

Deliverable #: 14**Deliverable # in relation to WP: 3.6 - Self-Evaluation Report (SER): Implementation and Contribution to the Eastern Neighbourhood****1. Purpose and context of the deliverable**

Deliverable 3.6 concerned the preparation of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) for the Joint MA Program in Political Science (JoPScIP) as the principal documentary basis for external quality assurance and accreditation under the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes. As is common practice and in line with the project proposal, the SER builds on the jointly developed curriculum, the institutional agreement between the consortium partners and other means collaboratively developed, esp. the Quality Handbook, a Teachers Handbook, an Examination Book, a Grading Convention and much more. The Project Coordinators and the Academic Coordinators' Board were tasked with synthesising the academic input generated through curriculum development in WP4 and translating it into the common institutional, academic and quality-assurance framework required for accreditation.

2. Preparation of the SER and accreditation process

The preparation of the SER was embedded in an extensive collaborative process involving academic coordinators, quality managers, teaching staff and institutional representatives from the consortium. A dedicated meeting in Salzburg in October 2024 was held to work collaboratively on the SER.

The work on the SER built on a broader series of JoPScIP capacity-building activities conducted during 2024. These included Innovation Labs in Georgia and Armenia in April and May; Quality Days in Skopje involving coordinators and quality managers from Armenia, Georgia, Austria and North Macedonia; Teacher Days in Skopje and Salzburg, during which teaching staff worked on their course descriptions; the October Teacher Academy; and the joint meeting of the extended consortium in Salzburg on 26 October specifically devoted to preparation for European Approach accreditation and work on the SER. The Innovation Labs alone comprised around 15 meetings with ministries, quality-assurance agencies, rectors and vice-rectors, heads of political science departments, prospective teachers, administrative staff, quality-management units and international offices in Georgia and Armenia; these meetings were specifically intended to prepare for the national implementation of the European Approach accreditation results.

The original project plan had envisaged submitting the report to an EQAR-listed quality-assurance agency in autumn 2024. Since the University of Salzburg, as WP3 lead, was required by its internal regulations to conduct a competitive procurement procedure, the selection of the accreditation agency was carried out in parallel with the final preparation of the report. Three agencies (AQ Austria, ZeVA and AQU) were asked to submit tenders. AQ Austria was selected as the best-fitting external accrediting body.

PLUS subsequently organised the accreditation site visit in Salzburg from 26 April to 2 May 2025, with the formal accreditation visit on 29 April, which involved consortium partners, AQ Austria, and the external evaluators. AQ Austria communicated its positive accreditation decision on 25 June 2025 and provided the accreditation certificate and report on 24 July. These documents were made available to all consortium partners via the shared project platform and publicly on the websites of AQ Austria and JoPScIP, thereby completing the milestone foreseen in the deliverable.



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3. Joint curriculum and course programme

The core of the JoPScip programme and the SER is certainly the joint curriculum. The course programme developed for this curriculum is equally significant. This process resulted in 85 courses, 60 of which were developed by the Armenian and Georgian partners. During teacher workshops, the 2024 Teacher Days and afterwards, teaching staff worked intensively on course-level learning outcomes and syllabuses. During this time, draft courses underwent iterative academic and quality reviews. Consequently, all courses correspond to a jointly agreed curriculum at EQF level 7 and to the learning outcomes of one of the following five modules: Political Theory, Comparative Politics, Public Administration and Policy, International Relations, and European Integration.

This was an important capacity-building process for the Eastern Neighbourhood partners. It enabled the academic staff from TSU, GIPA, YSU and EIU to engage directly with the programme's approach to EQF-level learning outcomes, ECTS-based workload calculation, student-centred teaching, and common syllabus design, and to shape and expand the programme itself. The result is clearly visible in the distribution of teaching responsibilities. GIPA, TSU, YSU and EIU contribute to Political Theory; GIPA and YSU to Comparative Politics; GIPA, TSU, YSU and EIU to Public Policy and Administration; all four to International Relations; and TSU, YSU and EIU to European Integration. They also contribute to Methods in Political Science, Thesis Seminars, Applied Politics and optional courses. The South Caucasus institutions are therefore integrated both horizontally, through participation in the common disciplinary curriculum, and substantively, by broadening geographical expertise and comparative scope of the joint Master programme.

4. Strengthening institutional and quality-assurance capacity

A second major contribution of the deliverable concerns the institutional capacity for implementing a European joint programme. The accreditation process and hence the SER required each institution not only to demonstrate academic capacity but also to engage with a common governance and quality-assurance model. By December 2024, TSU, GIPA, YSU and EIU had provided the required institutional documentation, including signed participation declarations, information needed for diploma supplements and confirmation of their higher-education status. The Partner Declaration (cooperation agreement) consolidated this institutional integration. It establishes common rules covering student admission, courses and teaching staff, examinations, master's theses and defences, the awarding of the joint degree, multilateral programme coordination, transparency, participation costs and conflict resolution. Its appendices include the curriculum, student-selection procedures, common grade-conversion arrangements, the Quality Management Handbook, Examination Book, Teaching Handbook, student-service provisions, and the Diploma Supplement framework.

Consequently, each institution is incorporated into the programme's multilateral decision-making structures. Every partner is represented in the Coordinators Board, and each partner also nominates a representative to the Quality Board. Student and alumni representation complement these structures. The Coordinators' Board makes joint decisions on the curriculum, course recognition, student selection, and other core aspects of programme implementation, while the Quality Board monitors the implementation of shared standards.

The process also offered targeted staff-development opportunities. The Teacher Academies and JoPScip workshops familiarised instructors with the Teaching Handbook and its approach to constructive alignment, in which learning outcomes, assessment methods and teaching activities are planned coherently. The SER emphasises that the 2024 workshops strengthened capacity-building practices, in which instructors worked within a student-centred European teaching framework. The Teaching Handbook covers the European teaching

approach, requirements for instructors, course and module design, constructive alignment, online teaching and examples of good didactic practice. To this end, the academic and QA staff worked to interpret the ESG and apply it to specific curricula, syllabuses and institutional procedures.

At the same time, this process prioritised accommodating national differences over mechanical standardisation. For example, while the general programme applies ECTS consistently, the SER recognises that one ECTS represents an average of 30 hours of student workload in Armenia, compared with 25 hours in other participating countries. Local partners remain responsible for course evaluation and workload monitoring within this common framework. This illustrates the broader approach of the SER: common European standards are combined with the regulatory requirements of each participating system (principle of “local rules apply”).

5. Preparing institutions in Armenia and Georgia for national implementation of the joint programme

In parallel to SER-development the project made an important contribution by connecting European-level accreditation to the national regulatory environments of Armenia and Georgia. The programme could not be sustainably extended to the South Caucasus simply through a consortium-level agreement; each new partner also needed a viable route to implement the accredited joint programme within its national and institutional legal framework.

For this reason, as mentioned above, the JoPScip consortium used stakeholder meetings in Armenia and Georgia to analyse the conditions for joint degrees and the national implementation of accreditation obtained through the European Approach. These discussions involved the institutions themselves as well as ministries, national quality-assurance bodies and other relevant actors.

Deliverable 3.8 (National accreditation certificates obtained by national QA agencies) specifically shows the various challenges and successful results of this process.

6. New opportunities for South Caucasus students and institutions

The mobility tables in the SER indicate that South Caucasus universities can host students across multiple fields and at different stages of the programme. Students from Armenia and Georgia are also eligible for Erasmus+ KA171 mobility opportunities offered by participating universities. The programme is explicitly targeted at international students seeking an internationally certified master's degree. The integration of Georgian and Armenian universities therefore strengthens the programme's attractiveness in the region while creating more accessible entry points to an international joint programme.

The same common framework extends to student support. Students are to receive both the rights of regularly enrolled students and the relevant privileges associated with mobility programmes, including support with visa requirements, accommodation, language assistance, registration and integration. As first-year teaching is decentralised, support instruments previously concentrated in Salzburg, such as the regular “Internship & Field Experience” guidance format (aka Jour fixe), are also foreseen at the other universities providing first-year study.

7. Overall contribution and sustainability

Deliverable 3.6 should consequently be understood as a central capacity-building milestone rather than only as a single accreditation document. The SER consolidated the academic, institutional and quality-assurance work



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undertaken across JoPScIP.

For the four South Caucasus partners, its contribution can be identified at several interconnected levels. It integrated their academic staff and new courses into a common EQF-level 7 curriculum, established their role as first-year, second year and degree-giving institutions, and incorporated them into the joint governance and quality-assurance system. SER-preparation also was preceded by extensive training and peer learning on European standards for curriculum design, teaching and assessment as well as by clarifying institutional and national procedures for implementing a joint programme in Armenia and Georgia. Finally, the SER clearly shows the additional possibilities for student and staff mobility.

The participation of the South Caucasus partners enlarged the programme's academic portfolio and increased its teaching and intake capacity. It provided substantive expertise on political developments in Georgia, Armenia and the wider region.

The positive accreditation decision delivered by AQ Austria in June 2025 confirms the successful completion of this process and provides the external quality-assurance foundation required for the next phase of national implementation and programme delivery. Hence, the accreditation provides a common European quality framework through which this partnership can operate beyond the lifetime of the JoPScIP project. In this sense, the SER has contributed directly to the principal capacity-building objective of JoPScIP.

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Self-Report for the Assessment of the Joint Master's Programme

Political Science – Integration and Governance (PoSIG)

with the expanded consortium in course of the ERASMUS-project JoPScip

Accreditation following the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes

January 2025

Jointly submitted by:

University of Salzburg (PLUS)

Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje (UKIM)

European University of Tirana (UET)

University of Tirana (UTIR)

University of Business and Technology Pristina (UBT)

University of Sarajevo (UNSA)

Sarajevo School of Science Technology (SSST)

University of Trieste (UNITS)

University of Prishtina (UP)

University of Montenegro (UMO)¹

University of Belgrade (UBG)¹

Tbilisi State University (TSU)

Georgian Institute for Public Affairs Tbilisi (GIPA)

Yerevan State University (YSU)

Eurasia International University Yerevan (EIU)

¹UMO and UBG have participated in PoSIG teacher academies, with faculty in Belgrade contributing as guest teachers at PLUS. UMO has faced internal capacity issues that hindered their participation in the re-accreditation process. UBG, while initially interested and having submitted 19 course syllabi, has encountered opposition from the university rector due to the inclusion of Kosovo HEIs in the consortium. The Faculty of Montenegro, despite initial enthusiasm and plans to join before Summer 2024, has been discouraged by the significant administrative burden anticipated by the national accreditation agency for implementing a European programme. - Both UBG and UMO express a continued interest in joining the consortium. To facilitate their potential future participation, the partners agree to maintain their names on the relevant documents.

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Title of the programme	Joint Master's Programme in Political Science – Integration and Governance (PoSIG)
ECTS	120
Standard period of study	4 semesters
Awarded degrees	<i>all partners except from Albania:</i> Master of Arts (MA) <i>partners from Albania and UKIM:</i> Master of Science (MSc)
Intake capacity per year	Until 2022/23 the annual intake capacity was 20 students; all students started at PLUS. After the recent curriculum reform a much higher annual intake is possible. Students can now start at PLUS, UKIM, SSST, UP, GIPA, TSU, YSU and EIU. In particular, YSU has a minimum number of 10 students to start the programme (8 with special decision from the rector), TSU, EIU and GIPA have a minimum of 5.
Average number of graduates per year	6
Total number of graduates as of Jan. 2025	29
First Implemented in	winter term 2017/18
ISCED-F 2013	0312
Contact Person of the Programme Consortium:	Dr. Franz Kok, Programme Coordinator, franz.kok@plus.ac.at, 0043/664/2135181

List of Appendices

Please note: Alle appendices are available from online folders on Google Drive; direct link in the list below.

