AQAS

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QUALITÄTSSICHERUNG DURCH
AKKREDITIERUNG VON
STUDIENGÄNGEN E.V.

EXPERTS REPORT

OFFSHORE WIND ENERGY (MBA)

OFFERED BY

HOCHSCHULE BREMERHAVEN (GERMANY)

AND

BUSINESS ACADEMY SOUTHWEST (DENMARK)

Assessment following the European Approach
for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes

December 2020

DRAFT DECISION OF THE STANDING COMMISSION OF AQAS

ON THE DEGREE PROGRAMME

OFFSHORE WIND ENERGY (MBA)

OFFERED BY

HOCHSCHULE BREMERHAVEN (GERMANY)
AND BUSINESS ACADEMY SOUTHWEST (DENMARK)

Based on the report of the expert panel and the discussions of the Standing Commission in its 8th meeting on 22 February 2021, the Standing Commission decides:

1. The study programme **"Offshore Wind Energy"** with the degree "**Master of Business Administration"** offered by **Hochschule Bremerhaven** in cooperation with **Business Academy Southwest** is **accredited** according to the criteria and procedures defined in the European Approach for Quality assurance of Joint Programmes.
   The study programme complies with the requirements defined by the European Approach for Quality assurance of Joint Programmes and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) in their current version.
2. The accreditation is given for the period of **six years** and is valid until **30 September 2027**.

The following **recommendations** are given for further improvement of the programme:

1. The consortium should include legal aspects in the programme also at the level of intended outcomes: from regulatory politics including subsidy schemes down to administrative decisions like permission and admission.
2. Particular attention should be given to the academic foundation of the modules and to including recent research topics in the future development of the programme.
3. The consortium should incorporate a member with a strong academic profile into the advisory board of the programme.
4. Joint supervision of final MBA projects / final theses with supervisors from both consortium partners should be considered.
5. The consortium should monitor the coherence of teaching methods within the programme carefully.
6. Close monitoring of the upcoming needs of the industry and their implementation into the programme and potential competition should be constant part of discussions in the Study Board to assure programme sustainability.

With regard to the reasons for this decision the Standing Commission refers to the attached assessment report.

ASSESSMENT REPORT

ON THE

OFFSHORE WIND ENERGY (MBA)

OFFERED BY

HOCHSCHULE BREMERHAVEN (GERMANY) AND BUSINESS ACADEMY SOUTHWEST (DENMARK)

virtual site visit: 15.12.2020

Expert group:

Prof. Dr.-Ing. Andreas Reuter	Leibniz University Hannover, Fraunhofer IWES
Prof. René Chester Goduscheit	Aarhus University, Department of Business Development and Technology
Dirk Briese	CEO Wind:Research, Bremen (representative of the labour market)
Philipp Schulz	student at RWTH Aachen (student representative)

coordinator:

Ronny Heintze	AQAS e.V., Germany

I. Preamble

AQAS – Agency for Quality Assurance through Accreditation of Study Programmes – is an independent non-profit organisation, supported by more than 90 member institutions, both higher education institutions (HEIs) and academic associations. Since 2002, the agency has been accredited by the German Accreditation Council (GAC). It is therefore a notified body for accreditation of higher education institutions and programmes in Germany.

AQAS is a full member of ENQA and also listed in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) which confirms that our procedures comply with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), on which all Bologna countries agreed as a basis for internal and external quality assurance.

AQAS is an institution founded by and working for higher education institutions and academic associations. The agency is devoted to quality assurance and quality development of both academic studies and teaching in Higher Education Institutions. The activities of AQAS in accreditation are neither restrained to specific academic disciplines or degrees nor to a certain type of Higher Education Institution

II. Accreditation procedure

This report results from the external review of the **MBA** programme in **Offshore Wind Energy** offered jointly by Hochschule Bremerhaven (Germany) and Business Academy Southwest (Denmark).

1. Criteria

The programme is assessed against the criteria defined by the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes The criteria are based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) 2015.

2. Approach and methodology

The initialisation

The university mandated AQAS to perform the accreditation procedure in March 2020.

The University consortium produced a Self-Evaluation Report (SER). In March 2020, the consortium delivered a draft of the SER together with the relevant documentation of the study programme and an appendix.

The appendix included e.g.:

- Information on the status of the institutions,
- The cooperation agreement including the specific supplement)
- CVs of the teaching staff
- Quality Guidelines for further education programmes
- Examination regulations
- Admission regulations

- A sample diploma supplement

The accreditation procedure was officially initialised by a decision of the AQAS Standing Commission in May 2020.

AQAS scrutinised the SER regarding completeness, comprehensibility and transparency. The final version of the SER was handed in August 2020.

The nomination of the panel of expert

The composition of the panel of experts follows the stakeholder principle. Consequently, representatives from the respective discipline/s, the labour market and students are involved. Furthermore, AQAS follows principles for the selection of experts of the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA).

In September 2020 the Standing Commission nominated the expert panel. AQAS informed the consortium of the universities about the members of the expert panel and the consortium did not raise any concerns against the composition of the panel. The following panel of experts was nominated:

- **Prof. Dr.-Ing. Andreas Reuter**, Leibniz University Hannover, Fraunhofer IWES
- **Prof. René Chester Goduscheit**, Aarhus University,
  Department of Business Development and Technology
- **Dirk Briese**, CEO Wind:Research, Bremen (representative of the labour market)
- **Philipp Schulz**, student at RWTH Aachen (student representative)

The preparation of the site visit

Prior to the site visit, the experts reviewed the SER and submitted a short preliminary statement including open questions and potential needs for additional information. AQAS forwarded these preliminary statements to the universities and to the panel members in order to increase transparency in the process and the upcoming discussions during the site visit.

