

Accreditation practices of joint programmes in Estonia

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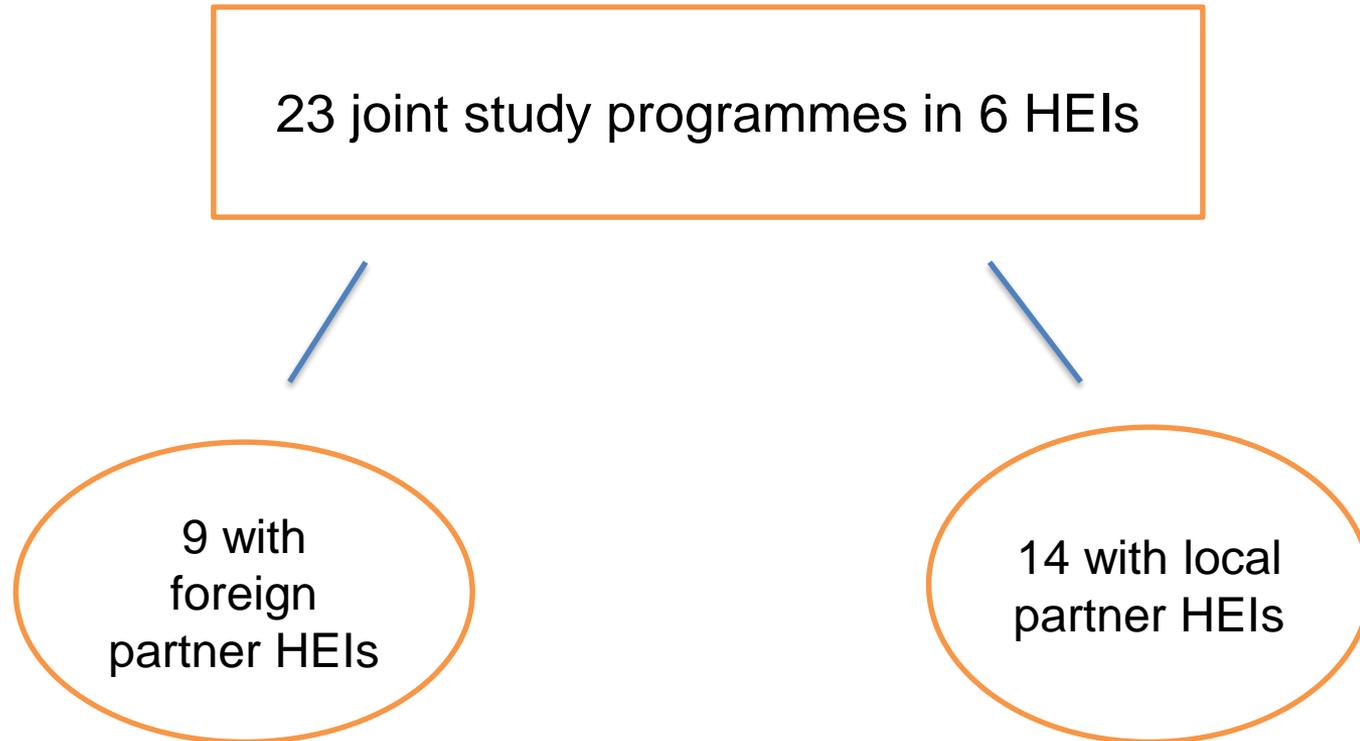
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EESTI KÕRG- JA KUTSEHARIDUSE
KVALITEEDIAGENTUUR

Joint programmes in Estonia: general overview



Joint programmes in Estonia: legal framework



- Requirements for joint study programmes are established in clause 22¹ of the Universities Act:

(6) a substantial part of the joint curriculum is implemented in the extent agreed in the joint curriculum contract at another educational institution participating in the joint curriculum /.../ and a substantial part shall make in total at least twenty per cent of the volume of joint curriculum

- Clause 22² of the Universities Act sets out the requirements for joint curriculum cooperation contract

Opening new joint study programmes in Estonia



The Ministry of Education and research receives a written application from the HEI to register a joint study programme



MER may involve EKKA to conduct an expert assessment of the programme if the written application is not sufficient to determine the quality of the programme



The joint study programme shall be entered/not entered in the Estonian Education Information System



Conformity to legal requirements is assessed

Joint programmes in Estonia: legal challenges (1)



Accreditation of the European Joint Master's programme in Strategic Border Management in 2014 – 2015



Revealed serious challenges in legal framework preventing smooth international cooperation (the EASS could not attain the status of an Awarding Partner in the consortium)



Prompted a discussion between EKKA and the Ministry of Education and Research regarding a possible review and change of legislation

Joint programmes in Estonia: legal challenges (2)



Legal complications underlined
in the accreditation report

Requirement in Estonia:
combined duration of the BA and
MA programme should be no less
than 5 years/300 ECTS

**Not compatible with the
duration of the programme** (1.5
years and 90 ECTS), and
admission requirement (an EQF
level 6 qualification of at least 180
ECTS)

Estonian legal requirement that at
least **20% of the curriculum**
should be provided by a partner
institution meant that there could
not be more than 5 academic
partners awarding the joint degree
whilst the consortium had 6
academic partners

Joint programmes in Estonia: new developments (1)



- Following the accreditation of European Joint Master's programme in Strategic Border Management, the Ministry of Education and Research asked for EKKA's input regarding possible changes in legislation
- In December, 2016 EKKA forwarded to the Ministry suggestions for making the legal regulation of joint programmes more flexible and compatible with the European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes

Joint programmes in Estonia: new developments (2)



EKKA made following suggestions to the Ministry:

1. To abandon the five-year requirement for combined duration of BA and MA programmes – this is not a common practice in other European countries
2. To abandon the requirement that at least 20% of the curriculum should be provided by a partner institution – has proven to be too restrictive
3. To reduce the level of detail in requirements for joint curriculum cooperation contract, leaving these matters up to the partners to decide
4. Allow for specificities on legislative level, regarding the volume of ECTS for Master's thesis, etc, for joint curricula – these matters could instead be regulated in the joint curriculum cooperation contract

Joint programmes in Estonia: new developments (3)



- Currently, these suggestions are being processed in the Ministry of Education and Research and hopefully, they shall at least partially be included in the new Code of Higher Education
- In March, 2017, a discussion round took place in the Ministry where it was agreed to reduce the level of detail in requirements for joint study programmes, leaving these matters for the partners to decide in the cooperation contract
- The discussion shall continue ...



Thank you very much for your
attention!