Documents	
1. Declaration (aka partner agreement)	gDrive document ; gDrive document with recent changes for the JoPScip consortium ; gDrive-folder with signed documents
2. Declaration appendices	Link to Folder
3. Curriculum	Curriculum 2024
4. Possible progression paths through the programme	As part of the curriculum
5. Valid regulations for student examination and assessment (in English translation if necessary)	Local regulations apply; see section 5 of the Partner Declaration
6. Examination book	Appendix E of the Partner Declaration
7. Template Master's thesis defence	Link
8. Regulations for student selection and admission	Part of the Partner Declaration and especially of appendix B of the agreement
9. Course catalogue and syllabi	Module descriptions , List of course per modules: PoSIG , JoPScip Folder with all syllabi: PoSIG , JoPScip
10. Diploma Supplement	Appendix H of the Partner Declaration
11. Regulations for the recognition of prior learning	Section 6 of the Partner Declaration
12. Academic CVs of core teaching faculty	from "old" PoSIG partners , from new partners
13. Quality Handbook	Appendix D of the Partner Declaration
14. Teaching Handbook	Appendix F of the Partner Declaration
15. Student Handbook and/or other information material for students	PoSIG website Appendix G of the Partner Declaration
16. Regulations for the organisation of internships and practical placements	Part of the curriculum
17. Quality assurance policy for the programme	See 2.9 of this document
18. Summary of results and outcomes of quality surveys and monitoring activities	See here
19. Key statistical data (cf. sample table below)	See section 3 of this document
20. For re-accreditation: last experts' report and accreditation decision	Accreditation 2016 ; Accreditation 2024 ;
21. 3-5 final theses (to be provided in digital form or as hardcopies during the site visit)	See here
22. Collection of supporting documents (partly already listed above)	See here

Preamble

Preparations for the joint master's programme Political Science - Integration and Governance (PoSIG) started in autumn 2015 with the Erasmus+ CBHE project EuroPS. It was first accredited (with conditions) by AQ Austria in March 2017, and the first students were welcomed in autumn 2017. The 2016/17 accreditation was valid until March 2023. After previous discussions about alternatives (another European Approach accreditation, national accreditation, no accreditation) and after some changes in the consortium (two partners left, two new partners could be welcomed), the coordinators' board finally decided to apply for a joint re-accreditation in spring 2023. Following a call for tenders, the German agency ZeVA was commissioned to carry out this new accreditation, which was successfully completed in July 2024. During the re-accreditation process, the new CBHE project JoPScip was approved and started in November 2023, leading to a further expansion of the consortium with 4 new partners in Armenia and Georgia. The deliverables defined with the EU Commission required another full accreditation. Therefore, the consortium is applying for another re-accreditation within only one year.

1 General Description of the Study Programme

1.1 Basic Facts and Figures

The “**Joint Master’s Programme in Political Science – Integration and Governance**” (PoSIG) is based on international standards and benchmarks of teaching political science in accordance to level 7 of the European Qualification Framework and to second cycle qualification of the Qualifications Framework in the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA). The **13 partner institutions** contribute with their specific academic profiles in

- Comparative Politics,
- European Integration,
- International Relations,
- Public Administration and Policy,
- Political Theory and
- Methodology.

Some of the cornerstones of the programme and the consortium are:

- The programme is **jointly developed and delivered**.
- The programme has a scope of **120 ECTS** credits.
- The regular duration is **4 semesters**.
- The language of instruction for courses at all partner institutions is **English**.
- There is a **highly flexible mobility scheme**.
- All partners are (potentially) **degree giving**.
- The awarded degree is a **joint degree** (no double or multiple degrees).

All relevant aspects are discussed in more detail in the following sections of this document.

1.1.1 Number of Students, Graduates etc.

In the original curriculum version from 2017 only PLUS and the University of Ljubljana were defined to offer courses in the first year of the programme. Since Ljubljana could not implement the programme due to financial reasons, the intake capacity was defined by 15 candidates (at PLUS), the number of intakes from 2017 to 2021 was always between 12 and 16. PLUS could provide an Erasmus+ grant for the first year to all students accepted from partner countries.

Accepted students from partner universities are very present in the programme but also alumni from other universities in the partner countries and beyond were successfully applying (1 Serbia, 1 Italy, 3 Georgia, 1 Lebanon). A growing share of accepted candidates already had an exchange year as a Bachelor student at PLUS.

The activity level of students in the first year is very high compared to other Master programmes. During this time about one third of the students decide to continue their Master studies in other programmes, several of them choose to stay in Salzburg, also using various job opportunities. Students from Kosovo especially have a high tendency to switch to the PLUS Master programme in *Political Science* after the first year with Erasmus+ grants at PLUS.

The positive observations about PoSIG alumni are based on reports about qualified job opportunities students receive, many already while working on their Master's thesis. On the other hand, this - the fact that students are already active in their jobs - is also the main reason for delays in the completion of the programme. Several students from the 2018/19 cohort for example only graduated in the second half of 2022. Overall, PoSIG graduates got good jobs in academia, in the management of international programmes (EU connected or others), in media and in political institutions. All professional areas defined in the curriculum design process are covered by the alumni.

Degrees were given from PLUS together with UNSA, UTir, UKIM, and UET. One Joint Degree was given jointly by PLUS, UNSA, and UKIM.

Please see [section 3](#) for all key statistics on students and graduates.

1.1.2 Mobility Scheme & Mobility Funds

University of Salzburg and University of Trieste provide mobility grants based on Erasmus+ KA 171 for up to one year program participation at their institution. Details about these grants are available via the website <https://posig.info/finances-and-scholarship/> and the partners websites.

PoSIG offers a highly flexible mobility scheme. A student's actual mobility path will largely depend on the elective modules he or she chooses. From the curriculum:

“According to § 9, courses can be completed at a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 4 PoSIG consortium member universities. The table below displays which courses PoSIG consortium members offer in which term, and how students can plan their mobility track. How to read the table: The courses marked with PLUS in term 1+2 will be offered at the University of Salzburg and are specified as Pro-seminar (PS) or Seminar (SE) or Exercise Course with Lecture (UV).”

Obligatory Elective Modules (2 modules out of 5):	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4
Political Theory				
Basic Texts in Political Theory: Democracy and Legitimacy	GIPA, TSU, YSU, EIU	UNITS		
Courses	GIPA, YSU, TSU	UNITS	UKIM, UNSA, UTIR, UET, UNITS, GIPA, TSU, YSU, EIU	UKIM, UTIR, UET, EIU
Comparative Politics				
Basic Texts Comparative Politics	PLUS, UKIM, YSU, GIPA	UKIM		
Courses	PLUS, UKIM, SSST, GIPA, YSU, EIU	PLUS, UKIM, YSU	UKIM, UTIR, UNSA, SSST, UET, PLUS, GIPA, YSU	UKIM, UTIR, SSST, UET, PLUS
Public Policy & Administration				
Basic Texts Public Policy & Administration	UP, GIPA, TSU	YSU		
Courses	UP, GIPA, TSU		UTIR, UKIM, UP, GIPA, TSU, YSU, EIU	UTIR, UKIM, EIU
International Relations				
Basic Texts International Relations	SSST, PLUS, GIPA, YSU, TSU, EIU			
Courses	PLUS, SSST, YSU, EIU, GIPA, TSU	PLUS, UNITS, YSU, EIU	UKIM, UNSA, SSST, UTIR, UET, UBT, GIPA, TSU, YSU	UKIM, SSST, UTIR, UET, UBT
European Integration				
Basic Texts European Integration – Multilevel Politics	PLUS, UKIM, EIU	UKIM, YSU		
Courses	PLUS, SSST, UKIM, TSU	PLUS, UKIM, YSU	UTIR, UKIM, SSST, UNSA, PLUS, TSU	UTIR, UKIM, SSST, PLUS
Obligatory Courses				
Methods in Political Science I	PLUS, UKIM, SSST, UP, GIPA, TSU, YSU, EIU			
Methods in Political Science II		PLUS, UNITS, UKIM, YSU		
Thesis Seminar			PLUS, UKIM, UTIR, SSST, UET, GIPA, TSU, YSU, EIU	PLUS, UKIM, UTIR, SSST, UET, YSU
Obligatory Elective Courses				
Advanced Methods in Political Science	PLUS	UNITS	PLUS	
Applied Politics	SSST, YSU, GIPA, TSU	PLUS, YSU	UKIM, UET, UNSA, SSST, GIPA, EIU, TSU	UKIM, UET, SSST, PLUS, EIU
Additional Courses				
Optional Courses	PLUS, UKIM, UP UBT SSST UNSA UNITS UTIR, UET, EIU, TSU, YSU	PLUS, UKIM, UNITS, YSU	PLUS, UKIM, UP UBT, SSST, UNSA, UNITS UTIR, UET, EIU TSU YSU UET	PLUS, UKIM, UP UBT, SSST, UNSA UNITS, UTIR, UET, UTIR

All students can study during their **first year** at partner universities providing *Basic Text* courses and *Methodology I+II* courses. In their **second year**, they will study at a partner university to complete their courses and their Master's thesis. The obligatory internship is performed in the second year; its recognition is based on a report.

1.1.3 Staff mobility & Staff Development

PoSIG not only offers a flexible mobility scheme for students. Over the last years there have been and still are also requirements and options to travel for PoSIG's teaching staff. These mobility opportunities are first and foremost an important means of staff development within PoSIG:

- During the initial EU-funded project EuroPS (2015-2017), in addition to the usual project meetings, there were several mobility activities explicitly dedicated to academics who would be involved in PoSIG teaching (UP, UTri and UMO were not involved in that time):
 - **Train the trainer workshops:** During these five meetings in spring 2016 (each for one of the modules) teachers spent two weeks (!) together to collaboratively work on their course descriptions in accordance with all the requirements (contents, EQF level, learning outcomes, Bloom, etc.); they were also used by participants to talk about further collaborations, writing papers, and preparing projects.
 - **Seminars of excellence** were funded events for individual teachers/researchers from partners to spend time with each other for around two weeks and teach together, but also to discuss cooperation when it comes to research, begin work on collaborative papers, etc.
 - During two **Quality Weeks**, the quality managers of all partners met to discuss quality issues and to come up with a shared model for quality assurance ([see 2.9](#)).
- Since then, there have been ...
 - The annual **PoSIG Teacher Academy** in Salzburg (usually in spring) brings together not only teachers from the PoSIG consortium but also from other interested partners, eventually to join PoSIG in the future (as did UP, UTri and UMO); including partners from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon and Ukraine. Each year, the Teacher Academy is focused on a field of teaching and research connected to the academic PoSIG programme. (Prof. Heinisch's edited volume on Populism is based on the 2018 teacher academy).

The **intention of the Teaching Academies** is to develop advanced teaching and research routines in relevant PoSIG fields and to connect them to the PoSIG quality standards. Teachers from PoSIG partner institutions and coordinators meet for one working week and include experts from other neighbourhood regions.

See a complete **list of all meetings** in the table in [section 2.1.2](#).

- Regular, at least annual meetings of the **coordinators board**, online and usually as part of the annual PoSIG Teacher Academy.
- One **quality week** in July 2022 with QA experts from UMO and UP in Salzburg provided training in QA standards for joint programmes and requirements for the successful implementation of PoSIG; also to reflect on the whole programme and to prepare for re-accreditation.



1.1.4 History and background of the programme

The PoSIG joint master and all accompanying measures have been developed as part of the **Erasmus+ KA2 Capacity Building Project 561485 - 2015-2017 “Curriculum Development Joint European Political Science MA (EuroPS)”**. This project resulted from continuous academic exchange of staff and students within several previous Erasmus Mundus projects and Erasmus+ Credit mobilities.

EuroPS was led by the University of Salzburg (Department of Political Science and Sociology) and its main goal was to develop a joint master's programme in Political Science together with a multilateral management framework. As a modernization and Europeanisation project, its further aim was to support and enhance the standards of higher education in the European Union, to intensify regular academic exchange of good practice and sustainable networking between EU partners and partners in the Western Balkans. The project ran from October 2015 until September 2017 and included the first intake of students in 2017 based on a call from February 2017.

PLUS provided 15 student placements in the programme for the first year of the curriculum from 2017-2022 and was able to offer Erasmus+ grants to all these students. A growing share of the cohort had previous study experience at PLUS as BA exchange students.

PoSIG students at PLUS as well as at all other partner universities were taught in seminar groups together with other MA programme students, only one specific course “Research Design for PoSIG Students” was offered only to PoSIG students to support the students group joint project development towards a master's thesis project. In general, the PoSIG students were and are recognised as a very active group (compared to regular students) with academic ambition to acquire a high number of ECTS credits per term.

1.1.5 Funding

The development of PoSIG was initially funded by the Erasmus+ KA2 capacity building project EuroPS. Another Erasmus+ capacity building project, JoPScip, funded the development of a Political Science Master's programme in the Eastern Partnership region. As the project progressed, it was decided to merge it with the current PoSIG consortium, resulting in the development of 85 courses (60 completely new courses from partners in Armenia and Georgia and 25 renewed courses from UKIM and PLUS).

The consortium's application for Erasmus Mundus funds in 2019 was not successful since the consortium's degree giving academic partners are situated mostly outside programme countries.

