



Joint European Degree Label – Pilot

External review report

Programme: Master in Global Challenges for Sustainability

Institutions

- University of Barcelona,
- Trinity College Dublin,
- Utrecht University,
- University of Eötvös Loránd Budapest and
- University of Montpellier

Date of the evaluation: 25th June 2026

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GLOSSARY

AQU	Agència Qualitat Sistema Universitari de Catalunya
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
DEQAR	Database of External Quality Assurance Results
EQAR	European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
JEDL	Joint European Degree Label
ESG	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
EQF	European Qualification Framework
EU	European Union
EA	European Approach
HEI / HEIs	Higher Education Institution(s)
QA	Quality Assurance
CHARM-EU	Challenge-driven, Accessible, Research-based and Mobile European University
MGCS	Master in Global Challenges for Sustainability
BIP	Blended Intensive Programme
DEI	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
PLO	Programme Learning Outcome
NGO / NGOs	Non-governmental Organisation(s)

INTRODUCTION

The Joint European Degree Label is a European quality label awarded to joint programmes delivered through transnational cooperation between higher education institutions from different countries, with the aim of promoting compliance with European standards and recognising the European dimension of such programmes.

This report results from the evaluation conducted by an external panel of experts on the Master in Global Challenges for Sustainability, which is applying to obtain the Joint European Degree Label. The programme was previously assessed as a joint programme by AQU Catalunya in 2020, and the corresponding evaluation report is publicly available in the Database of External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR).

The present evaluation constitutes an experimental pilot application of the recently adopted Operational Guide for the Joint European Degree Label (Publications Office of the European Union, 2026). It is also aligned with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes, and relevant Bologna tools.

The programme under evaluation is a master's programme (EQF level 7). Consequently, criteria specifically applicable to doctoral programmes have not been considered in this assessment.

This evaluation does not constitute a full accreditation procedure. Instead, it builds on the previous positive evaluation conducted under the European Approach. In accordance with the principle of non-duplication established in the Operational Guide, criteria already fully addressed in that framework have not been reassessed. The present evaluation focuses on criteria that are either partially covered or not addressed in the European Approach, i.e. those reflecting the specific added value of the Joint European Degree Label.

Basic information of the programme proposal reviewed

Full name: Master in Global Challenges for Sustainability

EQF level: 7

Degrees awarded: Master's in Global Challenges for Sustainability

ECTS: 90 ECTS

Panel composition

Chair:

Cristina Churrua Muguruza (University of Deusto, Spain)

Academic:

Ana Skledar Matijević (Institute for the Development of Education, Croatia)

Student:

Nadia Manzoni (Central European University, Austria)

Secretary:

Carme Edo (AQU Catalunya)

Methodology

The evaluation was conducted in line with the methodology defined in the Operational Guide for the Joint European Degree Label (2026).

The panel reviewed the following documentation:

- Self-evaluation report submitted by the programme consortium
- Previous evaluation report under the European Approach (AQU Catalunya, 2020)
- Additional evidence provided specifically for the Joint European Degree Label (Annex I shows the list of the evidence provided)

Assessment Approach

In accordance with the Operational Guide, the panel applied a differentiated assessment approach:

- Criteria fully addressed under the European Approach ● → not reassessed
- Criteria partially addressed ◐ → complementary analysis conducted
- Criteria not addressed ○ → fully assessed
- Criteria not applicable → explicitly identified (e.g. doctoral-level criteria)

This approach ensured coherence with prior evaluations while focusing on the specific requirements of the Joint European Degree Label.

For each criterion, the report includes an assessment based on evidence and objective data. Where relevant, the report also includes the following elements:

Enhancement areas: Shortcomings detected that must be resolved within a maximum period of three years. While significant, they are not serious enough to result in a non-compliant judgement.

Recommendations: Suggestions aimed at promoting the enhancement of the joint programme. Implementation of recommendations is not mandatory.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

DIMENSION A:

PROGRAMME ORGANISATION CRITERIA

A.1: Higher education institutions involved ①

The joint programme is offered by at least two higher education institutions from at least two different Member States.

Assessment

This criterion is fully addressed by the previous European Approach evaluation. The European Approach evaluation report confirms that the participating institutions are recognised higher education institutions within their respective national systems and that the degrees awarded belong to these systems. It also highlights the strong institutional profile of the consortium, composed of well-established universities with experience in delivering Master's programmes, thereby demonstrating their capacity to participate in the joint programme.

