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Boosting the potential of Joint Degrees in Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Programmes

Solutions to overcoming administrative barriers at institutional level

Noemi Anna Kovacs, CEU

Case study of MESPOM Programme at CEU

„CEU’s distinctive educational program builds on the research tradition of the great American universities; on the most valuable Central European intellectual traditions; on the international diversity of its faculty and students; on its commitment to social service; and on its own history of academic and policy achievements in transforming the closed communist inheritance.”

Mission – international, advanced research&teaching, open society, self-reflective critical thinking

History – 1991 est. multicampus university, 1995 Budapest permanent home, from 2019-2020 in Vienna

Move – unfortunate political climate, Lex CEU in 2017, phase I. 2019-2020 transition/bi-campus, phase II. 2020-2021 permanent move to Vienna

→ Grants, projects, programmes, fellowships to be transferred to Austria!

CEU in a nutshell - context

Erasmus Mundus at CEU

- **MESPOM** – Masters in Environmental Sciences, Policy and Management, coordinated by CEU
- **MundusMAPP** – Masters in Public Policy, coordinated by CEU
- **HIPS** – Masters in History in the Public Sphere, coordinated by CEU and by Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Japan
- **GEMMA** – Masters Degree in Women's and Gender Studies, coordinated by Universidad de Granada



MESPOM
Masters in
Environmental
Sciences, Policy
and Management

hips



Gemma
Erasmus Mundus Master's Degree
in Women's and Gender Studies

MESPOM

- 1st edition (M1): 2005-2011
- 2nd edition (M2): 2010-2016

Gap years: 2015-2018

- 3rd edition (M3): 2018-2023

Gap years: 2020, 2022

- 4th edition (M4): 2023-2028



MESPOM
Masters in
Environmental
Sciences, Policy
and Management

MESPOM – Consortium Partners

- Central European University (CEU, Austria)
policies and governance angle
- The University of the Aegean (UAegean, Greece)
ecosystems management and rural sustainability angle
- The University of Manchester, (UoM, UK)
science angle
- Lund University (LU, Sweden)
management angle

