CHARM-EU (CHALLENGE-DRIVEN, ACCESSIBLE, RESEARCH-BASED AND MOBILE EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY)

DELIVERABLE D2.4 – CHARM-EU: HANDBOOK – CHARM-EU'S INNOVATIVE GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT MODEL

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AQU: Catalan University Quality Agency

CHARM-EIGHT: CHallenge-driven, Accessible, Reasearch-based, Mobile European University – Expansion, Inter-institutional campus, Governance, Higher education, Transformation

CHARM-EU: CHallenge-driven, Accessible, Reasearch-based, Mobile European University

EA: European Approach

EC: European Commission

ECTS: European Credit Transfer and accumulation System

EHEA: European Higher Education Area

ELTE: Eötvös Loránd University

ESG: European Standards and Guidelines

EU: European Union

EUI: European University Initiative

EUniQ: Developing a European Approach for Comprehensive QA of (European) University Networks

GSC: Graduate Studies Committee

HAC: Hungarian Accreditation Committee

HCERES: High Council for Evaluation of Research and Higher Education

HEI: Higher Education Institution

HR: Human Resources

HRM: Human Resource Management

IT: Information Technologies

JAPC: Junior Academic Promotions Committee

JVAO: Joint Virtual Administrative Office

KCT: Knowledge Creating Team

MGCS: Master's Global Challenges for Sustainability

NREN: National Research and Education Network

NVAO: Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders

PLO: Programme Learning Outcome

QA: Quality Assurance

QQI: Qualifications and Quality Assurance Ireland

SAPC: Senior Academic Promotions Committee

SDG: Sustainable Development Goals

SG: Subgroup

SP: Student Policy

TCD: Trinity College Dublin

TORCH: Transformation Open Responsible research and innovation through CHARM-EU

TRIPLE: Team, Research, Impact, Professional performance, Leadership, Education

UB: University of Barcelona

UM: University of Montpellier

UU: University of Utrecht

WP: Work Package

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: HANDBOOK – CHARM-EU's INNOVATIVE GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT MODEL

CHARM-EU is an alliance that was created in 2019 in response to the European University Initiative launched by the European Commission. Five universities (University of Barcelona, Trinity College Dublin, Utrecht University, Eötvös Loránd University Budapest and University of Montpellier) gathered to create a Challenge-driven, Accessible, Research-Based and Mobile European University. The purpose of this new European University is to become a world example of the best of the European education tradition, offering a intercultural, inclusive, flexible, student-centred learning experience to citizens from the entire world, and at the same time to serve as test bed for innovation and a mean to improve our universities.

In order to achieve its objectives, the first step to working together was to build a shared governance and to include this alliance within the existing governance structures of the partner universities. To address this issue the project planned for a governance work package, Future governance and management design (WP2) which mission was to build the organization structure that suited the purpose and to design policies and procedures to create a framework for the alliance to work together and to be able to expand and scale its activities.

This deliverable 2.4 Handbook on CHARM-EU's innovative governance and management model is being implemented as the Governance of CHARM-EU. Furthermore, it was designed as a way to disseminate its model for other alliances to better understand the stakes of the governance and management and to make the model transferable. This handbook is designed to present the challenges faced by CHARM-EU when thinking and building a shared governance. It introduces the solutions and areas of improvement identified by the Governance WP team, and identifies the issues that require external development, such as the creation of a new statute for a legal entity.

> The Governance WP was divided into subgroups to enable experts to tackle specific issues from their field. Each subgroup was responsible for a chapter in this Handbook to deal with their topic:
>
> 2.1. Governance, autonomy and legal aspects
>
> 2.2. Resources management, financing and sustainability
>
> 2.3. Staffing
>
> 2.4. Services and IT
>
> 2.5. Quality and accreditation

In this Handbook, you will first find the definition of the concepts and introduction of the context for European Universities. Second, you will find a detailed presentation of CHARM-EU through its values,

CHARM-EU

CHallenge-driven
Accessible
Research-based
Mobile
European
University

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of the European Union

mission and vision. Finally, you will learn about the procedures and policies that were written by the different subgroups. In this last part, you will understand the challenges and thinking related to each specific topic and the solutions that were used.

This Handbook is a result of the WP2 for the CHARM-EU first three-year work plan, it aims at describing the work on Governance and sets the basis for the development and expansion of the alliance.

1. Introduction

Context

This Handbook on CHARM-EU's innovative governance and management model arises from the European University Initiative (EUI) from the European Commission.

In 2017, the French President, Emmanuel Macron, in his Sorbonne speech proposed the creation of European Universities to build strong networks, encourage multilingualism, pedagogical innovation and excellence in Research.

Following this speech, the European Commission launched the European University Initiative. They outlined a vision to promote European values and identity and to revolutionise the quality and competitiveness of European higher education.

The European Commission selected 41 European Universities Alliances between the first call in 2019 and the second in 2020. A new call opened in for 2022 to enable the Alliances to expand and deepen their cooperation. 16 of the first 17 Universities will be funded for the next four years, and four new ones have been selected. 6 additional alliances got a quality certificate as they were assessed over 81 but could not get the funding. At the moment of closing this handbook, the call for the deepening phase of the 24 second call alliances is open. The objective is to have around 60 alliances at the end of the period.

The European Universities are testing new models of cooperation, for that they developed their own governance models to organise management, decision making and day-to-day functioning.

The governance can be defined as "the manner in which power and authority is exercised in organisations in the allocation and management of resources". It relies on three main dimensions:

- **Authority**: who has a voice in making decisions?
- **Decision-making**: how are decisions made?
- **Accountability**: who is accountable?

The governance of a strategic alliance comes with some key challenges such as the implementation of joint initiatives despite diverging national and institutional regulations, laws, as well as internal organisations, processes and practices, the multicultural and multilingual environment, the mobilisation of stakeholders with different perceptions, the financial sustainability and the design of agile and legible decision-making processes.

Strategic alliances in the Higher Education sector have to face specific challenges such as representative democracy versus organisational effectiveness, integrated versus dual management structures, external versus internal influence in institutional decision-making or centralisation versus decentralisation in universities that are increasingly autonomous from the State.

The designing of an effective governance and management model for an alliance that brings together a variety of institutions with strongly diverging national regulations and internal practices is a huge challenge.

The building of the governance model for CHARM-EU alliance was entrusted to a Work Package (WP) dedicated to Governance. This Handbook is a result of their work.

Objectives of this Handbook

The objectives of this handbook are threefold:

- To state the way of functioning of our organisation;
- To serve as a *user's manual* for other institutions interested in replicating the CHARM-EU model of governance and management, in particular European Universities;
- To communicate our learning experience.

Methodological approach

Subgroups work

Keeping the original objective in mind: '*to propose a model that allows tackling shared problems by proposing a flexible and efficient governance and management scheme capable of anticipating and overcoming potential/usual barriers and risks through innovative mechanism*' [1] and considering the lessons learned in the Best practices Report entitled *First steps towards an innovative governance and management model for a new type of Alliance. Concepts, challenges and lessons learned from the higher education sector and beyond*[2], five subgroups of field experts were created within WP 2 Governance in order to address each specific area of governance and management.

All in all, five subgroups corresponding to five major "areas" were implemented, with each partner university acting as a subgroup leader for one (or more) particular topic:

1) Governance, autonomy and legal aspects (originally led by Utrecht University, taken over by the University of Montpellier in May 2021);
2) Resources management, financing and sustainability (led by the University of Barcelona);
3) Staffing (led by the University of Montpellier);
4) Services and Information Technologies (led by Eötvös Loránd University);
5) Quality and accreditation (led by Trinity College Dublin).

Each subgroup focused on a particular aspect of CHARM-EU's future innovative governance and management model, thus building the model in its specific area. The subgroup leaders reported to the WP 2 core team every two weeks, presenting the work achieved and the content produced so far. The different parts were then integrated in order to form the CHARM-EU future model of governance and management in a first draft (Deliverable 2.2). The plan was to design the model, test as many features of the model as possible and refine it (Deliverable 2.4).

In accordance with the original application, the following topics were assigned to the six subgroups:

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[1] Quote from the CHARM-EU proposal (2019)

[2] cf. CHARM-EU deliverable 2.1. 2020. *Best Practices Report. First steps towards an innovative governance and management model for a new type of Alliance. Concepts, challenges and lessons learned from the higher education sector and beyond.*

1. **Subgroup WP2.1: Governance, autonomy and legal aspects** (UU then UM)

This SG should describe thoroughly the future status of the Alliance, encompassing:

- Autonomy and cooperation;
- Organisation chart (governance structure);
- Inter-university interactions (respecting the legal basis of each member);
- Consequences of a separate legal entity (and how it would relate to each university member);
- Mechanism of expanding the alliance in the future (strategic planning and management process).

2. **Subgroup WP2.2: Resources management, financing and sustainability** (UB)

This SG deals with the financial management and sustainability modelling:

- Funding income model;
- Pricing (including fees and services accessibility);
- Scholarships and grants policy and other income;
- Financial flow management between the full partners;
- Infrastructural costs (especially IT support);
- Partnerships with other entities.

3. **Subgroup WP2.3: Staffing** (UM)

This SG tackles the challenges linked to staffing and Human Resources Management (HRM) within the alliance:

- Staff resourcing and provisioning/assignment;
- Professional development;
- Work conditions;
- Recognition and evaluation.

4. **Subgroup WP2.4: Services & IT** (ELTE)

This SG addresses the issues and solutions to allow for consistent services for the staff and users of the alliance:

- Joint admission and registration processes;
- Student support services catalogue and delivery;
- Library;
- Virtual access to campus services;

- IT Services (excluding teaching and learning environment).

5. Subgroup WP2.5: Quality and accreditation (TCD)

This SG establishes a standard framework for the procedures, processes and quality of the alliance:

- Initial Accreditation Process for the CHARM-EU Joint Masters Programme;
- CHARM-EU Quality Policies and Procedures that align with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG);
- Quality processes and quality assurance as measures against indicators and results;
- Quality improvement and enhancement plans based on outcomes of internal quality assurance.

The Quality Subgroup created a template for the writing of policies (see Annex 1). It was communicated to all the subgroups to be used for the writing of the policies. It requires to precisely define the scope of each subgroup's field, problem statement and a set of objectives. This preliminary content was approved by all five university rectors.

Guidelines to using this Handbook

One can get inspiration from the methodological approach described above in order to design their own policies and procedures, but it is also possible to duplicate the very CHARM-EU policies as those were specifically built in a spirit of transferability.

2. About CHARM-EU

2.1. Mission and vision

CHARM-EU (Challenge-driven, Accessible, Research-Based and Mobile European University) is an initiative formed by five research-based universities (University of Barcelona, Trinity College Dublin, Utrecht University, Eötvös Loránd University Budapest and University of Montpellier) which **was created to become a world example of good practice to increase the quality, international competitiveness and attractiveness of the European Higher Education landscape.**

The diversity of educational systems but also differing geographical, regional, cultural, lingual, economic and historical perspectives/challenges of the five CHARM-EU members contribute to consolidate the university of the future revealing our common goals on the path towards a more sustainable and inclusive future.

CHARM-EU offers a learning experience that, having mobility and inclusivity as its core, is based on the implementation of a transformative approach to program and curricula design combining the best of the different European traditions in structuring curricula through Knowledge Creating Teams, with a flexible, skill-oriented modulation structure. Leveraging the synergies in the knowledge square and following the strong interdisciplinary research and innovation capacities of the consortium members, CHARM-EU will become a decisive partner in solving the policy issues within the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that the EU and its Member States are currently facing.

CHARM-EU delivers an innovative, challenge-driven, student-centred, and self-directed teaching model that integrates research, teaching, innovation and enquire within and across the disciplines, open to the whole world, which can become a valuable precedent for all Universities in Europe. This model envisages a European higher education campus utilizing the latest modern technology in the service of accessibility and internationalisation.

The mission of CHARM-EU is to promote the common European values emphasizing the richness and diversity of the European tradition, strengthening its external window and focusing strategically on trying to rethink the role of Europe in the world as it faces one of the main global challenges of the 21st century: Reconciling Humanity with the Planet. Ultimately, CHARM-EU will be an ambitious and innovative example of the fundamental common values that are at the core of the university history in the framework of European plurality. CHARM-EU is committed to increase the quality of education, research, and international competitiveness of the European Higher Education landscape. CHARM-EU is put to the service of the European values of freedom, academic autonomy, and human rights[3].

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[3] CHARM-EU (2019, February 25). *Mission & Vision statement.* CHARM-EU website. https://www.charm-eu.eu/toolkit/charm-eu-vision-and-mission

2.2. CHARM values

CHARM-EU's vision is to have an innovative university model, which embraces the change needed to meet society's challenges, breaking down borders and linking local and global solutions, rethinking the role of the European universities in the world.