The PoSIG consortium's fee policy is based on the partner participation cost policy for MA students. The differing participation costs of the partner institutions are published at www.posig.info website. A specific role and opportunity is offered by PLUS with a waiver policy for three academic years programme participation in PoSIG. Most alumni could manage the completion of the programme within this period, but several had to pay the regular tuition fee when completing the degree in a year later.

As it can be identified from the course programme in the curriculum the workload-intensive study phase of the first year will now be offered by several partners. UTri is able to follow the PLUS experience with providing Erasmus+ grants to PoSIG students; other partners can provide a low cost study entrance with lower living and administrative costs.

1.2 Programme Consortium

The PoSIG networked currently comprises the following partner institutions:

Partner institution	Abbr.	Type	Numb. of Stud.	Fields of study	Research focus	PoSIG memb. since	PoSIG intakes and graduates since 2017
University of Salzburg	PLUS	public univ.	17.000	science, humanities, social science, law	biology, psychology, social science, humanities, law, European Union studies	2015	intakes: 86 graduates: 27 (together with partners)
Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje	UKIM	public univ.	28.500	natural and life sciences, medical sciences, social sciences, humanities, arts, technical sciences	natural and life sciences, medical sciences, social sciences, humanities, arts, technical sciences	2015	intakes: 6 graduates: 5
European University of Tirana	UET	private univ.	4.000	social sciences, natural sciences, law, humanities, arts, technical medical sciences, engineering, architecture, informatics, economics	social sciences, natural sciences, law, humanities, arts, technical medical sciences, engineering, architecture, informatics, economics	2015	intakes: 3 graduates: 2
University of Tirana	UTIR	public univ.	22.000	education, humanities, social sciences & journalism, business and law, Natural sciences, mathematics statistics, IT	education, humanities, social sciences & journalism, business and law, Natural sciences, mathematics statistics, IT	2015	intakes: 14 graduates: 8
University of Business and Technology Pristina	UBT	private univ.	10.000	social science, law media, medical science, engineering, architecture, informatics, computer sciences, agriculture , nutrition science	social science, political science, security policies, law, media and communication, medical science, engineering, architecture, informatics, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, agriculture, nutrition science	2015	intakes: 17 graduates: 0
University of Sarajevo	UNSA	public univ.	27,000	social sciences, humanities, medical sciences, natural, mathematical and biotechnical sciences, technical sciences, Arts	social sciences, humanities, medical sciences, natural, mathematical and biotechnical sciences, technical sciences, Arts	2015	intakes: 19 graduates: 13
Sarajevo School of Science Technology	SSST	private univ.	600	medicine, dentistry, computer sciences, game design, political science, international relations, economics and business,	computer sciences, political science, migrations, gender equality, green energy and sustainable development,	2015	intakes: 0 graduates 0



				modern languages, film	AI and medicine, health tech		
University of Trieste	UTS	public univ.	16.000	natural and life science, medical science, social science, humanity, technical science	UTS has high research institutions - such as SISSA, area science park and elettrà sincrotrone - a unique system in Europe for its density of research staff.	2023	intakes: 0 graduates 0 (new partner)
University of Prishtina	UP	Public univ.	25.000	natural sciences and mathematics, law, economics, teacher education, philosophy, medicine, sports and physical education, technical sciences, agriculture, arts	life sciences, computer sciences and information technology, international relations and peacebuilding	2023	intakes: 0 graduates 0 (new partner)
University of Montenegro	UMO	Public univ.	21.000	economics, engineering, law, history, agriculture, biological and medical research	urban and regional planning, classics and ancient history, computer engineering, physics, environmental science	2023	intakes: 0 graduates 0 (new partner)
Tbilisi State University	TSU	Public univ.	26000	Humanities, Exact and Natural Sciences, Social and Political Sciences, Psychology Education, Law, Medicine, Economics and Business,	Natural, exact sciences, humanities, multidisciplinary social sciences	2024	intakes: 0 graduates : 0 (new partner)
Georgian Institute of Public Affairs	GIPA	Private Univ.	2.200	Social Sciences, Political science, Journalism and Information, Business, Administration and Law, Public Health; Arts.	Public Policy/ Administration, Urban/Regional development, EU Integration, Education, Environmental Protection, Media/Communication Studies, Visual Art, Law, Social Science, Political Science, Gender Studies, Business, Public Health.	2024	intakes: 0 graduates 0 (new partner)
Yerevan State University	YSU	Public Univ.	14500	Comprehensive university with humanities, social and natural sciences degrees awarded	Humanities, social sciences and natural sciences	2024	intakes: 0 graduates 0 (new partner)
Eurasia International University	EIU	Private Univ.	1.000	Law, Management, Finance, Foreign languages, Pedagogy, Journalism, Informational Technology, Pharmacy.	Legal Studies, Management, Pharmacy	2024	intakes: 0 graduates 0 (new partner)

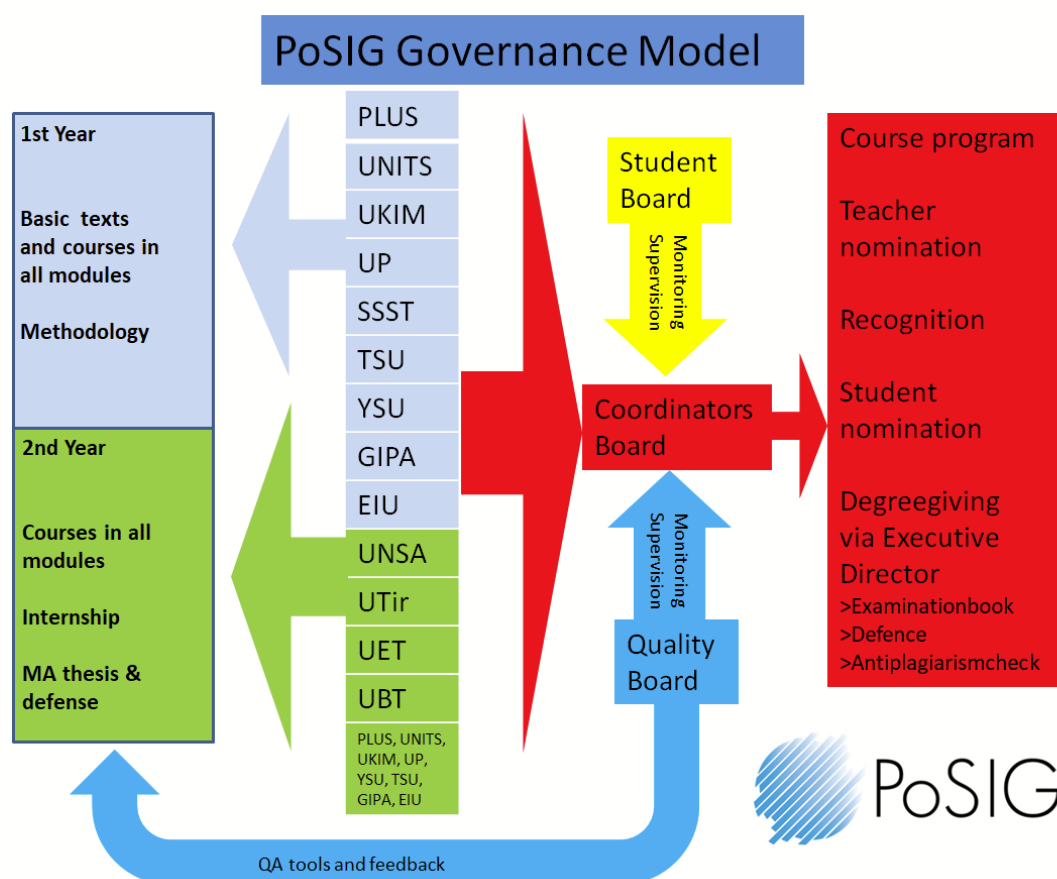
All participating institutions have **accredited programmes in Political Science** at Bachelor level, most of them also at Master's level, and some on PhD level. All partners benefit from the complementarity of the consortium partners' academic profile.

The implementation of this curriculum is regulated in a **cooperation agreement** signed by all partners. This agreement includes regulations for the governance of the programme and its quality management to guarantee an integrated character of the programme.

The partners in the Caucasus and in the Western Balkan additionally deliver the specific academic competencies regarding political developments in the region within these subjects.

Basically, all partners are degree giving partners: The degree is given to alumni enrolled at a partner university for at least one academic term.

The following diagram gives an **overview** of the PoSIG-consortium and its contributions to the curriculum:



The PoSIG consortium defined a specific **governance system** for the internal decision making about the course program, the nomination of teachers, recognition of courses, student nomination and the management of the joint degree giving process. The central institution is the **coordinators board** where each partner is represented by one academic expert. The Coordinators Board is the central policymaker regarding the joint PoSIG curriculum. It elects one member as Executive Director who is acting in the name of the consortium.

The coordinators board is accompanied by a **quality board** with one independently acting representative from each partner. The quality board supervises and monitors the policy decisions of the coordinators board and serves the implementation of the study programme with a set of quality assurance activities and tools.

The **student & alumni board** with members of PoSIG students and/or alumni from each partner is representing the student interest, i.e. especially supervising the activities of the coordinators board.

Together the **PoSIG consortium** is providing all courses and the learning environment to all students enrolled in the PoSIG curriculum. The module descriptions and more than **120 course syllabi** are a result of the joint negotiations of the academic and didactic requirements. The courses of the first year will be offered by PLUS, SSST, UKIM, UTri and UP, the courses of the second year by all other partners. Students have to enrol at least at 2 partner universities. The consortium is using a joint online tool for students application and selection run by UET, the eLearning environment and eLibrary is provided by each partner university. Recently, in the course of JoPScip - **Erasmus+ KA2 Capacity Building Project 101128841, 2023-2026 “Curriculum Development - Joint MA Program in Political Science (JoPScip)”**, also a new virtual education space, posig.online, has been developed and is ready for use. Students and staff (incl. all participants of the teacher academies) can use these resources based on their registration. The anti plagiarism check is provided by one of the degree giving partner universities (usually based on Turnitin). The proof of completion of the curriculum is given based on a PoSIG Examination Book, the minutes of the defence are collected on a jointly used form. Based on the Examination Book and the records from the master’s defence the degree giving process at the respective partner universities is initiated.

1.3 Accreditation

In the initial EuroPS project, separate accreditations for every single partner were planned. The project was compiled in 2014, i.e. before the Yerevan resolution on the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes (EA). After checking with the relevant European Commission, the PoSIG consortium decided to apply for EA accreditation. It is worth noting that the EuroPS/PoSIG consortium was only the second in Europe to go through the EA process.

Accreditation 2016/17 - accreditation with conditions

The first self-evaluation (i.e. application for accreditation) report was finally submitted to AQ Austria in October 2016, after a site visit in December 2016 and the review of the expert panel, the board of AQ Austria in its meeting on 14./15. March 2017, decided to award of the AQ Austria certificate for accreditation to PoSIG for a Period of six years and under three conditions:

- C1: The Consortium needs to complete the process of signing and ratification of the Partner Declaration by all partners in the Consortium until the start of the academic year 2017/18.



- C2: The Consortium needs to prove the fulfilment of all national accreditation requirements of all partners in the Consortium, especially in those cases where full accreditation procedures are required latest until the start of the academic year 2017/18.
- C3: The Consortium needs to allocate ECTS credit points to courses according to their actual workload. If this means that the ECTS value of a course drops below six points, the ECTS value of other courses in the same module (18 ECTS) should be examined with a view to a corresponding increase if justified by their workload.

With a report submitted in September 2017 the consortium proved the fulfilment of condition 1, but had to apply for a prolongation of the deadline for the fulfilment of the other two conditions until June 2018. In its meeting on 26. September 2017 the board of AQ Austria decided on the fulfilment of Condition 1 and accepted the extension of the deadline to prove the fulfilment of Conditions 2 and 3. With its report in August 2018 the board proved the fulfilment of condition 3 and also of condition 2 for all partners except for the Slovenian.

Due to regulation implementation issues (national legislation and regulations of the Slovenian national quality assurance agency) it was not possible for the Slovenian partner to finish national accreditation until this deadline. Therefore, the consortium had to apply for another extension for the full completion of all conditions. This application was granted by the board of AQ Austria in its meeting on 11. September 2018, in the same meeting the fulfilment of condition 3 was approved. The last deadline for the fulfilment of condition 2 was 15 March 2019.

The [report on the fulfilment of the conditions](#) contains a short summary regarding all conditions and regarding condition 2 a detailed documentation of the process in Slovenia.