The site visit

After a review of the Self Evaluation Report, a virtual site visit to Hochschule Bremerhaven took place on 15. December 2020. During the meetings, the experts interviewed different stakeholders, e.g. the management of the HEI, the programme management, teaching and other staff, as well as future students in separate discussions and consulted additional documentation. The visit concluded by the presentation of the preliminary findings of the group of experts to the consortium's representatives.

The report writing

After the site visit had taken place, the expert group drafted the following report, assessing the fulfilment of the AQAS criteria for the programme accreditation. The report included a recommendation to the AQAS Commission. The report was sent to the consortium for comments.

The decision

The report, together with the comments of the consortium, forms the basis for the AQAS Commission to make a decision regarding the accreditation of the programme. Based on these two documents, in February 2021 the Standing Commission took its decision on the accreditation. AQAS forwarded the decision to the consortium. The consortium had the right to appeal against the decision or any of the imposed conditions.

In April 2021, AQAS published the report and the result of the accreditation as well as the names of the panel of experts.

III. General Information on the Universities

The Offshore Wind Energy MBA is a further education programme with a joint degree offered by Business Academy SouthWest (BASW) and University of Applied Sciences Bremerhaven (HSBHV).

Business Academy SouthWest (BASW) is a regional education and research institution with campuses in Esbjerg and Sønderborg in Denmark. The geographic proximity to the North Sea means that the focal point of many local businesses and institutions is related to the offshore wind industry. For many years, the Academy has educated students for positions within the industry through commercial, IT and technical education and training.

University of Applied Sciences Bremerhaven (HSBHV) is described as a partner well-positioned in wind energy technology, including its Institute of Wind Energy (fk-wind) with industry and other research partners. They already offer both Bachelor and Master programmes focussing on wind energy technology.

The Offshore Wind Energy MBA is a further education programme with a joint degree offered by both institutions. For more than a decade, they have co-operated in research activities. The development of the Offshore Wind Energy MBA is based on the EU Interreg North Sea Programme Inn2POWER in which both universities are partners. Further partners in this project are cluster organizations from the wind energy sector. This larger project started in October 2016.

IV. Assessment of the study programme(s)

1. Eligibility

1.1 The institutions that offer a joint programme should be recognised as higher education institutions by the relevant authorities of their countries. Their respective national legal frameworks should enable them to participate in the joint programme and, if applicable, to award a joint degree. The institutions awarding the degree(s) should ensure that the degree(s) belong to the higher education degree systems of the countries in which they are based.
1.2 The joint programme should be offered jointly, involving all cooperating institutions in the design and delivery of the programme.
1.3 The terms and conditions of the joint programme should be laid down in a cooperation agreement. The agreement should in particular cover the following issues: • *Denomination of the degree(s) awarded in the programme* • *Coordination and responsibilities of the partners involved regarding management and financial organisation (including funding, sharing of costs and income etc.)* • *Admission and selection procedures for students* • *Mobility of students and teachers* • *Examination regulations, student assessment methods, recognition of credits and degree awarding procedures in the consortium.*

Description

The two participating universities have already been working together since 2010 and explain in the SER that since then, an exchange about teaching formats, practice transfer, further education and projects has taken place. As part of the documentation, both universities provided evidence for the recognition in their respective national frameworks.

With the preparation of the EU project application Inn2POWER in 2014, this common basis with a focus on further education, teaching innovation and the offshore wind industry, which both institutions in Esbjerg and Bremerhaven share, was a particularly important focus of the cooperation.

The Offshore Wind Energy MBA is an entirely new development of a programme that did not previously exist at either of the two universities. In this respect, both universities have developed a joint product, while the degree of an MBA is known and practiced in both national frameworks, independent from joint offerings. As part of the documentation, both partners describe that the degree is awarded jointly, and consequently, the joint programme delivers a joint degree.

Both universities signed a collaboration agreement targeting at the joint Offshore Wind Energy MBA on1 June 2018. The agreement regulates the basic principles of ruling the programme and is an annex to the SER. The programme's implementation is facilitated by the “Verein zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Weiterbildung an der Hochschule Bremerhaven e.V.” and the specific regulations regarding this cooperation are subject to an additional trilateral agreement which was annexed to the SER.

Experts’ Evaluation

Both Hochschule Bremerhaven and Business Academy Southwest are recognized as higher education institutions by the relevant authorities of respectively Germany/Federal State of Bremen and Denmark. As described in the self-evaluation report, both institutions are enabled by their respective legal framework to deliver joint programmes and award a joint degree. For Hochschule Bremerhaven, this results from § 12 Bremisches Hochschulgesetz, for Business Academy Southwest from Chapter 3, § 9 Regulations for the Applied Science Institutions in Denmark. As the awarded degree is an MBA, this is in line with the regulations of the higher education systems of both Denmark and Germany. The experts fully concur with the explanations in the self-evaluation as there is no doubt about the legal status of the institutions and the nature of the degree in both national contexts.