CHARM-EU aims for a challenge-driven university, creating flexible, student-led educational programmes focused on identifying and solving specific challenges in close collaboration with the broader community.
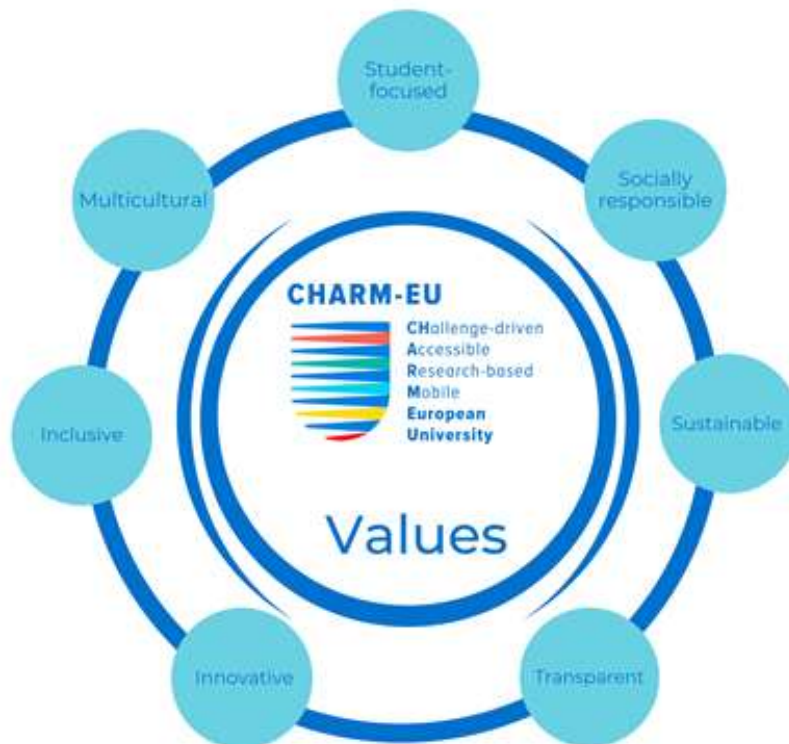
Figure 2-1 CHARM-EU Values

Student-focused

Students are the core of the CHARM-EU initiative. It is made for them, and partially by them, with the constant involvement of a student body in the working groups of the alliance. The pedagogical model is made to offer them a brand-new way to learn in order to face the upcoming challenges of the society.

Socially responsible

CHARM-EU is meant to have an impact on society and is driven by this challenge. From the administrative and governing structure to the pedagogical model and the curricula design, everything is made to have a positive impact and make our society go forward. By creating a sustainable and

replicable model, CHARM-EU aims at initiating a global movement and changing the European education landscape.

Sustainable

Sustainability is the first key challenge when talking about the future. The main reason being this is not only a challenge for the future, but it also is an ongoing concern and needs to be addressed as of today. CHARM-EU aims at being a model of sustainability on every aspect: economically, socially, and environmentally. Global sustainability is an absolute prerequisite for a global impact on the long run.

Transparent

CHARM-EU has nothing to hide. On the contrary, the objective is for the recipe for success to be widely known, shared and reproduced, in order to initiate a global change. Achieving this ambitious goal requires transparency both on the economic side and on our unique pedagogical process.

Innovative

The European University concept is innovative in itself, but we are taking it to the next step. We are offering a brand new pedagogical, challenge-based approach with a unique curricula design and online solutions. Students will build their own path to the diploma through by choosing their flexible phase, and then be a force by bringing forward ideas and challenges through a capstone phase. An innovative model, resulting in even more innovative students.

Inclusive

CHARM-EU is meant for everyone, regardless of nationality, gender, personal situation, CHARM-EU will welcome anyone and provide any specific arrangement needed to guarantee everyone the same chances of success. CHARM-EU strongly supports the idea that diversity is an unmatched strength. That is why our model encourages and promotes diversity, equal opportunities and tolerance through actions conducted by a dedicated working group.

Intercultural

CHARM-EU was founded as the alliance of 5 universities from 5 different countries and was then expanded to 8 institutions, each one with a different culture, identity and history. It also gathers international students from all around the world and offers a collaborative model and various mobility opportunities, both for staff/academics and students. This mix of diversity and interaction creates an intercultural environment, which is a unique chance to learn and benefit from each other.

3. Policies, procedures and expected results per strategic area

CHARM-EU governance principles

At the time of the initial application, all five partners agreed that the long-term governance model developed in the frame of CHARM-EU will be based on the following fundamental principles:

- **Transparency**: clarity and public accountability of decision making.
- **Financial sustainability**: in order to grow, CHARM-EU must be financially sustainable for both the entity itself (whether a separate legal entity or not) and economically viable for students of CHARM-EU.
- **Participation**: participation of all the wider community involved in and associated with the CHARM-EU initiative. Their participation can take different forms, such as providing them the opportunity to give their opinion and make recommendations or, depending on the subject matter, participating in the actual decision-making process.
- **Engagement**: the project will need active hands-on engagement of representatives from different levels of the CHARM-EU alliance working on the project together with their colleagues of other universities (e.g. teaching staff, financial management staff, student services desks, quality offices, etc.).
- **Equity and inclusiveness**: equal opportunities, ensuring that all groups, especially the most vulnerable, have the opportunity to participate in the process.
- **Flexibility and adaptability**: to ensure resilience and agility in a changing educational landscape.
- **Socially and sustainably driven**: sensitivity to the needs of the entire community, seeking a balance between the different interests of the agents involved and endorsing sustainability.

3.1. Governance, autonomy and legal aspects

Scope

CHARM European University Governance is seen as the decision-making bodies, rules and procedures serving the development and management of the institution's strategy. It also defines the underlying roles and responsibilities of both individuals and groups of the organisation and how all of these integrate with the partner universities' governing bodies, roles and procedures. The governance also establishes the links between the political sphere and the administrative sphere.

Problem statement

The creation of a shared governance for CHARM-EU requires to analyse the diverse European context and existing models. The European Union contains a variety of rules, regulations and processes. They vary greatly from one region to another. Higher Education Institutions have different governance structures and processes across Europe. To deliver on its mission, CHARM-EU must develop an internal governance model that includes the diverse university community and lead to structures and processes that support efficient decision-making and flexible, sustainable management and that integrates smoothly with the partner Governance models

The main aspects identified are based on four essential premises:

1. The European Commission has not yet clearly defined the scope and expectation it intends to give to the creation of a strategic framework for ambitious and seamless transnational cooperation between higher education institutions in Europe. In particular, it remains to be seen and must be clarified to what extent the option for a European degree or the possibility of creating a new legal entity will eventually be accepted and under what conditions by the Member States, the Council and the European Parliament.
2. The currently selected European Universities and their future developments must necessarily start from the association of universities from different Member States of the European Union, which implies the existence of different national systems and laws regulating the organisation and functioning of universities and the whole public service of higher education.
3. Education is a Member State competence with no delegation at all in the European Governance (a difference with Research and Innovation that has some).
4. The universities in the Member States of the European Union, which have partnered in the European Universities Initiative and those which will partner in the future developments of this initiative have and will continue to have different cultures, traditions and operating mechanisms, specific to each institution and to the university system in each Member State. This is also a common European heritage that must be preserved.

A genuine European University could be a new entity which, at European level, can directly deliver European university degrees, be eligible to participate in the Erasmus programme, be able to participate in calls for research, innovation and development under the Horizon Europe programme, have a common European-wide system of quality assurance and evaluation and a single funding model which also makes it possible to obtain European funds. Or a different model. This will be seen in the near future.

The difficulties and obstacles in relation to governance and the legal aspects of creating a new separate legal entity that will have to be overcome and that have been identified are the following:

− The incorporation into European Union law of a new separate legal entity, created through the association or alliance of universities, which can directly deliver university degrees that are recognised in the Member States.
− The incorporation into the national law of each Member State of the separate legal entities created through the association or alliance of universities.
− The fit of the governance and governing bodies of a new separate legal entity with the governance, functioning and governing bodies of the partner universities.
− The dilemma between taking advantage of the possible use of existing national and European statutes, such as the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) - with important limitations as regards to the objectives pursued by the European Universities - or betting on a new legal instrument and a new type of legal entity adapted to the academic, scientific and research needs of the European Universities.

Regarding the option for a new separate legal entity, and from a more political perspective, there is also another order of problems:

− Any initiative for a new separate legal entity that is launched should come from the universities themselves and in no case may it overlap and/or dilute existing university institutions, which have their own brand in the European and international university context.
− Any initiative for a new separate legal entity should ensure that the presence of participating universities in international rankings is not diminished or reduced by their membership of a European University.
− Any initiative for a new separate legal entity that is launched should ensure that the heads of the various universities (rector, president, chancellor or provost), whatever their system of election or appointment, will also be the heads of the new entity.

Objective

It would be essential to examine and develop each of the six key recommendations of the Best Practices Report presented to the Rectors Assembly of the CHARM-EU European University Alliance, dated from 26 October 2020, entitled *First steps towards an innovative governance and management model for a new type of Alliance. Concepts, challenges and lessons learned from the higher education sector and beyond*[4]:

1. Build on the existing governance of the alliance's member institutions;
2. Adopt a 'living strategy' approach;
3. Build on the partners' complementarity of skills and knowledge;
4. Carefully balance inclusiveness and flexibility;
5. Focus on financial sustainability to ensure long-term success;
6. Facilitate networking among the member institutions' communities and support services.

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[4] cf. CHARM-EU deliverable 2.1. 2020. *Best Practices Report. First steps towards an innovative governance and management model for a new type of Alliance. Concepts, challenges and lessons learned from the higher education sector and beyond.*

Expected results

The specific expected results in terms of governance, autonomy and legal aspects are the following:

1. To have in the short term, and to be tested, an innovative, flexible, joint and stable governance structure that clearly and simply integrates transdisciplinarity and the involvement of students, academics and external stakeholders (business and civil society), ensuring that CHARM-EU remains socially driven and innovative and flexible, but strongly connected to the governance of CHARM-EU member universities.
2. To determine in the medium term, and in parallel with the operational functioning of the first teaching offer that CHARM-EU started from September 2021 - the Master's Degree in Global Challenges to Sustainability - whether the ambitions of European Universities can be realised within the current legal framework, identifying the legal changes that need to be made, at the level of the European Union, the Member States and the universities themselves.
3. To draw up for the medium and long term a strategic planning cycle that includes the timetable and structured path of decision-making in order to develop a new, innovative, flexible, joint and stable governance structure, with the participation of the member institutions, that will configure a genuine European University as a new entity that can directly deliver European university degrees, be eligible to participate in the Erasmus programme, be able to participate in calls for research, innovation and development under the Horizon Europe programme, have a common system at the level of quality assurance and evaluation and a single funding model that will also make it possible to obtain European funds.
4. To ensure that students are consulted according to the procedures and that student needs are respected in all processes;

Rationale

The WP 2.1 aims at being able to reflect the multiple differentiation of legal systems and organisational traditions and cultures in a new - and perhaps unique - model of governance, while taking into account that this diversity - legal, organisational and cultural – is, at the same time, a common European heritage that should not be lost either.

Results

Policies or procedures

The Governance WP was assigned the task to think and develop a governance model, to establish the processes and organisation for the alliance. No specific procedures or policies resulted from the Governance, autonomy and legal aspect subgroup. However, they built and redacted the *Governance model - Terms of Reference*[5], describing the different bodies, the ways they interact, the processes to make decisions and the staff involved in CHARM-EU. The specific procedures and policies were designed by the relevant subgroups and will be detailed later on in this document. The expected strategic planning cycle including a timetable and structured path of decision-making was not covered by the WP2.

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[5] CHARM-EU (2022, October). *Governance model - Terms of Reference*.

Designing a new governance model

There are various steps to achieving a sustainable governance model, to move from the governance of the project to the governance of the alliance.

During this first three years while building the alliance, we used the Project governance. The first step was the creation of the Rectors' Assembly, the Project Management Team (PMT) and WPs. This is how the governance of the project was organised with WPs reporting to the PMT and the strategic decisions being taken by the Rectors' Assembly.

The intention was to create the model, test as many characteristics as possible during these three years and refine the model. However, the pandemic delayed considerably the Best Practices report (entitled *First steps towards an innovative governance and management model for a new type of Alliance. Concepts, challenges and lessons learned from the higher education sector and beyond)* and the definition of the global Governance model. Therefore, the strategy of development changed. The priority was to develop the Boards and the Policies that could be tested with the Master implementation and after, create the Governance and Management model. This forced change has been a great success, as the Governance and Management model has been developed base on the experience of what has worked and as and a natural evolution of CHARM-EU way of doing. The steps were:

1. The first step, was to analyse the different European Legal Entities and define the guiding principles of the Governance partners wanted for CHARM-EU, even if they don't exist in on legal entity today (see Legal requirements – Comparison of Different types of EU Separate Legal entities[6]), and to make a first draft of the organisation chart.
2. The second step was the creation of the Master's and of the necessary structures to support it such as Academic Board, the Admission Board and the, and the Joint Virtual Administrative Office[7]. These complementary bodies also reported to the Project Management Team and were subject to the strategic decisions of the Rectors' Assembly.
3. The third step was the thinking of long-term objectives and the integration of the previous elements in the governance.
4. Then, we designed a governance model to achieve by designing a new organisation structure, new bodies, their composition, decision-making and frequency of meetings and the positions needed to support this structure. As an example, the support units are the natural transition from the work packages.
5. Once the wanted governance model was designed and approved by all members, we co-created an implementation plan to put it in place in the coming years.
6. The final step is the implementation of the designed model and the continuous evaluation to adapt and update it based on the needs of the alliance that will be done from 2023 onwards

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[6] cf. Annex 22 *Legal requirements – Comparison of Different types of EU Separate Legal entities*

[7] cf. Annex 10 *Joint Virtual Administrative Office : Roles and Responsibilities*

In this part, we will develop the main aspects of the work of this subgroup.

Autonomy and cooperation

The governance model designed comprises a shared governance, with bodies that are fully dedicated to CHARM-EU's functioning. This shared governance is the basis of all the cooperation between the different partners. All universities are represented in the shared governance through a voice in the Executive and Strategic Boards, but also through participation in all the different activities and level of the alliance. This governance model was designed collaboratively based on these years of experience and then approved by the rectors and vice-rectors of each institution. This model is the result of a strong cooperation and its implementation will allow for an even deeper level of cooperation through determined bodies and processes including all partners, staff and students.

The second part of this governance model is the integration of CHARM-EU within each institution's own governance. Each partner university remains a distinct entity from the alliance, they keep their own strategy, programmes and identity. They hold the ability to decide to what level they want to involve their university in the alliance by being able to make the decisions through the participation of the rectors and vice-rectors in the Strategic Board. The scope of decision of the Strategic Board includes:

- General strategy and annual work plans;
- Integration of a new member;
- Exclusion of an existing member;
- New programmes and projects;
- Finance and budgets;
- Internal conflicts resolution (not resolved at the lower levels).