National implementation of the 2016/17 accreditation result

Unsurprisingly, we had to face a few challenges, especially regarding the national ratification of the Yerevan resolution on EA; in particular:

- **Austria:** basically, no external accreditation is needed, hence the EA accreditation, as any other accreditation would be, is a voluntary add on to the University's autonomous decision (self-accrediting status of the Austria universities).
- **Albania:** The ministry in charge accepted the outcome of the EA accreditation as a form of pre-accreditation for both Albanian partner institutions by June 2018 (one public, one private). Nevertheless, after one year the study programme had to undergo national accreditation, which was in fact not a full accreditation but a form of study programme evaluation after the first year of programme implementation.
- **Bosnia-Herzegovina:** Both partner institutions received a letter of "consent for the implementation of the study programme" from the ministry in charge in July 2018; no further steps were necessary.
- **Italy** (initially, in EuroPS, there was also a partner from Pavia): The Italian partner had to withdraw from the consortium at an earlier stage of the CBHE project due to legal restrictions regarding the funding of study programmes (no possibility to use synergies with other programmes, but proof of additional staff capacities for the whole programme based on existing resources). The University of Trieste parallel to the European Accreditation procedure has started the internal process to apply



also for the national accreditation based on the existing master accreditation and the proof of academic capacity required for additional courses in the accreditation scheme of Italy.

- **Kosovo:** The Kosovo Accreditation Agency has approved the result of the EA-accreditation for both partner institutions in July 2017; no further steps were necessary.
- **North Macedonia:** A process for full national accreditation had to be started and was successfully finished by April 2018 (i.e., no direct ratification of the EA-accreditation; but usage of the AQ board decision in the accreditation procedure).

This list is an amended version from the article “Power to the Faculty Approach in the Bologna Process: How does the European Approach to accreditation of joint programs enhance innovation capacity?” (Kok & Wageneder, 2023) which elaborates on the issue and is available from <https://journals.ysu.am/index.php/j-pol-sci/article/view/9092>.

Re-accreditation 2023/24

In 2023 the then existing PoSIG consortium (some partners left, new partners entered the consortium; see above) decided to apply for re-accreditation. After a tender call, the German quality assurance agency ZeVA was commissioned to carry out this accreditation. After the usual procedure, PoSIG received full accreditation (without any conditions; but with recommendations). This accreditation was based on a previous version of this self-evaluation report. The final report is published with [ZeVA](#) and [EQAR](#).

Re-accreditation 2024/25

During the re-accreditation process, the new CBHE project JoPScip was approved and started, which led to a further expansion of the consortium and required another full accreditation. That's why the consortium is applying for another accreditation within only one year.

National implementation of the accreditation results 2023/24

Because of this new re-accreditation within one year, most “old” partners waited for national accreditation; not to have to undergo the same procedure twice within one or two years.

Preparations for national implementation in new partner countries

Part of the JoPScip project was a series of meetings with members of ministries, quality assurance agencies, rectorates, administration and academics in Armenia and Georgia in May 2024. One of the main objectives of these meetings was to analyse the conditions for joint programmes and to prepare for national implementation of the EA accreditation. In particular, the situation in the two countries appears to be as follows:

- **Armenia:** According to [EQAR](#) the “European Approach (is) available to all higher education institutions”. Nevertheless discussion during stakeholder meetings pointed out that the current legal framework in Armenia lacks specific provisions for joint degree programmes, posing challenges for immediate implementation. However, new legislation, including a new law on education expected in 2025, is anticipated to address these gaps. Once the new law is enacted, ANQA will assume a central role in licensing. It was proposed that accreditation should begin with a trial period, followed



by formal accreditation. The meetings with stakeholders have also highlighted the programme's potential to influence policy development for joint programmes and their EA accreditation in Armenia.

- **YSU** will apply for the joint programme licence to relevant authorities during the academic year 2024/25. The procedure includes validation at YSU, confirmation by YSU Faculty of International Relations Council, confirmation by YSU Quality Assurance Center and YSU Academic Council and following submission of the documents to the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports for the final decision.
- **EIU** will also be applying for the programme license to the relevant authorities during the academic year 2024/25. The process involves several steps of internal and external review. The programme, developed by the relevant academic department, ensures it meets university standards. Next, it will be reviewed and approved by the Quality Assurance Center and the Scientific Council. Once these approvals are secured, the documents will be submitted to the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports for a final decision on granting the license.
- **Georgia:** According to [EQAR](#) the “European Approach (is) available to some higher education institutions or only under specific conditions”. In particular “when the HE institutions apply for accreditation of joint programmes run by local and foreign institutions, the national QA agency (NCEQE) may apply the European Approach. When the local HEI teams up with the international partner university to establish a joint educational programme the draft agreement of institutions implementing the joint higher educational programme has to be ‘pre-approved’ by the national QA body, NCEQE who will also check the content and implementation of the joint programme, the rule for awarding a joint academic degree and enrollment regulations.”
 - In the case of **TSU**, the accreditation of a higher education programme developed in compliance with the requirements of Georgian legislation, including a joint programme, may be conducted by a foreign organization recognized as competent by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE). The NCEQE acknowledges accreditation granted by an organization that operates within the territory of an EU member state, is a member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), and is registered in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), provided that the organization has the authority to do so according to the legal provisions of the respective country.
 - **GIPA:** The implementation of educational programs, including joint educational programs, is closely tied to internal and external evaluation processes. The internal evaluation procedure involves the assessment of the developed educational program by the Quality Assurance Office. Upon receiving a positive conclusion, the programme is reviewed by the Academic Board of the University. If approved, the programme is formally endorsed by the Rector of the University. External evaluation is conducted by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE), which evaluates the compatibility of educational programs with established standards. Additionally, higher education institutions are authorized to have their programmes evaluated by competent foreign organizations. Subsequently, the results of such evaluations may be submitted to the NCEQE for recognition at the national level.

At this stage, the internal evaluation process of the joint educational programme will be completed. The external evaluation, specifically the recognition at the national level of the evaluation conducted by AQ Austria is planned to be finalized by the fall semester of 2025.

1.4 Summary of major amendments since the first self-evaluation report in 2016

The curriculum, the Partner Declaration and – most of all – its actual implementation remained quite stable over the previous years. However, there have been some (mostly minor) changes, which can be summarised as follows:

- **Consortium**

- University of Ljubljana has left the consortium in 2020 for internal reasons.
- FAMA College Pristina has stopped its participation in meetings and consortium events from 2019 without explicit declaration about leaving the consortium.
- Four new partners showed their interest in joining the consortium, two of them finally made it (University of Trieste, University of Prishtina), two (University of Montenegro, University of Belgrade) are still in the phase of internal preparation of capacity for participation.

- **Partner Declaration**

- In accordance with the curriculum the most important amendment is related to the **mobility scheme**. In the 2016 version PLUS and ULju were defined as the two universities where students can study during their first year. This is now generalized to demanding students to study at least at two partners, with a maximum of four partners.
- This is also mirrored in the **requirements for the supervision** of the Master's thesis project. Previously it was required that one of the two supervisors is from Salzburg or Ljubljana. Now the only PoSIG-specific requirement remains that the supervisors must be related to the two modules chosen by the student.
- Initially, a set of software tools for PoSIG was purchased with funding from the CBHE EuroPS project (eLearning platform, eLibrary, ePortfolio, plagiarism detection). However, it turned out that people use the standard tools of their university. The agreement has been updated respectively. Nevertheless, in the course of the JoPScip project another shared virtual educational space, posig.online, was developed, ready to be used by all PoSIG teachers.
- Especially, it turned out that the once planned **Joint Degree Management System (JDMS)** created a high administrative workload without providing additional services since the internal administration of the degree giving process at the partner institutions anyway needs documentation of study progress and the recognition of courses by the partner institutions. The JDMS was therefore replaced by the Examination Book, which was in fact already in use throughout the previous years. The minutes of the Master's defence are collected in a [jointly used form](#). Based on the **Examination Book** and the records from the Master's defence the degree giving process at the participating partner universities is initiated.

- **Curriculum**

- The **curriculum implementation** followed the intended idea and the consortium's capacities: the defined areas of specialisation and modules are still at the level of art in the discipline and well connected to the academic capacity of the consortium partners.
- The most relevant change in the curriculum is related to the **mobility scheme** and the role of the partner institutions. The 2017 accreditation of PoSIG was dominated by the partner



roles as defined by the CBHE project used to develop the joint programme with defining ULju and PLUS as dominating partners for teaching the first academic year. The observation and experience of the actual implementation of the programme showed that this should not be continued. Different partners should have the opportunity to offer courses for the first year (Basic Text, Methodology I+II) based on the jointly agreed standards and module description.

- **Management**

- The continuous success of the programme in calls for applicants and the constant degree giving activities created a **high awareness** about the programme implementation during the time. At least annual Coordinators Boards as parts of the Teacher Academies and additional online boards (especially during the corona period) involved the coordinators but also teaching staff and administrative stakeholders.
- While the practical side of student and student file management was concentrated on the Executive Director, the most important decision of the Coordinators Board every year was jointly performed about the acceptance of students to the new student groups per year. Based on the evaluation results about candidates provided by the Executive Director and the full documentation of all application documents the Coordinators Board decided about the **selection of students**.
- The ongoing **degree-giving** processes based on the joint recognition of courses documented in the Examination Book was managed by the coordinators at the partner universities of the degree giving consortium. The results and alumni lists are constantly reported to the Coordinators Board.
- Beside the joint meetings of coordinators and teaching staff at board meetings and the Teacher Academy the Executive Director at least once a year is **visiting the partner institutions** to report about the consortium's activities to stakeholders and involved faculty.
- Initially, a holistic **quality management** model was developed and described in a quality handbook. However, local regulations apply and take precedence, and there is also a lack of programme-specific resources to maintain such a comprehensive approach. The quality measures actually applied are described in [section 2.9](#).
- At first implementation students were also invited to use a **PoSIG ePortfolio** tool. This ePortfolio environment should have been a key feature of student engagement, where students could document, discuss and reflect on their learning achievements, collaborate with peers, and especially showcase their work on their Master's thesis. The ePortfolio was meant to be student-driven and would have allowed students to monitor their own progress and competences. Students were encouraged to reflect on their learning outcomes in relation to the course objectives in their ePortfolios. But, as it turned out, students were hesitant to use this tool, only a few of them used it as a showcase for their studies and work. The main reason for this certainly was that there were **no ECTS credits allocated** for these activities.

2 Quality Standard

2.1 Eligibility [EA, Standard 1]

2.1.1 Status

All institutions involved are recognised as higher education institutions. Every single partner has checked with their legal authorities regarding their right to award joint degrees.

As of December 2024, the following documents are available:

Partner institution	Declaration signed	Info for diploma supplement	HEI status declaration
University of Salzburg, Austria	yes	Yes	Yes
Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje, Macedonia	yes	Yes	Yes
European University of Tirana, Albania	yes	Yes	Yes
University of Tirana, Albania	yes	Yes	Yes
University of Business and Technology Pristina, Kosovo	yes	Yes	Yes
University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina	yes	Yes	Yes
University Sarajevo School of Science and Technology, Bosnia and Herzegovina	yes	Yes	Yes
University of Trieste	yes	Yes	Yes
University of Prishtina	yes	Yes	Yes
Tbilisi State University	yes	Yes	Yes
Georgian Institute for Public Affair	yes	Yes	Yes
Yerevan State University	yes	Yes	Yes
Eurasia International University	yes	Yes	Yes
University of Montenegro	no	no	Yes
University of Belgrade	no	no	Yes

All partners of the consortium are ...

- state-recognized in their respective countries and
- entitled to award joint degrees.

2.1.2 Joint Design and Delivery

Initially, in 2015 and 2016, in terms of **capacity building** and in order to **collaboratively develop and discuss** all relevant documents, especially the curriculum and the Partner Declaration were developed in joint meetings of coordinators, quality managers and teachers. In the so-called train-the-trainer-workshops (potential) lecturers were brought together to **collaboratively work on module and course descriptions**. On these occasions, a quality model was also developed and repeatedly discussed. The training activities were continued with annual PoSIG Teacher Academies as peer-to-peer learning events focused on specific fields of research and teaching. In addition, and particularly during the Corona lockdowns several online meetings of the Coordinators Boards or of smaller groups on specific occasions took place. All these meetings, but especially the Teacher Academies, are an essential part of PoSIG's quality management.

All partner institutions participated in all meetings and events and every representative of the consortium had the chance to **bring in their views and contributions**.



