork. In addition to the minimum of two semesters that students will spend at two different RePIC Universities, the curriculum envisages teachers from all partner universities participating virtually in courses taking place at another partner's campus or offering their own courses online. Staff mobility shall facilitate the establishment of courses in team-teaching mode and an increased exchange between the RePIC academics, which is anticipated to result in joint research, training, and dissemination projects.

The curriculum structure is depicted as follows:



During the first semester, students are supposed to complete a core curriculum shared by all partner institutions to lay the foundations. By this, students shall be equipped with basic tools to understand the study of the post-industrial city by modules which shall provide a substantial foundation of content knowledge including facts and ideas as well as the theories that connect them in the context of a conceptual framework of the postindustrial city. The semester kicks-off with a field trip to Cork, Ireland, where UCC plans to conduct a City Lab in early/mid-September with experimental ethnographic and service-learning approaches. This is supposed to contribute to building a joint cohort and to interconnect RePIC staff and students. Afterwards, the cohort returns to Bochum (RUB) to attend classes in the RePIC Core Theory and RePIC Research Forum modules. Additionally, students take the Research Methods I module which aims to enable students to assess research work and to be able to make decisions about research design. It includes an asynchronous online classroom.



In the second semester, students choose one of the four offered tracks which are offered at the host university given below which then is the location of students during the semester; the collaborating university is supposed to support the track by teaching contributions:

- Urban Transformations and Resilience (offered at University College Cork in collaboration with Université de Liège),
- Inequality, Diversity and Social Justice (offered at Koç University, Istanbul, in collaboration with Erasmus University Rotterdam),
- Urban Analysis: Smart, Sustainable and Resilient Cities (offered at RUB in collaboration with the University of Oulu),
- Governance of Post-Industrial Cities (offered at the University of Zagreb in collaboration with University of Deusto).

The tracks contain method-oriented contents (Research Methods II), either as specifically designated research methods modules or as an integrated part of content modules.

In the third semester, students are offered two options for further specialization. Half of the cohort is planned to be hosted by University College Cork, the other by University of Liège. The focus at UCC is supposed to be on structured learning activities and engaged research placements, whereas Liège shall offer modules in urban mobility, urban ecology, and urban economics. By the middle of the second semester at the latest, students must decide whether to continue their studies at University College Cork or University of Liège. Additionally, two modules will be offered for the entire cohort. City Lab II and Field Work will be offered in cooperation with local partners by UCC at rotating locations while the module Research Methods III is held online and designed as an International Seminar which shall contribute to further developing students' understanding of research methods, introducing more complex forms of quantitative, qualitative, geospatial, design and mixed methods approaches. This shall contribute to the students' building of an individual profile and preparation of the final thesis.

For the master's thesis in the fourth semester, students can choose among three types: a traditional dissertation, a research manuscript aiming at publication in an academic journal, or a practical project accompanied by documentation and written analysis. Supervision can be taken over by any of the partner universities and shall be co-supervised by a professor from another RePIC University. The master's thesis is coupled with a final presentation and discussion in an online format that will be attended by staff members from all contributing universities and all RePIC students. Students shall be encouraged to arrange a self-organised graduate exhibition of their thesis projects (in a combination format with presence and online elements).

Experts' evaluation

It has become clear for the experts that significant work has been undertaken to arrange a complex curriculum across the partner institutions by which students gain 120 CP (ECTS) in total. In general, the curricular concept is convincing, though challenging due to its complexity. The cooperation of the different faculties across Europe has an enormous potential which can be used within the programme and make graduates fit to act within different processes of post-industrial urban development. However, more work needs to be undertaken to make the precise programme timings and outline across the academic year clear to existing and prospective students. This is also needed to clarify that students can achieve the ILOs at module and thus also at the programme level, as already mentioned in chapter 2.

In particular, it is important that a clearly delineated outline of the timeline for the first and second semesters is presented to prospective students. Given the current complexity of year one (Y1) of the programme and associated module timings, the programme must be defined in a more precise manner (**finding 5**). The timeline must clearly show how the programme's sequence will be organised ensuring that the workload from the first

semester does not overlap with the beginning of the second semester of Y1. Such a timeline will also include the following:

- An outline of the specific time windows spent in Bochum and Cork in the first semester of Y1 as well as including concrete information on the time periods (including dates) of all elements of the semester, the distribution of the workload (keeping in mind that the workload for each semester comprises 30 CP/810 hours), the teaching and assessment methods and coursework, the mobility of students and the opportunities to resit exams within the semester;
- more detailed information on the tracks available at the different partner universities in the second semester of Y1 taking into account the differing semester/term dates of the partner universities (also including detailed information as mentioned in the previous paragraph).

Separately to the foregoing suggestions, it is important that the concept of both City Lab modules is described in a clear way in the revised timeline or alternatively in a separate document. The timeline for these modules must be made clear. In addition, the distribution of module workload across the semester must be made clear, as well as how the ILOs are to be achieved within the allocated time, which stakeholders will be involved and, detailed information must be provided on coursework and assessment (including preparatory literature reading and resitting options for examinations) (**finding 6**).