For detailed regulations regarding the joint programme, three documents are important: First, both parties signed a cooperation agreement aiming at the joint development of the MBA programme in 2018. In addition to that, a so-called “Supplement to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for institutional cooperation” between the two partners has been signed in 2020. This document particularly includes regulations regarding the degree awarded in the joint programme, coordination and responsibilities of the partners involved regarding management and financial organization (including funding, sharing of costs and income etc.), admission and selection procedures for students, mobility of students and teachers as well as examination regulations, student assessment methods, recognition of credits and degree awarding procedures in the consortium. In terms of administrative and financial affairs, a third agreement is to be considered, the trilateral contract with the “Verein zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Weiterbildung an der Hochschule Bremerhaven e.V.”. With this “Verein”, responsibilities for administrative and financial issues in context of the MBA programme are operationally implanted, which is a practical and hands-on solution which is also supported by the panel of experts.

Taking all three agreements into account, all relevant aspects of the criterion “eligibility” are adequately addressed. The consortium between Hochschule Bremerhaven and Business Academy Southwest, administratively supported by “Verein zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Weiterbildung an der Hochschule Bremer-

haven e.V." is organized in a way that clearly ensures a reliable and sustainable delivery of the joint programme. In this context, it must be pointed out that all academic core responsibilities are allocated at the higher education institutions, while the "Verein" is only handling financial and administrative affairs.

Using the opportunities resulting from the described legal and contract framework that enables both institutions to establish joint programmes, they have intensely cooperated to design, develop, and deliver the MBA programme together since the very beginning. This happened by meetings, discussions and making use of existing contacts between the institutions. Crucial for this cooperation is the so-called Study Board consisting of representatives of both institutions. Some kind of joint management committee is also required by the Bremisches Hochschulgesetz in case joint study programmes are to be established. The Study Board meets on a regular basis to discuss and decide on all issues related to the Offshore Wind Energy MBA programme which ensures that both institutions are permanently and immediately involved with running the programme. The responsibilities of the Study Board furthermore include those of an admissions, study and examination committee. Consequently, all relevant formal responsibilities are also clearly and transparently allocated in one single joint committee.

The panel of experts used the virtual site visit to discuss the degree awarding and also the orally presented evidence clearly indicates the award of a joint degree as described in the regulations.

Conclusion

Based on the above assessment the panel concludes the criterion is fulfilled.

2. Learning Outcomes

2.1 The intended learning outcomes should align with the corresponding level in the Framework for Qualifications in the European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA), as well as the applicable national qualifications framework(s).
2.2 The intended learning outcomes should comprise knowledge, skills, and competencies in the respective disciplinary field(s).
2.3 The programme should be able to demonstrate that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.
2.4 If relevant for the specific joint programme, the minimum agreed training conditions specified in the European Union Directive 2005/36/EC, or relevant common trainings frameworks established under the Directive, should be taken into account.

Description

The intended management competencies are described to cover the classic requirements of management tasks such as finance, leadership, strategy, logistics and internationalization, but should also strictly be linked to the challenges of the offshore wind industry, which are very different from the challenges of trading, manufacturing or service companies due to technical, regulatory and operational challenges. For this reason, competencies are also being developed, the foundations of which have already been laid in a predominantly technical course of study and/or previous technical experience in the course of professional activity, such as project management or innovation management. The intended result is a competence acquisition that is tailored to the industry, directly relevant to practice and beneficial for the professional development of the MBA participants.

Each of the compulsory modules delivers predefined specific learning outcomes that in combination are aiming at the following programme learning outcomes:

- Ability to manage complex situations in offshore wind energy business,
- Competence to identify risks and challenges by analyzing data gathered and use them for decision making in the complex surroundings of Offshore Wind, considering technical, logistical, economic and ecological aspects simultaneously,
- Competence to integrate business knowledge, analytical skills and management techniques for planning and control,
- Further develop leadership capacity and teamwork skills,
- Ability to autonomously become acquainted with new theories and methods,
- Apply new theories and methods to practical challenges,
- Ability and Capability of evaluating new – if applicable game changing – technologies like new foundation structures or new turbine designs,
- Reflect upon application of theory and methods,
- Evaluate risks and consequences of a relevant set of solutions,
- Ability to communicate these challenges and risks, followed by or combined with problem-solving solutions to relevant stakeholders, solving challenges and reducing risks,
- Understand the influence of global competitive environment and cultural differences.

Experts' Evaluation

From the experts point of view, the intended learning outcomes presented in the SER and discussed during the virtual site visit follow widely internationally recognized benchmarks for establishing a master's in business administration. It describes that the Offshore Wind Energy MBA is a higher education offer at the level of the 2nd cycle (Germany: Master's level). The expert panel generally confirms that the learning outcomes are in line with the respective national qualification frameworks of both partner countries. As an implicit result, the learning outcomes also align with the Master level in the Framework for Qualifications in the European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA). The defined skills and qualifications both provide a broad education – as expected from an MBA – while at the same time focussing on the application in the offshore wind energy sector.