Date/s	Meeting	Participants
October 2015	Kick-off meeting in Tirana	Coordinators and quality managers
February 2016	Coordinators Board in Salzburg	Coordinators and quality managers
March 2016	Train-the-teachers workshop in Salzburg	Module coordinators and (potential) instructors of the following modules: International Relations, European Integration; representatives of quality management;
April 2016	Train-the-teachers workshop in Ljubljana	Module coordinators and (potential) instructors of the following modules: Comparative Politics, Public Policy & Administration, Methodology and Thesis Supervision; representatives of quality management;
April 2016	Train-the-teachers workshop in Pavia	Module coordinators and (potential) instructors of the following module: Political Theory; representatives of quality management;
May 2016	Coordinators Board in Ljubljana	Coordinators and quality managers
September 2016	Various meetings regarding mid-term-reporting and dissemination; various meetings with rectorates, ministries and accreditation agencies	Project coordinator and local project partners (local coordinator, quality manager, instructors, ...)
September 2016	IT-related meeting in Pristina	Project coordinator, members of quality management, IT-related staff at UBT
October 2016	First meeting of the quality board in Skopje	Quality managers of all partners, project coordinator
November 2016	Meeting of the Coordinators Board prior to the site visit during the accreditation process in Salzburg	Members of the Quality Board; local quality manager
January 2017	Coordinators Board in Salzburg	Members of Coordinators Board and Student Board, selected quality manager
May 2017	Coordinators Board and Student Board in Pavia	Members of Coordinators Board and Student Board, selected quality manager
May/June 2017	Quality tour/visit to all project partners to inform them about the EuroPS teaching approach, (contents of the) Teaching Handbook and Quality Handbook	Members of quality management team, local quality members, local teaching staff
June 2017	Second Quality Board in Sarajevo	Members of the Quality Board; local quality manager
June 2017	WB Political Science conference "Bridges within Europe!" in Sarajevo	Members of Coordinators Board and individual researchers/teachers; guests
May 2018	Teacher Academy in Salzburg: Populism in Eastern Neighbourhood	PoSIG Teacher Academy with coordinators and teaching staff from PoSIG partners and partners from the Eastern Neighbourhood region.
April 2019	Teacher Academy in Salzburg: EU Neighbourhood Policy from outside Perspective	PoSIG Teacher Academy with coordinators and teaching staff from PoSIG partners and partners from the Eastern Neighbourhood region.
April 2020	Teacher Academy in Salzburg: Trade Policy in the Age of Populism	PoSIG Teacher Academy with coordinators and teaching staff from PoSIG partners and partners from the Eastern Neighbourhood region.



2021	Corona break	-/-
February 2022	Teacher Academy in Salzburg: QA of Joint Programs	PoSIG Teacher Academy with coordinators and teaching staff from PoSIG partners and partners from the Eastern Neighbourhood region.
July 2022	Quality Week in Salzburg	PoSIG coordinators and/or quality managers from each partner.
April 2023	Teacher Academy in Salzburg: Migration, Gender & Governance	PoSIG Teacher Academy with coordinators and teaching staff from PoSIG partners and partners from the Eastern Neighbourhood region.
February 2024	Teacher Academy in Trieste: Sectoral Integration.	PoSIG Teacher Academy with coordinators and teaching staff from PoSIG partners and partners from the Eastern Neighbourhood region.
April/ May 2024	Innovation Labs in Georgia and Armenia	About 15 meetings with stakeholders in Georgia and Armenia: ministries, quality agencies, rectors, vice rectors, heads of PolSci departments, academic members of these departments (prospective PoSIG teachers), administrative staff, quality management, international offices
May 2024	Quality Days Skopje	Meeting of JoPScip coordinators and quality managers (i.e. from partners in Armenia, Austria, Georgia, North Macedonia)
June 2024	Teachers Days Skopje	Exchange with teachers, various inputs, teachers working on their course descriptions.
June/July 2024	Teachers Days Salzburg	Exchange with teachers, various inputs, teachers working on their course descriptions.
October 2024	Teacher Academy Salzburg	PoSIG Teacher Academy on Sectoral Integration in Salzburg with participants from all consortium partners and far more post soviet transformation countries.
October 2024	Quality Board Salzburg	Joint Coordinators Board of the extended consortium on 26 October 2024 in Salzburg. Preparation of EA accreditation, esp. work on self-evaluation report.

Substantial effort was especially put into the **collaborative design of the PoSIG-Curriculum and the Partner Declaration**. During the Coordinators Board in Salzburg in February 2016 the proper design of **learning outcomes** (that are **fitting the Framework for Qualifications** of the European Higher Education Area, QF-EHEA, and the European Qualification Framework, EQF) was elaborated on extensively. Furthermore, the PoSIG-model for **generic competencies** and the widely known and accepted **Bloom's taxonomy** of learning outcomes were taken into consideration. The resulting **PoSIG scheme for learning outcomes** ([see attached](#)) was an important guideline for the design of the curriculum, its modules and courses.

All **Teacher Academies** include training about QA standards for curriculum and syllabus design and their implementation in course designs. During years of continuous programme implementation participants have identified the Teacher Academies as a non-hierarchical place for creative and peer guided work on a shared level. The academic focus of the workshops is jointly defined along the needs and interests of the participants. The identification of participants is based on a call for papers addressed to all PoSIG partners and partners of the PoSIG Eastern Neighborhood network.

Regarding **joint delivery** see the table in [1.1.2](#).



2.1.3 Partner Declaration

The PoSIG Partner Declaration contains the following **sections**:

- objectives
- admission of students
- PoSIG courses and teaching Staff
- exams, Master's theses and Master's thesis defences
- awarding the Joint Degree
- multilateral programme coordination
- information, documentation, and transparency
- participation costs and business plan
- duration, amendment, review, and termination of the Agreement
- application of the law
- conflict resolution

as well as these **appendices**:

- Appendix A: PoSIG curriculum
- Appendix B: Criteria and procedure for student selection
- Appendix C: Convention for the conversion of grades
- Appendix D: Quality management handbook
- Appendix E: Examination book
- Appendix F: Teaching handbook
- including forms for course and module description
- Appendix G: Student services and student elections
- Appendix H: Diploma supplement

Some important specific aspects of this agreement are:

- Students must be **enrolled** in every partner university they attend during their PoSIG-studies.
- Thereby all partners apply their individual policy on **participation costs** (tuition fees).
- Every partner had the possibility to suggest **courses for the actual implementation** of the curriculum. Whether courses are accepted or not is decided by the Coordinators Board based on quality checks by the PoSIG coordinator. This procedure during the initial EuroPS project was repeated in 2022/23 with the so-called "syllabus renovation" prior to the application for re-accreditation in 2023.
- The **diploma** will be issued by all partners a student has attended in his/her last term (including the diploma supplement, showing the student's study track with all partners attended; see [appendix H of the agreement for an example](#)). Additionally, a shared certificate of all relevant partners is issued.
- In order to implement multilateral **governance**, a *Coordinators Board*, a *Quality Board* and an *Alumni & Student Board* as well as an *Executive Director* (i.e., the elected head of the *Coordinators Board*) are installed.
- The **Executive Director** is responsible for the proper administration of PoSIG. To reimburse the efforts of the *Executive Director* the coordinating partners receive 500 € per PoSIG graduate from the partners that have attended (proportionately; 125 € per term).
- The PoSIG **Examination Book** (see annex E of the agreement) is used for record keeping by each student. When introducing to the programme the Executive Director also instructs the students on how to use the examination book for the documentation of their study progress. By documenting progress the examination book also documents the student's needs to the coordinator of the next



university in the mobility move. Without the proof of completion in the examination book the students can not receive a date for the master's thesis defence at the end of the programme (together with the transcript of records of the attended universities). In other words, the examination book is used to keep track of the required courses based on the curriculum and is listing all courses recognised by the coordinators.

- Furthermore, the agreement mentions the **technical infrastructure** to be provided by all partners (i.e. eMail address, eLearning environment, plagiarism scanner) (see standard 7.2).
- The agreement also defines which **information** is to be communicated esp. via www.posig.info.
- Finally, the agreement comprises information on **entering and leaving the consortium** and on **conflict resolution**.

2.1.3.1 Diploma, Diploma Supplement and Joint Degree Certificate

The issuing of **diplomas** varies in regard to students' study tracks (i.e., depending on where the students choose to study; and esp. depending on where they complete their studies), there is no single form for the diploma supplement. Instead of that there are available ...

- one *example* of a Joint Degree Certificate ([attachment G of the agreement](#))
- a document collecting all relevant information for the various Diploma Supplements (also [attachment G](#)).

2.1.3.2 Business plan

Each partner applies its regulations on **participation costs** (tuition fees) to all students registered in the PoSIG curriculum for the period of their active study at that institution, but not during study periods where students are attending another partner. Students can find information about participation costs policy of all partners at www.posig.info.

The PoSIG partners agree to send their local coordinator, local QM-expert, and one student to meetings of the relevant boards, as defined in Article 6 of the agreement, at their own expense.

The partners agree to **charge no costs** for the operative management and technical support, application system, website and learning environment to the PoSIG consortium for the duration of this contract (see Article 9 of the Partner Declaration).

The partners can apply for **national and international funding** to finance local services for the PoSIG Joint Degree Programme and for grants for students (and probably instructors) participating in the Programme (Erasmus+ Joint Degree Grants, Jean Monnet Network etc.).

Mobility of students and staff is supported with Erasmus+ funds (KA 131 and KA 171).

2.1.3.3 Status of the cooperation agreement

All partners have agreed on this cooperation agreement at the coordinators board in April 2023. The document meanwhile is **signed** by all respective rectorates (see table in EA 1.1).

2.1.3.4 Amendments since version 2016

Please see the summary of all amendments since 2016 in [section 1.4](#).



2.2 Learning Outcomes [EA, Standard 2]

2.2.1 Level

The (appropriate) level of the learning outcomes was discussed within the consortium on several occasions:

- An inventory of implemented Bachelor curricula at the partners and a previous investigation on the academic content and level of Bachelor curricula in Political Science within www.erasmus-netowork.eu allowed the identification of **benchmarks** for teaching a consecutive Master's degree in political science.
- Basically, this was **discussed** and (above all) **defined** during the Coordinators Board in Salzburg in February 2016, resulting in the scheme for learning outcomes as well as in the **forms for module and course descriptions** ([see attachments](#)).
- How to design learning outcomes (on the appropriate level) then was an **important input and topic of discussion** during the train-the-teacher workshops in Salzburg, Ljubljana and Pavia in early 2016 ([workshop notes](#)).
- Once again there was respective **input** from quality management during the Teacher Days in Skopje in June 2024 and in Salzburg in June/July 2024.
- During these workshops, both in 2016 and in 2024, participants worked on the **learning outcomes of their modules and courses** (syllabi) and had intensive discussions on that issue.
- The final module and course descriptions were **checked by the module coordinators as well as by the PoSIG coordinator or resp. by the person authorized for this task**. In 2016/16 several courses had to be rejected – also and especially due to inappropriate learning outcomes. In 2024, all final course submissions could be accepted, following prior iterative reviews.
- In the Coordinators Board in April 2023 it was decided to continue the curriculum's definition of modules and module learning outcomes but to broaden the basis for first year teaching. At the same meeting it was decided to start a **“syllabus renovation process”** coordinated by Aneta Cekikj from UKIM. The intention of this process was to update the course syllabi collection from 2017 and to adopt the course programme offered to the changed academic profiles and capacities. All then existing course syllabi were checked against formal and qualitative criteria (esp. regarding learning outcomes) and, when needed, accordingly adapted. Within this process more than **60 courses** were updated, many of the respective reform processes were supported by Aneta and Franz.

In particular, the following **skills and competences** are **defined as learning outcomes on curriculum level**. They were the basis for the definition of the intended learning outcomes on module level. On this level there is a separation between learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and competences.

Intended learning outcomes as defined in the curriculum
Competence in the field of study , in particular:
- comprehensive knowledge about theories in political science, political concepts, actors, institutions, processes, norms and central policy fields;
- the ability to understand, assess and apply political science research with high methodological standards to other modules;
- the ability to analyse political and societal problems, based on social science concepts and theories.
Methods competences , in particular:
- the ability and knowledge to thoughtfully and critically apply the methodological instruments of empirical-analytical political science research, including the ability to use statistical software, and to plan and carry out independent research;
- the ability to cooperate with others (interdisciplinarily and/or in groups), to carry out research together;
- the ability to present complex research and research findings convincingly in front of an audience.
Competence in sound reasoning and judgement , in particular:
- the ability to understand high-level social and political science literature and to critically analyse and assess it by drawing on the insights of neighbouring disciplines (such as law, economics, sociology, history);
- the ability to assess the presentation of scientific research outcomes, to make comparisons and to give self-reflecting feedback;
- the ability to debate and compare one's own insights and positions with those of others and to modify them, if necessary.
Competence in responsive action , in particular:
- the ability to grasp political and social problems, to develop practical strategies, policy reform contributions and to present them in public debates;
- the ability to connect science and political practice;
- the ability to engage in politics effectively on the basis of scientific insights.
- the ability to work within the scope of the standards of academic and professional integrity and ethics;

These intended learning outcomes are also available from www.posig.info.