To make the curriculum transparent to (prospective) students, also the module handbook needs to be reviewed and, where appropriate, revised. All descriptors need to be checked and possibly adapted to include the following criteria (**finding 3**):

- the description of the content and learning outcomes should be clarified and harmonised (cf. chapter 2);
- details of how the learning outcomes will be assessed must be provided for each module as well as information on resit options;
- descriptions of the distribution of each module's workload should be included and must be detailed specifically for the city lab modules (also see findings 5 and 6),
- the impact of students' mobility within or between semesters on their overall workload and assessment should be made clear in the module handbook.
- Furthermore, the module handbook must clarify where and how aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals are meaningfully addressed in the course programme over and above the current badging exercise.
- It must be made transparent that the programme focusses on urban transformation of cities in Europe and the Global North.

In order to make it fully clear that the programme as a whole can achieve the ILOs, a presentation is also needed from which it can be seen, how the programme's learning outcomes are reflected at module level and can thus be achieved by the programme with its different tracks, e.g., by a matrix (**finding 4**). This is necessary in order to be able to deal with the complexity of the programme by providing appropriate information. The experts do not fundamentally question that the curriculum is suitable (with the previously mentioned adaptations which are needed) to achieve the ILOs. However, this needs to be made clearer.

Also, the experts see the potential in the interdisciplinary study programme which is characterised by the different facets and subjects within the curriculum. However, it is suggested to regularly evaluate the adequacy of the curriculum by monitoring as well as direct exchange with the students and also stakeholders (e.g., from the labour market), and to regularly update it (cf. chapter 9). By being located in geography, urban planning and politics, the benefit of the local potential of each partner university should be fully used. To do so, wishes and needs of students should be considered when making changes to the curriculum.

The subject area of post-industrial city development is a very broad field, and the experts recognise that it can be difficult to cover it thoroughly. That is why the different tracks are seen as very positive so students can focus on certain areas. In case the consortium expands by including other partners in the future, it should be kept in mind that the expertise already existent should be complemented by research fields that are not yet (fully) covered in the programme, maybe even by creating additional tracks.

Conclusion

The criterion is partially fulfilled.

4. Admission and recognition

4.1 The admission requirements and selection procedures should be appropriate in light of the pro-gramme's level and discipline.

4.2 Recognition of qualifications and of periods of studies (including recognition of prior learning) should be applied in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention and subsidiary documents.

Description

The RePIC programme is open to candidates from diverse backgrounds, having acquired a qualified Bachelor's degree (Level 6 EQF) with a dissertation, or an equivalent degree with a total grade above average indicated in a Transcript of Records, and demonstrable experience in RePIC related themes including, but not limited to, the following fields: Architecture, Urban Design, Urban Planning, Geography, Civil Engineering, Environmental Engineering, Geoinformatics, Sociology, Public Administration, Media and Visual Arts Studies, and other related fields of study. The application must include a motivation letter in which a reflection about the content of the study programme is provided and their specific interest in the RePIC programme is stated as well as their envisaged contributions to the programme. Applicants also must submit a recognised qualification in the language of instruction (English).

The application, admission, and enrolment procedure for RePIC shall take place on a yearly basis for up to 60 students and shall be jointly organised and implemented by the RePIC Admission Committee under the lead of RUB. The Admission Committee is responsible for setting and reviewing the admission criteria in the Study and Examination Regulations and is supposed to consider national law and regulations and to coordinate the correct levying of student participation costs. The submission of the application shall be possible through a central website. Candidates fulfilling the entry requirements shall be ranked by the Admission Committee according to the following selection criteria:

- Type and level of academic qualification according to grades
- Type and level of documented research experience
- Type and level of prior knowledge and professional experience in the field
- Persuasive power of the motivation letter
- Preferential treatment of people with disabilities
- Results of admission interviews (if applicable)

The terms of recognition are defined in the Examination Regulations in § 13. The regulations cover the recognition of examination results obtained at other higher education institutions and of competences acquired outside higher education, e.g., in non-formal education; the recognition of the latter is limited to a maximum of 15%. The joint RePIC Examination Committee is responsible for decisions on recognition. It is stated in the SER that the procedure and the decisions have to be based on the Lisbon Convention.

Experts' evaluation

Overall, it has become clear to the experts that significant work has been done to try and coordinate the admission of students to the programme across the different partners which is a complex task. In general, admission criteria and processes are defined in a clear and transparent way. However, in order to give (prospective) students additional clarity earlier in the year, the experts recommend that admission should be set earlier for students from Europe (**finding 7**). In comparable study programmes, application and admission processes usually take place in late winter and spring. It should be borne in mind that students may be offered places in different programmes (and they may be more likely to accept early offers), and that a large proportion of EU students still need to move to Bochum. This requires some planning and time. Therefore, the experts would encourage the team to consider a rolling admission process where decisions on applications are made as they arrive rather than waiting for a future application deadline date.

