![AQU CATALUNYA logo]

FOLLOW-UP DECISION OF THE SPECIFIC COMMISSION FOR ENGINEERING AND ARCHITECTURE OF THE CATALAN UNIVERSITY QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY ON THE STUDY PROGRAMME

Study programme	Bachelor's degree in Software Development and Testing
Jointly offered by	Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (Spain)
	Open University of the Netherlands (the Netherlands)
	Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (Spain)
Workload	180 ECTS
Date of evidence submission for requirements correction	14/07/2025

Introduction

On 04/06/2025, the Specific Commission for Engineering and Architecture of the Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency issued a decision requesting that the joint programme address specific requirements related to eligibility, learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment, to be monitored within six months from the date of the decision. In addition, the Commission provided a series of enhancement areas and recommendations aimed at further improvement of the programme.

Analysis
A. Requirements

Eligibility (Standard 1)

> "*The Cooperation agreement should be updated to explicitly address the staff and student mobility in the context of online programmes.*"

The joint programme has submitted a document titled "*Addendum between UOC, OUNL and UNED within the framework of the Joint Bachelor's Degree in Software Development and Testing. Mobility for Higher Education students and staff among OpenEU consortium partners*" which has been formally signed by the three universities in the consortium. The

addendum to the Cooperation Agreement explicitly addresses the requirement to update the agreement to reflect mobility in the context of online programmes. This is accomplished through the inclusion of clear definitions, administrative processes, support mechanisms, and institutional commitments that accommodate and promote mobility for both students and staff participating in virtual or hybrid educational contexts.

The document introduces and defines various types of mobility within the OpenEU framework. These include physical mobility, synchronous hybrid mobility, blended mobility, and fully online or virtual mobility.

Administrative processes have been adapted to support this model. Applications are handled electronically, and key deadlines and institutional contact points are provided.

Each university commits to accessibility and inclusion, offering support for students with special needs, including accommodations to support remote learning, adapted materials, and tailored assistance.

The agreement also provides guidance on housing, visas, and insurance for cases where short-term physical stays are required.

It ensures academic recognition of online mobility and confirms that data processing will comply with GDPR regulations.

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

Learning Outcomes (Standard 2)

> *"The consortium should clearly demonstrate how the programme meets the academic standards required for a WO degree, particularly in the context of the Dutch qualifications' framework. This should include a justification of the academic level of the intended learning outcomes, the inclusion of research-oriented components, and the coherence with national criteria for WO programmes."*

The partnership revised the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) using those of a comparable, Dutch-accredited program at OUNL as a reference point. They conducted a comprehensive analysis, which led to the identification of two ILOs in need of revision. Updated versions were proposed, and the team ensured alignment at the course level across several relevant courses, including the final project. The process was conducted in a systematic and coherent manner. With the proposed changes, the academic level of the programme is expected to fully meet the requirements of Dutch legislation.

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

Learning, teaching, and assessment (Standard 5)

> *"The programme must establish standardized rubrics and assessment criteria across all institutions. A unified grading system or conversion table should also be created to harmonize grading practices. These measures must be finalized before the implementation of the programme."*

The information provided demonstrates that common rubrics and assessment criteria will be applied. The fact that training sessions have already been organized to support harmonized grading practices further illustrates the consortium's commitment to consistency in the assessment procedures.

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

B. Enhancement areas

Learning outcomes (Standard 2)

> *"Provide a proper matrix aligning the ILOs with the relevant national and European qualifications' frameworks."*

The programme has developed and documented a matrix aligning its Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) with both the Dutch National Qualifications Framework (NLQF) and the Spanish MECES framework, which are in turn aligned with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

The inclusion of this mapping in the self-assessment report (Annex A.1.4) further supports transparency and traceability.

It is considered that the enhancement area **has been met**.

Study programme (Standard 3)

> *"Review the curriculum (courses or at least the content of already included courses) to treat software testing aspects in more detail".*

The documentation provided shows that software testing will be explicitly identified into three programming courses:

- Fundamentals of Programming
- Programming in Practice
- Object-Oriented Programming

These courses will incorporate TILE (Test Informed Learning with Examples) approach, developed by OUNL and UOC as part of the EU-funded QPeD project. TILE is designed to expose students to software testing practices from the earliest stages of their training. Its inclusion demonstrates a structured effort to embed testing concepts across the curriculum, beyond the dedicated Software Testing course offered in Semester 5. Furthermore, the self-assessment report now also includes the subject areas in the overview of the curriculum.

It is considered that the enhancement area **has been met**.