Considering disciplinary requirements, it can be confirmed that the defined outcomes also consider the requirements of the labour market if the level of an MBA. The intended learning outcomes comprise knowledge, skills, and competencies needed in a Master MBA Offshore Wind. Particularly considering the required broadness of the education, and the future work field of the graduates and area which might need future attention in the further development of the intended learning outcomes are legal aspects which are currently only lightly represented in the curricular implementation, while not specifically at target at the level of intended learning outcomes. The experts believe that aspects like regulatory politics, including subsidy schemes down to administrative decisions like permission and admission are important aspects in the field of offshore wind energy. **(Finding 1)** The issue was also discussed during the virtual site visit and the experts conclude that the presented reasons for not including legal aspects at the level of outcomes at this time can be overcome and strongly encourages the consortium to continue its efforts to include legal aspects as part of the continuous enhancement process.

The intention of the programme is to provide its graduates with the ability to integrate business knowledge, analytical skills, and management techniques to further aid planning and control in a complex and changing offshore wind environment. Ultimately for the MBA participants this should lead to a thorough understanding of how the global competitive environment, regulatory framework, international technological developments, and cultural differences may influence business practice in Offshore Wind. Since the programme did not yet produce any graduates measuring the achievement of course is hard to demonstrate. Based on the SER the experts conclude that the programme is designed in a way that the intended learning outcomes are likely to be achieved. This is supported by an innovative and student-centred teaching approach as well as the staff available to implement the teaching process. It will be important for the programme to critically self-reflect the achievement of all outcomes once a relevant number of graduates is produced as at this time demonstration of achievement will be based on a more profound evidence base.

The experts agree with the consortium that European Union Directive 2005/36/EC is not applicable to the provided qualification.

Finding

The expert panel recommends the consortium to include legal aspects in the programme also at the level of intended outcomes: from regulatory politics including subsidy schemes down to administrative decisions like permission and admission, both of existential importance for Offshore Wind projects.

Conclusion

Based on the above assessment the panel concludes the criterion is fulfilled.

3. Study Programme

3.1 The structure and content of the curriculum should be fit to enable the students to achieve the intended learning outcomes. *3.2* The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) should be applied properly and the distribution of credits should be clear. 3.3 A joint bachelor programme will typically amount to a total student workload of 180-240 ECTS-credits; a joint master programme will typically amount to 90-120 ECTS-credits and should not be less than 60 ECTS-credits at second cycle level (credit ranges according to the FQ-EHEA); for joint doctorates there is no credit range specified. The workload and the average time to complete the programme should be monitored.

Description

As of 2020, the curriculum consists of nine modules and the master thesis:

- Module 1: Future Scenarios in Strategy Development
- Module 2: Operational Leadership
- Module 3: Innovative Project Management
- Module 4: Operational Risk and Safety Management
- Module 5: Economics of Offshore Wind Farms

- Module 6: People Management
- Module 7: Innovation through Collaboration
- Module 8: Logistics and Supply Chain Management
- Module 9: Global Business
- Module 99: MBA Thesis

Students have to follow all ten modules. They can choose any of the modules 1 to 9 to start with and finalize their MBA by realizing their MBA Thesis. Consequently, there is no fixed sequence of modules, allowing participants a flexible entry and progression.

Starting 2022, the curriculum will provide three additional modules to increase potential areas of specialization, as from then on participants will have the option to choose nine out of twelve modules. Each module counts for 5 Credit Points, with the master thesis equalling 15 Credit Points. In total the Offshore Wind Energy MBA counts for 60 Credit Points.

As students can flexibly join the modules and do their studies in addition to the workload of their jobs, the total duration of the programme strongly depends on the students themselves. Studying all modules in a row, the duration would be about two and a half years (five semesters).

Experts' Evaluation

The programme is well structured and designed in a way that students can enter at any time since modules do not build on each other but constitute a separate entity that builds a defined skill/qualification. The combination of the different modules added with the final master thesis builds the qualification of a master. The panel of experts believe that this structure enables the achievement of the required level particularly in light of the specifics of the target group of the programme, and thus applaud the consortium for this well thought and flexible approach. It is evident that the programme is built close to the needs of application and applicable skills and competencies.

Nevertheless, an assessment of the various modules tends to indicate that some of the modules are less academically grounded than others. **(Finding 2)** Some of the courses incorporate recent research within the respective fields, while others employ relatively dated publications. As an illustrative example, *Module 1: Future Scenarios in Strategy Development* lists seven sources, out of which only two publications are from the last decade. With a topic on future scenarios, one could have anticipated more contemporary articles as part of the readings for the module. Similarly, *Module 3: Innovative Project Management* does not outline any academic articles but merely textbooks. This appears somewhat surprising when the academic interest in this particular field is taken into account. While the expert panel acknowledges the essentiality of being able to adjust the content of the modules, it is suggested to incorporate some indicative readings for all the modules in order to enhance the academic quality of the modules. This impression, that was based on the provided documentation, was partially balanced as part of the virtual site visit discussions, in which the intention to use broader and more up-to-date literature was explained beyond the fact that the focus of the description in the modules apparently was not on the literature list. Continuous updating is recommended particularly to support the demonstration of an academically well-grounded teaching. Particularly based on the discussions during the virtual site visit, the experts conclude that the described concerns are less a problem of and sufficiently academic teaching, but more a problem of reflection of the academic approach in the provided documentation. Consequently, these initial concerns do not directly impact the achievement of outcomes by the curriculum.

