

## FOLLOW-UP DECISION OF THE SPECIFIC COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL SCIENCES 1 OF THE CATALAN UNIVERSITY QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY ON THE STUDY PROGRAMME

<b>Study programme</b>	Master in Tourism Transformations for Regenerative Futures (MATTeRS)
<b>Jointly offered by</b>	Universitat de Girona (Spain) University of Oulu (Finland) Kenyatta University (Kenya) University of Mauritius (Mauritius)
<b>Workload</b>	120 ECTS
<b>Date of evidence submission for requirements correction</b>	08/07/2025

### Introduction

On 17/01/2025, the Specific Commission for Social Sciences 1 of the Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency issued a decision requesting that the joint programme address specific requirements related to eligibility and resources standards, to be monitored within six months from the date of the decision. In addition, The Commission provided a series of recommendations aimed at further improvement of the programme.

### Analysis

#### A. Requirements

##### Eligibility (Standard 1.3)

*“The Cooperation Agreement should include specific terms and conditions regarding the mobility of the academic staff from the four university partners of the joint programme”.*

The joint programme has submitted a document titled *“Addendum 1 to MATTeRS’ Consortium Partnership Agreement – Agreement regarding faculty mobility for teaching”* which has been formally signed by the four universities in the consortium, evidencing the consortium's commitment to structured faculty mobility and compliance with the requirements set out by the Commission. The addendum incorporates specific provisions, related to different aspects:

- > **Designated Teaching Mobility:** The document outlines the allocation of specific courses and short-term teaching assignments for faculty members from the partner universities.
- > **Cost Coverage:** It is stipulated that all expenses related to faculty mobility will be covered by the MATTeRS Consortium budget.
- > **Institutional Support:** Each university within the consortium is committed to facilitating the necessary administrative procedures and ensuring efficient coordination.
- > **Dispute Resolution Mechanisms:** The addendum specifies that any disputes arising from the interpretation or implementation of its provisions will be addressed in accordance with the procedures outlined in the main agreement.

It is considered that the requirement **has been met**.

#### **Resources (Standard 7.1)**

*“The University of Mauritius (UoM) should increase the number of academic staff involved in the programme to ensure a balanced contribution and mitigate potential risks associated with the low number of lecturers available”.*

In the response letter, it is indicated that the University of Mauritius (UoM) has doubled the number of faculty members initially proposed, evidencing the institution's commitment to strengthening its academic staff. As a result, the academic staff at UoM is now equivalent to that of Kenyatta University. Two new faculty members have been added to the courses M8, M9, M10, and M11, with their professional profiles and research experience detailed in Annex 2. This action adequately addresses the requirement outlined in the Commission's report, demonstrating that UoM has implemented a structural, rather than temporary, measure.

It is considered that the requirement **has been met**.

#### **Resources (Standard 7.2)**

*“Specify the participation of professors from associated partner universities in courses M9, M10, and M11, including details on the duration, topics, and types of teaching activities”.*

In the response letter, a list of seventeen partner universities and thirty professors with specialized expertise in specific and regional topics for courses M9, M10, and M11 has been provided. The professors from the partner universities participating in the programme are outlined, with their fields of specialization highlighted, including

sustainable tourism, heritage, research methodologies, spatial planning, community development, ethics, and geopolitics of tourism, among others. The document also details the activities they will undertake and estimated duration. The information provided adequately addresses the requirement outlined in the Commission's report.

It is considered that the requirement **has been met**.

## Conclusion

**Based on the documentation submitted and the discussions of the Specific Commission for Social Sciences 1 in its meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2025, it is decided:**

1. The study programme "Master in Tourism Transformations for Regenerative Futures (MATTeRS)" offered by the Universitat de Girona (Spain) in cooperation with the University of Oulu (Finland), the Kenyatta University (Kenya), and the University of Mauritius (Mauritius), **is accredited** according to the criteria and procedures defined in the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes.
2. The study programme **complies** with the requirements defined by the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) in their current version.
3. The following recommendations remain applicable for the continued enhancement of the program:

### 1. Eligibility

- > Detail the contributions of associated partners in the joint programme design, implementation, and governance.
- > The role of the Student and Industry Advisory Boards could be a bit more elaborated in the Governance structure.
- > Provide full support letters from the associated partner institutions before the implementation of the joint programme.
- > Deploy coordination mechanisms in order to ensure that any variability on the voluntary participation of associated academic and industry partners does not affect the consistency of the program along the years.

### 2. Learning outcomes

- > Collaborate with industry partners to gather specific tourism sector needs, analyse tourism trends and future projections in post de-growth transformative scenarios, include requirements, challenges and needs from professional current and future employers to validate the programme's content and its applicability.

### **3. Study programme**

- > Ensure coherence and adequacy of intended learning outcomes across the joint programme, it is recommended to further define coordination mechanisms between participating universities and establish a systematic process for developing collaborative arrangements with associated partners.
- > Inform prospective and actual students about the actual workload per ECTS in each university.
- > Conduct a student survey at the end of each term per course to ensure equitable distribution of workload among the four universities, monitored closely by the Consortium Academic Board.

### **4. Admission and recognition**

- > Clearly specify the opportunities available for the recognition of prior learning, previous qualifications, and periods of study and ensure that this information will be easily accessible in the programme's website.

### **5. Learning, teaching, and assessment**

- > Clarify criteria and processes for work placements and industry research projects (M10).
- > Outline connections between preparatory courses (M09) and industry involvement.
- > Detail requirements for preparatory courses (M07) to guide master's thesis topic selection and supervisor appointments.
- > Provide detailed procedures and criteria for appointing supervisors in M11.
- > Create a dedicated Examination Board within the Academic Board.
- > Elaborate a comprehensive guide for master's thesis process (proposal approval, elaboration, assessment).
- > Publish a clear grading system for the master's thesis evaluation.
- > A three-member panel, including the supervisor and two external members, is suggested for the evaluation of modules M10 and M11.

### **6. Students support**

- > Since the delays in obtaining visa by Embassies and finding appropriate student housing are common issues to all EMJMs, a common policy for students obtaining visas (when needed) and finding accommodation is recommended.
- > Consider developing a unified student support handbook that outlines all available services and how to access them across the consortium.

- > Provide clear information on personal support services for students' mobility during the 4<sup>th</sup> semester, ensuring effective management of relocation and project engagement at partner universities.
- > Building on the alumni network after studies.

#### **7. Resources**

- > Provide a clearer explanation of the simultaneous participation of experienced teachers and post-doc teachers in each module.

#### **8. Transparency and documentation**

- > Include a description of the structure and content of the programme's website and educational guides in future documentation.

#### **9. Quality Assurance**

- > A dedicated quality assurance board, comprising representatives from the various bodies involved in the system is advised.

The chair of the Specific Commission for Social Sciences 1,



Irene Delgado Sotillos