> *"Reflect the 9 subject areas in the overview curriculum on page 14 to give more insight into the structure of the curriculum".*

The curriculum overview has been updated to include references to the 9 subject areas for each course. These areas are:

S1: Mathematical foundations

S2: Programming

S3: Software engineering

S4: Web development

S5: Databases

S6: Computer organisation and administration

S7: Business and soft skills

S8: Application domains

S9: Projects

It is considered that the enhancement area **has been met**.

Resources (Standard 7)

> *"Provide evidence of teaching staff qualifications in online teaching methodologies and outline plans for training where needed."*

The academic staff documentation (section A.1.10 of the self-assessment report) now includes further details on staff experience with online teaching methodologies. Furthermore, section 7.1, has been improved including a description of the training plan for academic staff provided by the coordinating university. These sessions will focus on the learning management system, assessment practices, and overall teaching methodology, ensuring consistency across institutions.

The first round of training took place in May–June 2025, and a second session is ongoing in July 2025, specifically aimed at non-UOC faculty involved in the programme. This indicates a proactive and ongoing commitment to staff training in online and blended learning environments.

It is considered that the enhancement area **has been met**.

> *"Clarify the staff assigned to administrative or coordination activities within the study programme."*

The governance structure is outlined in the consortium agreement, and a visual representation of the relevant bodies has been included.

Final confirmation of the bodies' composition is expected by end of 2025. It is recommended that once available, this information be integrated into the documentation.

It is considered that the enhancement area **has been partially met**.

Transparency and documentation (Standard 8)

> *"Provide a clear and detailed description of the documentation and information that will be made publicly available to students. This should include specific information on the programme's admission requirements, structure, curriculum, and education and examination regulations (EER), particularly in relation to the joint degree."*

The documentation provided shows that considerable progress has been made toward ensuring transparency and public access to key programme information. The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC), as coordinating institution, will publish comprehensive information on its website once accreditation is granted. This includes:

- Programme presentation and curriculum
- Recognition of qualifications and prior learning
- Faculty and management staff
- Labour market relevance
- Admission requirements, enrolment procedures, and tuition fees
- Description of the joint nature of the degree and the educational/assessment models

This information will also be made available through the websites of the partner institutions (OUNL and UNED) and the OpenEU Alliance portal. In addition, the Student Guide will support enrolled students with operational and pedagogical information.

However, there is no explicit mention of how or where the Education and Examination Regulations (EER) will be published or made available to students. To fully meet this enhancement area, the institution should clarify how the EER will be documented, structured, and made accessible to students, particularly in the context of the joint degree framework.

It is considered that the enhancement area **has been partially met**.

Quality Assurance (Standard 9)

> *"Establish mechanisms to measure key quality indicators for consideration and analysis, such as student satisfaction with their programme, career paths of graduates, and other relevant factors."*

The documentation confirms that the programme will operate under the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC), as the coordinating institution. Within this framework, mechanisms are already in place to monitor and analyse key quality indicators, including:

- Student satisfaction with the programme, based on regularly administered surveys.

- [Academic performance](#) metrics, such as success, performance or graduation rates.
- [Career paths of graduates](#), using data collected and published by the Catalan quality assurance agency (AQU Catalunya).

These indicators are publicly accessible via UOC's website and are systematically gathered, analysed, and used for continuous improvement. The approach is consistent with established quality assurance practices and ensures that relevant data is available to inform programme monitoring and development.

It is considered that the enhancement area **has been met**.

> *"Publish annual IQAS review reports."*

The annual IQAS review report is currently accessible to internal stakeholders at the UOC, including the Quality Committee. While the possibility of making it publicly available is under consideration, no formal commitment has been made. The faculty hosting the programme publishes an annual report that is available online and includes relevant information on programme quality.

It is considered that the enhancement area **has not been met**.

C. Recommendations

Learning Outcomes (Standard 2)

> *"Consider referencing international frameworks to strengthen the programme's academic foundation and enhance its international comparability."*

The Consortium have expressed their intention to explore additional international references, such as those related to Information and Communication Technology. However, the documentation provided does not yet include any concrete examples or evidence of these international frameworks being explicitly referenced or incorporated.

It is considered that the recommendation **has not been met**.

> *"Establish a formal mechanism for the stakeholder involvement in the development and periodic review of the ILOs."*

According to the provided documentation, the Coordination Committee will be responsible for overseeing the development and periodic review of the ILOs. This process will be carried out with the guidance and advice of the Joint Program Committee, as outlined in the consortium agreement.

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

> *"Consider including elements related to the intercultural competence or similar dimensions, in the design of the ILOs."*

The institutions have indicated their intention to implement appropriate measures within the programme framework to ensure the continuous improvement and effective monitoring of the bachelor's degree programme, particularly regarding its multicultural aspect.