The programme is offered by a consortium of five higher education institutions from five different European countries (Spain, Ireland, the Netherlands, Hungary and France), all of which have recognised status and degree-awarding capacity. The documentation confirms that all partner institutions are actively involved in delivering the programme and awarding the qualification, with coordinated roles and shared responsibilities across the consortium. On this basis, the panel concludes that the consortium meets the requirements in terms of transnational composition, institutional status and degree-awarding capacity for the Joint European Degree Label.

Compliance: Yes

A.2: Transnational joint degree delivery

A.2.1: Joint design and delivery ●

The joint programme is jointly designed and jointly delivered by all the HEIs involved.

Assessment

This criterion is fully addressed by a European Approach evaluation; no additional assessment is needed under the Joint European Degree Label.

This is further supported by the positive assessment of the relevant standard (Joint design and delivery), which was found to be compliant.

Compliance: Yes

A.2.2: Joint degree

The joint programme leads to the award of a joint degree.

Assessment

The evidence confirms that graduates receive a joint degree, namely a Joint Master's in Global Challenges for Sustainability, awarded by the degree-awarding partner institutions. This joint degree is evidenced through the issuing of a single joint diploma/parchment signed by the five degree-awarding institutions. Students are enrolled as full students of the partner universities, and the degree-awarding arrangements are managed jointly through the Joint Virtual Administrative Office, ensuring consistency and traceability of the qualification. The sample joint diploma/parchment and the anonymised list of diplomas/parchments issued to graduates support compliance with this criterion.

The Addendum to the CHARM-EU Consortium Agreement, signed in December 2019 for the implementation of the European Joint Master's Programme in Global Challenges for Sustainability, states in Article 2.4.1 on "Degree Awarded" that students "will be awarded a Joint Master's in Global Challenges for Sustainability" and "will receive a single joint degree/award/parchment which may be issued by any partner university".

However, the joint diploma/parchment provided as evidence does not clearly indicate which university issues the diploma/parchment on behalf of the consortium partners. The institution issuing the joint diploma/parchment should be explicitly stated either on the joint diploma/parchment itself or in the accompanying degree-awarding documentation. In addition, the recognised national qualification title in Ireland is not listed among the national degree titles by which the joint degree is recognised in the partner countries. Even if the Irish title is identical or substantially equivalent, it should be explicitly mentioned for the sake of transparency and consistency.

The name of the programme, "Master in Global Challenges for Sustainability" / "Master's in Global Challenges for Sustainability", is clearly stated in the self-assessment report, the Addendum to the Consortium Agreement and the Joint Diploma Supplement. However, there are minor inconsistencies in the way the programme name is used across the official documentation. For example, the title of

the Addendum refers to the “European Joint Master’s Programme in Global Challenges for Sustainability”, while other documents refer to a “Master” or “Master’s” in Global Challenges for Sustainability. It would be advisable to ensure that the official name of the programme and qualification is used consistently throughout all official programme documents, including the Consortium Agreement, the joint diploma/parchment and the Joint Diploma Supplement.

Compliance: Yes

Enhancement area:

Although the evidence supports compliance with this criterion, the programme could further clarify, either on the joint diploma/parchment or in the accompanying degree-awarding documentation, which institution issues the joint diploma/parchment on behalf of the consortium and how the national legal mentions or recognised qualification titles, including Ireland, are reflected in relation to the single joint diploma/parchment.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the programme ensures the consistent use of the official name of the programme and qualification across all official documentation, including the Consortium Agreement, the Addendum, the joint diploma/parchment and the Joint Diploma Supplement. In particular, this refers to harmonising references to “Master in Global Challenges for Sustainability”, “Master’s in Global Challenges for Sustainability” and “European Joint Master’s Programme in Global Challenges for Sustainability” in order to avoid ambiguity regarding the official title of the programme and the qualification awarded.

A.2.3: Joint Diploma Supplement ⓘ

A joint Diploma Supplement is issued to students.

Assessment

The evidence confirms that a joint Diploma Supplement is issued to graduates of the joint programme. The Diploma Supplement follows the model developed by the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO, and provides information that supports the transparency and recognition of the joint qualification.

The document identifies the holder of the qualification, including the student registration numbers in the five participating universities, and states the name of the qualification as “Master’s in Global Challenges for Sustainability – Joint degree”. It also lists the corresponding national qualification titles in Spain/Catalonia, Ireland, the

Netherlands, Hungary and France, as well as the five degree-awarding institutions and their status.

The Diploma Supplement provides information on the level and duration of the qualification, the programme structure, the modules completed, the ECTS credits, the locations where the modules were followed, the Blended Intensive Programme, the Capstone Project, the transcript of records, the grading system and relevant information on the national higher education systems. It therefore provides appropriate transparency and supports recognition of the joint qualification.