Ex-officio members take the decisions by consensus and if needed, by qualified majority. They have a right of veto on key issues regarding finance and budgets in case they don't have the approval from their institution. In case of disagreement, there is a mediation procedure. The involvement in the decisions and the agreed process on decision-making enable partner universities to remain autonomous.

The designed governance model allows for a deep level of cooperation between the university while also keeping their autonomy and having a final say on the strategical and financial matters.

Organisation chart

The governance of CHARM-EU was created around the project and needs to evolve to be organised around the Alliance. In order to respond to the needs of CHARM-EU, the governance has to be flat, flexible, bottom-up and allow the innovators take the lead. It requires both a common structure and local ones in the member universities, and they need to be strongly connected and operational at home level. Apart from these main characteristics, CHARM-EU is a learning organisation as part of its test-bed mission and it will be implemented in the same project cycle as other CHARM-EU activities: design, implement, evaluate and improve.

The new governance model is based on the experience of the past three years in the project, what worked well, and adapted to the needs of the Alliance. The created model allows for innovation within the Alliance through the Knowledge Creating Teams. The KCTs will make proposals and work closely

with the CHARM-EU operational boards. The thematic support offices with full-time or part-time staff located in the different universities allow flexibility, and provide inter-institutional and intercultural diversity by adapting to specific needs and secure the visible representation of the Alliance in each member university and the continuous, comprehensive and equal representation of each member university in the joint operation of the Alliance.

The governance model and positions were designed with the objective to respect the core values of CHARM-EU. The following criteria were carefully taken into consideration while building this model:

1. Flexible, operative, ready to handle emergency situations (unforeseen circumstances, changes within the teaching staff or with the students, external events, etc.);

2. Mainstreaming intercultural atmosphere (in the virtual sphere);

3. Sustainability;

4. Incorporating good practices of partner institutions.

This organisation ensures a multicultural environment and embeddedness of the knowledge of the Alliance members. The model is based on four main bodies:

- The Strategic Board, as the highest board of CHARM-EU, takes the strategic and financial decisions based on consensus, which enables the common strategy to be consistent with the members' individual institutional strategies.

- The Executive Board takes the day-to-day management decisions for the effective decision-making, implementation and follow-up of CHARM-EU activities and each Director ensures that the decision making and resourcing in the partner universities is aligned

- The Academic Council, already existing under the name Academic Board, will act as advisory for the education and research decisions as well as for upholding the connection with the KCTs, and in charge of the day-to-day academic follow-up of the programmes, with clear division of roles between the Executive Board and the Academic Council. Thus, it also occupies a central place in the governance.

- The Student Council enables the governance to be student-focused. The Student Council will receive the agendas of the meetings for the Academic Council and Executive Board and can attend these meetings.

All the boards take decisions based on a consensus, when there is no agreement, the issue is escalated to the higher board. Cases that don't follow these rules will be detailed in the description of the specific board.

The objective is to start the implementation by the end of 2022 and fully implement the governance model by the end of 2023. There will be a governance review every year through a report, which will be used to continuously improve the governance model and adapt it to the needs of the alliance.

The steps to be taken for the implementation of this new model are the following:

- Step 1: detail the missions, roles, composition and chairs, decision-making and procedures of each board and staff member, as well as the terms of reference of full-time CHARM-EU staff members;

- Step 2: development and validation of the funding of this model;

- Step 3: development of the local CHARM-EU structures: Rectors, Vice-rectors, Directors and Managers;

- Step 4: constitution of the boards and recruitment of the required staff;

- Step 5: pilot test of the structure processes by the end of 2022;

- Step 6: adjustment as needed according to the pilot test;

- Step 7: consolidation of the new governance model (up and running);

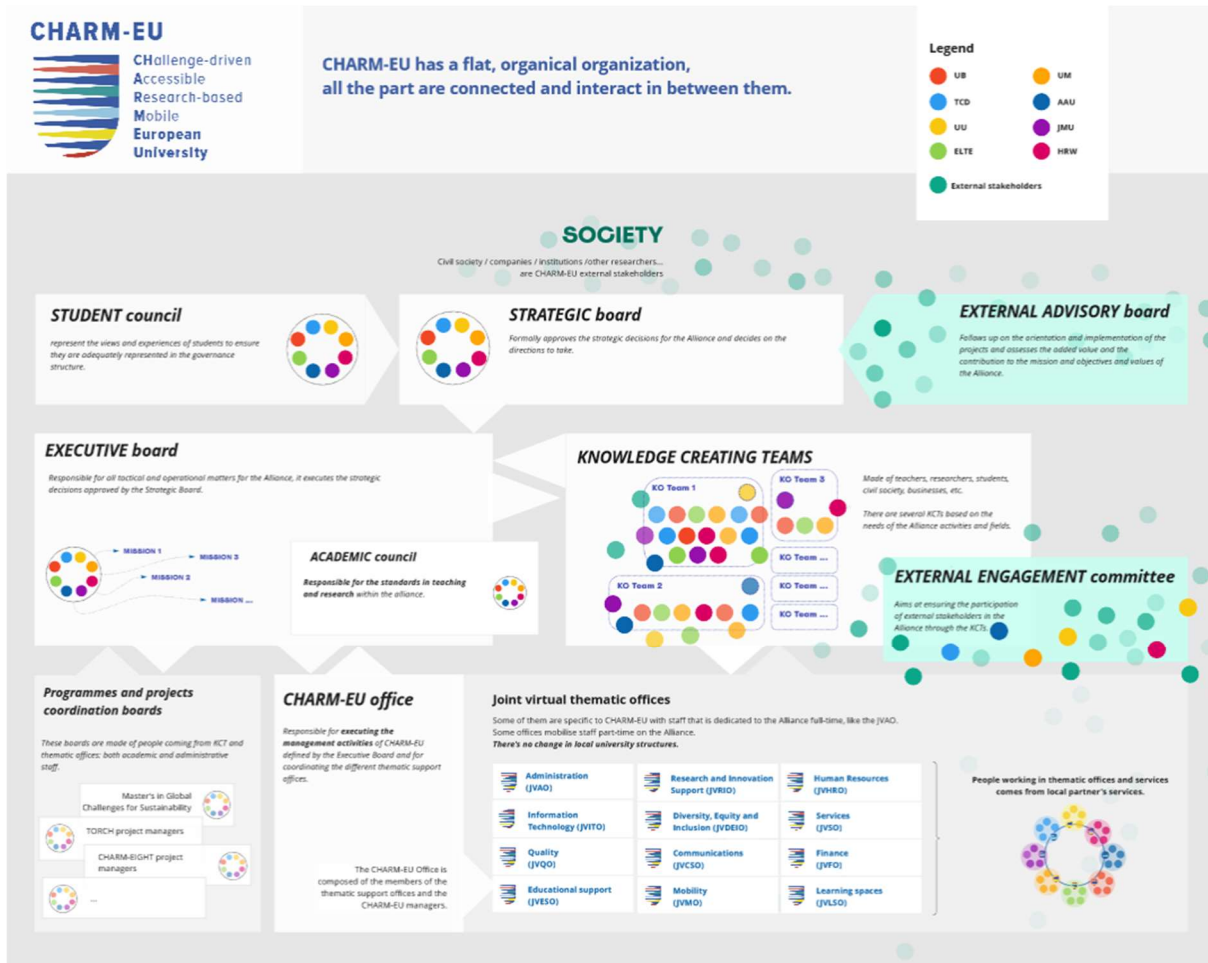- Step 8. Systematic evaluation and improvement of governance model.

Figure 3-1 CHARM-EU Organisation Chart

	Strategic Board	Student Council	Executive Board	Academic Council	CHARM-EU Office
Role	Formally approve strategic decisions and decide on the directions to take	Represent the views and experiences of students, ensure their representation in the governance, discuss and provide feedback on decisions and activities of the alliance, prepare a report for Strategic Board meetings	Responsible for all tactical and operational matters, execute the strategic decisions, responsible for the implementation of the different actions by the thematic support offices and the management of the projects	Responsible for the standards in teaching and research within the alliance, oversee the academic matters and quality follow-up of all joint and common education and research activities, adise the Executive Board about the relevance of the new proposals, provide links with the KCTs	Responsible for executing the management activities of CHARM-EU defined by the Executive Board and for coordinating the different thematic support offices
Composition	Ex-officio members: - Rectors of the member universities - in rare occasions they can be represented by the Vice-rector No voting members: - Alliance Secretary General - Chair of the Executive Board	- One student from each member university elected by the student representatives from their home university - One student per member University participating in the CHARM-EU programmes - One alumni Students are appointed for a maximum of 2 academic years	- One CHARM-EU Director per member institution - Alliance Secretary General CHARM-EU Managers attend the meetings Can be invited when needed: students, KCT members, support staff or project representatives	- CHARM-EU Academic Director - Local Academic Directors (except the one represented by the CHARM-EU Academic Director) - One student - Chief of the JVAO	- CHARM-EU Managers - Heads of thematic support offices
Chair	One of the Rectors Rotation every 6 months	Chair elected by the Student Council Rotation every 6 months	One of the CHARM-EU Directors Rotation every 6 months	CHARM-EU Academic Director Rotation every 2 academic years	One of the CHARM-EU Managers Rotation every 6 months
Decision-making	Consensus Qualified majority if needed with a right of veto on finance and budgets	Consensus Two-third qualified majority if needed	Consensus Strategic Board is responsible to find an agreement if the Executive Board doesn't reach consensus	Consensus If needed, the matter will be taken to the Executive Board	
Frequency of meetings	Twice a year	Every two months	Twice a month	Once a month	Once a month

Figure 3-2 Description of CHARM-EU main boards

Inter-university teamwork

CHARM-EU has encouraged inter-university teamwork throughout the compositions of the teams (WPs, PMT) and the various meetings, normally in weekly bases. The different universities interacted through the WPs and Project Management's meetings. Indeed, in order to collaborate and communicate within the alliance, these teams were composed of members of all partner universities that has the partner knowledge on the matter. The intensity of the teamwork and the online tools and dynamics due to pandemics helped to build a well-integrated organisation.

In the designed governance model, inter-university interactions will almost be seamless. The different boards and the support teams will comprise members of the different universities. Each board or team will work closely with their counterparts from the other institutions. They will work jointly and remotely through digital tools. Throughout the project, we have used tools such as a SharePoint, Teams and emails, in the future we might need to develop specific digital solutions for the needs of the alliance.

In order to create a sense of community and to keep the members of the alliance informed, the alliance relies on different communication channels such as newsletters (internal or addressed to the Master's students) and articles on the website, they keep the members of the alliance – staff and students – informed. Internal communication may need to be improved and adapted to the specific needs of each board and entity within the alliance.

To make the interactions tangible, the alliance organises weekly on-line meetings and some face-to-face meetings through mobility and events. The alliance gathers the members once a year for an annual conference, the stakeholders through regular KCT meetings and some one-off events. These events are the opportunity to bring together the members and stakeholders in-person and to reinforce the inter-university interactions to benefit the collaboration. Staff mobility is also encouraged whenever possible and some meetings for dispersed teams to meet as it was done with the Joint

Virtual Administrative Office[8] for example. In-person inter-university interactions are widely encouraged but the alliance also tends to pool these opportunities for efficiency and sustainability.

Consequences of a separate legal entity

The creation of a legal entity for the CHARM-EU alliance was considered early on since it could facilitate the sharing of resources and joint regulations. Indeed, a legal entity could enable the partners to better share financial resources, material or technical resources such as an IT platform for example and it would also be a game changer in terms of human resources by enabling CHARM-EU to recruit its own staff. Besides the practical effects of a legal entity on the management of the alliance, it would strengthen the commitment between partner universities and the long-term governance and the image of the alliance.

At the beginning of the project, the different existing legal entities at the EU level were compared through examples of other strategic alliances[9]. Among these models, the ones that seemed the most suggestive and also responded to quite similar characteristics are the European Economic Interest Groupings (EEIG) and the European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). The European Commission itself, as early as its 2020 Communication, suggested the EGTC as a possible model for the future legal entity for alliances10. However, on the one hand, the ambition of the European Commission and the long-term perspective it envisages for these European Universities is still not clearly defined; on the other hand, the model would need to be adapted to the needs of the European Universities and, moreover, it should be done with the necessary flexibility as not all the alliance has an exact mission and vision. In any case, the future creation of a hypothetical separate legal entity for European Universities could be a turning point in the definition of this future of strong networks of universities, pedagogically innovative and excellent in research. [11]

During the project and as a result of the analysis of the existing legal entities, it was decided to fully implement the Governance and Management model of the alliance first and decide later on the legal entity.

Mechanism of expanding the alliance in the future

During the last year of this Erasmus+ project, the CHARM-EU alliance applied for a new call with the CHARM-EIGHT project. The objective is to expand and strengthen the alliance in the future by deepening, intensifying and expanding the effectiveness of CHARM-EU in advancing the Higher Education transformation process. The expansion of the alliance can be characterised by the extension

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[8] cf. Annex 10 *Joint Virtual Administrative Office: Roles and Responsibilities*

[9] cf. CHARM-EU deliverable 2.1. 2020. *Best Practices Report. First steps towards an innovative governance and management model for a new type of Alliance. Concepts, challenges and lessons learned from the higher education sector and beyond.*

[10] It did so in COM(2020) 625 final, 30.9.2020, available at https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0625&from=ES, and on a future legal status for partnerships it reiterated this in COM(2022) 16 final, 18.1.2022, available at https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52022DC0016&from=EN.

[11] Cf. CHARM-EU deliverable 2.5. 2022. *White Paper on the Governance of European Universities: The case of CHARM-EU.*

of the innovative educational model, the building a multicultural environment and the expansion of external cooperation.

The governance model designed allows the alliance to grow and expand in the future, in terms of number of internal partners, of external partnerships but also in terms of activities such as new programmes and projects.

