

D1.2: OpenEU Quality Assurance policy

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Executive Summary

The OpenEU Quality Assurance policy establishes the common framework for Quality Assurance (QA) within the key activities of the OpenEU Alliance. It particularly emphasizes the following areas:

1. Teaching and learning, especially:
 - a. Mobility
 - b. Joint programs, including degrees
2. Research and innovation
3. Internationalization and outreach

The main topics related to QA—continuous improvement, stakeholder orientation, evidence-based indicators, and accountability—will be addressed within these areas of action, while also considering their specific goals and objectives. The European standards and guidelines for quality assurance in higher education are an essential component of our QA framework.

In this line, the OpenEU QA Policy provides the structure necessary to ensure that a culture of quality permeates OpenEU's efforts towards achieving its goals for 2028.

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1. Purpose and scope

1.1 Introduction

Working in a broad alliance that includes the leading online universities across Europe, from Iceland to Cyprus, was a key point in the creation of the OpenEU Alliance. With this in mind, we believe that including not only online universities but also in-person universities focused on digital transformation, along with associated partners, will enrich the Alliance, thereby upgrading the student and staff experience. The result was the constitution of the OpenEU Alliance in December 2024.

Since we have been working on our first steps towards the construction of the Alliance, this document is vital and a benchmark for warranting the Quality Assurance across titles, actions and universities. Each country is in a different stage of QA development, even though they belong to the European Higher Education Area. Therefore, **the OpenEU Quality Assurance policy is the foundation for spreading quality assurance between the participating universities and partners.**

From now on, our efforts will be dedicated to aligning the European quality assurance between universities that start from very different points. Although national quality assurance (QA) systems maintain their autonomy, an increasing number of countries are permitting foreign agencies registered with EQAR to operate within their jurisdictions. This shift is especially significant in the context of joint programmes and transnational education, where quality assurance needs to extend beyond national boundaries. It allows us to accomplish our twofold mission: establishing a learner-centered, inclusive, digital and green open university with a European scope, and contributing to the digital transformation of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

This document is under constant revision and admits further changes while we materialize our goals through the implementation of new titles and experiences. It gathers our intentions, and conception of what quality assurance should be on a general level.

1.2. Purpose

Aligned with the latest European Union recommendations, resolutions, and the OpenEU's mission statement, the OpenEU's QA Policy builds an integrated approach to quality assurance and continuous improvement within the Alliance. Our QA Policy guides the individual strategies of each OpenEU partner, ensuring compliance with European guidelines on quality assurance.

1.3. Scope

This policy applies to the OpenEU Alliance as a whole, promoting alignment among its member organizations. It does not impose directives on individual universities but offers a collaborative framework to guide joint actions. Additionally, it extends to projects related to the Alliance, facilitating coordinated efforts across various initiatives.

2. Framework of action

2.1. Mobility of OpenEU students and staff

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| What | Enhance all kinds of mobilities of OpenEU students and staff, to facilitate mutual learning and cooperation opportunities, to create high-quality programmes, and to offer a genuine European learning experience to all. Ensure learning mobility schemes that are inclusive, environmentally sustainable, benefit from the use of digital technologies and promote common European values. |
| Who | WP1 and WP6 Boards (at a governance level) T1.2, T6.1, T6.2 and T6.3 leaders (at an operational level) OpenEU Office for internationalization and joint actions (at an operational level) OpenEU Office for quality and management (at an operational level) OpenEU Secretariat (at an operational level) |
| 2028 Objective | OpenEU has embedded quality assurance mechanisms across all student and staff mobility activities, ensuring that mobility is planned, monitored, and enhanced based on shared standards of quality, inclusion, and impact. |

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| How | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the guidelines of the OpenEU Mobility Framework. • Establishing mechanisms for continuous improvement of the mobility initiatives, including an effective OpenEU office for internationalisation and joint actions. • Implementing the related actions of the Inclusive Gender Equality Plan. • Integrating interoperable technologies for Erasmus without papers and the European Student Card. • Establishing mechanisms for continuous improvement of mobilities experiences among students and staff, and an effective coordination of the Institutions within the Alliance. • Deploying the OpenEU Quality Assurance Plan and developing the processes within the Internal Quality Assurance System. • Implementing OpenEU dashboards and visual tools of performance indicators for the mobility initiatives, including the level of satisfaction with mobility activities. |
| Regulatory or internal frameworks | <p>OpenEU Mobility framework (2025) OpenEU Joint programmes and degrees framework (2025) OpenEU Inclusive Gender Equality Policy and Plan (2025) Council Recommendation on a European quality assurance and recognition system in higher education (2025)</p> |