The Diploma Supplement also refers to the mobility requirement, indicating that students must complete at least one mobility period in Phase 2 or Phase 3. However, while the document includes the locations of the modules and refers to the Blended Intensive Programme, it could make the student's mobility pathway clearer by explicitly listing the mobility periods.

Compliance: Yes

Enhancement area:

The programme should further strengthen the transparency of the joint Diploma Supplement by explicitly listing the student's mobility periods, in addition to the current information on module locations and the Blended Intensive Programme

A.2.4: Use of ECTS Users' Guide ●

The joint programme describes the learning outcomes and credits in line with the ECTS Users' Guide.

Assessment

This criterion is fully addressed by a European Approach evaluation, no additional assessment is needed under the Joint European Degree Label.

Compliance: Yes

A.3: Joint arrangements for the joint programme ①

The joint programme has joint policies, procedures and/or arrangements defining curriculum planning and delivery, as well as all organisational and administrative matters. Students' representatives are part of the

decision-making process to define the joint policies and procedures and/or arrangements.

Assessment

The evidence confirms that the programme has joint policies, procedures and arrangements covering curriculum planning and delivery, admissions, enrolment, tuition fees, assessment and progression, marking, registration, student information and mobility. The programme is governed by a Programme Board composed of representatives of all partner institutions and includes student representation. Additional joint bodies, including the Portfolio Assessment Committee, Board of Examiners, Academic Council and Appeals Board, provide further evidence of joint academic and administrative governance.

The arrangements demonstrate that the programme is delivered as an integrated joint programme, with common rules and regulations, a common student handbook, embedded mobility, cross-campus teams and joint delivery across partner institutions. The EA evaluation also confirms the jointness of the policies, procedures and arrangements related to the curriculum. The rules and regulations provided as evidence support compliance with this criterion.

The Programme Board includes one student representative for each active student cohort. However, the evidence provided does not include Programme Board minutes or other documentation showing the active participation of student representatives in programme decision-making. In addition, no evidence is provided on the rules or procedures for the election or appointment of student representatives to the Programme Board. Similarly, the evidence base on staff participation in programme governance could be strengthened by documenting staff representation, consultation or participation in relevant programme bodies in a clearer and more systematic way.

Compliance: Yes

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the programme provides evidence of the active participation of student representatives in the Programme Board and clarify the rules and procedures for their election or appointment. It is also recommended that the evidence base on staff participation in programme governance is strengthened, for example by documenting staff representation, consultation or participation in relevant programme bodies in a clearer and more systematic way. This would reinforce transparency regarding both student and staff involvement in programme decision-making.

A.4: Quality assurance arrangements

A.4.1: Internal and external quality assurance ●

Internal and external quality assurance is conducted in accordance with the ESG. The HEIs, the field of study or the programme are evaluated by a QA agency registered in the EQAR or an EU agency fully implementing the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes.

Assessment

This criterion is fully addressed by a European Approach evaluation, no additional assessment is needed under the Joint European Degree Label.

Compliance: Yes

A.4.2: European approach ●

The joint programme is evaluated using the standards of the European Approach.

Assessment

This criterion is fully addressed by a European Approach evaluation, no additional assessment is needed under the Joint European Degree Label.

Compliance: Yes

A.5: Graduate tracking ○

The joint programme monitors graduates through a graduate tracking system or using data collected by the European Higher Education Sector Observatory

Assessment

Based on the evidence provided in the self-assessment report, the programme has established a structured graduate tracking mechanism that operates after graduation and is linked to its quality assurance processes. Graduates are invited, during the final

in-person student activity, to opt in to future communications with CHARM-EU through an online form, creating the basis for systematic post-graduation follow-up.

The evidence shows that a dedicated alumni survey is sent to graduates who have consented to be contacted approximately 10 to 12 months after graduation. The survey was jointly developed by drawing on graduate tracking practices from the partner institutions, and the data are managed in a GDPR-compliant manner under the CHARM-EU joint data protection arrangements. The Quality Officer is responsible for collecting and analysing the data and for sharing the results with the Programme Board and the Academic Council.

The mechanism has been in place since the first cohort and is intended to support the continuous enhancement of the programme. The alumni report for the first graduating cohorts, together with the CHARM-EU Alumni LinkedIn Group and the Alumni Taskforce, provide further evidence of an active and regular graduate tracking system. Valid evidence, including the alumni survey and graduate tracking reports, was provided to support compliance.

However, while the evidence shows that graduate tracking is carried out and that alumni reports are produced and shared with relevant programme bodies, the evidence could more clearly demonstrate how the results of these reports are discussed within the programme's quality assurance structures and how they inform programme enhancement.