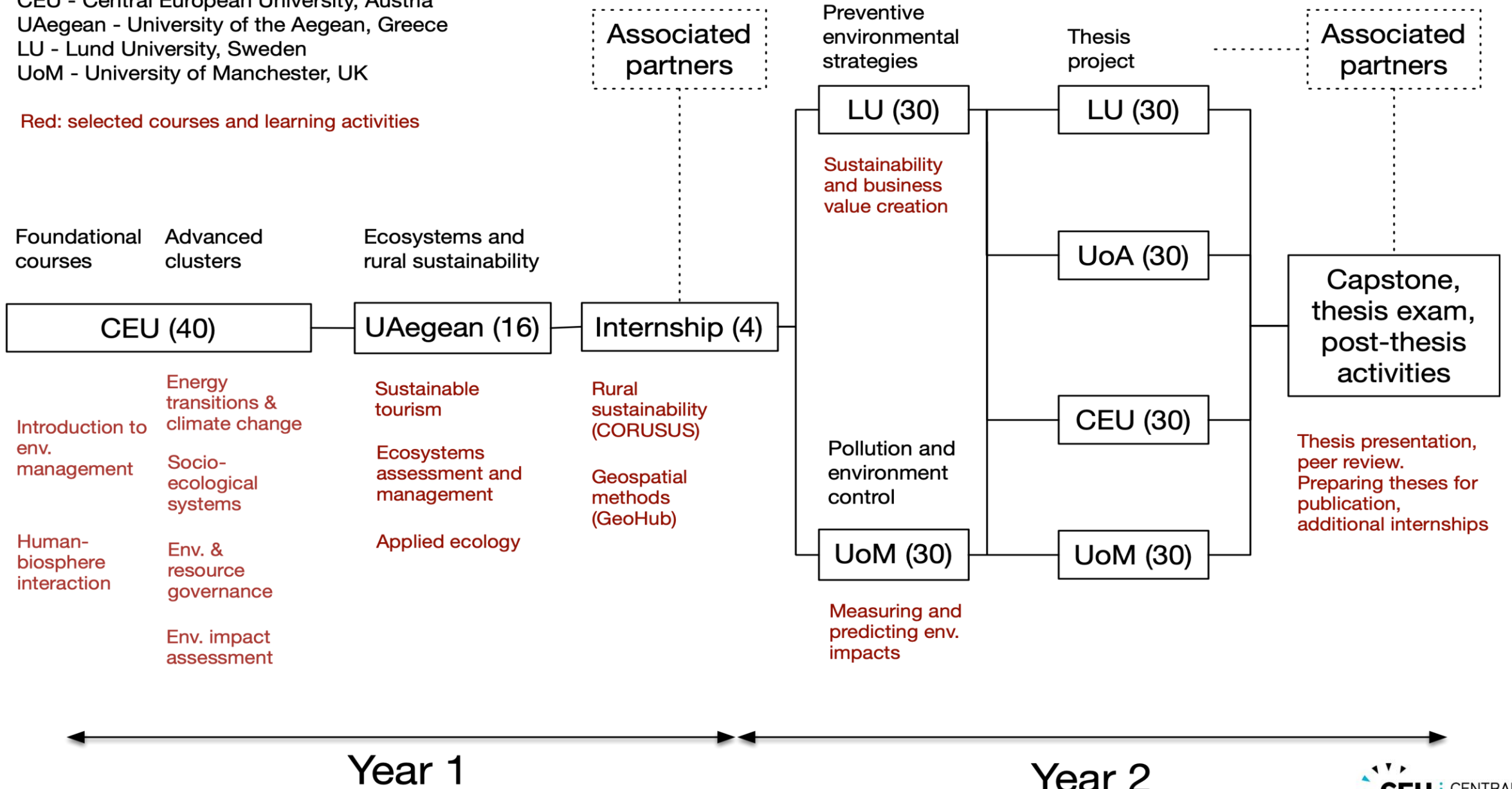


MESPOM Associate, Internship and Thesis Research Partners

- [alchemia-nova GmbH](#), institute for circular economy & nature-based solutions, Austria (AP)
- [Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment](#), India
- [AvantGarde Energy s.r.o.](#), Slovakia (AP)
- [Chinese Research Academy of Environmental Sciences](#), China
- [Ecoline International Ltd](#), Ukraine and Bulgaria (AP)
- [Fleming College](#), Canada (AP)
- [Fundacion Amigos de la Naturaleza \(FAN\)](#), Bolivia
- [International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis](#), Austria
- [International Institute for Sustainable Development](#), Canada
- [Institute for Climate protection, Energy and Mobility \(IKEM\)](#), Germany (AP)
- [Natural History Museum of the Lesvos Petrified Forest](#), Greece (AP)
- [Paulo Freire Zentrum c/o Mattersburger Kreis für Entwicklungspolitik an der Osterreichischen Universitäten](#), Austria (AP)
- [Schneider Electric Energy and Sustainability Services](#), Hungary and UK
- [SEI-Oxford](#), UK
- [South African Environmental Observatory Network](#) (facility of the National Research Foundation), South Africa (AP)
- [Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences Uppsala](#), Sweden
- [The Hebrew University of Jerusalem](#), Israel (AP)
- [Tomorrow2day Sustainability Consulting AB](#), Sweden
- [Trelleborg AB](#), Sweden
- [University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences](#) (Universität für Bodenkultur Wien, BOKU) (AP)
- [University of Witwaterstrand Johannesburg](#), South Africa (AP)

CEU - Central European University, Austria
 UAegean - University of the Aegean, Greece
 LU - Lund University, Sweden
 UoM - University of Manchester, UK

Red: selected courses and learning activities



MESPOM – Joint Degree

CEU's legal background

- CEU New York: accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education
- CEU PU: accredited by the Agentur für Qualitätssicherung und Akkreditierung Austria (AQ Austria)