However, the documentation does not provide specific details on how intercultural competence will be integrated into the ILOs or how these aspects will be measured or evaluated within the programme.

It is considered that the recommendation **has not been met**.

Study programme (Standard 3)

> *"Ensure consistent presentation of curricular content across all documentation. Key topics—such as security and embedded systems—should be clearly identified and consistently referenced where relevant."*

The institutions involved in the Joint Degree programme have reviewed all relevant documentation to ensure consistency and correctness. Specifically, updates have been made in the tables for subjects 3, 6, and 7 in Section 3.1 of the self-assessment report, where the commented elements have been identified and clearly referenced where applicable.

The documentation now consistently includes these key topics and updates, reflecting the necessary corrections for better alignment.

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

Learning, teaching, and assessment (standard 5)

> *"Provide detailed information on how teaching and learning methods will be adapted for online delivery, including student-teacher interactions and use of digital tools."*

The institutions involved have outlined their intention to implement appropriate measures within the framework of their internal quality assurance system (IQAS). These measures aim to ensure continuous improvement and effective monitoring of the programme, particularly in the context of online delivery.

However, the provided documentation does not include specific, detailed strategies on how student-teacher interactions will be structured or how digital tools will be integrated into the teaching and learning processes. Further clarification on these aspects would be beneficial to fully address the recommendation.

It is considered that the recommendation **has not been met**.

> *"Address how the programme will accommodate diverse cultural and educational backgrounds to ensure inclusivity."*

The three universities involved in the Joint Programme have demonstrated their institutional commitment to equity and inclusion through a range of policies, support systems, and

actions aimed at fostering an inclusive learning environment for students from diverse backgrounds.

All three institutions are aligned with the principles of the Global Impact 2030 framework, which integrates the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in terms of gender equality, refugee support, and global citizenship. This alignment ensures a cohesive approach to inclusivity and reinforces the support structures provided to students.

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

> *"The programme should reconsider the composition of the examination board during the presentation and defence to help ensure impartiality and reinforce confidence in the objectivity of the final assessment."*

The programme has indicated that proper measures will be implemented through the internal quality assurance system:

Tutor's Weighting: It is guaranteed that the tutor's weighting in the final grade will not exceed 70%, even if the tutor is part of the examination board.

Joint Examination Board Oversight: The Joint Examination Board will oversee the composition of the examination boards, ensuring impartiality. If necessary, corrective actions will be taken to maintain fairness and objectivity in the assessment process.

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

Student support (Standard 6)

> *"Provide detailed information on internship support, including assistance with placement and the supervision structure."*

The updated documentation clarifies that the programme does not include mandatory internships. For students who choose the optional 12 ECTS internship course, the coordinating university will provide assistance with placement (e.g., helping with the definition of the internship agreement for the company and the student) and supervision ((e.g., following the learning process and ensuring that the internship addresses the required competencies of the course).

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

> *"Clearly indicate that all student support is centralized through the UOC platform and specify the contributions of all partner universities."*

The revised documentation states that student support will be centralized through the coordinating university (UOC), ensuring a consistent service. Support will be offered via UOC's platform and online channels, with reference to a student guide explaining the services available. Additionally, the contributions of the partner universities (OUNL and UNED) are described: they will provide support related to the specific courses they offer. Regular communication through coordination bodies is also planned to ensure effective collaboration and shared responsibility across institutions.

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

Conclusion

Based on the documentation submitted and the discussions of the Specific Commission for Engineering an Architecture in its meeting on 21st July 2025, it is decided:

1. The study programme " Bachelor's degree in Software Development and Testing" offered by the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (Spain) in cooperation with the Open University of the Netherlands (the Netherlands), and the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (Spain), **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 enhancement areas and recommendations remain applicable for the continued enhancement of the program:

   Enhancement areas:

   7. Resources
   > Clarify the staff assigned to administrative or coordination activities within the study programme.

   8. Transparency and documentation
   > Provide a clear and detailed description of the documentation and information that will be made publicly available to students. This should include specific information on the programme's admission requirements, structure, curriculum, and education and examination regulations (EER), particularly in relation to the joint degree.

   Recommendations

   2. Learning Outcomes
   > Consider referencing international frameworks to strengthen the programme's academic foundation and enhance its international comparability.
   > Consider including elements related to the intercultural competence or similar dimensions, in the design of the ILOs.

5. **Learning, teaching, and assessment**
   > Provide detailed information on how teaching and learning methods will be adapted for online delivery, including student-teacher interactions and use of digital tools.

The chair of the Specific Commission Engineering and Architecture,

Ángel Ortiz Bas