2.2. OpenEU joint educational programmes

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| What | Develop high-quality joint educational programmes, joint degrees included, by ensuring the <i>jointness</i> of the programmes, the mutual learning recognition as well as the alignment within university structures and European and national regulations and resolutions. |
| Who | <p>WP1, WP2, WP3, WP4 and WP6 Boards (at a governance level) T1.2, T2.2, T2.3, T3.2, T3.3, T4.2, T6.1 and T6.4 leaders (at an operational level) OpenEU Office for internationalisation and joint actions (at an operational level) OpenEU Office for quality and management (at an operational level) OpenEU Secretariat (at an operational level)</p> |
| 2028 Objective | Quality assurance principles will be mainstreamed across the entire OpenEU joint educational offer, including joint degrees, micro-credentials, and other co-developed programmes. |

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| How | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complying with the OpenEU Joint Programmes framework. • Following the guidelines of the OpenEU Mobility framework, in particular the integration of mobility of students in the academic curricula. • Guaranteeing the compliance within the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), and alignment with the principles and rules enshrined in the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes, and with the EU recommendations for European Degrees and European Degree Labels. • Regulating joint governance, coordination, and decision-making in programme co-creation and delivery. • Providing mechanisms for mutual recognition and continuous improvement. • Implementing the related actions of the Inclusive Gender Equality Plan • Integrating interoperable technologies for Erasmus without papers and the European Student Card. • Deploying the OpenEU Quality Assurance Plan and developing the processes within the Internal Quality Assurance System. • Implementing OpenEU dashboards and visual tools of performance indicators for the joint programmes, including the level of satisfaction with these activities. |
| Regulatory or internal frameworks | <p>OpenEU Mobility framework (2025) OpenEU Joint programmes and degrees framework (2025) OpenEU Inclusive Gender Equality Policy and Plan (2025) Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (2015) European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes (2015) Council Recommendation on a European quality assurance and recognition system in higher education (2025)</p> |

2.3. Research and Innovation

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| What | Enhance high-quality, collaborative research and innovation across OpenEU institutions, by fostering coherent and transparent research practices aligned with OpenEU shared values and strategic priorities and the European R&I agendas |
| Who | WP1, WP4 and WP5 Boards (at a governance level) T1.2, T4.1, T4.2, T4.3 and T5.1 leaders (at an operational level) |

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| | <p>OpenEU Office for internationalisation and joint actions (at an operational level)</p> <p>OpenEU Office for quality and management (at an operational level)</p> <p>OpenEU Secretariat (at an operational level)</p> |
| 2028 Objective | OpenEU has applied quality principles and standards to its research and innovation activities, in alignment with the Open Science and Innovation Plan and the European R&I frameworks. |
| How | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the guidelines of the OpenEU Open Science and Innovation policy. • Establishing a cross-disciplinary OpenEU doctoral community. • Ensuring the quality requirements of research funding bodies are met. • Establishing mechanisms for continuous improvement of R&I activities and an effective coordination of the Institutions within the Alliance. • Deploying the OpenEU Quality Assurance Plan and developing the processes within the Internal Quality Assurance System. • Implementing OpenEU dashboards and visual tools of performance indicators for the quality and impact of the research and innovation initiatives, including the level of satisfaction with these activities. |
| Regulatory or internal frameworks | <p>OpenEU Open Science and Innovation Policy (2025)</p> <p>European Charter and Code for Researchers (2005)</p> <p>European Research Area Policy Agenda 2022-2024 (2021)</p> <p>European Recommendation on the guiding principles for knowledge valorisation (2022)</p> <p>European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2023)</p> <p>European Competence Framework for Researchers (2025)</p> |

2.4. Supporting Societal Impact

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| What | Ensure that the OpenEU activities have a positive impact on society, by including an effective engagement with local communities, policymakers, and industry stakeholders to address societal needs and contribute to economic and social development, and by supporting multilingualism, intercultural competence, and global citizenship. |
| Who | <p>All WP Boards (at a governance level)</p> <p>T1.2, T2.3, T3.1, T4.1, T6.5, T7.1, T7.3, T8.1 and T8.4 leaders (at</p> |