In order to emphasize the essentiality of the academic quality of the teaching in general and also on specific module level, the expert panel suggests incorporating an academic profile into the advisory board of the programme. A person with a strong research profile (e.g. a university professor) in the advisory board could contribute to the quality assurance of the teaching and provide sparring for the teaching staffs in terms of the latest research within the various fields of interest. **(Finding 3)**

On the other hand, a strong point for the programme is the teacher team structure which directly impacts the implementation of the modules. The expert panel applaud the effort to create teams of teachers that can supplement each other in the teaching development, planning and execution. By combining academics and practitioners in the teaching, but also the curricular implementation and preparation, the achievement of learning outcomes particularly in an MBA programme that is built close to application, is greatly facilitated.

Considering the appropriate implementation of the ECTS, the panel believes that with a clear allocation of credits per module, that is also connected to an expected amount of work out for students, the ECTS is very well implemented. The structure of the programme indeed uses the benefits of ECTS as it enables flexible in learning and the combination of modules and thus centres around the needs of diverse students that can use the programme along the lines of their individual situation in life. With a defined amount of 60 credit points the master programme is also in line with the European requirements for such a degree.

Findings

The expert panel suggests that particular attention is given to the academic foundation of the modules in the future development of the programme.

The expert panel suggests incorporating an academic profile into the advisory board of the programme.

Conclusion

Based on the above assessment the panel concludes the criterion is fulfilled.

4. Admission and Recognition

4.1 The admission requirements and selection procedures should be appropriate in light of the programme's level and discipline.
4.2 Recognition of qualifications and of periods of studies (including recognition of prior learning) should be applied in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention and subsidiary documents.

Description

As stated in the SER, the admission criteria are:

- First professional qualification (Bachelor or diploma from a university, university of applied sciences or comparable foreign university)
- at least two years of relevant professional experience in the offshore wind industry or related fields

The formal criterion is a first professional qualification combined with two years' work experience. For exceptional cases when the applicants do not meet these criteria, the consortium agreed on exceptional rules that on an individual level may allow a candidate to still be considered if they can demonstrate other capabilities or relevant professional qualifications e.g. more than five years' business experience in the industry. Candidates must show proficiency in English to successfully participate in the modules and go through extensive pre-

reading (as least level B2 according to the European frame of reference). The Study board then decides about the admission of each applicant.

In case of the recognition of equivalent competences the Study board will examine the documents of the applicant and decide about admission following the Lisbon Recognition Convention and subsidiary documents. Modules which are equivalent to the curriculum of the Offshore Wind Energy MBA and which have been completed at other universities can be recognized for the Offshore Wind Energy MBA.

Experts' Evaluation

The experts carefully reviewed the admission requirements which are clearly defined in the respective documents and also discuss these requirements as part of the virtual site visit not only with the programme coordination, but also with prospective students. On both levels, the formal as well as the level of required incoming qualifications, the panel of experts concludes that the defined regulations are appropriate and fit for purpose. With the requirements of two years of prior working experience in the respective fields, the target group is very well defined, and the admission requirements positively echo the didactic concept of the programme so both aspects go very well together.

As the programme currently requires 240 CP as a standard entry requirement, it even reflects the relatively strict German interpretation of a master's degree only to be awarded after regular completion of 300 CP. In order to increase flexibility at the intake level, the programme also defined individual recognition options for potential incoming students with less than 240 CP which is well done and formally correct from the expert's point of view. However, on the long run, it creates a hurdle as many bachelor's degrees in the respective fields award only 180 or 210 CP. The experts recognize that this 300 CP requirement is not a common requirement across Europe and consequently not a requirement in the European approach accreditation. Thus, the consortium is encouraged to internally reassess the legal requirement to implement this national interpretation of admission for master level programmes.

Independent of experts also discussed the recognition regulations, that are appropriately defined in the regulations, and that are ready to use as also the operational implementation is structurally well prepared in the consortium.

Conclusion

Based on the above assessment the panel concludes the criterion is fulfilled.

5. Learning, Teaching and Assessment

5.1 The programme should be designed to correspond with the intended learning outcomes, and the learning and teaching approaches applied should be adequate to achieve those. The diversity of students and their needs should be respected and attended to, especially in view of potential different cultural backgrounds of the students.

5.2 The examination regulations and the assessment of the achieved learning outcomes should correspond with the intended learning outcomes. They should be applied consistently among partner institutions.

Description

The teaching format in each module is to be realized by a lecturing team consisting of a main lecturer and a second lecturer. While the main lecturer is responsible for the entire course and has profound teaching competences, the second lecturer has broad and recent offshore wind industry experience and brings in the case, on which the participants work during the workshops and between the workshops.

Each module starts with an introductory session using videoconferencing. This kicks off the individual preparation of each participant by readings.

After the introductory session and the individual preparation phase, the first workshop per two days takes place. It is followed by a four to eight weeks phase of casework, where the participants work on the assignments and cases prepared and discussed during the first workshop. After this, the second workshop per two days takes place, followed by a period of three to four weeks to finalize the given assignments.

The final grade for the Offshore Wind Energy MBA is calculated from the grades achieved for individual components of the programme. There are nine MBA modules (2020) with the plan to extend it to respectively 13 modules in 2022. Assessment for these modules combines written exams, individual and/or group coursework. Lecturers can choose individual assessments within their module. These assessments could be through a written and/or an oral examination.