The regulations for recognition of prior learning and credits gained/competences acquired in other study programmes are transparently and adequately defined in the programme's regulations. To what extent these rules will be implemented in practice, remains to be seen in the future though.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

5. Learning, teaching and assessment

5.1 The programme should be designed to correspond with the intended learning outcomes, and the learning and teaching approaches applied should be adequate to achieve those. The diversity of students and their needs should be respected and attended to, especially in view of potential different cultural backgrounds of the students.

5.2 The examination regulations and the assessment of the achieved learning outcomes should correspond with the intended learning outcomes. They should be applied consistently among partner institutions.

Description

In the SER, research-oriented teaching is given as the basis of the RePIC teaching and learning approach. To understand complex processes of urban transformation in different regions better, the RePIC programme aims at offering an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach with a focus on processes of urban, post-industrial transformations. Thus, the importance of cross-cutting issues and themes is supposed to be stressed by cross-curricular projects and cross-boundary learning. Research-oriented teaching shall be supported by:

- Challenge-based learning within three main steps: engage, investigate, and act. At the start, the students are asked to agree on the question they will work on, then they shall conduct research related to their question, participate, e.g., in a simulation or a design studio, resulting in a paper or a presentation, ideally shared with the public.
- Active learning is supposed to enable students to understand content and use and reshape it and to develop new content. This approach aims at giving students more responsibility in their learning process and enabling them to reflect and to learn actively in teams.
- Peer learning is supposed to be used for facilitating students' learning processes and for practicing scientific thinking and acting.

The development of communicative skills is explained to be integrated in each module in either oral presentations, written assignments, or reports. From the second semester on, the programme is supposed to feature a flexible structure to allow for students' individual choices. The teaching is to consist of a mix of face-to-face and

online delivery. Teaching methods comprise lectures, readings, discussions, as well as design-based learning, system thinking, peer learning, learning by doing, challenge-based learning, co-design methods, workshops, ateliers, studios with interdisciplinary collaboration, face-to-face and virtual team teaching of lecturers from different partner universities, etc.

Students' intercultural awareness and cultural sensitivity is supposed to be enhanced within the programme, and transferable skills such as teamwork, problem solving, language competencies, and communication skills shall be strengthened. The teaching approach is supposed to address a diverse student population with different national, economic, political, historical, social, and cultural backgrounds. Mentor teachers and so-called International Student Ambassadors shall assist RePIC students to cope with unforeseen difficulties. As explained in the SER, the International Student Ambassadors come from different countries and shall know about the requirements and country-specific challenges.

As explained in the SER, students have access to the joint online learning environment, where the partner universities shall offer materials for the modules and lectures of the current academic year, and where students can upload their assignments.

The eight partner universities plan to establish a Joint Examination Committee that shall function as a coordinating, monitoring and reviewing institution in addition to the local Examination Committees. The Joint Examination Committee will consist of elected professors and research assistants as regular members; elected students' representatives can be included for certain matters such as the further development of the study programme. The Joint Examination Committee is responsible for the overall assessment standards, study, and assessment regulations, and has the authority to issue the thesis topics and to control supervision quality, fraud, and plagiarism cases as well as other matters as specified in § 14 of the Joint Study and Examination Regulations. If there are matters that affect only one university, e.g., during the tracks in the second semester, the Joint Examination Board can only decide in agreement with the local examination board. For modules held on campus of one of the partner institutions and for which the university is responsible, the local regulations for fraud and plagiarism cases also must be considered.

The Joint Examination Committee must report to the RePIC Board of Directors and to the deans of the faculties of the partners at least once per year. The report shall inform about the development of the examinations (overall grades and distribution) and the current study periods, and it shall provide reform suggestions on examination regulations and the study plan.

According to the SER, the assessment in the programme consists of graded or ungraded module examinations and the master's thesis. As specified in § 6 of the RePIC Examination Regulation, examination performance can be provided in the form of a written examination, an oral examination, a contribution to a seminar, a presentation, an essay, a project, a practical examination, or a colloquium lecture. Where there are alternative options, the final form of the examination performance and the resources permitted shall be announced at the start of the semester during which the module takes place. Upon special request, the examination board may allow other, alternative examination formats. Failed module examinations or those that are deemed to have been failed can be retaken at least two times per study year. Any additional retake requires the renewed registration and participation in the module.

The master's thesis usually is assessed by two examiners from different partner universities. For grading in the programme, a specific grading table was developed. The final grade is converted to the different national grade systems making use of a conversion scheme and is given accordingly in the Transcript of Records.

Experts' evaluation

Following an inter- and transdisciplinary approach to address and unravel the complex processes of post-industrial cities in terms of urban transformations is highly appreciated. This also results in a complex and ambitious

approach to teaching and learning which includes high mobility of students and a high diversity of teaching formats, including asynchronous teaching formats. To be able to adequately inform about and conduct such concept requires transparent clear and detailed information (cf. chapter 3) since the foreseen cohorts with up to 60 students present will be a particular challenge to everyone involved in this joint programme. The more detailed presentation of the programme as a whole, of the different tracks and the modules in particular (as already claimed as necessary above) must take the formats of teaching and learning into account; in particular, the module descriptions must clearly indicate them (cf. **finding 3**).