Students who want to be registered for PoSIG have to hold a Bachelor's degree in political science or international relations or related fields. It is expected that students therefore have an overview of political science in general and to have knowledge, skills and competencies with the respective theories and methodology (EQF level 6). Because of this **requirement on prequalification**, it is possible to start PoSIG teaching with a theory and methodology guided course on basic texts in the first year and build on the achieved level in the subsequent courses. Advanced methodology and applied courses complement the chosen modules. The syllabi of the now approx. 120 courses designed along these learning outcomes are available from these folders: [60 courses from the old consortium](#), another [60 from new partners in the Caucasus](#); 25 of the old courses



from PLUS and UKIM renewed in the course of the JoPScip project, the others updated in the syllabus renovation project before the 2023/24 accreditation.

PoSIG enables students to carry out **independent theory-driven empirical-analytical social science research** while meeting high methodological standards and developing innovative research strategies and solutions for politically and socially relevant problems in their **Master's theses** (EQF level 7).

All partners agreed to accept PoSIG alumni as eligible for their **PhD programmes** at EQF level 8.

It was one of the intentions of the PoSIG consortium not to follow the development at the "Master market" and specify the curriculum on one subfield of Political Science **but to offer the whole dimensions of the field**. Allowing the selection of two out of five modules to develop an individual academic profile is combined with the opportunity to complete courses from all other modules as well. To require from PoSIG applicants a Bachelor's degree in Political Science or International Relation or related fields (with at least 10 credits in methodology) and to accept related subjects only under the condition of the completion of relevant courses from Bachelor level allows the implementation of this **benchmark level for teaching a Master in Political Science**.

2.2.2 *Disciplinary field*

On curriculum level the intended learning outcomes are implicitly organised along the **differentiation of knowledge, skills and competencies** whereas on module level all definitions of intended learning outcomes had to follow this distinction explicitly (see the module descriptions in the annex of the [curriculum](#)). On course level many of the descriptions follow this distinction, others don't (see links to course descriptions above).

Hence, quite an effort has been put to the process of the discussion and definition of the intended learning outcomes on module level during the (therefore organised) train-the-teacher-workshops in 2016, as inputs in the annual teacher academies in Salzburg as well as during the JoPScip workshops in June 2024 (Skopje and Salzburg).

2.2.3 *Achievement*

All partners are keen to support PoSIG students in **achieving the intended learning outcomes**, to equip them for challenging and promising careers. Furthermore, all partners are **involved in local study programmes** in the relevant fields; therefore, they are familiar with the requirements of the job market. They entered the consortium to offer their students a wider range of promising opportunities. As can be seen from the curriculum, as well as e.g. from the various teacher trainings there has been and still is a strong focus on the writing of and working with learning outcomes (as a basis for constructive alignment). Also, the fact that most teaching staff was involved in the various LO-/syllabi-workshops is an element of assurance that **PoSIG instructors contribute to the achievement** of the defined learning outcomes (teacher workshops in 2016/17, annual teacher academies, JoPScip workshops in 2024).

Another, even more crucial aspect of achievement is that the course descriptions (syllabi) and hence the intended **learning outcomes of the single courses** were strictly developed and defined **to fit the modules they belong to**. The **course selection process** for PoSIG has a particular focus on the contribution of an individual course to the learning outcomes of the respective module (see [standard 7.1](#) for more details on course

selection).

The structure of the curriculum enables students to follow their **specific mobility track** (requiring them to study at least at two partners). The PoSIG consortium has to assure that they can take all courses of their modules, i.e. to achieve the intended learning outcomes. Addressing students with a respective Bachelor's degree each module starts with a course in *Basic Texts* that requires students to study and work with literature on a **demanding level**. This way students get an **extensive overview** of the standard literature in the field, regarding both theory and methodology (6 ECTS). On this basis, they have to demonstrate in the two selected modules their **competence to apply theory and methodology** in the field (2 courses, each 6 ECTS).

Other aspects of achievement are related to the students' master's theses:

- Firstly, supported by two courses in methodology (I+II, each 6 ECTS) the students are prepared to **develop their own research project** in their Master's thesis (30 ECTS). Work on this thesis is accompanied with a Master's thesis seminar and supervised by two professors from two different partners. The MA thesis projects of students are concluding from the methodological and thematic inputs of courses and can go beyond these incentives by using the students' individual experiences, motivations and should be in relation to their qualification strategies. The internship as a window to a non-academic learning space is part of this individual strategy development and the students are supervised on how to connect this experience to their qualification strategy in a PoSIGer Jour fixe during the first academic year. Support is offered when students need advice in this important period of orientation.
- Secondly, there are the **topics students are working** on. These demonstrate an intensive engagement with the learning outcomes of the programme. A list of all Master's theses submitted during the last years can be [found from the annex](#).
- Thirdly, there are the [questions as suggested to the examiners in the master's thesis defence](#) in the respective protocol template. They are strictly formulated along the curriculum's learning outcomes, hence on level 7 of the European Qualification Framework, and hence intended to give students the opportunity to prove full achievement of the curriculum's intended learning outcomes. (Please note: Due to academic freedom these questions can only be a suggestion to the examiners.)

PoSIG alumni are quite successful in the job market, both in academic and in professional fields. Evidence thereof is reported in various testimonials, in a series of round table talks with active students, dropouts and alumni in June 2022 and in a PoSIG Master's thesis (Stanic, 2023²). Hence, the experience of PoSIG alumni at the job market prove their fit to high requirements in academia, national and international governmental and nongovernmental organizations. A LinkedIn group was established in early 2025 to use this career and professional communication oriented media with the existing LinkedIn platforms of participating partner universities.

² Stanic, J. (2023). Return of Highly Skilled Migrants to the Western Balkans: Potential and Possibilities. Master's thesis submitted for the degree of Master in Political Science – Integration and Governance (PoSIG).

2.2.4 Regulated Professions

This is not applicable to PoSIG.

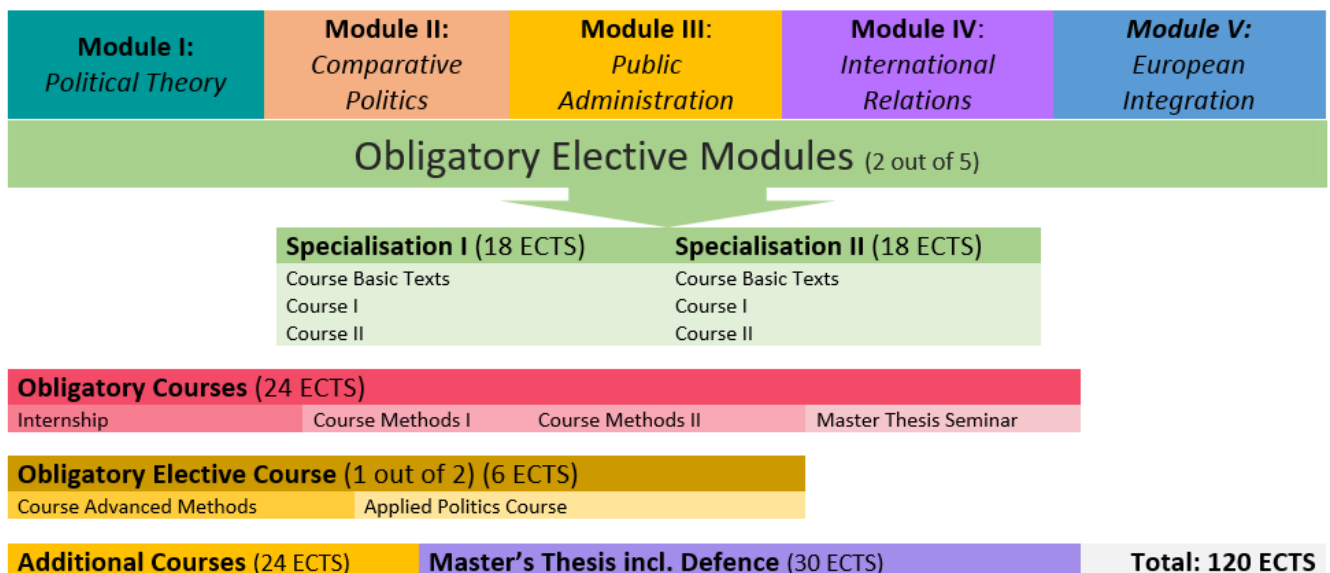
2.3 Study Programme [EA, Standard 3]

2.3.1 Curriculum

PoSIG is a **highly integrated programme** and offers qualifications and competencies for all traditional careers in political science but has a special focus on the context of the Western Balkan and the South Caucasus and their integration in European structures. It is not a “collection” of existing modules or courses from the different partners to use them for a shared curriculum but the **result of an inclusive and collaborative work** on the definition of the academic identity of the curriculum. This shared understanding of the discipline was defined at the level of the curriculum and implemented in the definition of academic content and learning outcomes at the level of the five modules and **more than 120 syllabi** of courses (proving the motivation of partners to contribute to the implementation of the curriculum; see course syllabi in two folders: [PoSIG](#), [JoP-Scip](#)).

Based on EQF level 7 the learning outcomes **enable alumni for qualified jobs in different fields and levels of the political systems and international relations**. Following a student-centred approach PoSIG-participants can decide about their individual qualification track, taking benefit from the fact that PoSIG is providing excellent education in all fields of political science and research.

The key elements of this curriculum are as follows:



In further elaboration:

- Out of five two “**Obligatory Elective Modules**” (each with 18 ECTS credits) have to be elected by each student. The five modules available are:
 - **Political Theory**
 - **Comparative Politics**
 - **Public Administration and Policy**
 - **International Relations**
 - **European Integration**
- Besides these modules students have to take:
 - **Obligatory Courses** (incl. methods courses, the Master’s seminar, internship; 24 credits)
 - **Obligatory Elective Courses** (6 credits)
 - **Additional Courses** (24 credits)
- Finally, they have to work out a **Master's thesis** incl. **Master's thesis defence** (30 credits).
- During their **first year** all students have to study with a focus on theory and methodology guided courses in the two selected modules as well as in methodology. In their **second year** they will study at one or two other partner universities to complete their courses and to work on their Master’s thesis.
- Every partner has the possibility to **suggest courses for the actual implementation** of the curriculum. Whether courses are accepted or not is decided by the Coordinators Board (with a specific focus on whether a course contributes to the respective module’s learning outcomes; and whether it fits the criteria of the [form for course descriptions](#)).
- **Exams** have to be taken based on local regulations. The conversion of grades is based on a PoSIG-grading table partners have agreed upon.
- The **Master’s thesis** has to be written in one of the two elected modules. For each Master’s thesis there will be a team of two supervisors (one from a first year university and one from a second year university).
- The **final exam** has the form of a Master’s thesis defence. The examination board consists of examiners from all partners a student has attended during his/her PoSIG-studies. Examiners must also represent the two modules the student has elected.

The **contributions of every single partner** to the course programme can be seen from the table in § 5 of the curriculum (see also in [1.1.2 of this document](#)).

2.3.1.1 Courses

During the first year of the preparatory EuroPS project each partner had the possibility to prepare (especially during the three train-the-teacher-workshops) and **suggest courses** to be added to the PoSIG course programme, i.e. **for the implementation of PoSIG** in its first two years. The proposed courses were reviewed by the **module coordinators** in place at the time based on the modules’ intended learning outcomes and by the **PoSIG coordinators** regarding formal criteria (esp. to check if the [form for course description](#) is filled in properly). This way, a number of the submitted courses were rejected.

During the last years this process has been applied repeatedly. And when preparing for re-accreditation the so-called “**syllabus renovation process**” was initiated. Starting with a workshop in 2023 and subsequent communication all involved teachers were asked to review their courses or to suggest new ones. Also, new partners (in terms of the 2023/24 accreditation) had to bring in their syllabi. All course descriptions were evaluated and decided on by the Coordinators Board (formal and qualitative criteria; see the [list of courses at the](#)

[time](#)). These communication intensive activities were coordinated by Aneta Cekik from UKIM.