Through the CHARM-EIGHT proposal it is planned to involve three new partners in the alliance: Åbo Akademi University (Finland), Julius-Maximilians-University Würzburg (Germany), and Hochschule Ruhr West (Germany). The process of expanding in terms of members relies on the Strategic Board approval of their integration. The Boards will grow to include representatives of the different partners. The support staff will also evolve to include the new members and to offer the same services in each institution. The overall structure will remain the same and the composition of the boards and support teams will be flexible to adjust to changes in the alliance. The process of integration will be progressive to allow for better integration and organisation.

In order to extend the innovative educational model, the alliance will also expand by taking on new activities such as projects or academic programmes. These can be suggested by any member of CHARM-EU. The Strategic Board will then decide on taking on these new activities and the Executive Board will distribute the work and tasks associated to the new activities among the existing boards and teams.

Recommendations

The specific technical and regulatory barriers identified in the work of CHARM-EU WP2 lead to the following proposals to overcome them:

- It is possible to design a flexible Governance that integrates smoothly with partner Universities and not as a completely aside organisation.
- In terms of organisation structure, it is important to remain flexible, the designed governance will be tested and reviewed continuously in order to adapt to internal and external changes.
- Probably some legal changes should be made in European Union law and adjustments of the domestic law of the Member States to recognise European Universities as such, so they can operate (e.g. be able to submit project proposals directly under the Horizon Europe programme and other European research, innovation and development programmes).

3.2. Resources management, financing and sustainability

Scope

Universities and colleges, like most other not-for-profit enterprises, typically receive two sorts of funding. Unrestricted funds generally include government grants, tuition fees, and revenues from so-called ancillary services (e.g. student residence services, conference and catering services, campus bookstore sales). The level of public funding is usually linked to the size of the universities as measured by the number of students, the number of degrees, etc. as well as their absolute (or relative) performance (measured by the number of research outputs produced in a specific period or the increase in PhD members for example). Unrestricted funds can be used for any purpose consistent with the mission of the organization and are generally those used to pay operating costs. Apart from

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the tuition fees, universities can also seek external research funding from various sources in order to complement their core funding. Restricted funds can only be used for specific purposes, e. g. Capital (land, buildings, equipment) or Endowments. If the specific purpose is identified by a donor, the funds are considered to be externally restricted.

Expenses basically include employee salaries and benefits, other operating expenses as well as the costs of replacing infrastructure and investing in innovation to meet the future needs of students, employers and society.

Balancing incomes and expenditures in order to guarantee sustainable finances at the university level is not an easy task. The application of strategic financial planning tools is required in order to ensure that the university achieves its goals and objectives for both the short-term and long-term.

European Universities receive their funds from the European Union and they also cofinance with their own funds. Moreover, they might receive extra funds from tuition fees and grants from governments. There is a correlation between tuition fees and funding (see figures 3-2 and 3-3).

Figure 3-3 Funding growth and student enrolment growth 1[12]

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[12] Thomas Estermann, European University Association (2022, March). Presentation on *Sustainable funding for EUI alliances and related challenges* during the CHARM-EU Forum on European University Governance at the University of Montpellier.

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Figure 3-4 Funding growth and student enrolment growth 2[13]

Problem statement

Several issues have emerged in relation to finance management due to relevant differences between universities regarding the following points:

1. Differences in the funding schemes. In some cases, offering new undergraduate or postgraduate programmes imply an increase in the level of public funds received by the universities, while in others it does not directly affect the level of funding.
2. Differences in tuition fees. While in some countries postgraduate studies are also subsidised by governments, in other countries, students must fully cover the costs. Even among the firsts, there are substantial differences in the fees (from 240 € in France to 3.000 € in Spain). This creates an imbalance between students depending on their country of origin that requires the introduction of grants.
3. Differences in staff costs and in teaching hours. Although all universities in the project strictly follow the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), there are significant differences in the number of teaching hours between universities per ECTS (face-to-face hours). From a 20-hour study load per ECTS in Ireland, to a 30-hour study load per ECTS in Hungary and Spain and 28-hour per ECTS in the Netherlands. Teaching costs per ECTS vary between universities even if wages were equal across the participating institutions (variation between 60 €/h in UB to 115

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[13] Thomas Estermann, European University Association (2022, March). Presentation on *Sustainable funding for EUI alliances and related challenges* during the CHARM-EU Forum on European University Governance at the University of Montpellier.

€/h in UU). Adequate mechanisms should be introduced to compensate universities for the additional staff costs associated to their participation in new programmes.

4. **Common/shared resources.** There are some services to students or some infrastructures (such as IT or library services) that could be provided by the consortium as a single entity or that could be provided between the different members. Deciding between the two options and fixing the cost of the service to guarantee its sustainability and distributing the cost among the users in a fair way will not be easy.

5. **Budget sharing depending on the legal status.** In the absence of a shared legal entity, there has to be a specific plan to share the budget between the different entities of the alliance. On the contrary, if the alliance was to be a legal entity, how does its budget relates to the ones of the partner universities. The absence of a legal entity makes it difficult to share a budget.

6. **Financial sustainability.** Ensuring continuous projects to have regular funding, find EU, national and regional subsidies, private funding, etc.

Objective

The main objective is to ensure financial sustainability in the long term and clear and transparent financial relations between CHARM-EU and the partner institutions.

Expected results

- To ensure that all financial and budgetary procedures pertaining to CHARM-EU programmes and related services are properly authorized and comply to the public rules and regulations of financial management;

- To ensure that the Rectors Assembly retains responsibility to set the institutional direction regarding all budget-related subjects in order to guarantee financial sustainability in the long-term;

- To establish clear and transparent financial relations between CHARM-EU and the partner institutions;

- To ensure equity in access to education and boosting access for low-income students;

- To ensure the balance between sustainability and the provision of an adequate level of services to students and staff.

Rationale

The Finance SG works towards providing reliable and transparent information on the mechanisms used to set financial measures and the way they are implemented in CHARM-EU. It is helpful for students, prospective students, funders and sponsors in order to make better informed decisions, but it is also a relevant aspect to guarantee CHARM-EU's long-term sustainability and to minimize financial risks among its members.

Results

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Policies and procedures[14]

Not all the initial policies and process identified have been develop at this stage. We concentrated in the ones that we could test with the proof of concept, the Master. The others will be developed in the future.

- **Tuition fees;** CHARM-EU developed this policy to ensure how to establish unique fees for the programmes considering the wide variety of fees in each country/institution, how to manage them and how to decide on updating it through the next academic years.
- **Refund Policy;** this policy was designed to determine a unique policy of refunding in the case of withdrawals.
- **Grants;** Inclusivity is a core value of CHARM-EU. This policy describes what we finally applied with the resources we had. The first draft of the policy before testing considered that every student with the condition to have a grant has to be granted, however, the incomes were not enough to keep this policy as initially planned.
- **Programme financial management;** programmes will be one of the main education activities of CHARM-EU. To establish the policies for budgeting and the relations among the partners in the financial management is of primary importance to keep the activities financially sustainable.
-

Tuition fees

CHARM-EU aimed from the beginning to have a unique fee for the Master on Global Challenges for Sustainability, no matter where the student starts or follows the programme to ensure equity. There were different tuition fees for European and non-European students, as in many other European programmes. The unique fee was not an easy agreement to achieve due to disparity of tuition fees in the countries represented in CHARM-EU directly related to the funding scheme of higher education in each Member State and the impact that a different fee of the ones of each partner university (higher or lower) can produce in terms of attractiveness for potential students and "internal" competition with the partner programmes.

Furthermore, and more important the definition of the policy had an important requirement: to be consistent with two of CHARM-EU core values: inclusivity and at the same time sustainability (in a broad sense).

These three elements (tuition fees of the different countries/ partner universities, inclusivity and sustainability of the programme are difficult to combine.

The policy developed has a set of principles to ensure: high quality, affordability and accessibility and equity, transparency and predictability for the users, and comparability with other similar programmes.

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[14] All policies and procedures are available on CHARM-EU website. https://www.charm-eu.eu/index.php/policies-and-regulations

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Refund Policy

The policy aims to set a common ground for refunds in case of withdrawals, again among the disparity of rules and regulations that sometimes are ruled at the national level, to keep the equity of the students' rights and avoiding refunding them depending on their starting institution. As CHARM-EU is not a legal entity, the coordinator institution's rules and regulations could be approved and applied. However, CHARM-EU wanted to keep flexible in the testing period, define a joint policy and analyse the cases and refine the policy. The policy in the annex is the result of the refining process after the test.

Grants

One of the CHARM-EU core values is inclusivity. As mentioned above, the unique tuition fee was defined considering this among other elements. However, even this fee and the compulsory mobility can make the Master unaffordable and inaccessible, that are principles of the tuition fee policy.

Many structural barriers, inequalities are persisting for students when accessing and participating in higher education. Financial support is strongly correlated with postsecondary completion, and it even more applies to underrepresented groups. CHARM-EU is committed to provide a financial support system for students with various backgrounds, own lived experiences, access needs while participating in CHARM-EU Master Program.

For these reasons, the first draft of the Grants Policy aimed to determine that all candidates with the expected conditions for a grant have the right to be granted. However, the financial sustainability of the Master, only allowed CHARM-EU to fund a 5% of the European Union students enrolled. For those, CHARM-EU covers the tuition fee and a mobility fund. In first instance, the candidates are address to national and international grants available, and when they are not eligible they are assessed by the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Team, that rank them and bring the results to the Academic Board for approval. This limited amount of grants doesn't allow to be very inclusive, specially with non-European students. The Master had quite a number of applications from the Global South that could not be attended, and no other grants in Europe could be applicable.

The policy in annex and the complementary information on it, are the result of the testing phase of the Master, the application in two editions of the master and the refining them. However, the grant system is something that CHARM-EU and probably the European Universities in general will need to revisit together with the European Commission and the Member States if we want to keep the tag "inclusive" in our alliances.

Programme financial management

Considering the CHARM-EU core value in a broad sense, CHARM-EU prepared a balance budget for the Master as a test of the programme financial policy and procedures.

This policy aims to guarantee correct expenditure regarding European, national and external stakeholders provisions set in the appropriate agreement with the Alliance. Furthermore, it sets out the mechanisms to follow-up the expenditure among the partners and guarantee the financial

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sustainability of their programmes and actions. Moreover, it tests some mechanism towards an integrated alliance and the foreseen creation of a legal entity.

The provisions set out in this financial policy have been limited for specific programmes and projects, and specifically in the Master on Global Challenges for Sustainability that serves as a test. The principles that are the pillars of the policy are: long-term sustainability, risk mitigation, integration among the partners and transparency and accessibility. Even if not defined as a principle, one subjacent idea on the programme financial management is a balance contribution and balance distribution of incomes among the partners. In the test it has not been possible but the objective is still there for future editions of the Master and future programmes.

The financial management in a joint programme where all partners share every single module delivered in the five campuses and to keep the balance between joint and local expenses, joint and local costs (staff, materials, complementary activities) is extremely complex. Lessons learnt from the test phase of the Master has been more useful than expected and changes in future editions will be done.

Recommendations

- Aligning tuition fees and have a unique one is not an easy task and not always possible. The tuition fees of each University country, reflects the funding model of public Universities and the national policies. The tension comes trying to balance an inclusive fee, not too low to for some countries that can be considered as "competence for other programmes" in a specific partner university fee, and not too high to make it not competitive at the national level.
- The testing phase demonstrate that to be excellent, sustainable, to have mobility as a norm and to be inclusive is a complex jigsaw. We think that it requires specific resources to grant the students and for that, probably the European Universities will need on the one hand, some joint approaches between European funding and national funding, and on the other hand, private grants for students.
- In a joint complex interinstitutional organisational environment such as a European University it is important to establish not only rigorous system of budgeting but also ensuring monitoring tools and more important, the governance scheme of micro-financial decisions. Probably a legal entity will help to establish sound procedures and tools.

3.3. Staffing

Scope

Staffing in Higher Education Institutions includes the recruitment and training of staff, the compensation systems, promotion, work condition and financial implication. The distinction between the academic and administrative staff is paramount to the understanding of staffing in HEIs.

Problem statement

Staffing is a key issue when building an alliance, all the work and cooperation rely on the staff of the different institutions. In order to make an alliance work and to make it sustainable, it is capital to find ways to involve the staff in the activities of the alliance. When it comes to staffing issues in HEIs in Europe, each country, region and institution has their own rules, regulations and common practices. The main HRM issues linked to the creation of a European University are described below:

1. The HEIs are subject to different rules depending on their home country. It means that there are national legal administrative barriers for the recruitment of staff for example.
2. There are different institutional mechanisms and practices for sharing staff, recruiting and other HRM related processes. Special mention need to be done to recognition systems that can vary significantly for the same activities to one institution to the other.
3. In HEIs, there are two types of personnel subject to different sets of policies: academic and administrative.
4. The universities' requirements for staff selection may vary from one institution to another. They may have different and required qualifications (mostly in teaching).
5. Each country, region and institution has their own cultures and subculture, bringing them together raises the issue of interculturality and reconciliation of the diverse working cultures and languages with the need for staff mobility and inclusiveness.
6. Shared degrees between the different universities of an alliance raises the matter of the sharing and recruitment of teachers for shared degrees or activities: who will recruit them, based on what criteria, what rules apply, etc.
7. In a concern of offering the staff of the alliance the same opportunities, each university has to offer vocational training for their staff.

At this point, there is no legal status for European Universities and CHARM-EU acts as an alliance of five distinct universities. This is significant for staffing issues because it prevents the creation of a completely harmonised and shared model. CHARM-EU cannot recruit staff directly, they have to act through the member universities, thus applying their rules. Although, no legal entity was created so far, the subgroup has worked towards understanding the differences between the members and creating procedures to create a shared framework. They also worked towards thinking a new ideal model, a general long-term vision to develop a better staffing model for European University alliances.