Compliance: Yes

Recommendation:

The programme could strengthen the evidence base by showing more clearly how alumni survey results and graduate tracking reports are considered within the quality assurance system and contribute to the continuous enhancement of the programme.

A.6: Student-centred learning ●

The joint programme is designed and continuously enhanced and delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in the learning process. Assessment of students reflects this approach.

Assessment

This criterion is fully addressed by a European Approach evaluation, no additional assessment is needed under the Joint European Degree Label.

Compliance: Yes

A.7: Transnational campus – access to services ①

The programme has joint policies for students and staff to have access to relevant services in all participating higher education institutions under conditions equivalent to those for all enrolled students and local staff.

Assessment

This criterion is partially addressed by the previous European Approach evaluation. The European Approach evaluation report provides evidence on student support and resources, confirming that adequate services are in place to support students throughout the programme, including orientation, guidance and administrative support mechanisms. It also confirms that facilities and services at partner institutions are sufficient to support the intended learning outcomes. However, the evaluation does not fully assess the extent to which access to services is organised jointly across the consortium or ensured under equivalent conditions within a transnational campus framework.

Building on this foundation, the panel has assessed the specific requirements of the Joint European Degree Label based on the evidence provided in the self-assessment report. The documentation demonstrates that the programme has joint arrangements to ensure that students have access to relevant services across the participating institutions and through CHARM-EU as a joint structure. Students are enrolled as full students of all partner universities, rather than merely as mobility students, and therefore have access to institutional services during their study periods under the same conditions applicable to local students. These services include libraries, language centres, student support, career services, sports and cultural facilities, and IT services.

The evidence also shows that students have access to common CHARM-EU services throughout the duration of the programme, including counselling, inclusion and diversity support, and other student support structures. Access to online library resources is granted by individual libraries and is available to students during the programme. In addition, the programme provides common digital infrastructure for students and staff, including the virtual learning environment, Moodle as the main learning management system, Teams channels for collaborative work and communication, the e-portfolio system, and hybrid classrooms in all five partner universities.

The Student Services Policy, the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Student Handbook, the hybrid classroom arrangements and the DEI support structures provide sufficient evidence to support compliance with this criterion.

While the evidence clearly documents student access to institutional and CHARM-EU services, the policy and evidence base regarding access to physical and support services for academic staff during mobility could be made more explicit.

Compliance: Yes

Recommendation:

The programme could further clarify the arrangements for academic staff access to relevant physical, support and institutional services during mobility across the partner universities, complementing the evidence already provided on student services and shared digital infrastructure.

A.8: Flexible and embedded student mobility

A.8.1: 30 ECTS physical mobility

The joint programme offers student physical mobility of at least 30 ECTS (that can be split over several stays) at one or more partner institution(s). The joint programme has a policy offering alternatives for students who are unable to travel, such as virtual exchanges and/or blended mobility

Assessment

This criterion is partially addressed by the previous European Approach evaluation. The European Approach evaluation report provides evidence that mobility is an integral component of the programme, confirming that different study pathways and learning experiences across partner institutions are embedded in the programme design. The report highlights that the joint delivery and the variety of study paths across institutions are essential elements of the programme, contributing to its multidisciplinary and collaborative nature. However, the evaluation does not explicitly assess the requirement of a minimum of 30 ECTS of physical mobility nor the existence of formalised alternative arrangements for students unable to undertake such mobility.

Building on this foundation, the panel has assessed the specific requirements of the Joint European Degree Label based on the evidence provided in the self-assessment report.

The documentation confirms that the programme includes a compulsory physical mobility of at least 30 ECTS in Phase 2, which constitutes a graduation requirement

and is fully embedded within the curriculum. This mobility takes place in Phase 2, where students select a thematic track according to their academic interests and move to the relevant partner location. In addition, students may complete a further 30 ECTS mobility in Phase 3, depending on the Capstone challenge selected. The evidence indicates that a significant proportion of students complete the programme in more than one location, and that many students study in three different locations. The programme also includes a Blended Intensive Programme.

The Academic Rules and Regulations provide for alternatives or exceptions to the standard mobility pathway on inclusivity grounds. Such requests are considered on a case-by-case basis and require approval by the Board of Examiners. The hybrid and blended delivery model also provides additional flexibility in the organisation of teaching and learning.

Compliance: Yes

Enhancement area

The programme could further clarify how alternatives or exceptions to the standard mobility pathway are communicated to students and documented in practice, particularly in cases approved on inclusivity grounds. This could include clarifying how the term “inclusivity grounds” is understood and applied in practice, while preserving the necessary flexibility for case-by-case decisions by the Board of Examiners.

A.8.2: Six months physical mobility

The joint programme offers at least six months of physical mobility at one or more partner institution(s). The joint programme has a policy offering alternatives for students who are unable to travel.

