COURSE INTEGRATION

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Partnership

- University of Minho (PT), Coordination
- Czech Technical University in Prague (CZ)
- University of Padova (IT)
- Technical University of Catalonia (SP)
- Associated Partner: Institute of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics of the Czech Academy of Sciences (CZ)

(currently on its 2nd edition)
Main Ideas: Organization

- One year course (60 ECTS)
- 39 ECTS (coursework) + 21 ECTS (thesis)
- Coursework held simultaneously in two of the four partners, every 2\textsuperscript{nd} year
- Thesis held in the four partners + associated partner every year
- Modular organization of coursework (six modules of about 3.5 weeks + one integrated module: full design for engineering application).
- Mobility of students & lecturers (with an international pool teaching 50% of the modules)
- About 40 lecturers involved from 5 institutions
- One FTE administrative hired (50% for the General Secretariat + 25% in the two institutions running the coursework)
Main Ideas: Vision & Attractiveness

- “Master after Master” or Professional Master
- Niche market / Unique world program. Scientific and professional competences
- A leading European network that can become global
- Attracting top students (with and without grant)

- Major international impact / Recognition by peers and technical community
- Students:
  - 30 students / year (being 20 from 3rd countries) from 15 countries / year
  - Increasing number of applications 2007/9: 90; 130; 180
  - 2008/9: two 3rd country students without grant
  - 2008/2009: four students from USA. Three 3rd students from other advanced economies (Canada, New Zealand and Japan)

- Leading international scholars: US, Canada, Japan, Peru, Brazil, Israel
Integration and Quality (I)

- A single centralized secretariat, webpage, inscription, etc.
- Pilot tests (optional) + bridging courses (self-study) prior to coursework to detect and repair weaknesses in required knowledge
- Welcome week to build up team spirit & promote integration (very positive effects along the academic year)
- Room with full-time use + individual lockers
- E-learning platform to assist lecturers and students during coursework
- Same programme and course material in the four partners (uniformity). Course material jointly developed and updated (some local adjustments possible). A single coordinator in charge of each course.
- Appointment of Local Coordinators in each partner institution
Integration and Quality (II)

- Regular (informal) meetings with students for feedback
- Written evaluation of modules + entire academic year by students
- Annual meetings of the Board to discuss adjustments and further improvements of modules (curriculum improvement expected to stabilize in 2009/2010)
- Adjustment of qualitative selection criteria based on students performance (towards a more accurate assessment procedure)
- Feedback from Scholars on course quality and organization (scientific and technical assessment)
- Memorandum of Understanding (joint approach to the programme)

Goal: 4 Universities, a single Course!
Integration and Quality (III)

- Non-reimbursable deposit requested to all selected students
- Student guides provided to students prior to their arrival
- Rights & duties regarding the scholarship clearly stated in a contract. Clear rules, e.g. students absenteeism or underperformance implies cancellation of grant / enrolment
- Lump sum of € 2500 advanced at students arrival
- Signature of attendance sheets during lectures and independent work (the students stay at the University a minimum of 8 hours/day)
- Definition of clear and common learning outcomes
Integration and Visibility

- Programme logo and attractive website
- Common thesis cover (uniformity + visibility + dissemination)
- Free on-line access to dissertations (in progress)
- Information of the new graduates disseminated to relevant European companies (European students only)
ECTS Grading Scale (I)

- Different (and inevitable) academic cultures among partners make necessary the use of a “common” grading scale.
- ECTS grading scale allows to establish a relationship between any two national grading scales.
### ECTS Grading Scale (II)

- Table adopted during the 1st edition:

<table>
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(to be further improved, based on a statistic treatment)
Degree issuing

- Double degree issued by the first and second host universities
- Diploma Supplements edited in English + national language
- Diploma Supplements of all partners contain a common description of the programme (including the mobility path and reference to the Erasmus Mundus programme)
Final Remarks (I)

Plus points:

- Very good support of international offices from partners
- Previously existing and strong partnership between partners. No difficulties with finances, legal aspects, absence of reply / non-performing partners, insufficient quality, MoU, etc.
- No difficulties with the students or lecturers with English language
- Fantastic teaching experience: Students with group spirit, highly motivated, 100% of the time in the fully dedicated students’ room, program perceived as a “one in a life time experience”

Challenges:

- Legal complexity (e.g. restrictive rules for programs in Portugal and Italy, “State exam” in Czech Republic)
- High administrative costs (visa, lodging, etc.)
- Increase the contribution / value of scholars
- Enormous differences of living cost in Europe
- Fully new teaching material to be prepared (due to contents and language)
- Huge coordination efforts in the first year
It is worthwhile!