Students will be confronted with case-based learning, with the challenge to solve being a current and relevant case from a real ‘client’. The exam is to document that the student can apply central theories and methods taught in the module. The purpose of the module examination is to further the academic and personal development. The individual learning and performance can be assessed in numerous ways (following the examination regulations), depending on the lecturer’s didactic and pedagogical approach, but the student will receive only one overall grade. If the module examination consists of both a written and an oral part, then the written/oral ratio will be announced in advance and will be used accordingly.

All MBA students in the programme are required to complete an MBA project. The MBA project is designed to tie together everything that students have learnt on the course, enabling them to apply theory and method to real managerial issues. They will conduct an in-depth research project into a particular organization or business area using the knowledge and skills they have developed throughout the course. The project is a practical learning experience, and students will be expected to plan and execute the project under the guidance of a dedicated supervisor with specialist knowledge of their area of interest.

Experts’ Evaluation

The panel of experts believes that the implemented teaching methods, the didactic concept of the curriculum and the different learning phases very well meet both, the requirements of the learners, while also enabling and achievement of the intended outcome on programme level. Designed as a programme that attracts learners who are already working in the field, the organization of a learning format that allows a balance between occupation, personal life, and learning is a high priority. The module structure with a balanced combination of self-study, joint seminars/workshops, preparation, and presentation is very well aligned with the intended

achievement of the master programme. A noteworthy strong point is the alignment between the learning outcomes and the exams, which concludes the various modules. The emphasis is on the ability of the students to engage in the workshops but also the capacity to present the learning in both a written and oral format clearly is a good example of assessment methods that fit the intended outcomes. This positive impression is for the most supported by the flexibility of the curriculum that enables students to bring their own cases, work in small groups with changing members and thus create a learning environment that is very close to the requirements of the application in the industry.

The expert panel noted the expedient approach to the MBA project which opens up for the potential of students to both works with their 'own' organization but also to work collaboratively amongst the students on common challenges confronting the industry as a whole. This seems very well embedded and in line with the overall character of the programme.

To further strengthen the achievement of intended learning outcomes one element that at the same time fosters the jointness within the programme could be the joint supervision of Master theses respectively MBA projects (shared between Bremerhaven and Esbjerg). This would implicitly also contribute in the medium term towards a further alignment of assessment criteria. **(Finding 4)** Ideally, this would be further enhanced if the Master theses respectively MBA project are always arranged with industrial partners, handling up to date topics the partner directly uses in his (strategic or even in the day-to-day) business.

With a growing number of students, an interesting aspect to consider will be the careful analysis of the diversity of the students, e.g. coming from quite different backgrounds, as well as cultural as industrial. The broad variety within the offshore wind value chain will carve out quite different needs and topics: from strategical to financial or logistical contents, from "hand-on and fast" problem-solving and decision-making to sophisticated business planning, considering all up and downsides, pointed out in different scenarios, even for 25 or 30 years in advance. Based on this analysis it will be interesting to assess if the programme's intended broadness is put into practice or that the individual preferences of the diverse student body lead to certain imbalances the one way or the other. While the experts found no reason for concern in this area, it is the particularity of the didactic model chosen by the programme and the strongly student-centred approach, that of course then also requires an evaluation of the impact of this strong reflection of the individual students' backgrounds.

The experts also positively confirm that the regulations for assessment and supervision offer joint regulations across the programme and that the Study Board is the central decision-making body of the consortium also supervises the implementation of the assessment regulations. Simultaneously, the panel of experts encourages the programme management also to monitor the consistent implementation of examination regulations and not ignore inconsistencies in the teaching methods between the two partners involved in each module. While it is a clear strength of the programme to work with two different instructors in each module, a coherent approach across the programme – while respecting individual diversity – has to be maintained. **(Finding 5)** Again, it is important to underline that the panel of experts found no reason or evidence for any problems in this area; however, it is the progressive teaching methodology chosen by the programme that also requires a advanced monitoring mechanism.

Finding

Joint supervision of final MBA projects / final thesis with supervisors from both consortium partners should be considered.

The expert panel recommends the consortium to monitor coherence of teaching methods within the programme carefully.

Conclusion

Based on the above assessment the panel concludes the criterion is fulfilled.

6. Student Support

The student support services should contribute to the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. They should take into account specific challenges of mobile students.

Description

The consortium agreed that with the matriculation all students have access to the full library functionality of the Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Bremen including online services. As the central library, it is responsible for the state-wide literature supply of the state universities in Bremen and Bremerhaven.

Students will have a university e-mail account and access to the e-learning system ELLI of Bremerhaven University of Applied Sciences to which as well all lecturers have full access. Via ELLI, students can contact their lecturers or fellow students.

Contact to the Study board can be made via e-mail or phone. Contact details of the respective subject director of each module, who is also part of the Study board, are available online at each module flyer.

Experts' Evaluation

As discussed during the virtual on-site visit, the students consider themselves well-supported by the higher education institutions and their representatives. Due to close contact between students and the programme coordinators in both Esbjerg and Bremerhaven, any upcoming issue on the student side can usually be solved within a very short time. For instance, courses had to be reorganized due to the COVID-19 situation, and the students explained the process to be organized in a way that clearly puts students' needs and realities in the centre of attention to assure the feasibility of the programme. As most of the students did not want to follow the courses in an online format but rather meet in person, the programme coordinators decided to postpone these courses until meetings in person will be possible again. This supports the didactic teaching approach's upkeeping and also reflects the importance of exchange between students while being exposed to different teaching surroundings at different host institutions. The experts are well aware that it was probably not an easy decision for the consortium to pause courses and welcome that students were not only involved in the decision but obviously a strong supporter of it.