Assessment

This criterion applies only to doctoral programmes and is therefore not applicable in this assessment.

Compliance: Not applicable

A.9: Co-evaluation and co-supervision for dissertations

Dissertations are supervised by at least 2 supervisors and co-evaluated by cosupervisors or a committee with members from at least 2 different institutions located in 2 different countries

Assessment

This criterion applies only to doctoral programmes and is therefore not applicable in this assessment.

Compliance: Not applicable

DIMENSION B:

EUROPEAN DIMENSION CRITERIA

B1: Interdisciplinarity and research-based learning ○

The joint programme's arrangements include embedded interdisciplinarity and/or research-based learning components, tailored to the nature and circumstances of the joint programme.

Assessment (based on evidences and objective data)

The programme provides clear evidence that interdisciplinarity, trans disciplinarity and research-based learning are embedded in its design, delivery and assessment.

The Master's in Global Challenges for Sustainability is conceived as an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary programme and is delivered through challenge-based and research-led pedagogical approaches. Students from different disciplinary backgrounds work in interdisciplinary and intercultural teams, including through cross-campus collaboration supported by hybrid classrooms. Interdisciplinarity and trans disciplinarity are also reflected in the programme learning outcomes, module descriptors, pedagogical guidelines and CHARM-EU educational principles.

The curriculum includes a mandatory 10 ECTS module on Transdisciplinary Research, while other modules in Phase 1 and Phase 2 also integrate different disciplinary perspectives and interdisciplinary skills. Research-based learning is particularly evident in the Capstone phase, where students address a real sustainability challenge proposed by an external stakeholder and undertake applied research. The Teaching

Staff Policy further supports this approach by requiring staff to be qualified both academically and pedagogically for interdisciplinary teaching.

Compliance: Yes

B2: Opportunities for learning beyond academia and employability ○

The joint programme's arrangements foresee opportunities to broaden the learning experience of students beyond the academic context, tailored to the nature and circumstances of the joint programme, including labour market requirements incorporating inter-sectoral components or activities and development of transversal skills.

Assessment

This criterion is partially addressed by the previous European Approach evaluation. The European Approach evaluation report provides evidence on the relevance of the programme to the labour market and its links with professional practice, highlighting that the programme is designed to address real-world challenges and integrates external perspectives within its learning approach. It also emphasises the importance of transdisciplinary approaches and the involvement of external experts, particularly in components such as the capstone project, which contribute to the practical orientation of the programme. However, the EA evaluation does not fully assess the extent to which structured opportunities for learning beyond academia and employability are systematically embedded across the programme.

Building on this foundation, the panel has assessed the specific requirements of the Joint European Degree Label based on the evidence provided in the self-assessment report. The programme provides clear and structured opportunities for students to broaden their learning experience beyond the academic context and to develop transversal and professional competences relevant to employability.

This is one of the strongest aspects of the curriculum. External stakeholders are actively involved in the programme through field trips, guest lectures, conferences and, most importantly, through two embedded learning components. First, the Cross-Thematic Blended Intensive Programme brings together students from different tracks to work in interdisciplinary teams on real-world sustainability challenges proposed by external stakeholders, who remain involved as referents throughout the process. Second, the 30 ECTS Capstone/Master thesis is based on real challenges proposed through an open call by external stakeholders, including UN agencies, regional governments, NGOs, businesses and universities outside the CHARM-EU alliance.

Students work on these challenges in interdisciplinary teams and present their outputs to the stakeholders involved.

The programme also supports employability through mentoring arrangements and through its challenge-based, competency-focused and programmatic assessment model. These elements contribute to the development of transversal skills, including teamwork, communication, problem-solving, intercultural collaboration, critical thinking and the capacity to respond to complex societal and workplace challenges.

Compliance: Yes

B3: Digitalisation ○

The joint programme's arrangements include embedded interdisciplinarity and/or research-based learning components, tailored to the nature and circumstances of the joint programme.

Assessment

Based on the evidence provided in the self-assessment report, the programme demonstrates a strong and systematic integration of digitalisation both in its delivery model and in the development of students' digital competences.

The programme is delivered through an inter-institutional hybrid learning model, where students collaborate across campuses using shared digital platforms and virtual learning environments. Tools such as Moodle, MS Teams, MIRO, e-portfolio systems and other collaborative technologies are embedded in the teaching and learning processes, enabling students to work effectively in international and interdisciplinary digital teams. This approach reflects current professional practices and supports the acquisition of digital skills relevant to global and digitally mediated work environments.