Objective

The main objective, as a European meta-organization, is to be able to primarily share, and only in very specific cases, to recruit staff following the long-term vision of the ERASMUS+ Programme ("Students,

doctoral candidates and staff can move seamlessly (physically or virtually) to study, train, teach, do research, work, or share services in any of the partner institutions.").

This SG deals with the following areas of policy in order:

- Policies according to the staff nature: administrative or academic;
- Assignment mechanisms (secondments, detachments, …);
- Work conditions (inclusiveness, language, …);
- Financial implications (salaries, buyouts, staff mobility, …);
- Professional development (promotion, training, career recognition and evaluation pension, …);
- Quality (use the European standard, or define a CHARM one).

Expected results

- To specify a clear and simple procedure for teachers' assignment recruitment and nomination;
- To ensure that information about diversity in the conditions is shared between the five university administrations;
- To try to align the partner recognition mechanisms with CHARM-EU activities.

Rationale

The thinking behind this SG is to be transparent on CHARM-EU Human Resources policies and to pave the road for the HR policy of a potential future CHARM-EU legal entity.

Results

Policies and procedures[15]

As part of the Staffing SG, two documents were created to provide a framework for HR matters specific to the development of the CHARM-EU alliance and in particular to the creation of the Master's degree.

- Recruitment and nomination of CHARM-EU teaching staff: The SG developed this procedure in order to determine a shared model for recruitment and nomination of the teachers, considering the complexity of joint delivery of each of the modules with academic staff of each of the partners. This need arised from the creation of CHARM-EU Master's Global Challenges for Sustainability (MGCS) and the allocation of teachers.
- Joint Virtual Administrative Office: roles and responsibilities: The creation of the MGCS came with new HR needs such as administrative support, both locally and at the level of the alliance, it resulted in the creation of a Joint Virtual Administrative Office. This document aims at describing the role and responsibilities of this new office and of the staff.
- Hiring, promoting and rewarding staff systems in each partner institutions

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[15] All policies and procedures are available on charm-eu website. https://www.charm-eu.eu/index.php/policies-and-regulations

Staff resourcing and provisioning/assignment

As CHARM-EU is not a legal entity capable of hiring and paying its own staff and as the HR rules of CHARM-EU partners vary greatly from one institution to the other, it is not possible for the moment to create a common HR rule for all staff. Even with a legal entity capable of hiring, the majority of teaching staff would remain in each institution. Therefore, the universities keep their complete freedom when it comes to recruiting staff externally or internally. Each staff member is employed and paid by one of the member universities, the labour law, policies and procedures from that country/university then apply to them, including work conditions, salary, career evolution, administrative tasks, etc.

Regarding the teaching staff for CHARM activities, a Procedure for recruitment and nomination of CHARM-EU Teaching Staff[16] was written. It aims at detailing how teaching staff of the joint Master's is selected. It also sets the objectives and criteria and the approval procedure by the Academic Board. This is a first step towards standardizing the framework and practices although they will change from one institution to another.

The administrative staff is recruited by the different universities according to the framework set by the alliance, namely the budget, responsibilities and needs of the project or alliance. In the future, most of the administrative positions needed for the alliance will be the ones described in the governance structure designed in WP2 and detailed in the *Governance model - Terms of Reference*[17] and will then be adjusted according to the needs and finances of the alliance.

Professional development

We use the term "professional development" here to describe the processes by which administrative or academic staff gain and develop skills and knowledge in order to improve as a professional. It is both a way to attract and retain employees and to improve as a European University through the skills of the staff.

Professional development within the alliance during the phase of the project was developed by the WP4 as well as organised by the home university of each staff member. The inter-institutional collaboration and virtual mobility is a valued tool for professional development.

Although the professional development of the administrative staff will remain under the responsibility of their home university, it was decided for the new proposal to create WPs dedicated to professional development of academic staff. These WPs will enable to establish a professional development plan relying on training, e-learning, personalised support, peer learning and staff mobility for teachers' observation (shadowing). The objective is to create detailed activity and training plans and materials for educational staff. Professional development will occupy a much more important place in the new project.

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[16] All policies and procedures are available on charm-eu website. https://www.charm-eu.eu/index.php/policies-and-regulations

[17] CHARM-EU (2022, October). *Governance model - Terms of Reference*.

Work conditions

CHARM-EU's work conditions are defined by the work environment and the conditions of employment such as schedule, days off, etc. As for most of HR related issues for the alliance, as long as there is no legal entity it is not possible to create a common model, therefore work conditions are dictated by the university that employs each specific staff member and with shared employees it will not change dramatically. However, the objective is to create a framework for CHARM-EU in order to move towards harmonising some work conditions. This would allow universities to adapt this to their local rules and regulations while converging towards a common model.

Recognition and evaluation

CHARM-EU is a part of our universities, it enables them to develop internationally and is a test bed for innovation. Therefore, involving staff from our universities is capital to its development. To value and recognize the involvement of the staff, each university has a recognition system.

During the project, we have been trying to study the possibility of the creation of a common compensation system model. Given the different statutes of the staff in each country and university, the differences in recruitment, evaluation, promotion, salary and compensation, we have reached the conclusion that it is not possible to have a common model in the current context. However, we can learn from each other's good practices and each institution can build on these experiences to improve our models and aim at the harmonisation of these systems on the long run. At least, each partner institution needs to work on the alignment of their internal recognition systems and include the CHARM-EU activities on them, considering the innovative and transformative dimension of them.

During this period, we have gathered and discussed the existing policies and procedures of each member institution. You will find it detailed in the following table.

	University of Barcelona	Trinity College Dublin	University of Utrecht	Eötvös Loránd University Budapest	University of Montpellier
Time reallocation	● Certain management responsibilities (dean, head of department, head of studies, etc....) imply reductions on teaching load ● Reductions in teaching load has a maximum with the exception of the rector that has no teaching responsibilities. ● Top research profiles have reductions on teaching load based on an individual evaluation according to fixed objectivec indicators"	● As determined by the Head of School. Varies from School to School. No fixed formula.	● Balance between research & education depends on faculty/ role/ grants/ personal qualities & interest. No specific rules for CHARM-EU work, this is just one of the programmes someone can be involved in.	● Decision of faculty/leadership of the unit	● Teachers can be discharged maximum 2/3 of the 192 contact hours (for instance by converting administrative tasks bonuses, deans have this discharged automatically)
Promotion	● National accreditation is mandatory ● Promotion to professors also considers research activity, management positions	● Annual Process: Senior Academic Promotions (SAPC), Junior Academic Promotions (JAPC) ● Based on Research and Scholarship, Teaching, Service to the College and Engagement with Discipline/Society	Based on the principles of Reward & Recognition, looking at TRIPLE (team, research, impact, professional performance, leadership, education). CHARM-EU work part of this.	● Work done in CHARM-EU can be considered as part of promotion (see "other" field as well).	● UM acknowledges investment in activities other than research and teaching for promotion
Financial compensation	● Salary raise based on the evaluation of the teaching activity every five years ● Salary raise based on evaluation of the research every six years ● Special management positions (vice-rector, dean, secretary, head department, direct nominations by the rector to develop certain projects…) can have extra financial compensation ● There is no financial compensation for teaching in regular courses	There is no financial compensation available over and above a person's salary. The public sector operates a principle of one person one salary. No top-up payments can be made	No financial compensation for working for Charm EU, this is just part of someone's tasks and responsibilities	● In case the work completed in CHARM-EU is not part of someone's job description, compensation is possible to a limited extent in the form of extra payment. In case of faculty (academic) staff, there is financial compensation in most cases. In case of support staff, depending on the task.	● Possible bonus once a year
Other		Highlight the opportunities to develop research connections with academics and researchers in the partner universities. Foster networks, encourage people to meet via conferences, encourage co-authored research proposals.		● All academic achievements (research work, conferences, project works, extra tutoring tasks, etc., including CHARM-EU) registered in "ELTE Strategic Database" (sta.elte.hu). This database serves as the basis for academic progression, is considered in promotions etc.	

Figure 3-5 Existing HR policies and procedures of CHARM-EU members

Local adjustments and changes made for the project

In order to manage the cooperation of the alliance and for the success of our common activities, the partners have managed the compensation system of the activities of CHARM-EU locally by making adjustments or using their existing systems.

UB

At the University of Barcelona, they have implemented several actions to recognize and motivate the participation of the teaching staff and researchers to CHARM-EU:

- Participation in the Master's is considered as a regular teaching, so it is reflected in the regular teaching load of the teaching staff;
- There has been a financial compensation to the researchers working in different WPs, according to the number of hours dedicated to the project;
- The participation in CHARM-EU has been recognized as participation in an innovative educational project. This will have positive repercussion on the evaluation of the teaching that the teaching staff follows every five years and that, if positive, has impact on the salary;
- The participation in CHARM-EU has been recognized also as participation in a European project. This increases the inputs on the research profile of the teaching staff and could imply reductions on the teaching load.

These are other possible actions to compensate participation in CHARM-EU in a near future (next academic year) but that are not implemented yet:

- Temporary contracts to compensate researchers working in specific in laboratories;
- Load reduction similar to load reduction one can get for an excellent performance in research;
- Participation as a core member in a KCT, recognition in research;
- Promotion opportunities for those that are actively involved in CHARM-EU, before expected.

TCD

In Trinity College Dublin, no changes regarding the local recognition policy (promotions) were made. There are four criteria for promotions: Teaching, Research, Contribution to College and Contribution to Discipline. The involvement in CHARM-EU is considered as a contribution to discipline or contribution to college. Those staff involved in CHARM-EU can reference this in their promotion application, however based on the weighting of the criteria, it would not be sufficient in itself to secure a promotion as the criteria for teaching and research are more heavily weighted.

ELTE

In the case of ELTE, no significant adjustments of the financial recognition system were made, since the compensation of both academic and support staff could be managed within the framework used at the university (i.e., in the national regulation system). In case of teaching, CHARM-EU classes are counted as additional teaching activities and compensated accordingly.

In terms of the recognition of academic staff it is crucial that participation in CHARM-EU activities can be opted for in the Strategic Database, the central academic performance registry of the university, mandatorily filled each semester by all members of academic staff. This was made possible by the addition of a new category into the system that covers CHARM-EU but also other collaborations, thus CHARM-EU also played the role of catalyser in this process.

In terms of rewarding significant achievements, ELTE established the ELTE CHARM-EU Award which can be given to academic as well as support staff for substantial contribution to the work of the Alliance.

Amongst the good examples of work organisation, the CHARM-EU Office of ELTE can be mentioned. Due to the size and complexity of the group of experts from a large variety of fields, ELTE established the CHARM-EU Office in the structure of the Rector's Cabinet to coordinate the work of the Alliance within the university including administering HR documents, managing both internal and external calls for (part-time and full-time) CHARM-EU positions, involvement of academic staff (timetables, technical details, leadership approvals) etc. in cooperation with respective departments of the University. In the future, this Office will serve as a good example of a framework facilitating professional career development in an internationalised context. This also serves the internal transformation of the university, flexibly applying CHARM-EU best practices adopted to the local institutional environment. We consider this Office one of the main achievements in terms of the operation of CHARM-EU at ELTE and think that similar units, adopted to local needs, can contribute significantly to the seamless functioning of the Alliance at each member institution (especially in case of a growing number of new projects).

UU

At Utrecht University no adjustments in the financial recognition system were made, as work for CHARM EU is treated as one of the programmes teaching and support staff can be involved in. Hence the current reward and recognition systems can accommodate the CHARM-EU efforts made: staff get time allocation based on all their projects, teaching and research activities. At Utrecht University we hereby take into account the TRIPLE criteria (team spirit/research/impact/ professional performance/ leadership and education)[18] and allow for diversification in activities and career paths.

UM

At the University of Montpellier, as in the University of Barcelona:

- Participation in the Master is considered as a regular teaching, so it is reflected in the regular teaching load of the teaching staff;
- There has been a financial compensation to the researchers working in different WPs, according to the number of hours dedicated to the project.

The University of Montpellier is currently working on a new framework for the recognition and promotion of Academic staff.

Recommendations

Although a common model was not achievable, we have started to describe the characteristics that such a model would have.

- On a long-term scale, the participation in CHARM-EU activities cannot only be voluntary because the staff already have their designated tasks and there is a need for a recognition and compensation system for the staff taking part in the alliance. As previously mentioned, it was

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[18] Utrecht University (2022, October 12). *Recognition and Rewards Vision*.
https://www.uu.nl/sites/default/files/UU-Recognition-and-Rewards-Vision.pdf

not possible to create a common system for the alliance. Therefore, the main recommendation is that each institution needs to implement mechanisms for the work and activities of the alliance to be recognised and compensated, according to the local rules and regulations in order to make the alliance possible and sustainable. Working on CHARM-EU is one of the programmes academic and non-academic staff can contribute to, and should be recognised for.

- CHARM-EU academic system is characterized by the strong interconnectedness of education and research and this must be reflected into the recognition and promotion model.
- The model of recognition and rewards should be designed to improve, in a reciprocal way, the quality of each of these key areas: education, research, impact and leadership
- The challenges that society and academics face in our days require an assessment system that appreciates both (transdisciplinary and intercultural) cooperation and the unique talent of individual academics.
- Usually there is a one-sided emphasis on research performance, frequently leading to the undervaluation of the other key areas such as education and service to society. The assessment system must be adapted and improved in each of the areas and in the connections between them.
- Academics should have a minimum of competences in research and education plus in one of the other key areas: impact on the institution or leadership of the institution.
- Academics should be assessed not just for their individual performance but also for their contribution to the team or institution of which they are a part.
- Redesigning academic career paths with the guiding principle always the interrelatedness of education and research, innovation and service to society; these two key areas deserve to be accommodated within each profile.
- For the professionals, the possibility to have a network in the alliance where they can benchmark good practices through virtual, hybrid and physical mobility is a useful tool.