Students are given good possibilities to choose courses according to their individual interests. Nevertheless, a joint programme with the intention to bring students back together in different occasions must acknowledge the diversity in knowledge gained during the programme and also in undergraduate studies, as well as the students' cultural diversity. This particularly holds true for a content-related overarching (normative) framing of the programme as well as methods training. In this regard, a clear framing, e.g., along the SDGs, could strengthen the didactics of Geography (and other disciplines), support cross-cutting and systems thinking, and could likewise be used for an overall evaluation of the performance of different cities with regards to urban transformations. This should be kept in mind in the future and should also be reflected when revising the module handbook.

Furthermore, it is the City Lab approach that is highly acknowledged to bring students together with the urban practice. Here, the experts recommend developing a more detailed approach based on the vast existing social science-based knowledge on transdisciplinary research, urban living labs, etc. to make this a fruitful win-win approach for all – students, teachers, and urban practitioners. This should include a strong theoretical basis to transdisciplinary thinking and co-design research approaches as well as preparation in terms of skills and methods.

Also, the preparation of the City Labs needs comprehensive planning. Language issues as well as the benefits in terms of students' networks to be established need to be considered. However, this was not clear to the experts in the evaluation. Therefore, the City Lab concept must be described in a clear way in the requested timeline or a separate document, comprising information on the placement in the course of studies, the distribution of workload, how the ILOs are to be achieved (including teaching and learning formats to be used) within the allocated time, which stakeholders will be involved and how, details on coursework and assessment have to be given and the documentation needs to comprise more detailed information on the preparation of students for this study phase (cf. chapter 3; **finding 6**).

Although designed and advertised as an international programme, from the experts' point view, the programme is European centred which should also be framed as such (cf. chapter 3). The envisaged world-wide composition of students, including students from the Global South, is not yet reflected accordingly in the didactic concept as this would require a stronger consideration of the diversity of students, recognizing their individual geographic and cultural backgrounds as well as the particularities of post-industrial cities in other regions than in the European context. Besides the need to make the focus clearer in the programme's information (i.e., module descriptions; cf. chapter 3), a further development of the entire concept of teaching and learning considering this diversity is advisable.

The establishment of a Joint Examination Committee is highly appreciated as well as the range of different examination performances planned. This will be crucial in ensuring that assessments are carried out in a binding and comprehensible manner.

When it comes to the study load of students, it is key to detail the distribution of workload for all modules, including the assessment (by equally defining and allocating the assessment of modules/demands on students according to the workload and evenly throughout the timeline of each semester). This has not yet been fully applied and requires the harmonization of the official documents (cf. chapter 3, **findings 5 & 6**).

With regards to the assessment of individual courses by students, working with a unified survey might increase transparency and facilitate straight forward adjustments.

Conclusion

The criterion is partially fulfilled.

6. Student support

6.1 The student support services should contribute to the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. They should take into account specific challenges of mobile students.

Description

It is explained in the SER that a pre-entry guidance pack is sent to applicants including programme support information, e.g., induction arrangements, contact details of programme representatives, etc. After enrolment, students shall receive:

- the RePIC Module Handbook, the Student Handbook, and the Joint Study & Examination Regulations;
- study support by a personal mentor from a RePIC university according to the preferred study tracks as indicated in the application;
- access to communication channels with regular counselling hours and a joint discussion platform to exchange with fellow students;
- an official invitation letter as well as general support for visa procedures and immigration policies, if applicable;
- support for and facilitation of accommodation application procedures and other counselling and administrative support services;
- information on language courses.

At each partner university, a RePIC Coordinator will provide guidance and assistance to the students concerning practical aspects of the programme (housing, language courses, orientation courses and general information about services and facilities) as well as concerning the contents of the programme.

Prior to starting their studies, all students are invited to attend a study counselling consultation in-situ. The RePIC staff will organize a joint welcome session at the beginning of each taught semester, and particularly at the start of the first semester in Bochum, which will be organized by the Department of Geography together with the student council. Social activities are also to be offered. Between the first and second semester, students shall be informed about each study track in a joint meeting, also with information about how to prepare.

According to the SER, every student is allocated a mentor teacher who is an active member of the programme team and who is supposed to review the student's academic progress; record progress in personal and transferable skills; advise on matters relating to the programme including selection of options; review attendance; listen to student concerns; refer to other services where appropriate; assist with study skills. International student ambassadors (second year students) will also be recruited to support new students.