For continuous student support, several online resources are provided by both partners with ELLI, and the library access in Bremen/Bremerhaven mentioned above being the most important ones. Regarding online library access individual students reported during the on-site visit that there had some problems with the VPN connection. This was obviously not new to the consortium while it was beyond the mandate of the panel of experts to follow up on individual cases. Consequently, the panel of experts underlines the importance of well-functioning remote access to the library and the necessary information for the students on how to install a VPN connection to the library. It might even be a good idea for the consortium to follow up on the system's actual use as part of their quality assurance activities.

Generally, the experts conclude that the implemented student support mechanism is very much tailored to the needs of the specific group of students in the programme. They also are designed in a way that support is available independently from the individual geographical location of the student.

Conclusion

Based on the above assessment the panel concludes the criterion is fulfilled.

7. Resources

7.1 The staff should be sufficient and adequate (qualifications, professional and international experience) to implement the study programme.
7.2 The facilities provided should be sufficient and adequate in view of the intended learning outcomes.

Description

Each module is conducted by the main lecturer who is responsible for the entire course, including the integration of the second lecturer. The main lecturer should have a solid background in the topic and profound teaching competences. A professional background in the offshore wind industry or adjacent fields is an advantage. In addition, a second lecturer, with experience from and/or working in the offshore wind energy industry will deliver and include relevant real cases.

For external lecturers, teaching appointments shall only be given to persons who have completed a university degree at least at master level and who, after two to three years of relevant work, are able to develop and design courses according to scientific principles independently.

The Study board decides about teaching appointments in accordance with the regulations of both universities, e.g. „Ordnung der Hochschule Bremerhaven für die Vergabe von Lehraufträgen (Lehrauftragsordnung)" and "Bekendtgørelse om stillingsstruktur for undervisere ved erhvervsakademier, professionshøjskoler og Danmarks Medie- og Journalisthøjskole" .

The curriculum vitae of the current lecturers were presented to the expert panel as an annex to the SER.

The programme will use facilities of both institutions. However, teaching will also use facilities of partners in order to support the applied character of the programme. Each module is supposed to be implemented at different facilities, as described in the following table:

Module	City	Country	Facilities of ...
Future Scenarios in Strategy Development	Esbjerg	Denmark	Business Academy South West
Operational Leadership	Esbjerg	Denmark	Business Academy South West
Innovative Project Management	Hamburg	Germany	DNV GL
Operational Risk and Safety Management	Bremerhaven	Germany	University of Applied Sciences Bremerhaven

Economics of Offshore Wind Farms	Delft	The Nether-lands	DOB Academy
People Management	Ostend	Belgium	Bluebridge
Innovation through Collaboration	Esbjerg	Denmark	Business Academy South West
Logistics and Supply Chain Manage-ment	Hamburg	Germany	N/A
Global Business	Esbjerg	Denmark	Business Academy South West

Experts' Evaluation

The experts support the described and already well-practiced approach of having two lecturers for each course/module combining academic and industry perspectives in the curriculum. This approach makes very good use of the academically well-qualified teams of both higher education institutions, while also linking their qualifications to the industry perspective represented with a lecturer coming from professional practice. With the provided information on the available teaching staff at both institutions, sufficiency and adequacy of teaching staff can be testified. The support of a third-party, namely the "Verein", is an adequate way to assure the availability of support mechanisms and staff for the non-academic parts, which flexibly reacts to the student's needs and provides administrative support.

The programme's concept implements changing locations for the different modules which is seen as a significant additional effort by the experts, and very much appreciated by the students as confirmed during the virtual site visit. The implementation of these different locations, using facilities of partnering institutions from the offshore wind energy sector, also reflects the close link between the academic world and industry represented in this programme. Of course, this opens up additional options in the future, e.g. to organize joint workshops, securing the differentiation and timeliness of the programme, e.g. regarding new technological (new turbine capacities, assembling methods, foundation structures), legal (new subsidy schemes), ecological (new threshold values) or even economic (PPAs) developments. A continuous and frequent reconcilement would help with the advisory board, especially the industrial part, including regular international trend analysis.

A key aspect from the experts' point of view is the question of sustainability of the programme. Sufficiently high student numbers are key for being able to provide the necessary resources in the long run. The experts positively recognize the clear commitment of the leadership of both higher education institutions to the programme, which assures the availability of resources for the time of the accreditation. At the same time, the programme will only survive with a continuously sufficient number of students. Therefore, the close cooperation with the supporting industry is seen as a vital factor for the future of this master programme. Close monitoring of the upcoming needs of the industry and their implementation into the programme and potential competition should be constant part of discussions in the Study Board **(Finding 6)**.

Finding

Close monitoring of the upcoming needs of the industry and their implementation into the programme and potential competition should be constant part of discussions in the Study Board to assure programme sustainability.

Conclusion

Based on the above assessment the panel concludes the criterion is fulfilled.

8. Transparency and Documentation

Relevant information about the programme like admission requirements and procedures, course catalogue, examination and assessment procedures etc. should be well documented and published by taking into account specific needs of mobile students.