3.4.   Services and IT

Scope

'Services' cover all types of necessary and supportive provisions, systems, and tools offered to CHARM-EU students, academic and non-academic staff (CHARM-EU Citizens) by the partnering institutions. "Student Services" cover a unified, overarching structure of educational administration throughout the student journey. Services provided to all CHARM-EU Citizens cover the services related to university life (pre-admission, progression and post-graduation). Services also include the IT system(s) ensuring the technical infrastructure to underpin the above.

Problem statement

Each member of CHARM-EU already has services in place for their users, the challenge for the Services subgroup is to analyse, harmonise and develop the services to provide a framework for the alliance.

1. The five institutions are using different approaches and IT systems and face different problems, which causes that CHARM-EU Citizens are provided services of different kind and quality, difficult to integrate, and in some cases, there is a lack of certain services.
2. There are diverse requirements and protocols followed causing different deadlines.
3. Regulations and rules are different in terms of the accessibility to certain services (e.g. prices, academic rules, access of certain groups to certain services)
4. A legal entity is essential for purchasing (procurement) of digital tools and applications, thus only one of the member institutions and not the Alliance as such can do so at the moment.

Objective

The objectives of this SG are the following:

- Designing the student-life journey;
- Creating the framework – including the development of new types of services if required – in which each CHARM-EU Citizen has a CHARM-EU (virtual) identity (including the CHARM-EU campus experience at physical locations and virtually);
- Defining and creating a package of inclusive CHARM-EU services equally accessible to each and every CHARM-EU Citizen;
- Defining the scope of services delivered by CHARM-EU and of those provided by the partner institutions;
- Developing unified protocols, regulations and the required supporting systems (both services and IT platforms) in order to offer equal accessibility and common standards across CHARM-EU (maintaining and building on the advantages of cultural diversity);
- Developing a unified CHARM-EU IT system for storing, retrieving, and sending information within universities in accordance with data protection rules so that CHARM-EU Citizens have the same experience about CHARM-EU.

Expected results

- To provide high quality services throughout the student journey to all CHARM-EU students in compliance with the expectations of international students;

- To support a high degree of cooperation between the educational and administrative units of the partners.

Rationale

The rationale behind the services subgroup is first to provide a framework of students (both on the five campuses and jointly online) that offers the best possible student experience. And second, to ensure that students receive proper administrative support and professional guidance in all matters related to their activities within CHARM-EU or, in case a certain service is not provided by the Alliance, up-to-date information on where they can turn to at the partner institutions.

Results

Policy[19]

- Student Services Policy

The Student Services Policy was required in order to lay the general principles of the services provided by CHARM-EU as an alliance and its member universities to the students of the CHARM-EU educational programme. The Policy was written by several expert groups of the respective fields within the framework of the Services subgroup of the Governance WP of CHARM-EU (experts of admissions in the admissions section etc.). The Policy describes the overall idea of CHARM-EU services, how these represent the "CHARM-EU identity" and how they expand from admissions until graduation throughout the student journey. The policy details the individual services provided by CHARM-EU centrally (admissions, registration, orientation etc.) and by the member universities based on jointly agreed principles (housing, library services etc.).

Services

The services developed by the subgroup include the following:

- Admissions: centralised admissions principles of CHARM-EU;
- Registration and CHARM identity: the principles of a central CHARM-EU registration system;
- Pre-arrival and Orientation: preparation of the students for starting their studies at the campuses;
- Disability and accessibility service: application the CHARM-EU inclusion principles on services;
- Buddy System: a system of support by students to students based on central principles;
- Accommodation and Housing: principles of supporting students' housing matters;
- Counselling services: a central CHARM-EU-level counselling support for students;
- Mobility services: the service aspects of the CHARM-EU mobility system;
- Languages, Sports and Socio-cultural Services: statement of providing equal services on these fields to CHARM-EU students as to the international students of the respective member institution;
- Career Support services: joint career support provided to CHARM-EU students;
- Alumni services: central alumni concept of CHARM-EU students.

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[19] All policies and procedures are available on charm-eu website. https://www.charm-eu.eu/index.php/policies-and-regulations

All these are described in detail in the official Student Services Policy document.

IT
Background

It had already been widely accepted before the pandemic and became even more evident all around the world that a stable, sustainable and cross-cutting IT background is the *sine qua non* of the operation of all types of institutions in the 21st century. This is, evidently, also the case in higher education where teaching methods, research cooperation and administrative operation have all gone through essential transformation in the past two years. The member institutions of the CHARM-EU Alliance, recognising the importance of well-structured and coordinated actions on this field, are working towards 1) in the short term, the establishment of a solid IT background for the operation of CHARM-EU; 2) in the midterm, becoming a catalysator in the process of creating digital interoperability of European University alliances and other European stakeholders; 3) in the long term, contributing significantly to the European Digital Action Plan.

Definition of IT Services

In CHARM-EU delivering IT solutions are considered providing IT services to its citizens, based on the concept of ITSM (IT Service Management)[20]. CHARM-EU is making efforts to provide IT solutions as a service on all fields of operation of a higher education institution to its citizens in order to fulfil all digital needs on the fields of

- governance (finances, HR, etc.) and administration;
- education (using hybrid solutions and technology enhanced learning, learning analytics);
- research (data collection, storage and sharing);
- communication and (teaching and research) cooperation of academic staff members.

Providing IT services on these fields include the different steps of designing, establishing, delivering, and supporting the IT operation of CHARM European University. As a prerequisite of joint developments, CHARM-EU summarized the challenges to be resolved and the possible solutions to be further developed and carried out in the next phase of the collaboration.

Problem Statement

Today CHARM-EU practically operates as an alliance of five separate legal entities as well as five separate digital structures, while it should realise the digital operation of a single entity. This creates a need to harmonise a large variety of services, different data structures, different processes in IT service management, different operational and also financial models. Since a joint legal entity has not been established yet, the short-term solution for connecting these separate digital entities must be a flexible work-around to harmonise systems and to reduce redundancy, moving towards joint operation. This process also serves as a testbed to pilot solutions and to find answer to the question whether and to what extent a joint legal entity could contribute to the seamless functioning of a CHARM-EU joint digital entity.

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[20] Atlassian (2022, October 12). *What is IT Service Management (ITSM)?*. https://www.atlassian.com/itsm

Main challenges:

- different data structures of the institutions;
- different processes and practices in providing IT services;
- different financial models behind IT infrastructure and operation;
- different national regulations of data management and information security even if we are under the same umbrella of the European law;
- requirement of a unified profile (students of "CHARM European University" as main end users must have one access point in case of each digital service) *vs.* strict national regulations (institutions must register and administer each CHARM student as their own);
- working towards multilingualism on the field of IT requiring serious extra resources.

Short-term solutions and further plans

Considering the above challenges, CHARM-EU started to work on designing a federative structure that would on the one hand join the most central parts of the partners' IT operation, on the other hand would not alter their individual IT environments and procedures. Harmonising solutions and tackling common denominators in such a federation is one of the most important areas of development. A possible way of proceeding towards such a federation is to pilot solutions, balancing between 1) the common use and expansion of existing systems and 2) creating new, fit-for-purpose solutions in joint developments. In the past three years, CHARM-EU has actively piloted various solutions of (1) and has carried out planning activities of (2).

In terms of using existing systems, CHARM-EU has been using

- the online administrative system of the University of Barcelona for student applications and registration (implementing certain modifications, e.g., new types of data not required by the University of Barcelona but necessary for another alliance member);
- the online virtual teaching environment of Utrecht University (providing access to CHARM-EU students and staff with an Utrecht University ID to the system).

In terms of further plans CHARM-EU is working on

- developing a federal and cooperative model to lay the foundations of the full digital operation of a university with standardization and interoperability kept in scope;
- establishing and supporting project and institutional activities which will systematically reveal and classify the data assets (educational, scientific and administrational) of the CHARM-EU community;
- developing the common metadata structure and interoperability communication standards.

Strategic goals for longer term

On the mid- (and long-) term, CHARM-EU is planning to create a flexible and innovative IT network with an architecture enabling us to realize accessible and easy-to-use platforms and systems. In this work, CHARM-EU is going to actively cooperate with FOREU1 and FOREU2 alliances, other European higher education institutions and their networks, external stakeholders, national public IT-organisation and NREN's and governmental authorities. As it was concluded at the IT session of the CHARM-EU Governance Forum March 2022 in Montpellier, such cooperation must be based on the following principles:

- needs & requirements must be detected on European level (not only within the alliance);
- it must be accepted that some solutions of others might work better than ours, in which case adaptation may be the better way forward;
- we must work towards interoperability between alliances and with external stakeholders;
- interoperability does not mean we must use the very same solution – it means we must use solutions compatible with others, developing European standards;
- collaboration must be started with National Research and Education Networks;
- developments must be connected to the Digital Education Action Plan.

Recommendations

Based on the experiences of the first months of the CHARM-EU master's programme and the short life of the alliance, the following conclusions can be drawn related to the cooperation of institutions on the field of services:

- It is very useful in terms of establishing student identity to offer joint services to the students of the alliance, i.e., services that are offered by a team consisting of representatives from the partner institutions, possibly on joint websites etc. (cf. Student Services Policy [henceforth SP] 7.1–7.3, 7.8). This affects also to academic staff and professionals related to students service.
- Services, especially those offered jointly, must reflect the core values of the Alliance and be in accordance with the respective documents and policies (cf. SP 5, 9).
- In case of services that, by definition, can only be provided locally, joint agreement must be made to ensure equality of students at all campuses and a minimum of quality in terms of these services (cf. e.g. SP 7.4).
- In terms of the local orientation of students, the involvement of local students is very important, especially in the first period of studies (cf. SP 7.5).
- It is crucial that in the case of local services that necessarily differ at each location (e.g. dormitory accommodation), member institutions keep students continuously informed about local opportunities and offerings (cf. e.g. SP 7.6.3).

3.5. Quality and accreditation

Scope

Quality Assurance is an all-embracing term referring to an ongoing, continuous process of evaluating (assessing, monitoring, guaranteeing, maintaining, and improving) the quality of a higher education system, institutions, or programmes. As a regulatory mechanism, quality assurance focuses on both accountability and improvement, providing information and judgments through an agreed upon and consistent process and well-established criteria.

Accreditation is "The process by which a (non-) governmental or private body evaluates the quality of a higher education institution as a whole or of a specific educational programme in order to formally recognize it as having met certain predetermined minimal criteria or standards" (Agency for Science in Higher Education). [21]

Each university is recognised as a higher education provider by the relevant ministry and quality authorities of their own country at institutional and/or programme level, where different arrangement for Degree Awarding Authority apply. For example, Trinity College Dublin is a self-awarding body, in the Nederland's the Quality Agency NVAO lists the awards, while in France, Spain and Hungry, the Ministry is the final authorising body.

Each University develops its systems considering this framework.

Problem statement

Quality is a key issue when creating a European University alliance as the rules and regulations are very specific to each country and institution and relay in the Member State competence in education and its national rules. The main problems to be found are the following:

1. The initial need to overcome the legislative, structural, technical and other challenges in delivering and quality assuring joint European degrees in the name of CHARM-EU. Specifically, the
   - Initial Accreditation Process for the CHARM EU Joint Masters Programme;
   - Development of CHARM–EU Quality Policies and Procedures that align with the European Standards Guidelines (ESG);
   - Design of a CHARM EU Quality model supported by quality processes and quality assurance as measured against indicators and results;
   - Embed quality improvement and enhancement plans based on outcomes of internal quality assurance.
2. The medium and long term need to maintain quality in a dynamic environment arising from:
   - The publication of the Framework for Quality for European Universities (EUNIQ Project) that focuses Quality at the Alliance level governance rather than the academic programme level;
   - The addition of new partners to the CHARM-EU Alliance requiring review of CHARM-EU Quality Model, policies, procedures and processes to align with the regulatory requirements in new jurisdictions;

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[21] Agency for science and higher education (2022, October 12). *Glossary of terms used on this site.* https://www.azvo.hr/en/component/seoglossary/6-quality-assurance-and-accreditation-glossary-basic-terms-and

- Incorporation of CHARM-EU functions that sit outside the delivery of academic programmes for credit e.g. Research (TORCH), CHARM-EU short programmes e.g. Summer/Winter Schools, Hackathons etc.

Objective

The main objectives the Quality subgroup are:

- To have an established EU Quality and Qualifications Register that provides the legislative framework to enable CHARM-EU to be recognised as Higher Education actor;
- To demonstrate a cross-Alliance approach to internal quality assurance using integrated quality assurance procedures and agreed quality indicators that facilitate internal and external reporting on the quality of CHARM EU activities;
- To assure the quality of the CHARM-EU student experience through the delivery of a student-centred, challenge-based, transdisciplinary, mobile education experience.

Expected results

- An agreed process for initial accreditation of CHARM-EU Masters Programme in consultation with Quality Agencies and Ministries;
- Published CHARM-EU policies and procedures aligned with the European Standard Guidelines;
- A documented quality management system that enables internal quality assurance, monitoring and enhancement to inform the continuing development of a CHARM-EU quality model, policies and processes;
- To ensure CHARM – EU internal quality model and processes meets the expectations of a future external evaluation of CHARM-EU as a European University Alliance.

Results

Step 1: Agreed process for initial accreditation of CHARM EU Masters

A decision to adopt the *European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes*[1] (October 2014) for the initial accreditation of the proposed Joint CHARM-EU Masters programme, was approved by a meeting of CHARM-EU Alliance partners, representatives from Quality Agencies (including ENQA) and Ministries in Budapest in February 2020. Early engagement of these key external stakeholders (Quality Agencies and Ministries) proved vital in facilitating legislative changes in Hungryand Spain. This externally focused work was led by the Alliance Manager and representatives of the Governance WP.

