

## University of Warsaw (UW)

### *Procedure regarding the accreditation of a new joint programme at UW*

Establishment of a new study programme in a specific field of study, level and profile requires permission of the Minister ([ACT of 20 July 2018 - The Law on Higher Education and Science \(LHES\)](#) Art. 53 sec. 3). The University applies to the Ministry for permission to establish a concrete programme. The application shall be submitted no later than 6 months before the planned commencement of studies (Art. 54 sec. 1, LHES). The Minister issues a permit after consulting the authorities indicated in Art. 54 sec. 2, LHES. UW profits from the so-called programme autonomy i.e. is exempt from the need to obtain the above-mentioned permit, pursuant to Art. 53 sec. 7, LHES. Therefore, **for most cases at UW, only the internal accreditation procedure is to be observed.**

Each joint programme must be **accredited as a new programme**, therefore it must go through the HEI's Senate. Art. 28, LHES (Senate's tasks include - 11) development of study programmes, postgraduate studies and specialist education;). The basis for conducting a joint programme is an **agreement** signed by all partnering HEIs (Art. 60, LHES).

At UW, the procedure of internal accreditation of new study programmes is described in the **Ordinance No. 71 of the Rector of the University of Warsaw**, dated 9 April 2020 ([consolidated text](#)). Paragraph 11 pertains to the creation of joint programmes and describes the necessary elements that must be included in the consortium/partnership agreement. It is a crucial legal document and constitutes the basis for internal accreditation procedures at UW.

### **Step-by-step procedure**

*Please note: in the case of the preparation of a transnational **joint** programme, it is allowed to carry out the procedures outside of the deadlines set out in Ordinance No. 71.*

*The procedure for establishing new study programmes may be initiated by the following entities: 1) The Rector and/or 2) The University Council for Teaching and Learning (UCTL) and/or 3) The teaching and learning council and/or 4) a group of at least 15 academic teachers hired at the University as their basic workplace. They will be called "applicants". In the case of new joint programmes usually it's the teaching and learning council from a faculty/unit that applies for it.*

1. First step is to prepare the **Teaching Concept Description** for the new joint programme.
  - The applicant should attach a **letter of intent** concerning the joint implementation of the joint programme signed with partners who express their willingness to co-operate in the provision of said programme. The letter of intent should include information on the framework of the new programme: at which universities what parts of the programme will be realised, and which participating HEI will be responsible for what tasks, including administrative. In case of transnational collaboration, the letter of intent should be in English, it can be signed by the Rector, one of the Vice-Rectors or by the Dean of the Faculty.
  - *Please note: for the Erasmus Mundus programmes, it usually is sufficient to attach a project application as it describes everything stated above.*

- A template of the Teaching Concept Description, together with guidelines for its preparation is available at <https://bid.uw.edu.pl/studia-i-i-ii-stopnia/> (available in Polish).
  - Submitted Teaching Concept Description is formally checked by the Office for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (OITL) and passed for evaluation to the University Council for Teaching and Learning (UCTL).
  - *Please note: in order to speed up the process when the timeline is crucial (concerning mostly Erasmus Mundus application) it is advised to submit **Teaching Concept Description together with the Erasmus Mundus application as soon as possible**. If the **partnership agreement** is prepared (even in a draft form) it should be attached as well. Once the Teaching Concept Description is positively evaluated by the UCTL, it is considered that the first step for internal accreditation is completed. **It should be done before submitting an Erasmus Mundus application!***
2. The Teaching Concept Description is evaluated by the University Council for Teaching and Learning (UCTL).
    - If the Teaching Concept Description receives a positive opinion, the UCTL may appoint an expert to support the applicant in the preparation of the application for the establishment of a joint programme.
    - *Please note: it is advised to use the help of an appointed expert, as this can significantly speed up the evaluation of the study programme by the Senate.*
  3. The second step is to prepare of the **application for the establishment of a joint programme**
    - Application prepared with the support of experts from the Office for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (OITL) and the University Council for Teaching and Learning (UCTL) after passing formal checkup by OITL is then evaluated by the Senate Committee for Students, Doctoral Students and Educational Quality and UCTL.
    - Attached to the application should be an opinion of the student council from the respective faculty/unit and a copy of the resolution of the teaching and learning council (in the case where the teaching council is the applicant)
    - In the case of the establishment of a new study programme conducted entirely in English, the applicant should prepare and submit to the OITL two separate documents: an application for the establishment of joint programme (completed in Polish) and a translation of Part I of the application in English
    - Templates of the application are available at <https://bid.uw.edu.pl/studia-i-i-ii-stopnia/> (available in Polish and English).
  4. Once the application for the establishment of a new joint programmes received a positive opinion of the UCTL and Senate Committee for Students, Doctoral Students and Educational Quality, the Resolution by the Senate on creation of the new joint programme is adopted.
  5. Based on that, Rector's ordinance on the establishment of a new programme is issued and the new joint programme is established.
    - *Please note: **the new joint programme must be established following the above described procedure before the joint admission for the programme begins**, even if the first cohort of students will be enrolled at UW for the second year. The date of issue of the Rector's ordinance on establishment of said programme must precede the beginning of joint admission procedures.*

The structure of the application for the establishment of a joint programme with foreign partner(s) is **simplified**. The joint programme does not require the specification of, inter alia:

- 5% of the total number of ECTS credits realised as OGUN (university-wide level elective courses);
- 5 ECTS credits for courses in social sciences or humanities;
- 30% of the number of ECTS credits realised as elective courses;
- number of hours for each type of course;
- ways to verify the learning outcomes for specific courses.