With the **JoPScip** and the inclusion of new partners in the Caucasus more courses were developed, again esp. during respective workshops (see repeatedly above) and evaluated. After an intensive and iterative process of working on syllabi and feedback, all courses were accepted in this round.

2.3.1.2 Internship

Regarding the obligatory internship the Curriculum specifies in Art. 10:

“According to the ECTS workload of 6 ECTS, the internship has to represent a 4-week full time work placement experience. This workload can be done with a full time internship contract, or with a part-time internship contract with an equivalent longer duration of the placement.

The internship can be completed at a maximum of one or two employers.

The recognition of an internship requires a student report on the work experience, reflecting the relevance of the conducted work and collected experience for the academic aims, and learning outcomes of the PoSIG curriculum. The report also has to include a timetable of work presence, and a confirmation of the work time and statement about the student’s performance from the employer. This report has to be accepted by a supervising lecturer of a partner in order for the student to complete the internship. A form for the internship confirmation is available at www.posig.info.

Students are encouraged and supported to complete their internship at institutions as listed in § 2 (3) (local, national or international institutions). The internship should allow for a reflection of the PoSIG study experience but can also be used to develop and qualify the research interests for the student's thesis project.

The partners support the students in their internship by providing a list of contact addresses of possible employers and sources for financial support (national or others, such as Erasmus+ internship grants).”

For students a [list of partner institutions](#) is available.

2.3.1.3 Master’s thesis

The Master’s thesis is **supervised** by one teacher from a first-year university and one teacher from a second-year university. The supervising function of the thesis seminar is integrated with a shared curriculum and the individual supervision of students will be protocolled to allow an accountable and transparent supervision process with a joint communication between the student and the two supervisors. The **defence** of the Master’s thesis is organized as public examination with participation of all partners attended by a student during his/her PoSIG studies. Details on this are regulated in the Curriculum in Art. 9 & 13 and in Art. 4 of the partnership agreement. The antiplagiarism check of the thesis is carried out by the Executive Director, the defence records are signed by the examiner and the head of the committee, these are an essential part of the student files register.

To guarantee the examination of the achievement of the curriculum’s learning outcomes examiners are asked to use a set of questions as part of the [Master’s thesis defence form](#). When students have delivered

the final version of their MA thesis and this is accepted and evaluated by the supervisors the Executive Director is circulating this document to prepare the candidate and the supervisors for the defence date agreed. After the defence this document collects the questions asked in the defence and the grading of the defence confirmed by the examiners and the head of the committee. The Executive Director is attending the defence and is initiating the degree giving procedure at the partner institutions in cooperation with the PoSIG coordinators at the involved partner institutions based on this document.

Local rules apply with regard to deadlines for registering for the exam or time limits in terms of maximum number of semesters or number of months/years after acceptance of the research proposal, as well as other local specificities.

2.3.1.4 Mobility scheme and exemplary study tracks

The learner centred approach of the programme allows students to decide about their two fields of specialisation (two out of five modules). These are connected to their mobility track:

- The obligatory Basic Texts seminar in each field of specialisation has to be completed in the first academic year. It is offered by selected partner universities as defined in § 5 of the curriculum.
- Activities in the second PoSIG year (courses, internship, MA thesis project) can be completed at all PoSIG partner institutions (depending on the course offers as displayed in the course catalogue; § 5 of the curriculum).
- In general: PoSIG students have to be mobile within the consortium and have to attend courses and activities at least at two and at a maximum of four partner universities.
- All partner universities attended for at least one academic term are collaboratively awarding the Joint Degree to the student.

University of Salzburg and University of Trieste offer Erasmus+ KA 171 grants to students from BiH, Kosovo, Montenegro, Albania, Georgia, Ukraine, Lebanon, Armenia and Azerbaijan. In addition students can use the regular Erasmus+ grants.

PoSIG mobility scheme:

Students first step is to decide about the field of specialisation: They have to select <u>two</u> fields of specialisation from the five fields offered. Module 1: Political Theory Module 2: Comparative Politics Module 3: Public Policy and Administration Module 4: International Relations Module 5: European Integration					
Second step is to decide about the planned mobility track: As an example, below a decision for Political Theory and International Relations at YSU, UNITS and UKIM is highlighted. More examples can be found in this PPT.					
Specialisation	Political Theory	Comparative Politics	International Relations	European Integration	Public Administration & Policy
Sem 1	GIPA, TSU, YSU , EIU	PLUS, UKIM, YSU, GIPA	SSST, PLUS, GIPA, YSU , TSU, EIU	PLUS, UKIM, EIU	UP, GIPA, TSU
Sem 2	UNITS	UKIM, PLUS, YSU	PLUS, UNITS , YSU, EIU	UKIM, YSU, PLUS	YSU
Sem 3	UKIM, UNSA, UTIR, UET, UNITS , GIPA, TSU, YSU, EIU	UKIM, UTIR, UNSA, SSST, UET, PLUS, GIPA, YSU	UKIM, UNSA, SSST, UTIR, UET, UBT, GIPA, TSU, YSU	UTIR, UKIM, SSST, UNSA, PLUS, TSU	UTIR, UKIM, UP, GIPA, TSU, YSU, EIU
Sem 4	UKIM , UTIR, UET, EIU	UKIM , UTIR, SSST, UET, PLUS	UKIM, SSST, UTIR, UET, UBT	UTIR, UKIM, SSST, PLUS	UTIR, UKIM, EIU



Exemplary mobility tracks 2016/17-2021/22

Student Amer C. - semester 1: PLUS - semester 2: PLUS - semester 3: UNSA - semester 4 and master defence: UNSA	Student Dredhëza I. - semester 1: PLUS - semester 2: PLUS - semester 3: UKIM - semester 4 and master defence: UKIM
Student Doris P. - semester 1: PLUS - semester 2: PLUS - semester 3: UTir - semester 4 and master defence: UTir	Student Denisa I - semester 1: PLUS - semester 2: PLUS - semester 3: UET - semester 4 and master defence: UET
Student Jenifer. - semester 1: PLUS - semester 2: PLUS - semester 3: UNSA - semester 4: UKIM	Internship during the second year: easily possible with 30 ECTS for the master thesis and 6 ECTS for the internship, i.e. 24 credits for course attendances in the whole second year.

Exemplary mobility tracks from 2024/25 on

Student 6 - semester 1: PLUS - semester 2: PLUS - semester 3: UNSA - semester 4 and master defence: UNSA	Student 7 - semester 1: UKIM - semester 2: UKIM - semester 3: UET - semester 4 and master defence: UET
Student 8 - semester 1: PLUS - semester 2: UNITS - semester 3: UET - semester 4 and master defence: UNSA	Student 9 - semester 1: UP - semester 2: UNITS - semester 3: UNSA - semester 4 and master defence: UNSA



Exemplary mobility tracks from 2025/26 on

Student 10 - semester 1: PLUS - semester 2: UKIM - semester 3: UKIM - semester 4 and master defence: PLUS	Student 11 - semester 1: UP - semester 2: PLUS - semester 3: PLUS - semester 4 and master defence: UTIR
Student 12 - semester 1: YSU - semester 2: UNITS - semester 3: UNITS - semester 4 and master defence: UKIM	Student 13 - semester 1: PLUS - semester 2: PLUS - semester 3: UNSA - semester 4 and master defence: SSST



2.3.1.5 Degree Giving

The PoSIG partner universities attended by a student for at least one academic term are collaboratively awarding the Joint Degree: Based on the examination book as proof for the completion of the curriculum and the records of the Master's defence which also include the grading of thesis and defence, the Executive Director initiates the degree giving process by the relevant authorities at the partner universities (examination office, rectorates, register offices). The degree document and the accumulated diploma supplement of the degree giving universities is set up by the Executive Director for the individual student and circulated to the involved partner universities who add the signature and seal of the relevant person and authority to the document. Partners can add their specific documentation of the acquired degree to this circulating file and the last attended partner university hands over the degree document to the student in the local standard procedure (by post, to the hand of the student or in a ceremony). The PoSIG coordinators at the partner institutions take care about this process, both in the consortium as well as within their Universities and communicate this with the Executive Director.

In addition, partner universities, such as those in Georgia, may issue their national diploma (along with the supplement) to ensure compliance with local legislation, without affecting the standards set by the joint consortium.

2.3.2 ECTS Credits

The ECTS is appropriately **applied**. It was an important topic during the various teacher workshops and subsequently is part of the [form for course descriptions](#). In the various workshops PoSIG-teachers were/are trained in using the **ECTS credits as a means for the didactical planning** of their courses (i.e. in order to achieve constructive alignment; see section "Teaching methods" in the form for course descriptions). The Examination Book is used to keep track of the credits acquired by the single student. For the preparation of the TtT-workshops, the **ECTS user's guide 2015** was an important document of reference.

As can be seen from the structure of the curriculum **every module has 18 credits**. Basically, every single course should have 6 credits. If a partner wants to offer a course with less than 6 credits it has to be assured that two or more courses can be combined to at least 6 credits.

2.3.3 Workload

PoSIG has a planned workload of 120 ECTS credits. § 3 of the curriculums shows the **allocation of ECTS** credits and hence workload along the modules, courses and other elements of the curriculum:

	ECTS
Obligatory Elective Modules (2 of 5)	36
Political Theory	(18)
Comparative Politics	(18)
Public Policy & Administration	(18)
International Relations	(18)
European Integration	(18)
Obligatory Courses	24
Internship	(6)
Course Methods I	(6)
Course Methods II	(6)
Master's Thesis Seminar	(6)
Obligatory Elective Courses (1 of 2)	6
Advanced Methods in Political Science	(6)
Applied Course	(6)
Additional Courses	24
Master's Thesis	28
Master's Thesis Defense	2
Total	120

On the subsequent level, i.e. on **course level**, the mandatory [form for course descriptions](#) with its table for planning student's workload is an important means for ECTS allocation and monitoring, together with the didactical planning of the course (table row "teaching methods").

Regarding student workload per ECTS **local regulation** must be applied. This means that in most countries 25 hours are the average equivalent of 1 ECTS credit, whereas in Armenia and Northern Macedonia the average student workload for 1 ECTS credit is 30 hours.

The **monitoring of the actual student workload** for the single courses is in the responsibility of each partner, usually as part of course evaluations. This is also the case for any requirements to adjust in case of inaccurate workload.

The study activity reports based on the Examination Book show that the **students are able to acquire 60 ECTS credits in the first year** when they receive a full Erasmus+ grant. The identification of the Master's thesis project is the most challenging element in the study career. Methodology courses and courses as *Research Design for PoSIG* and *Internship & Field Experience* support the students in this process. Starting internships and other job opportunities during the second year leads to a lower study intensity and delays the completion of the programme.

2.4 Admission and Recognition [EA, Standard 4]

2.4.1 Admission

The PoSIG programme is designed as a Master programme on EQF-level 7, **continuing from Bachelor programmes in Political Science or International Relations and related fields on level 6**. It is not open for every applicant holding a Bachelor's degree but is still interdisciplinary as Political Science needs contributions from other fields such as economics, law and other social sciences.

To be accepted to PoSIG students therefore **must hold a Bachelor's degree in Political Science or International Relations** from one of the consortium partners or in a related field or from another accredited higher education institution. Students with Bachelor's degrees that followed curricula with less than 10 ECTS in methodology and scientific work have to compensate this with relevant courses in that field. These courses are recognizable as additional courses.

If a student's Bachelor's degree is **not equivalent** to an acceptable extent, the student may be required to complete academic work for up to 30 ECTS credits. These requirements must be fulfilled by the completion of the programme. The equivalency and, if given, the required additional academic work is decided by the Coordinators Board.

The **definition of the admission requirements** was based on studies about the structure and learning outcomes of European Bachelor's curricula following the Bologna process as they are represented in the www.erasmus-network.eu.

Because of this pre-qualification level it is possible to start the teaching in the modules with a **theory guided course on basic texts about** this sub field in the first year and set up the level of further courses in these modules at this level. Advanced methodological and applied courses will complement an intense engagement with the chosen modules. This will enable students to carry out independent theory-driven empirical-analytical social science research, while meeting high methodological standards and developing innovative research strategies and solutions for politically and socially relevant problems in their Master's thesis.

The **criteria for student selection** are their academic performance (final grade, exam grades), motivation statements, letters of reference, results of a personal interview (as part of the selection process) and English language proficiency.