Office hours (on campus and online) shall be offered by the programme advisor and the local coordinators of each university as well as regular meetings. In addition to offering assistance with visas and accommodation, the International Offices of the partner institutions shall also coordinate services such as introduction sessions, language courses, university guidance service, social assistance service, support in contracting private health insurance, funding opportunities, sports and cultural activities, etc. Additionally, students can use all counselling

facilities at the partner universities; this includes subject-related counselling and counselling for social and financial matters and psychological counselling. Each partner shall also provide students with information about the local and regional job market and offer career guidance and assistance in finding appropriate positions after graduation. Graduates shall be encouraged to link via social media, mailing lists as well as annual graduation ceremonies combined with alumni forums.

For Semesters 2 and 3, students will already be asked to state their mobility preferences (1st, 2nd, 3rd choice) in their application and will be deployed according to the available places in each track.

RePIC considers itself to be an inclusive programme and intends to recruit students worldwide. The RePIC Board of Directors is responsible for developing and implementing an Equality and Diversity Awareness Programme and, as part of the application process, ensuring the collection of nationality, gender and disability data.

Regulations on maternity protection, family and care obligations as well as disadvantage equalisation for students with a physical or mental disability or a chronic illness can be found in the Examination regulations. Service centres for students with disabilities at the partner universities shall provide support. Prior to mobility, students with special needs shall receive pre-departure counselling with the service unit dedicated to these questions at each partner university. Students with individual handicaps shall take examinations with assistance or extra provisions. Where work placements or fieldwork is part of a module, it shall be organized to enable full participation by disabled students.

Experts' evaluation

Within the programme, comprehensive support is provided to help students organise themselves at the relevant points in the programme. The experts were able to ascertain a high level of commitment on the part of all participating universities and the persons responsible there. This is one of the most important foundations for a programme like this.

The Student Handbook is designed to ensure that students receive comprehensive support within the programme. It contains clear and complete information about the study locations and the partners. The handbook will be of great support for interested and participating students to find out about the framework conditions of the programme and also to obtain important information in the course of their studies.

There is also a wide range of further support for students of this programme. For example, language courses are offered (some of them specifically for the programme) so that students will have good access to them and can be prepared for studying and living in other countries. However, that there are options for taking extra-curricular courses such as these language courses, courses on academic writing and integrity, etc. at the different universities should be made more transparent, e.g., in the student or module handbook (**finding 8**). So far, this information could not be found by the experts in any of the documents mentioned.

For mobility, which is a particularly important component of this programme, students are comprehensively supported and have an appropriate range of advisory and support services on the part of the programme organisation. Nevertheless, students must probably largely bear the financial burden themselves; especially if they do not receive a scholarship. This should be kept in mind – especially when students from the Global South are part of the target group – and (continue to) look for suitable ways to support them. The options for the universities are understandably limited though. In the course of the procedure, the experts were pleased to note that ERASMUS Mundus funding was obtained for the programme.

The organisation of the programme in general seems stringently planned to guarantee that feasibility is ensured and that the intended learning outcomes can be achieved. However, as already mentioned in chapter 3, the concrete timeline of year one is not thoroughly clear so an adequate plan has to be drafted to show that all units and demands of each semester can be completed within the allocated workload (cf. chapter 3,

findings 5 & 6). In general, recognisable planning and measures have been taken within the programme to ensure that organisational aspects do not cause major problems for students, especially by appointing a Programme Manager and thanks to the high level of commitment of the universities/departments involved in the programme. The students are also to be comprehensively supported by offers from the corresponding local partners to gain practical experience on site and are also supported in their job search when about to graduate.

With regard to support in special life situations, there are many different offers within the programme, each of which is located at the local partner university. A system for retaking examinations is in place, which makes it also possible for examinations to be taken at the partners' premises (which, however, has to be taken into account in the organisation of the first and second semester of year one by showing how all elements fit together, timewise; cf. chapter 3). Offering compensation and support for students with special needs is also highly appreciated.

For the experts, it is recognisable that a lot of attention has been paid to the possible challenges of this complex programme. The people behind the organisation have created corresponding offers so that the smoothest possible study operation can take place, and they also try to ensure that there is help for problems that can arise locally. It has also been foreseen that measures are necessary which shall make settling in after moving to another city is as easy as possible and that assistance is also provided at the cultural level. Contact points are adequately defined and comprehensively described in the documentation. However, because the organisation and implementation are so complex, the experts strongly advise to look at it critically and evaluate it accordingly once the programme has started, in order to learn from practical experience and make quick adjustments, if necessary.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

7. Resources

7.1 The staff should be sufficient and adequate (qualifications, professional and international experience) to implement the study programme.