Internally within CHARM-EU, WP 3 and the Knowledge Creation Teams began work on the Masters Proposal, while the work of the Quality and Accreditation focused on the:

- design and approval of a process and timeline to support the initial accreditation of the CHARM-EU Masters across Alliance partners, under the European Approach to Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes;
- the selection of a Quality Agency to lead the initial accreditation and coordinate the external panel process and the recognition of the programme across partner jurisdictions assuming a positive report;
- the development of Quality policies and procedures necessary to meet the requirements of the Terms of Reference of the Lead Agency;

CHARM-EU

CHallenge-driven
Accessible
Research-based
Mobile
European
University

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

- nomination of external panel members with the necessary expertise and experience to conduct the initial accreditation under the European Approach to Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes.

The figure below outlines the process designed to support the initial accreditation of the CHARM-EU Masters across Alliance partners. This process itself required approval by the respective governance bodies of CHARM-EU partner institutions, in advance of bringing the Masters Proposal through the accreditation/academic validation processes at partner institutions, as it represented a departure from the governance processes that support initial accreditation and recognition of joint awards within partner institutions and jurisdictions.

The Masters Proposal and Collaboration Agreement went through iterative cycles of design, consultation and approval by partner institutions before the final drafts for approval by institutional governing bodies was agreed and the initial approval steps commenced in partner institutions. Trinity College Dublin as the coordinator for the pilot Masters programme submitted the Masters Proposal through its Graduate Studies Committee (TCD GSC) before submitting the Proposal to the Lead Quality Agency to enable the External Panel process to occur.
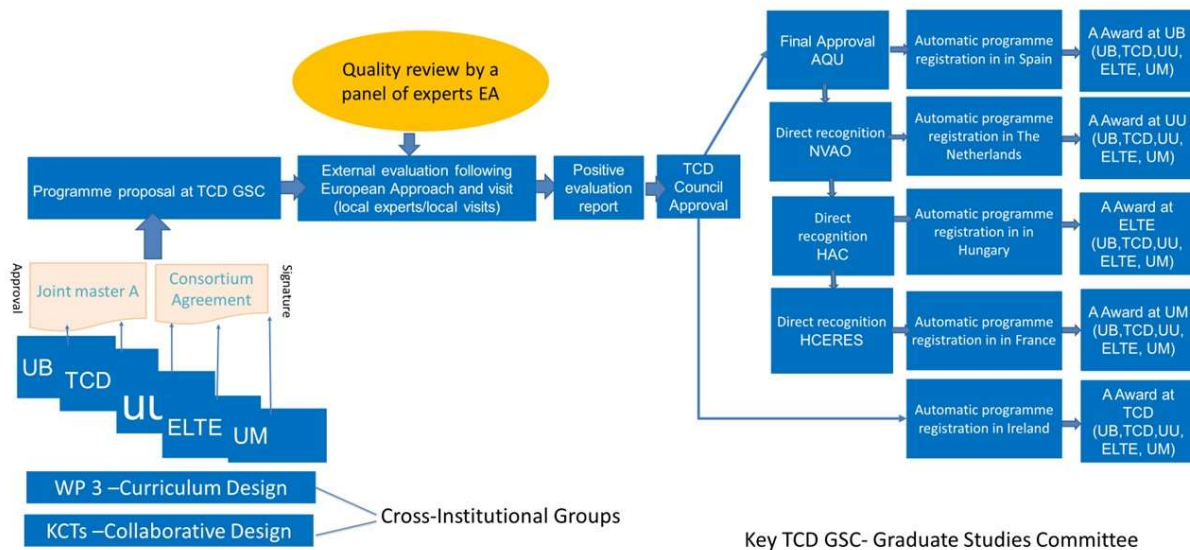

Figure 3-6 Initial accreditation process under European Approach to Quality Assurance to Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes
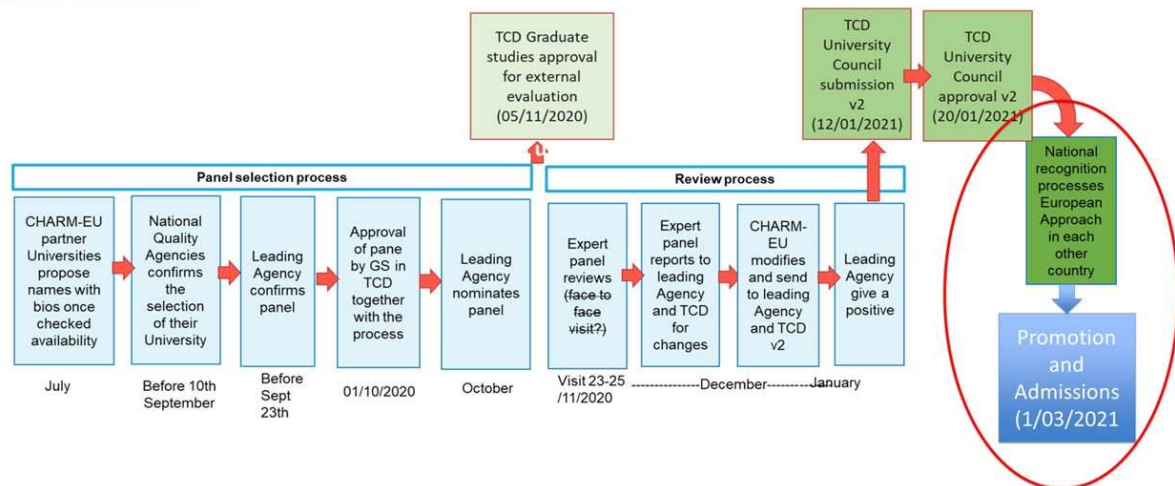
Figure 3-7 Timeline to initial accreditation and recognition of the CHARM-EU Master's

The ambition to start the CHARM-EU Masters in September 2021, set the constraints of the timeframe for initial accreditation and recognition of the CHARM-EU Masters. AQU Catalunya was selected as the Lead Agency, having both previous experience with the European Approach and the ability to meet the ambitious timeline outlined above.

The AQU Terms of Reference[22] and Guide to Ex-Ante Accreditation of Joint Programmes using the European Approach[23] lists the necessary documentation for submission to the External Panel. These included the following draft Quality policies, procedures and indicators[24]:

- Quality Management System Policy;
- New Programme Design and Approval Policy;
- Procedure for the Approval of New Programmes Interim Process;
- Appeals Policy;
- Complaints Policy.

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[22] AQU, ENSA, EQAR. *Terms of Reference*. https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/Annex_I_Tripartite_ToR_Targeted_AQU-2022_Final.pdf

[23] AQU (2022). *Ex-Ante Accreditation of Joint Programmes using the European Approach*. https://www.aqu.cat/ca/doc/Universitats/Guide-to-ex-ante-accreditation-of-joint-programmes-using-the-European-Approach

[24] All policies and procedures are available on charm-eu website. https://www.charm-eu.eu/index.php/policies-and-regulations

An External Panel comprising of seven representatives was agreed and the process for nomination and approval of External Panel members was also subject to the approval of governance bodies in the partner institutions (see figure above). The seven-member External Panel included:

- One expert in transdisciplinary research;
- Three experts in each of the disciplinary fields in the Masters (Food, Water, Life &Health);
- A professional expert who worked in the area of sustainability;
- A Student representative from the European Students Union Panel;
- One European Quality expert to act as Secretary to Panel.

The External Panel was conducted in November 2020, travel restrictions as a result of Covid-19 necessitated that the panel visit was conducted virtually. AQU Catalunya provided a positive evaluation report[25].

The Master's Proposal was amended to incorporate suggested improvement made by the External Panel and the revised proposal (v2) and the report of the External Panel was submitted to Trinity College Dublin Academic Council for approval. The approved Proposal, the minutes of Academic Council documenting the approval and a letter by the Irish Quality Agency (Qualifications and Quality Assurance Ireland) evidencing Trinity College Dublin as a Designated Awarding Body with approved quality assurance procedures in Ireland, was submitted to AQU Catalunya to complete the final requirements for initial accreditation under the European Approach. This final step initiated the recognition process of the CHARM-EU Masters in each jurisdiction and the commencement of the marketing and promotion campaign of the CHARM-EU Masters for initial intake of students in September 2021. The recognition process was not without challenge, automatic recognition was not facilitated by all jurisdictions as expected under the '*European approach to Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes*' due to different interpretations of European Framework Documents and of the European Approach.

Step 2: Quality Policies Procedures and Processes that align to the European Standards Guidelines

Following the successful completion of the initial accreditation process, it was necessary to complete and bring the draft Quality policies and procedures required under the European Standards Guidelines (2015)[26] through the formal governance approval process. Policies are documented using the approved CHARM-EU template and guidelines (see Appendix 1). All policies and regulations undergo an internal consultation process prior to submission for approval. This ensures that due consideration is given to regulations specific to partner jurisdictions that may need to be met and that they meet the CHARM-EU Inclusivity principal.

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[25] AQU Catalunya (2020, December 15). External review report: Master in Global Challenges for Sustainability. https://www.aqu.cat/en/doc/Master-in-Global-Challenges-for-Sustainability-External-report-European-Approach

[26] ENQA (2015). *European Standards Guidelines*. https://www.enqa.eu/esg-standards-and-guidelines-for-quality-assurance-in-the-european-higher-education-area/

ESG Standards	CHARM-EU Policy, Procedure	CHARM-EU Processes
1.1 Policy for Quality Assurance 1.10 Cyclical External Quality Assurance	Quality Management System Policy CHARM–EU Dignity and Respect Statement	CHARM-EU Quality Model CHARM EU Policy Template CHARM EU Policy Approval Process
1.2 Design and Approval of Programmes	New Programme Design and Approval Policy Procedure on the Approval of New Programmes Interim Process	
1.3 Student Centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment	Appeals Policy Appeals Procedure Complaints Policy Complaints Procedure Assessment Regulations Capstone Supervision Policy	Recheck Procedure
1.4 Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification	Admission Regulations Assessment Regulations	Pre-Programme Survey Student Handbook
1.5 Teaching Staff	Teaching Allocations Policy	
1.6 Learning Resources and Student Support	Services Policy	
1.7 Information Management 1.9 Ongoing monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes	Programme Monitoring and Review Policy	Module and Phase Survey Phase Review Process
1.8 Public Information		Publication on CHARM-EU website

Figure 3-8 CHARM-EU Policies, procedures and processes and the ESG (2015)

Following final approval of CHARM-EU Policies and procedures, they were published on the Policies and Regulations page of the CHARM-EU website[27] in compliance with ESG 1.8 Public Information.[28]

Step 3: Defining the CHARM EU Quality Model

The initial draft of the CHARM-EU Quality Model (February 2021) focused on the quality assurance of the CHARM EU Master's Programme and the Student Experience, as outlined in the figure 38 below.
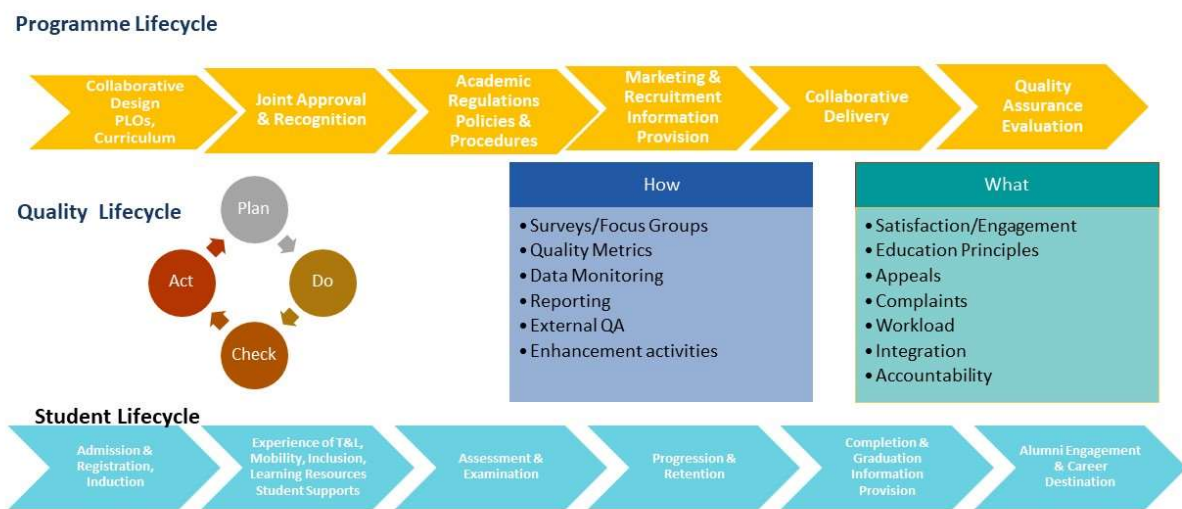

Figure 3-9 CHARM-EU Quality Model

The co-design of the curriculum as outlined in Fig 34 above included cross-institutional representatives and Knowlege Creating Teams. Student input was achieved in a Student Forum conducted in October 2020 and attended by 25 students from across all CHARM-EU partner institutions   and student input at which the initial draft of the curriculum design and the CHARM-EU Education Principles was discussed.

Student are represented on the Academic Board and on the Staff-Student Council. In this way students are engaged in the co-creation of CHARM-EU Policies and Procedures. Students can instigate the need for policies and procedures, reviews of workload or assessment and in this way inform enhancement activities.

This initial Quality Model precedes the publication of the Framework for Quality for European Universities (EUNIQ Project) and the establishment of TORCH (CHARM-EU's Research and innovation project funded under Horizon 2020). Future iterations of the model will need to refocus quality at the

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[27] CHARM-EU (November 2022). https://www.charm-eu.eu/
[28] All policies and procedures are available on charm-eu website. https://www.charm-eu.eu/index.php/policies-and-regulations

Alliance level and incorporate functions that are not reflected in the initial draft such as Research and CHARM EU short-programmes that do not attract credit (ECTS).