At curriculum level, digital competences are integrated into learning activities and assessment methods, including the use of qualitative and quantitative digital tools and the production of digital outputs such as podcasts or vlogs. In addition, students have access to further digital learning opportunities through the Transnational Online Course Catalogue, which complements the programme by offering modules related to digital skills and technology-enhanced learning.

On this basis, the panel concludes that digitalisation is coherently embedded in both the design and delivery of the programme and that students are provided with structured opportunities to develop relevant digital competences. The programme therefore meets the requirements of the criterion.

Compliance: Yes

B4: Values ○

The joint programme's arrangements include embedded interdisciplinarity and/or research-based learning components, tailored to the nature and circumstances of the joint programme.

Assessment

The programme is grounded in the mission and values of CHARM-EU and reflects a clear commitment to common European values and to the fundamental values of the European Higher Education Area.

The CHARM-EU Mission and Vision document, signed by the rectors of the consortium partners, explicitly states that the alliance places itself at the service of EU values, including freedom, academic autonomy and human rights. It also demonstrates a commitment to contributing to the European Higher Education Area, although the different EHEA values are not explicitly listed in detail.

These values are further reflected in the CHARM-EU educational principles, which were developed through a bottom-up process involving the academic and student community. The principles emphasise the public responsibility of higher education, challenge-based and situated learning, inclusivity, intercultural collaboration and engagement with complex societal challenges.

The transnational and intercultural design of the programme enables students to collaborate across countries, disciplines, cultures and perspectives. Through mobility, teamwork, joint learning activities and participation in a European University Alliance, students are exposed to practices that foster intercultural understanding, respect for diversity, collaborative decision-making and responsible citizenship.

Overall, valid evidence, including the Mission and Vision documents and the CHARM-EU educational principles, supports compliance with the criterion. The programme does not treat European values as an abstract statement only, but integrates them into the learning environment, governance structures, curriculum and student experience. However, the evidence could be further strengthened by making the programme's contribution to common European values and democratic citizenship more explicit.

Compliance: Yes

Recommendation:

The programme could further strengthen the evidence for this criterion by adopting or submitting a formal declaration on adherence to the fundamental values of the European Higher Education Area (academic freedom, academic integrity, institutional autonomy, student and staff participation in higher education governance, public responsibility for higher education, and public responsibility of higher education) and include the programme's commitment to promote common European values and

democratic citizenship in line with the Operational Guide for the Joint European Degree Label.

B5: Multilingualism ○

The joint programme's arrangements offer opportunities to equip each student with language skills through exposure to at least 2 different EU languages during learning activities or mobility.

Assessment

Although the language of instruction is English, the programme provides students with meaningful exposure to other EU languages and cultures through its embedded mobility structure, its international and intercultural learning environment, and access to language-learning opportunities across the consortium.

Compulsory mobility in Phase 2 exposes all students to different linguistic and cultural contexts. Many students also complete Phase 1 in a country other than their country of origin, participate in the compulsory Blended Intensive Programme, and may undertake Phase 3 in a further partner country depending on the Capstone challenge selected. According to the evidence provided, 45% of graduates have studied in two different countries and 55% in three different countries, not including the mobility linked to the Blended Intensive Programme.

Students are enrolled as full students of the partner universities and therefore have access to language courses offered by the consortium partners under the same conditions as local students during mobility periods. They also have access to the Transnational Online Learning Catalogue, which includes courses in different EU languages, including English, German and Hungarian. In addition, interaction with external stakeholders during the BIP and the Capstone phase further supports the development of intercultural and multilingual communication skills.

Multilingualism and interculturality are also reflected in the CHARM-EU mission and vision, the international composition of the student body and the diversity of students' backgrounds. Alumni surveys and the student contribution to the self-assessment report confirm that students value this intercultural and multilingual dimension of the programme.

Overall, valid evidence, including the mobility arrangements, the provision of language-learning opportunities and the Transnational Online Learning Catalogue, supports compliance with the criterion.

Compliance: Yes

B.6: Inclusiveness

B.6.1: Diversity, equality, inclusion ○

The joint programme's arrangements include a commitment to wide participation by fostering diversity, equality, and inclusion and by adopting tailored measures to support students and staff with fewer opportunities.

Assessment

Diversity, equity and inclusion are central principles of the CHARM-EU alliance and are embedded in the programme's design, governance, admissions and student support arrangements.

The programme provides evidence of a documented commitment to inclusion through the CHARM-EU Mission and Vision documents, the Dignity and Respect Statement, the DEI Office Terms of Reference, the educational principles, pedagogical guidelines, student support information and the Student Handbook. Inclusivity is also identified as one of the principles of the educational design, developed through a bottom-up process involving the academic and student community.