7.2 The facilities provided should be sufficient and adequate in view of the intended learning outcomes.

Description

Each of the eight universities has agreed to provide two to four academics who will teach in the RePIC programme and jointly act as supervisors and co-supervisors for thesis work. The academic staff shall have expertise in areas such as urban ecology, urban economics, urban architecture and design, or urban governance. Moreover, each university is supposed to appoint at least one academic coordinator, who shall be responsible for the academic programme and the communication with the other directors on all matters concerning the execution and consistency of the programme. Additionally, guest lecturers shall be invited to deliver talks, lectures, seminars, or organize round table discussions with students. Representatives from city administrations, their subsidiaries, companies, NGOs, and regional organisations shall also be invited to present challenges they are facing and to discuss options to solve them, which may result in projects, suggestions for master's theses or topics for City Labs. As described in the SER, administrative staff supports the programme in areas such as planning, quality management and international relations. In addition, each university is asked to appoint a local study coordinator, who shall assist the academic coordinator, carry out day-to-day administrative and technical tasks concerning admission, reception and induction, quality assurance, mobility in the programme and general matters of students. RUB as the coordinating university commits to additionally provide a full post-doc position for

coordination and management tasks for the entire programme. This RePIC Programme Manager shall oversee the operational project management, and manage the day-to-day tasks including financial management of project funds, project objectives and deliverables monitoring, and the composition of reports.

The Board of Directors, chaired by the Programme Coordinator, has the function of a steering group for the programme and is supposed to exchange regularly with the members of RePIC's External Advisory Board. The involvement of high-ranking representatives such as vice-presidents for teaching and/or international relations and deans shall enable feedback in case of new requirements or unexpected events.

The students shall be able to use the learning and ICT-facilities like seminar rooms and lecture halls, libraries, workstations and research lab facilities, free eduroam WIFI on each campus, as well as online learning material including recorded lectures, primary source material, assessment guidance, reading lists and digitized articles, chapters, audio recordings, streamed videos, additional practical exercises, etc. Students shall also be able to attend specially tailored local language courses free of charge, and special instruments or services for physically or mentally challenged students shall be provided.

Experts' evaluation

The resources needed for the programme have been assessed in the evaluation and everything that is needed is available. The programme also creates new resources through specific funding. Therefore, the experts do not doubt that the programme can be run according to the available resources.

The programme is comprehensively equipped with appropriate teaching staff. The information in the module handbook and in the SER shows that, on the one hand, existing courses are used, and on the other hand that a large number of offers are created only for this study programme. This is positive and seems to be an adequate mix.

For the majority of the modules, the responsible groups and/or chairs are given in the module handbook. The staff listed there is appropriately qualified and ensures, within the subjects taught, that the intended learning outcomes can be achieved.

The premises at the participating universities are adequate, as far as the experts can assume by the presentation held during the site visit and the information in the SER. The already existing spatial infrastructure is sensibly used.

Sufficient literature is available at the corresponding campuses of the study programme. Students also have access to digital offerings by the different university libraries, as it was explained during the site visit. Unfortunately, it was not possible for the experts to assess this for each participating university in situ. However, due to the fact that the participating universities show a high level of commitment for the study programme and offer comparable programmes locally, it can be assumed that the equipment is appropriately available at all campuses.

Existing courses offered by the respective universities are digitally available; the same applies to the infrastructure needed for this. At certain points, joint online teaching is planned, in which the teaching will take place either directly or asynchronously. This also supports the feasibility and organisation of the programme.

A MOOC (Massive open online course) will also be used (and is already available) so that students can gain insights into the subject areas of the study programme. Such formats are very helpful in a programme that is delivered at different campuses in countries all over Europe.

Furthermore, students are supported by a comprehensive range of services which focus on providing students with appropriate guidance. Offers and resources are available at the universities and can appropriately be used for support. However, the experts suggest that the programme's resources should be evaluated regularly once the programme has started in order to identify possible deficiencies, especially in view of the fact that so many universities are involved in the programme.

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

8. Transparency and documentation

8.1 Relevant information about the programme like admission requirements and procedures, course catalogue, examination and assessment procedures etc. should be well documented and published by taking into account specific needs of mobile students.

Description

All relevant information and details about the learning outcomes of modules and their overall integration in the study programme are said to be stated in the student handbook and module handbook. The Joint Study & Examination Regulations are intended to set out the framework conditions of the programme. All documents are available in English. According to the SER, the relevant documents will be published on RePIC's website and be handed out to students after enrolment.

Experts' evaluation

The student handbook and the module handbook were developed with much effort by the consortium which is to be acknowledged and appreciated. The most important aspects are included. The overall programme's complexity is in general reflected in both handbooks, but some inconsistencies still need to be revised and information added to the module handbook (cf. chapter 3). The student handbook already counts 132 pages, which is intense, and includes many links which need to be continuously updated. This complexity and thus danger that certain information quickly becomes outdated or links no longer work should be kept in mind when revising the document (now and in the future). Also, the complexity might be a challenge for those who are in charge of adapting it. However, having detailed and extensive information on the programme is also necessary, so there is no perfect solution. In the end, coordination, support and organisation of the programme is and will be a challenge the people in charge seem willing to face.

Information on admission is appropriately defined in a legally binding document. However, and as already mentioned above, the experts' recommendation is to set the date of application and admission earlier to allow students to plan and organise accordingly (cf. chapter 4).