**Changes** to the already established joint programme, incl. changes in curriculum must go through the same procedure as establishing new joint programmes described above, albeit a bit shorter:

- A request with changes to the joint programme is forwarded to the Office for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (OITL).
- Attached should be an opinion of the student council from the respective faculty/unit and a copy of the resolution of the teaching and learning council.
- After formal check, the request is forwarded by the OITL to the Senate Committee for Students, Doctoral Students and Educational Quality for evaluation and to the University Council for Teaching and Learning (UCTL).
- After positive results, changes to the programme are adopted by the UW Senate.
- In the case that the study programme is conducted entirely in English two separate documents should be prepared: an application for changes to the joint programme (completed in Polish) and a translation of Part II of the application in English
- Templates of the application are available at <https://bid.uw.edu.pl/studia-i-i-ii-stopnia/> (available in Polish and English).

#### *Any specific requirements or challenges*

It is really important to remember that when you're applying for an Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters funding, you will face two timelines that you need to observe:

#### **Project application timeline**

Usually, a call for the next Erasmus Mundus applications is announced by the European Commission in the Autumn with the deadline for submitting applications being mid-February. However, preparation of the application should begin earlier than when the call is announced. If the consortium does not have any previous experience in cooperation on joint educational offer, it should also be taken as a factor and more time should be given to develop a proposal. The results of the call are usually announced in the Summer – July/August. After positive results, grant agreement is signed and partnership agreement is signed. An exemplary and very general timeline might look like this:

- Early 2024 - consortium team starts developing a common idea and the basis for the joint curriculum (needs analysis etc.)
- Early spring/summer 2024 – consortium team starts working on joint proposal for EMJM
- Autumn-December 2024 – proposal should be in a concrete form – curriculum should be developed, mobility tracks planned, a draft of the partnership agreement should be already prepared, budget should be planned etc.

- February 2025 – proposals are submitted, everything should be ready by the end of January just in case small changes are required
- Summer 2025 – the call results are in, grant agreement and partnership agreement should be signed
- Autumn 2025-early Spring 2026 – joint admission takes place
- September/October 2026 – the first cohort of students arrives at the first-year institution.

### Internal accreditation timeline

As the work on the EMJM proposal continues, the procedures of internal accreditation at UW should already begin. As the process is long and many units and governance bodies are engaged along the way, it should be planned in advance. If we take the above-described exemplary and simplified timeline for EMJM proposal and compare it to what should be already done internally in order to establish new programme, it can look for example like this:

- Early 2024 - consortium team starts developing a common idea and the basis for the joint curriculum (needs analysis etc.)
- Early spring/summer 2024 – consortium team starts working on joint proposal for EMJM
- Autumn-December 2024 – proposal should be in a concrete form – curriculum should be developed, mobility tracks planned, a draft of the partnership agreement should be already prepared, budget should be planned etc.

*At this point, **Teaching Concept Description should be already prepared and submitted** to the Office for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (OITL) and forwarded to the University Council of Teaching and Learning (UCTL) for initial evaluation. **Draft partnership agreement** should be attached as well.*

- February 2025 – proposals are submitted, everything should be ready by the end of January just in case small changes are required

*Before the proposal is submitted, it should receive **a positive opinion of the UCTL**. It therefore means the programme **passed the first phase of internal accreditation**. **Why it's important?** When you submit a curriculum designed with all partners in the EMJM proposal, and it gets funded, **not a lot of changes can be introduced** (or none at all). Therefore, if the curriculum is reviewed before it's submitted, there is still time to introduce changes so that it meets the standards and criteria set by UW and Polish legislation.*

- Summer 2025 – the call results are in, the grant agreement and partnership agreement should be signed

*Between receiving information on positive results and opening joint admission, **ideally, the programme undergoes full accreditation by the UW Senate**. The Senate's resolution and Rector's ordinance should be issued before joint admissions begin, and definitely before the first cohort of students arrives at the first-year institution, doesn't matter if it's UW or a partner institution. **Why it's important?** The rules for admission for any study programme should also be adopted by UW Senate and announced on the website for candidates in advance before admission takes place.*

- Autumn 2025-early Spring 2026 – joint admission takes place

*At this stage, all the parties of the agreement should be already aware of the requirements concerning documents obligatory to be submitted by the candidates at each HEI in order to admit them to the programme.*

- September/October 2026 – the first cohort of students arrives at the first-year institution.