Inclusion is operationalised through concrete measures at programme and consortium level. DEI sessions are included in orientation and onboarding activities, and academic staff are also introduced to DEI matters. The CHARM-EU DEI Office, including the Disability and Inclusion Officer, provides support to students and staff with specific inclusion needs, including counselling, reasonable adjustments and personal support. Students are informed about available support options and their rights through the programme website and the Student Handbook.

Specific measures are also in place for students with fewer opportunities, including inclusion grants, tuition fee waivers and financial support for mobility, including the obligatory Blended Intensive Programme. The admissions process allows additional points for inclusion-related circumstances, and the DEI Office may advise the Board of Examiners on reasonable accommodations in cases involving special needs or other inclusivity matters.

Overall, the evidence demonstrates both a documented inclusion policy and concrete programme-level, institutional and cross-institutional interventions applicable to the joint programme. Valid evidence, including the existence of the DEI Office and the support system for counselling, reasonable adjustments and mobility-related grants, supports compliance with the criterion.

Compliance: Yes

Recommendation:

Given the transnational and highly mobile nature of the programme, the consortium could make more explicit how accessibility and reasonable accommodation are coordinated across all partner institutions for students with disabilities or functional diversity, including students who may be deaf, hard-of-hearing, blind or visually impaired.

B.6.2: European Charter for Researchers ○

The joint programme's arrangements include a commitment to respect the principles of the European Charter for Researchers

Assessment

This criterion applies only to doctoral programmes and is therefore not applicable in this assessment.

Compliance: Not applicable

B7: Environmental sustainability ○

The joint programme's arrangements include policies and actions related to environmental sustainability and implement measures to minimise the environmental footprint of its activities and foresee opportunities for students to develop adequate green skills and competences, tailored to the nature and circumstances of the joint programme

Assessment

Based on the evidence provided in the self-assessment report, the programme demonstrates that environmental sustainability is a central and defining element of its academic concept and learning objectives. The programme is explicitly focused on addressing global sustainability challenges, with sustainability embedded as a core Programme Learning Outcome and integrated throughout the curriculum.

At curricular level, sustainability is developed through interdisciplinary and challenge-based learning approaches, where students engage with complex environmental, social and economic issues. Activities such as the Capstone project and collaboration with external stakeholders further ensure that students apply sustainability principles to real-world challenges. In addition, the programme provides further opportunities to

deepen sustainability competences through complementary learning offers, including modules available in the Transnational Online Course Catalogue.

The programme also demonstrates a commitment to sustainability in its operational practices, including measures aimed at reducing environmental impact, such as minimising paper use, promoting sustainable travel options and implementing environmentally conscious policies at alliance level. These elements contribute to a learning environment that aligns educational content with sustainable practices.

On this basis, the panel concludes that environmental sustainability is coherently embedded in both the academic and operational dimensions of the programme and that the programme meets the requirements of the criterion.

Compliance: Yes

Summary of the assessment

STANDARD	ASSESSMENT
DIMENSION A: PROGRAMME ORGANISATION CRITERIA	
A.1: Higher education institutions involved	Compliant
A.2: Transnational joint degree delivery	
A.2.1: Joint design and delivery	Compliant
A.2.2: Joint degree	Compliant
A.2.3: Joint Diploma Supplement	Compliant
A.2.4: Use of ECTS Users' Guide	Compliant
A.3: Joint arrangements for the joint programme	Compliant
A.4: Quality assurance arrangements	
A.4.1: Internal and external quality assurance	Compliant
A.4.2: European approach	Compliant
A.5: Graduate tracking	Compliant
A.6: Student-centred learning	Compliant
A.7: Transnational campus – access to services	Compliant
A.8: Flexible and embedded student mobility	
A.8.1: 30 ECTS physical mobility	Compliant
A.8.2: Six months physical mobility	Not applicable
A.9: Co-evaluation and co-supervision for dissertations	Not applicable
DIMENSION B: EUROPEAN DIMENSION CRITERIA	
B1: Interdisciplinarity and research-based learning	Compliant
B2: Opportunities for learning beyond academia and employability	Compliant
B3: Digitalisation	Compliant
B4: Values	Compliant
B5: Multilingualism	Compliant
B.6: Inclusiveness	
B.6.1: Diversity, equality, inclusion	Compliant
B.6.2: European Charter for Researchers	Not applicable
B7: Environmental sustainability	Compliant

The External Assessment Committee recommends to the Institutional and Programme Review Commission of AQU Catalunya that the programme **be awarded** the Joint European Degree Label.