Also, the different specialisations/tracks with regards to their specifics could be described in more detail to allow students to make their choice on a very well informed basis, which is required already before their studies start. The module descriptions must be adapted accordingly, to give a clear picture on content and learning objectives and should be harmonised according to the level of detail, as both was already evaluated in earlier chapters of this report. Teaching and learning as well as the assessment methods used in the modules must be given in detail for each module, and the descriptions must include information on all required coursework (if applicable) with regard to the workload of the module. More information is also to be included on resitting examinations in each module, taking students' mobility within or between semesters into account. As already mentioned, the module handbook must clarify where and how aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals are addressed in the study programme (meant as the overall framing of the programme), and it has to be made transparent that the programme focusses on urban transformation of cities in Europe and the Global North (**finding 3**).

As the programme targets at a diverse group of students per cohort, the options for taking extra-curricular courses such as language courses, courses on academic writing and integrity, etc. at the different universities should be made more transparent, e.g., in the student or module handbook (cf. chapter 8; **finding 8**).

Conclusion

The criterion is partially fulfilled.

9. Quality assurance

9.1 The cooperating institutions should apply joint internal quality assurance processes in accordance with part one of the ESG.

Description

The joint quality management of the RePIC programme is described as combining and using the established quality management instruments of the individual partners and new joint instruments. The responsibility for the joint quality management lies with the Quality Assurance Committee which is supposed to lead the framework for internal and external QA. These processes are explained as involving relevant stakeholders. The framework is supposed to result into a RePIC Quality Handbook which will define internal and external evaluation processes, outlining the procedures and instruments for evaluating the programme.

External quality assurance is described as comprising “critical friend input” in form of regular feedback from the members of the External Advisory Board and expert comments received from invited guest lecturers and researchers as well as participants of the City Labs. Feedback loops with selected stakeholders every two years are supposed to generate ideas and critical input for programme enhancement. External programme accreditation is also mentioned as a measure to contribute to quality enhancement.

Internal quality assurance is supposed to continuously involve the students through questionnaire-based feedback on all modules in each semester, a survey on service quality, and includes graduate surveys, accompanied by benchmark data on student experience to compare student feedback across academic partners.

Teaching Analysis Polls (a moderated interview technique for qualitative evaluation) will be used for the evaluation of the four tracks in the second Semester. The students shall identify conducive and difficult elements in the respective track and suggest possibilities for improvement, which shall then be discussed by the teaching staff and lead to concrete recommendations for improvement.

The Joint Examination Committee is responsible for reporting annually on the number of examinations taken and passed and possible recommendations resulting from the analysis of this data. In addition, the Quality Assurance Committee is supposed to be provided with further evaluation results that the partner universities collect as part of their individual internal quality management. These results shall be cross-checked between the partners and then discussed in the Quality Assurance Committee.

As stated in the SER, the academics teaching in the programme are supposed to convene once per year to discuss ways to enhance content and cohesion of the curriculum. This annual internal programme review shall be overseen by the RePIC Board of Directors and the External Advisory Board to identify strengths and weaknesses of the programme and develop plans for improvements (including analysis of programme statistics, student evaluations of modules, staff evaluations, response to any issues, action plan with feedback to programme team). The results and conclusions to improve the quality of the curriculum and the quality of student services is also supposed to be reflected upon with the Student Committee and measures shall mutually be agreed upon. Each measure or change shall be checked for effectiveness in the next evaluation cycle and modified again, if necessary.

Experts' evaluation

The experts come to the conclusion that good planning is evident within the programme as to how quality assurance is to be carried out. The evaluations within the study programme are conducted at the different

partners, at module level as well as programme level. Within the joint programme, the local quality assurance bodies work together, and new instruments of joint quality assurance are implemented. Having a joint Quality Assurance Committee that is responsible for the evaluation of the entire programme and creates the joint framework for internal and external quality assurance is necessary and sensible. All partners should be represented there and participate equally.

In the first semester (in Bochum), the surveys will be done questionnaire-based. From the second semester onwards, they will be conducted using a moderated interview technique for qualitative assessment, as around 15 students per track per cohort giving feedback is too small a number to guarantee anonymity. In the groups, conducive and aggravating elements will then be identified, and possibilities for improvement will be worked out which will then be discussed by the teachers to create concrete improvements. This is an adequate process to ensure continuous quality checks of the programme with those directly involved in the courses. However, up to now, it is not precisely defined how input of guest lecturers and external researchers which are planned to be included in the programme will be obtained and used in the QA system. In future, this should be provided for in the QA process accordingly.

The joint Quality Assurance Committee reports on the outcomes of the QA measures taken and which recommendations/adjustments can be drawn from the results on an annual basis. It also uses local quality management data to cross-check the programme's data. The strengths and weaknesses of the programme can thus be identified, and adjustments can adequately be designed so that improvements can be made accordingly. An analysis of the programme's statistics, student evaluations of modules, staff evaluations, responses to problems, as well as action plans with feedback to the programme team will be incorporated and evaluated. However, at the time of the evaluation, the "RePIC Quality Handbook" was not (yet fully) available to the experts, nor was it possible to make a comprehensive statement on the status of the work steps since the programme is only about to start in autumn 2023; until now, only part one of the respective handbook is available which focuses on QA of application, selection criteria and admission.