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| | an operational level) OpenEU Office and the dissemination & engagement (at an operational level) OpenEU Office for internationalisation and joint actions (at an operational level) OpenEU Office for quality and management (at an operational level) OpenEU Secretariat (at an operational level) |
| 2028 Objective | To create a dynamic and collaborative environment that enhances the quality and impact of higher education and research in Europe and beyond. |
| How | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the guidelines of the OpenEU Community Engagement Plan. • Following the guidelines of the OpenEU Communication & Dissemination Plan. • Establishing mechanisms for continuous improvement of societal impact activities and an effective coordination of the Institutions within the Alliance. • Implementing the related actions of the Inclusive Gender Equality Plan • Deploying the OpenEU Quality Assurance Plan and developing the processes within the Internal Quality Assurance System. • Implementing OpenEU dashboards and visual tools of performance indicators for the societal impact activities, including the level of satisfaction with these activities. |
| Regulatory or internal frameworks | OpenEU Inclusive Gender Equality Policy and Plan (2025) OpenEU Community Engagement Plan (to be approved in 2025) OpenEU Communication & Dissemination Plan (2025) |

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Effective implementation of the OpenEU QA Policy relies on a shared commitment to transparency, collaboration, and accountability across the alliance. This section outlines the key actors involved in the development, implementation, coordination, monitoring, and continuous improvement of the QA policy.

WP1 Board → Policy Approval & Strategic Oversight

The WP1 Board holds the central governance responsibility for the QA policy. It ensures strategic alignment with the mission and values of the OpenEU Alliance and with relevant European frameworks. Its main responsibilities are:

- Approving and formally adopting the QA policy and any further updates.
- Reviewing the policy's effectiveness and strategic fit.
- Ensuring integration with alliance-wide goals (education, research & innovation, societal impact).

Work Package (WP) Boards → Governance level responsibility

Each WP Board is responsible for supervising the implementation of the QA policy within its thematic area (e.g. joint education, R&I, societal impact), ensuring that quality-related decisions align with both alliance goals and European standards. Their main responsibilities are:

- Ensuring QA measures are embedded in the WP's strategy and deliverables
- Monitoring progress and ensuring compliance with QA procedures
- Coordinating with WP1 on policy evolution and feedback loops

Task Leaders → Operational Implementation at WP Level

Task Leaders within each WP carry the operational responsibility for applying the QA policy in practice. They act as key actors in embedding QA mechanisms in their specific activities and deliverables. Their main responsibilities are:

- Implementing QA procedures in day-to-day WP activities
- Coordinating self-evaluation, stakeholder feedback, and reporting
- Ensuring adherence to QA timelines, tools, and standards
- Liaising with the OpenEU Secretariat and WP Boards on quality-related matters

OpenEU Secretariat and Offices → Cross-WP operational coordination & support

The OpenEU Secretariat provides overarching support to ensure consistency, documentation, and knowledge exchange across WPs. Its main responsibilities are:

- Ensuring the embedding of the QA policy in day-to-day OpenEU activities

- Facilitating communication and coordination across governance and operational levels
- Providing QA tools, templates, and capacity-building support
- Managing documentation, records, and QA reporting cycles
- Supporting monitoring, evaluation, and external reviews

OpenEU Offices at Universities → Institutional Anchoring & Local Implementation

The OpenEU office at each university acts as the bridge between alliance-level QA policy and guidelines, and local institutional practices. These offices ensure that procedures are locally implemented, contextually adapted, and regularly communicated back to the alliance. Their main responsibilities are:

- Fostering implementation of QA processes at institutional level in coordination with task leaders and the Secretariat
- Liaising with institutional QA units and alliance-level actors (WP Boards, Secretariat)
- Gathering local data and stakeholder feedback for alliance-wide evaluation
- Promoting engagement with QA among local students, staff, and external partners

Stakeholders (Students, Staff, Associated Partners) → Feedback and improvement

Stakeholders contribute to the relevance and legitimacy of QA through feedback, co-design, and participation in evaluation and improvement activities. Their main responsibilities are:

- Participating in QA consultations and evaluations
- Contributing to co-created programmes and activities
- Ensuring user-centred, inclusive perspectives are reflected in QA.

4. Approval

This policy has been approved in accordance with the provisions of the OpenEU Governance Framework Guidelines and rules (D1.1_A). The body responsible for the application and revision of this policy is the Executive Board, which approved this policy on 16 September 2025 and is responsible for its constant supervision.

Moreover, the text of this policy will be revised when there are significant changes in relevant national or international guidelines or legislation. Protocols will also be generated for the monitoring and measurement of the objectives. The purpose of this revision is to ensure the validity, continuity and compliance of this policy.

5. Appendix

5.1 External References

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