Summary of enhancement areas

A.2.2: Joint degree

- Although the evidence supports compliance with this criterion, the programme could further clarify, either on the joint diploma/parchment or in the accompanying degree-awarding documentation, which institution issues the joint diploma/parchment on behalf of the consortium and how the national legal mentions or recognised qualification titles, including Ireland, are reflected in relation to the single joint diploma/parchment.

A.2.3: Joint Diploma Supplement

- The programme should further strengthen the transparency of the joint Diploma Supplement by explicitly listing the student's mobility periods, in addition to the current information on module locations and the Blended Intensive Programme

Summary of recommendations

A.2.2: Joint degree

- It is recommended that the programme ensures the consistent use of the official name of the programme and qualification across all official documentation, including the Consortium Agreement, the Addendum, the joint diploma/parchment and the Joint Diploma Supplement. In particular, this refers to harmonising references to "Master in Global Challenges for Sustainability", "Master's in Global Challenges for Sustainability" and "European Joint Master's Programme in Global Challenges for Sustainability" in order to avoid ambiguity regarding the official title of the programme and the qualification awarded.

A.3: Joint arrangements for the joint programme

- It is recommended that the programme provides evidence of the active participation of student representatives in the Programme Board and clarify the rules and procedures for their election or appointment. It is also recommended that the evidence base on staff participation in programme governance is strengthened, for example by documenting staff representation, consultation or participation in relevant programme bodies in a clearer and more systematic way. This would reinforce

transparency regarding both student and staff involvement in programme decision-making.

A.5: Graduate tracking

- The programme could strengthen the evidence base by showing more clearly how alumni survey results and graduate tracking reports are considered within the quality assurance system and contribute to the continuous enhancement of the programme.

A.7: Transnational campus – access to services

- The programme could further clarify the arrangements for academic staff access to relevant physical, support and institutional services across the partner universities, complementing the evidence already provided on student services and shared digital infrastructure.

B4: Values

- The programme could further strengthen the evidence for this criterion by adopting or submitting a formal declaration on adherence to the fundamental values of the European Higher Education Area (academic freedom, academic integrity, institutional autonomy, student and staff participation in higher education governance, public responsibility for higher education, and public responsibility of higher education) and include the programme's commitment to promote common European values and democratic citizenship in line with the Operational Guide for the Joint European Degree Label.

B.6: Inclusiveness

B.6.1: Diversity, equality, inclusion

- Given the transnational and highly mobile nature of the programme, the consortium could make more explicit how accessibility and reasonable accommodation are coordinated across all partner institutions for students with disabilities or functional diversity, including students who may be deaf, hard-of-hearing, blind or visually impaired.

The Chair of the external evaluation committee states that this document constitutes the assessment report.

Chair: Cristina Churruca Muguruza

Bilbao, 03/07/2026

List of evidences provided

1. Self-assessment report European Degree Label MGCS Final
- 1a. Addendum to Consortium Agreement 2020 90 ECTS MGCS
- 1b. CHARM-EU_Master_Proposal
3. Masters Timetable 23.25
4. D3.1 Curriculum-Design-Blueprint
5. Programme Boards_FinalToR
6. HYBRID_CLASSROOM_handbook
7. Parchment_MGCS_3C_2025
8. Diploma_Supplement_MGCS_3C_2025
9. Accreditation References
10. MGCS_Parchments_issued_anonymised_90ECTS
11. Student_Handbook
12. CHARM-EU Multilateral IIA
13. PACHandbook 2023-24
14. Phase evaluations Cohort 1 to 4
15. CHARM-EU Hackathon (July 2024) - Final Programme
16. Alumni Reports
17. Student Information Portal Screenshot
18. Teaching Learning and Assessment Student Handbook
19. PLO rubrics
20. Mentor_handbook_2023
21. 5.2. Interactive Mobility Handbook
22. Inclusion information Student Information Portal
23. CHARM-EU DEI Office Terms of Reference
24. Add Phases_Mobility
25. Alumni opinion about self assessment

Module descriptors:

- Capstone: Student Module Descriptor Capstone_20.08.24
- Phase 1
 - 14 Nov update 2024-5-shared-SI_Module_Description_Manual_Timetable
 - SUST_ModuleDescriptor_version_Cohort_4_24_25_Masterfile_V2
 - TR Module Descriptor 2024!
- Phase 2
 - 2025 Food - Module 2
 - StudentModuleDescriptors_Food_M1_2025_
 - Students Food Module 3 2025 draft(2)
 - Introductoryweek_Module3_descriptor_HEALTH_and_WELL-BEING_Cohort4_01022025
 - L&H Module 1_Student module descriptor and schedule
 - L&H_Module2_descriptor_Health Systems and Policies_20240131
 - Module Descriptor Water @14022025