Description

The SER describes that, particularly due to the joint nature of the programme involving two academic institutions, the Offshore Wind Energy MBA faces challenges in making the contents and regulations transparent and comprehensible. Since the target group is international and the industry, the working language is English, not only in teaching but also in communication with the participants. Following current communication standards, the programme's website in particular, is used as an essential source of information. Relevant documents and information, like admission requirements, module descriptions and assessment procedures can be found here and are uploaded by the office management unit.

In addition, reference is made to the legally binding documents published in the respective national language in documents available at the universities in Bremerhaven and Esbjerg. They are also published on the websites of the Business Academy South West and the Bremerhaven University of Applied Sciences.

Students and prospective students can contact the organizational team directly by telephone and E-mail. The Study-board and the administrative unit assigned to the Study-board are available for answers.

Experts' Evaluation

The panel concludes that based on the provided documentation and considering available online resources open to public, relevant key information is well documented and available. This includes information about the programme itself, its outcomes, and the courses, as well as the specific concept of the programme and admission requirements.

The expert panel would like to stress that a particularly strong point is the extensive use of online solutions to ensure the transparency both internally within the teaching staff, between the teaching staff and the students and externally to the wider audience. The teaching staff uses Podio as a means to share teaching material for the various courses, the students have access to the e-learning system Elli, and the external communication is based on the strategic use of Social Media platforms. Furthermore, the website functions as a transparent and intuitive gateway to the programme. All combined, this approach towards information (internal and external) very well allows the availability of timely information, independent from the learner/ teacher/ external audience's geographic position.

Conclusion

Based on the above assessment the panel concludes the criterion is fulfilled.

9. Quality Assurance

The cooperating institutions should apply joint internal quality assurance processes in accordance with part one of the ESG.

Description

The Offshore Wind MBA's quality concept is embedded in the Quality guidelines for scientific continuing education of Hochschule Bremerhaven. The central steering unit of the Offshore Wind Energy MBA is the Study board. The rectorate of both universities nominates the members of the Study board. The SER describes that due to the size of the MBA programme, Study board's function covers all aspects like admission, programme design, quality assurance and examinations. In the Study board, the admissions committee's role and responsibilities, the study commission and the examination committee are integrated. After each workshop, an evaluation takes place, which gives the Study board the opportunity to readjust even during a module and after each module. Students either fill out the evaluation form electronically after the workshops or on site during the last part of each workshop. The evaluation form is also an annex the SER.

Experts' Evaluation

From the experts' point of view, it can be confirmed that an adequate quality assurance system (aligned with the quality guidelines for scientific continuing education of Hochschule Bremerhaven) is installed for this very specific programme.

Evaluations are carried out for every workshop meeting in every course. As explained by the students during the virtual on-site visit, their feedback is actually taken into account (regardless of whether it comes from the formal evaluation or is communicated informally). The experts conclude that the documented evaluation system is also put into practice and works well. In this context, a suggestion for further improvement resulting from the panel's discussion with students is implementing an online questionnaire replacing the paper-pencil-procedure for the workshop evaluation, particularly in light of good use of digital resources in other areas of the programme implementation the experts where quite surprised to see a focus on paper-based methodologies when it comes to evaluations.

As described before, the Study Board serves as the central committee for discussing and deciding on all issues related to implementing the Offshore Wind Energy MBA programme. If necessary, students can also address the Study Board immediately and direct their feedback to their members.

In addition to the Study Board as a decision-making body, both in Denmark and in Germany the higher education institutions have established Advisory Boards consisting of experts from the related industry to facilitate further consultancy on the MBA programme's design and development. After discussing issues in the Advisory Boards, the joint Study Board can take this external feedback as a basis for decisions and actions regarding further development and improvement of the MBA programme. From the experts' point of view, this assures industry input into the teaching process. As discussed above, the experts positively identified the reflection of applicable skills in the individual modules while an in-depth scientific view on all topics in the programme were becoming more visible only in the discussions as it is only indirectly visible in the descriptions of the curriculum. The experts believe that one way to stronger balance these curricular dimensions is by increasing the weight of the academic field in the programme's feedback structure by including experts with a strong academic background in the Advisory Boards and to the members coming from professional practice. This would allow for a dialogue within the advisory body that does not reduce the body to the voice of the industry, but to a two-way communication tool. **(see Finding 3)**

Conclusion

Based on the above assessment the panel concludes the criterion is fulfilled.

V. Recommendations of the panel of experts

The panel of experts recommends to accredit the study programme "**Offshore Wind Energy**" (Master of Business Administration offered by **Hochschule Bremerhaven** (Germany) and **Business Academy Southwest** (Denmark)**.**

Findings:

1. The expert panel recommends the consortium to include legal aspects in the programme also at the level of intended outcomes: from regulatory politics including subsidy schemes down to administrative decisions like permission and admission, both of existential importance for Offshore Wind projects.
2. The expert panel suggests that particular attention is given to the academic foundation of the modules in the future development of the programme.
3. The expert panel suggests incorporating an academic profile into the advisory board of the programme.
4. Joint supervision of final MBA projects / final thesis with supervisors from both consortium partners should be considered.
5. The expert panel recommends the consortium to monitor coherence of teaching methods within the programme carefully.
6. Close monitoring of the upcoming needs of the industry and their implementation into the programme and potential competition should be constant part of discussions in the Study Board to assure programme sustainability.