Possible difficulties may arise from different systems that are used in the countries (and also different "quality assurance cultures" that have been developed there) so that comparability between the different locations may prove to be difficult. The joint QA should also pay special attention to these potential difficulties and find possible ways to deal with them.

However, in summary it can be said that an appropriate quality management system is in place. The various formats of evaluations are apt to contribute to the further development of the study programme. The tasks are clearly distributed, and corresponding bodies are responsible for the evaluation. A regular exchange between these bodies is planned. It is also planned that stakeholders will be involved adequately. Many of the envisaged processes will be taken over by the local partners and a central office will be responsible for bringing results together and managing the tasks derived from QA results. As already mentioned above, this shows that a thorough quality assurance will be implemented regarding the whole PDCA cycle. Even though the system was not yet been put into practice, the concept is at a sufficiently elaborated level, but still has to prove its efficiency after implementation in the future. Thus, the experts highly recommend that the quality management system of the study programme should be evaluated from the start and that an overall review should take place after 12 to 24 months, in addition to the planned quality management system to see if the concept is adequate or needs adjustments (**finding 9**).

Conclusion

The criterion is fulfilled.

V. Recommendation of the panel of experts

The panel of experts recommends accrediting the study programme “Redesigning the Post-Industrial City” (M.Sc.) offered by the UNIC European University with conditions.

Commendation:

The efforts and high commitment of all members of the consortium in developing and implementing the new master’s programme is commended. Course development has involved great effort and both through prior work and during the site visit all partners have shown themselves to be willing to make the necessary contributions.

The programme convinced the experts on a general level of its multi- and interdisciplinary approach. Graduates will accordingly develop a broad base of knowledge and skills in the wider area of urban transformation and on completion will have gained insight into different approaches and methodologies – from cumulative exposure to the specific subject matter of individual course elements and specialisation through the available tracks. The multi- and interdisciplinary approach will qualify graduates for research positions as well as for a range of different jobs in the wider labour market.

Another positive aspect that should be emphasised is the engaged research approach of the programme. This specific teaching and learning method will provide good preparation for tackling practical questions after graduation, and productive employment in the European labour market.

Findings:

1. Making the full-time position of a RePIC Programme Manager permanent is recommended once the programme is established and running to full capacity, to ensure a continuous smooth delivery of the programme across the participating universities, and so that students have a specific contact person for questions and dealing with problems over the long run. The position will also be of central importance for the ongoing quality assurance of the programme.
2. The learning outcomes defined in official documents on the programme, such as the Diploma Supplement, Examination Regulations, and the Student Handbook, must be harmonized and described in identical manner.
3. All descriptors in the module descriptions need to be reviewed and where appropriate revised to include the following criteria:
 - a. the description of the content and learning outcomes should be clarified and harmonised;
 - b. details on the teaching formats used must be included;
 - c. details of how the learning outcomes will be assessed must be provided for each module as well as information on resit options;
 - d. descriptions of the distribution of each module’s workload should be included and must be detailed specifically for the city lab modules (also see findings 5 and 6),
 - e. the impact of students’ mobility within or between semesters on their overall workload and assessment should be made clear in the module handbook.
 - f. Furthermore, the module handbook must clarify where and how aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals are meaningfully addressed in the course programme over and above the current badging exercise.

- g. It must be made transparent that the programme focusses on urban transformation of cities in Europe and the Global North.
4. It must be made clear, how the programme's learning outcomes are reflected at module level and can thus be achieved by the programme with its different tracks, e.g., by a matrix.
5. The timeline of the first and second semester of the programme must be defined and depicted in a clear way due to its complex structure. The timeline must clearly show how the programme's sequence will be organised ensuring that the workload from the first semester does not overlap with the beginning of the second semester of Y1. Such a timeline will also include the following:
 - a. An outline of the specific time windows spent in Bochum and Cork in the first semester of year one, plus concrete information on the time periods (including dates) of all sub-elements of the semester, itemising the distribution of the workload, teaching and assessment activities and coursework, mobility requirements of students and opportunities to resit exams within the semester;
 - b. more detailed information on the tracks available at the different partner universities in the second semester of Y1 taking into account the differing semester/term dates of the partner universities.
6. The concept of both City Labs must be described in a clear way in this timeline or in a separate document, providing information on the placement in the course of studies, the distribution of workload, how the ILOs are to be achieved within the allocated time, which stakeholders will be involved and how, details on coursework and assessment (including preparatory literature reading and resitting options for examinations).
7. The date of application and admission should be set earlier for students from Europe.
8. The options for taking extra-curricular courses such as language courses, courses on academic writing and integrity, etc. at the different universities should be made more transparent, e.g., in the Student or Module Handbook.
9. It is highly recommended having a whole programme review 12 to 24 months after starting the programme, which should be conducted in addition to the requirements of the planned QA system.