Step 4 Processes to support the student experience under the CHARM EU Quality Model

Working closely across the Inclusion and Pilot WPs, the Quality and Accreditation subgroup collaborated on the design and approval of a:

- Pre-Programme Survey administered online during Induction Week and focusing largely on the initial application and registration process, gathering information on the broad disciplinary fields of students' entering the programme and their previous exposure to and experience of learning technologies;
- Module and Phase Survey first administered at the end of Phase 1 in February 2022 and in July 2022 at the end of Phase 2 and planned for administration at the end of Phase 3 of the Masters programme. The outcomes of the survey are keys inputs into the Programme Monitoring and review process and inform enhancement cycles (see figure below).
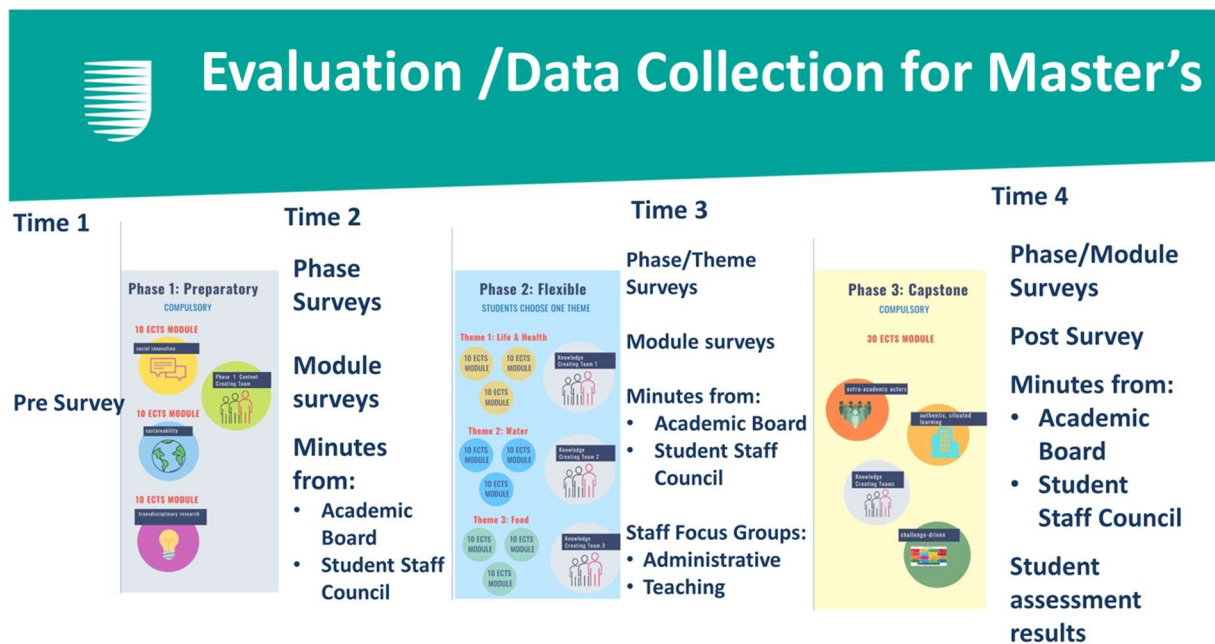

Figure 3-10 Evaluation and Data Collection for the Evaluation of the Master's Programme

Recommendations

1. The European Approach to Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes remains a challenging process to secure initial accreditation and automatic recognition of joint programmes for European Alliances. Greater efforts are required at European level to resolve differences in national legislation that act as an impediment to the scaling up of joint programmes.
2. Recognition is required that several iterations of quality cycles are required to achieve stabilisation of a quality model, inform realistic KPIs and reach maturity of integrated processes.

3. Dedicated resources are required to evolve the Quality Model in order to meet expectation of future external evaluations.
4. The CHARM EU quality model should benchmark the best practices of its members to derive a refined quality model.

4. Recommendations

This period building CHARM-EU has provided a sound learning and experimenting environment in every single corner of all the activities, some were already planned and included in the work package deliverables. Many others came from the experience trying to further planning and the deliverables. Thus, it became more than a project and created a long-term cooperation. These recommendations will be life document, because the learning experience has not stopped at any field in CHARM, neither in terms of Governance. CHARM-EU tested the implementation of the majority of the elements of the model included in this handbook. Currently, we are implementing the new Governance model.

In this chapter you will find some general recommendations arising from the global experience on Governance and Management, and others as a summary of the different chapters/sections of this handbook.

General recommendations

Joint cooperation, joint governance, unique policies and procedures, co-creation with Member States, regional Governments and European Commission means a high level of complexity but also better intercultural understanding and better results, and a way to make European values a lively experience. The conclusion and/or recommendation from CHARM-EU is that it is worthwhile.

The objectives and impact expected are very ambitious. The challenge is high. CHARM-EU aimed for a high level of ambition and produced some results, the best of which is the Master on Global Challenges for Sustainability as a proof of concept that was useful not only as a test-bed of CHARM-EU partners but also for Member State Governments of the participants' countries. Two of them, Spain and Hungary changed their national legislation to become more flexible on joint European degrees, not only for the European Universities but for the whole national higher education system.

Considering the previous point, a joint action coming from European Commission, National and Regional Governments will be needed. In terms of funding and in terms of more adapted rules and regulations that make the cooperation and the joint activities easier. Excellence, sustainability and inclusivity form a difficult triangle and the European Universities cannot solve it by their own.

As has been said many times in different fora by several European Universities and quoting a joint statement here:

> *All 41 alliances call on the Member States to urgently support the establishment of holistic and sustainable long-term funding to deepen transnational cooperation of European University alliances across all their missions in a coherent way. This will enable the European Universities Initiative to go beyond a short-term project approach and deliver on their long-term, innovative and ambitious vision of future-proof European universities. This funding must (1) integrate all university's missions (education, research, innovation, transfer to society) and (2) combine resources (Erasmus+, Digital Europe, Interregional Innovation Investments, member state funding, etc.) reflecting not only the knowledge square approach, but also the infrastructural and other supports needed to drive the development of globally competitive European University Alliances. Finally, it is important that support is (3)*

sustainable, a long-term funding instrument is needed to build sustainable European Universities that can deliver on their vision. The upcoming midterm review of the current European Programmes is an excellent momentum to test and design such a holistic funding instrument.[29]

Recommendations by field

On Governance and legal status, the specific technical and regulatory barriers identified in these three years of CHARM-EU experience led to some conclusions or recommendations. On the one hand, it is possible to design a flexible Governance model that integrates smoothly with partner Universities and not as a completely aside organisation. At the same time, in terms of organisational structure, it is important to remain flexible, the designed governance will be tested and reviewed continuously in order to adapt to internal and external changes.

On the other hand, some legal changes should be made in European Union law and adjustments of the domestic law of the Member States to recognise European Universities as such, so they can operate and to be able to submit project proposals directly under the Horizon Europe programme and other European research, innovation and development programmes. To be able to grant a programme degree is a more complex matter.

On finance, and specifically in the field programme funding, CHARM-EU experience shows that aligning tuition fees and having a unique tuition fee is not an easy task and not always possible. The tuition fees of each University country, reflects the funding model of public Universities and the national policies. The tension comes trying to balance an inclusive fee, not too low to for some countries that can be considered as "competence for other programmes" in a specific partner university fee, and not too high to make it not competitive at the national level.

The testing phase demonstrated that to be excellent, sustainable, to have mobility as a norm and to be inclusive is a complex jigsaw. We think that it requires specific resources to grant the students and for that, probably the European Universities will need on the one hand, some joint approaches were European, national and regional governments can participate.

On staffing, although a common model was not achievable, we have started to describe the characteristics that such a model would have. Therefore, the main recommendation is that each institution needs to implement mechanisms for the work and activities of the alliance to be recognised and compensated, according to the local rules and regulations in order to make the alliance possible and sustainable. Working on CHARM-EU is one of the programmes academic and non-academic staff can contribute to, and should be recognised for. The work in a long-term cooperation model such as a European University and the specific experience in CHARM-EU is that the challenges that society,

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[29] *Call for sustainable and holistic support to European University Alliances. Joint statement of all 41 European University Alliances on the need for long-term sustainable funding that allows Alliances to work across all their missions, March 2022.*

academics and professionals face in our days require an assessment system that appreciates transdisciplinary and intercultural cooperation and team work and not the unique talent of individual academics or individual professionals.

On services, based on the experiences of the first months of the CHARM-EU master's programme and the short life of the alliance, the main recommendation is that it is very useful in terms of establishing student identity to offer joint services to the students of the alliance, i.e., services that are offered by a team consisting of representatives from the partner institutions, possibly on joint websites etc., combined with others provided locally. In the local ones, the involvement of local students is very important, especially in the first period of studies. It is crucial that in the case of local services that necessarily differ at each location (e.g. dormitory accommodation), member institutions keep students continuously informed about local opportunities and offerings.

On quality, CHARM-EU opted for a joint quality model that adapts to the purpose and activities. It is based on the particular needs of the quality assurance of the activities (mainly the Master by now), and the best practices of its members to derive a refined quality model. Recognition is required that several iterations of quality cycles are required to achieve stabilisation of a quality model, inform realistic KPIs and reach maturity of integrated processes. And dedicated resources are required to evolve the Quality Model in order to meet expectation of future external evaluations.

A specific comment on the use of the European Approach to Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes. It remains a challenging process to secure initial accreditation and automatic recognition of joint programmes for European Alliances. Greater efforts are required at European level to resolve differences in national legislation that act as an impediment to the scaling up of joint programmes.

This section of recommendations section ends with a word **on IT**. CHARM-EU didn't plan to invest in a joint system and use the existing IT system of the partner institutions depending on the matter: management tools from UB as coordinator, admission and enrolment IT systems of UB for the same reason, UU digital learning environment as teaching and learning work package leaders, etc. However, the experience has shown a need of some joint IT solutions that need to be analysed: digital identity, one joint office system, database accessible by all the partners, joint learning environment integrated with one CHARM-EU joint digital identity, to mention some of them. It will be a key element in the future of CHARM-EU and all the European Universities. They face a challenge trying to come together in the analysis to find joint solutions and not trying to reinvent the wheel by each of them.

5. Glossary

Accreditation

Accreditation is "The process by which a (non-) governmental or private body evaluates the quality of a higher education institution as a whole or of a specific educational programme in order to formally recognize it as having met certain predetermined minimal criteria or standards" (Agency for Science in Higher Education). [30]

European approach

The European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes, adopted by European Ministers responsible for higher education, has been developed to ease external quality assurance of these programmes: it defines standards that are based on the agreed tools of the EHEA, without applying additional national criteria. This is expected to facilitate integrated approaches to quality assurance of joint programmes, which genuinely reflect and mirror their joint character.[31]

Finance

"Finance is defined as the management of money and includes activities such as investing, borrowing, lending, budgeting, saving, and forecasting."[32]

Governance

The manner in which power and authority is exercised in organisations in the allocation and management of resources (Carnegie, 2010).[33]

Human Resources Management

"Human resources management (HRM) is a distinctive approach to employment management which seeks to achieve competitive advantage through the strategic deployment of highly committed and capable workforce using an array of cultural, structural and personnel techniques" (Storey, 1995).[34]

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[30] Agency for science and higher education (2022, October 12). *Glossary of terms used on this site.* https://www.azvo.hr/en/component/seoglossary/6-quality-assurance-and-accreditation-glossary-basic-terms-and

[31] EQAR (2022, October 12). *European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes*. https://www.eqar.eu/kb/joint-programmes/

[32] Corporate Finance Institute (2022, October 24). *Definition of finance*. https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/knowledge/finance/what-is-finance-definition/

[33] Gary Carnegie (2010). *Understanding the ABC of University Governance*. The Australian Journal of Public Administration, vol. 69, no. 4, pp. 431–441

[34] John Storey (1995) *Human Resource Management A Critical Text*. Routledge.

Management

The process of working with and through others to achieve organisational objectives in a changing environment (Kreitner, 1995). [35]

Policy

A predetermined course of action established as a guide toward accepted objectives and strategies of the organisation.

Procedure

An established method of accomplishing a task, with steps that are performed in a prescribed order.

Professional development

Professional development is the processes by which administrative or academic staff gain and develop skills and knowledge in order to improve as a professional.

Quality assurance

Quality Assurance is an all-embracing term referring to an ongoing, continuous process of evaluating (assessing, monitoring, guaranteeing, maintaining, and improving) the quality of a higher education system, institutions, or programmes. As a regulatory mechanism, quality assurance focuses on both accountability and improvement, providing information and judgments through an agreed upon and consistent process and well-established criteria.

Work conditions

Work conditions are defined by the work environment and the conditions of employment such as schedule, days off, etc.

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[35] Robert Kreitner (1995). *Management*. Houghton Mifflin.

Annex 1: CHARM EU Policy Template

Annex 2: Policy Checklist

Annex 3: Guidelines for writing good policies

Annex 4: Tuition Fees

Annex 5: Refund Policy

Annex 6: Grants Policy

Annex 7: Complementary information to Grants Policy

Annex 8: Programme Financial Management

Annex 9: Recruitment and nomination of CHARM-EU teaching staff

Annex 10: Joint Virtual Administrative Office: roles and responsibilities

Annex 11: Student Services Policy

Annex 12: Quality Management System Policy

Annex 13: New Programme Design and Approval Policy

Annex 14: Procedure on the Approval of New Programmes Interim Process

Annex 15: Appeals Policy

Annex 16: Appeals Procedure

Annex 17: Complaints Policy

Annex 18: Complaints Procedure

Annex 19: Admission Regulations

Annex 20: Assessment Regulations

Annex 21: Programme Monitoring and Review Policy

Annex 22: Phase Review Process

Annex 23: Legal requirements – Comparison of different types of EU separate legal entities

Annex 24: CHARM-EU New Policy and procedure design and approval process