MESPOM Joint Degree but not a single diploma:

- CEU NY couldn't make the quality assurance check for EU Partners. MESPOM Partners couldn't feature on that diploma.
- MESPOM students receive one US accredited MESPOM diploma
- MESPOM students receive a joint diploma from 4 Partners, each issuing its own PLUS they receive a Diploma Supplement

MESPOM – Embeddedness

Highly embedded (most processes align but CEU is flexible)

- **Joint degree:** all MESPOM graduates receive MESPOM degree with four degree certificates: from the University of Lund, University of Manchester, Central European University-Privat University, and the University of the Aegean cross-referring to each other as well as a joint Diploma Supplement
- **Admission:** pre-selection according to MESPOM accreditation, application form, proof of residency, declaration, direct contact with selected applicants
- **Enrollment** at all 4 universities
- **External examiner** – validation of the joint framework (requirements, grading system --- Joint Quality Assurance)
- Synergy with **Erasmus+ Mobility** Programme – self-funded students benefit
- **Classes together:** MESPOM students are together with other students of their department
- **Services:** MESPOM students benefit from all services offered by Partner Institutions

MESPOM - Administrative challenges and solutions

1.) Transferring grant

- From one country to another
- Degree accreditation in Austria and in the U.S.
- New ECHE in Austria – help from Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research
- Legal establishment of CEU in AT
- Unprecedented task – both the PO and EACEA were extremely helpful, as well as the OEAD (Agency for Education and Internationalisation) and the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research in Austria

2.) Joint Degree accreditation

- Together with institutional accreditation
- Austrian requirements for joint degree
- CEU PU not established yet
- Letter of Intent from Partners
- Temporary Consortium Agreement
- Conditional accreditation
- CEU PU established
- Final Consortium Agreement
- AQ very-very flexible and helpful

MESPOM - Administrative challenges and solutions

2.) Visa/Residence Permit issue

- Third country nationals
- Application calendar (by Febr. 1)
- Joint selection (by April)
- Strict visa process – 9 months
- OEAD (Agency for Education and Internationalisation)
- Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Austria
- Embassies
- Solution: List of selected students
- Delaying students – online participation

3.) Grading system

- Ever changing system modified by all partners eventually → Stricktest rule prevails
- Joint Board decision
- Solution: communication, steady discussion

CEU			Aegean	Manchester	Lund			ECTS *	
Mark	GPA	Range			Mark	Range	ECTS range	Band	%*
A	4.00	96-100%	85-100%	70-100%	5	85-100%	90-100%	A	10
A-	3.67	88-95%	75-84%	65-69%			80-89%	B	25
					4	70-84%			
B+	3.33	80-87%	65-74%	60-64%			70-79%	C	30
B	3.00	71-79%	55-64%	55-59%	3	50-69%	60-69%	D	25
B-	2.67	63-70%	50-54%	50-54%			50-59%	E	10
C+	2.33	58-62%							
F			40-49%	40-49%	UG	<50%	<50%	FX	-
	0.00	< 57%	30-39%	< 40%				F	-

MESPOM - Administrative challenges and solutions

5.) Partnership Agreement

- Longish process
- Multiple levels
- Solution: pre-screening by legal and international offices
- Solution: DocuSign signature

6.) Gap year finances

- Various reasons:

Transition and stop the clock

Ineligible

Technical problem, one year gap

Re-application in 2017, Start in 2018

Solution: self-funded students + institutional scholarships (stipend, tuition waiver) for CEU period

Additional solution: Erasmus+ study mobility

Bonus: tuition revenue from self-financed students admin costs are covered



Recommendations

COMMITMENT of all partners to the program from the highest level of their institution

RAISING AWARENESS of administrative consequences of such a programme

HARMONIZATION of processes across the consortium partners including the academic calendars, grading systems, language of instruction, etc.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY plan once the funding is over

CONTINUING of the programme even without EU funding during applications

THANK YOU!

kovacs@ceu.edu