PoSIG is addressed to international students with a specific interest in the Western Balkans and South Caucasus and of course to students from Western Balkan, South Caucasus and Eastern Neighbourhood countries interested in an international certified Master's degree in Political Science, International Relations and related fields. The online application is organized via www.posig.info where prospective students have to drop their application documents. The call is opened each year in February and the decision about the accepted students will be made in May at the latest. Students applying must decide about their fields of specialisation and the partners they want to attend during their individual study track. Finally, the Coordinators Board decides about the acceptance of students to the programme.



Students are enrolled in every University they attend. From article 2 of the partner declaration:

“Students are selected and registered as joint degree candidates by the Coordinators Board (see Article 6) based on shared admission criteria (see Appendix B).

As students are required to attend at least 4 terms at least at two different PoSIG universities, in their application, candidates must select ...

- their modules of specialisation, and
- the POSIG universities they will attend during their first year of studies (both semesters).

Registration as a regular student is valid for the full study cycle at all POSIG universities the student will attend during his/her studies (min. 2 and max. 4).

Registration of PoSIG students is documented by the PoSIG coordinators (see Article 7).

This registration substitutes the need for records of the general as well as the special university entrance qualifications and the legalisation.

The nomination process is explained in Appendix B.

Joint degree candidates shall be subject to the standard rules, regulations, and enrolment procedures of the host institutions. They shall register with the host institution only for those parts of the PoSIG programme which will be carried out under the responsibility of that host institution.

Students in the PoSIG programme shall, in terms of the registration procedure and supporting services (supervision, language training, rooming, social integration etc.), be granted all privileges of candidates of ‘mobility programmes.’”

More details incl. the respective form can be found in appendix B of the partner declaration; additionally, see Art. 14 of the Curriculum.

2.4.2 Recognition

The **recognition of prior learning** within the admission process is defined by the given entrance level (as defined in EA standard 4.1.). Based on the analysis of Bachelor curricula of partners and with reference to the standards of Bachelor curricula in Political Science and International Relation (www.erasmus-network.eu) the PoSIG consortium decided to principally accept applicants holding a Bachelor in Political Science with a certain level of methodology teaching. Applicants with a methodology background below requirements or from other subjects have to compensate for this and are accepted conditionally.

PoSIG is a **highly integrated programme**. This results from the collaborative process of curriculum development as well as definition and design of the modules and course syllabi over the last years (see repeated elaboration above).

With these results the consortium has defined **an integrated and shared standard for the academic content and didactic requirements of courses** and other elements of the study programme. The annual decision about the recognised course programme of the following academic year at all partners will be the central decision point of the **Coordinators Board (CB)** about the recognition of courses offered by a consortium partner. This decision will be based on the shared standards and criteria defined in the curriculum and in the institutional agreement. This process is supervised and monitored by the **Quality Board (QB)**.

Students attending courses from this agreed course programme therefore have a guarantee about the recognition of single courses. The PoSIG **course programme is published** by every partner institution on their webpage; these can be accessed via www.posig.info. **Student’s applications** for the recognition of

- course listed in the programme for another position in the PoSIG curriculum or
- courses not listed in the programme (be it from partners or be it from other HEIs)

in order to support a specific individual qualification strategy have to be decided by the coordinators of the universities a student is attending during his/her studies. The Examination Book is used as a joint document of the students, the Executive Director and the local coordinators for the documentation of the agreed courses.

The described process **includes the recognition of courses in the context of (international) credit mobility** (according to the Lisbon Recognition Convention). The general process for the recognition of courses is described in § 9 of the curriculum and section 6 of the Partner Declaration.

2.5 Learning, Teaching and Assessment [EA, Standard 5]

As (esp. when following the approach of constructive alignment) learning, teaching and assessment belong together EA 5.1 and EA 5.2 will be elaborated in one section.

2.5.1 Learning and teaching and

2.5.2 Assessment of students

PoSIG is **highly student centred** with a consistent orientation on learning outcomes and competences and requires a high motivation of students for autonomous decisions about the academic profile they want to develop within the curriculum. Students must decide about their individual study tracks in two fields of specialisation (i.e. two out of five modules) out of all fields of political science and the partners offering these subjects during the two years of study. Within their master's thesis students have to prove their competences in an independent research project supervised by two teachers from two different universities they attended during their PoSIG studies.

Even though courses and teaching in general are embedded in the context of individual universities, much effort was and is made to ensure that **proper teaching and learning methods** are applied. Teachers are trained (as [QM-input](#) during the train-the-trainer workshops in spring 2016; a so called quality tour to all partners in spring 2017; since then repeated teaching academies in Salzburg; workshops in 2024 in the framework of JoPScip) and instructed (see the teaching handbook in the [annex of the partner declaration](#)) on the specific **PoSIG-teaching context**. They are expected to follow the “**paradigm**” of **constructive alignment**, i.e. the adjustment of learning outcomes, assessment methods and instructions, and to plan these three elements in the mentioned sequence. The entire process of planning the curriculum, the modules and courses was designed to begin with the writing of proper learning outcomes.

Regarding **student centred learning**, most PoSIG-courses are planned as **seminars**, which results in a high level of **student activity**. However, appropriate teaching and assessment methods were repeatedly discussed as there is a wide range of didactical settings for seminars and as PoSIG-instructors are expected to apply modern teaching methods. This should lead to real student-centred learning that results in the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. In the [PoSIG Teaching Handbook](#) expectations for PoSIG-instructors are made explicit, instructional and assessment methods are discussed, and tools to realise them are made available.

Regarding the planning of single courses this all is very much reflected by the compulsory [form for course](#)

[descriptions \(syllabi\)](#), a form that has to be used for all courses proposed to the PoSIG course catalogue. These course descriptions are the basis for the evaluation of course proposals.

2.5.2.1 Diversity of students, different cultural backgrounds

All partners have experience in academic exchange of staff and students. Therefore, the necessary **environment for hosting students** coming with different social, cultural and academic backgrounds is given and managed by the international offices of the partners. There's also supervising support and socialising activities at departmental level (personal academic supervisor for incoming students, tutorials). The so-called PoSIGer Jure fixe "Internship & Field Experience" offered by the Executive Director to all students in their first year supports their adoption to the actual study reality. A tutor gives support regarding the technical environment and exam requirements.

Regarding the **academic structure** of the PoSIG curriculum and requirements, students with a Bachelor's degree in Political Science have the specific background to enter courses at the Master level because the offered PoSIG modules are defined along international **standards** of the discipline. If Bachelor curricula of applicants do not cover all modules or the required level of methodology students will be accepted conditionally and have the opportunity to compensate this with courses on Bachelor level. Experience with student exchanges at Bachelor and Master level show that students are able to complete these requirements if the language competences are on the required level.

In addition, students can follow their **individual and diverse interests** within a highly flexible curriculum-structure:

- Two out of five modules of specialisation can be selected.
- Students can develop a specific profile, following applied and/or methodological courses when choosing for their optional elective courses.
- The selection of the Master's thesis project is based on individual & diverse motivating experiences and allows individual qualification strategies.

2.5.2.2 Course Examination

Course and module examinations will be organised **under the responsibility and regulation of each partner** offering a course/module. Nevertheless, course examination has to be in compliance with the **PoSIG-regulations** (curriculum art. 12):

- "In all courses, student performance is assessed directly. The achievement of teaching and learning objectives is assessed via written and/or oral assignments.
- The total grade of a module is calculated as a weighted average of the courses within this module.
- partners apply their local examination and grading regulations. In order to convert local grades to a common scale, a grading convention agreed by all partners is used following the ECTS grading scheme.
- For students with disabilities and/or chronic illnesses, alternative examination regulations suitable for each individual case will be offered in cooperation with the relevant support units of the relevant partners."

The assessment methods applied are part of the [form for course descriptions \(syllabi\)](#) that must be used by every teacher when proposing a course for PoSIG.

2.5.2.3 Master Thesis Examination

Students must have successfully completed all of the required courses and the Master's thesis in order to be eligible for the **Master's thesis defence**.

The examination of the Master's thesis is in the **responsibility** of the supervisors and the examination board for the Master's thesis defence. The examination board consists of at least (depending on local regulations) one instructor from each university the student has attended during his/her study (min. 2 and max. 6 examiners), teaching in the fields of the student's specialisation, and is headed by a PoSIG coordinator from any consortium partner institution.

The **grade** for the Master's thesis and defence has to be decided by the examination board by consensus. If it is not possible to reach a consensus, PoSIG coordinators of the other partners where the student took courses decide together with the examination board, by a 2/3 majority decision.

The **defence** lasts for a maximum 60 minutes and can be organized with the participation of examiners and coordinators via video conference.

The **defence** is part of the 30 ECTS credits assigned to the Master's thesis. In countries where Master's theses and their defence are graded separately this workload is shared between the thesis and its defence.

The **records of the defence** are collected and confirmed by signature in a Master's defence record document which is used to recognise the thesis and its defence to the curriculum and to initiate the formal degree giving.

2.6 Student Support [EA, Standard 6]

The PoSIG consortium agrees to give students of the PoSIG programme **all rights of regular enrolled students** and additionally **all privileges of exchange students** as they are defined within European exchanges programmes.

After receiving the letter of acceptance to the PoSIG programme students will be issued an **admission letter** notifying their admittance to the selected partners. At this point the services of the partners start with informing the students about deadlines and services connected to their stay at the selected partner. This includes **support for**:

- application for visa (if necessary)
- accommodation
- language assistance
- registration procedures
- invitation to welcome days

Student support is the **responsibility of the local partners**. However, as there are specific needs, especially regarding the mobility of PoSIG-students, the PoSIG-consortium agreed on [appendix G of the partner declaration](#) that specifies the relevant requirements to be met by the single partners.

The PoSIG-consortium will **additionally** offer the following services via www.posig.info:

- programme of recognised courses



- links to partners and their services
- financial support for students (grants like Erasmus+ credit mobility managed by single partners or the PoSIG consortium)
- student support centres and similar
- student and alumni board

Courses and student records have to be administered first at individual partners, but then have to be submitted to joint administration with the student Examination Book.

First year

During the first year the PoSIGer Jour fixe “Internship & Field Experience” is offered to PoSIG students every 4 to 6 weeks and gives information about:

- The study plan (curriculum) and academic requirements in courses, criteria for successful participation and evaluation in courses, good academic practice, personal and technical support infrastructure (tutorial, eLearning and eLibrary environment).
- Study strategy: How to achieve personal goals within the opportunities of the curriculum and the courses offered.
- How to identify topics for the Master’s thesis projects, how to identify internship opportunities to support this thematic specialisation and how to use course contents to deepen these interests.
- Optimization of international mobility tracks, also along the specialisations of staff in the PoSIG network, to maximise academic support for the Master’s thesis projects and to identify supervisor teams for the thesis.
- How to manage workload?
- How to establish peer to peer support within the student group of a cohort.

During the last years this was only provided in Salzburg (as all students had their first year there); in the future this Jour fixe must also be organised at all other first year universities.

2.7 Resources [EA, Standard 7]

2.7.1 Staff

Teaching staff in the initial phase of the programme was **nominated to the PoSIG coordinators**, incl. a short CV (see the staff list). The next step in staff selection was and still is the quality assurance of the submitted **course descriptions** (see repeatedly above).

Staff development and **staff mobility** are closely linked within PoSIG ([see 1.1.3](#) for details). Much input was provided during the train-the-trainer workshops in spring 2016 and with the quality tour in 2017. For the subsequent years the annual teaching academy in Salzburg must once again be mentioned, as well as the 2024-workshops in the JoPScip framework. During these occasions the changing role of instructors in a European teaching context is repeatedly discussed. Additionally, the respective input is also available from the [teaching handbook](#).



2.7.2 Facilities

The provision of proper facilities and learning resources is the **responsibility of each individual consortium partner**. E.g., as at all partners political science programmes are already taught all of them have adequate libraries. Also, all partners have a functional administrative system or eLearning services available. Hence, the partner declaration mentions the technical infrastructure to be provided by all partners (i.e. eMail address, eLearning environment, plagiarism scanner).

Within the scope of the **Erasmus+ CBHE EuroPS project** in 2016, the then participating Western Balkan Universities (UNSA, SSST, FAMA, UBT, UET, UTIR) had the opportunity to acquire IT equipment and various software tools (e.g., for statistical analysis).". For the whole consortium, online resources, especially a political science related eLibrary and a software for anti-plagiarism, as well as an eLearning- and an ePortfolio-platform, had been acquired and implemented. The new **Erasmus+ CBHE project JoPScip** once again provided the opportunity to acquire software for the whole consortium, namely Turnitin and Moodle. Additionally a replacement for the Excel-based "Examination Book" might be developed.

2.8 Transparency and Documentation [EA, Standard 8]

All information relevant to the **public**, especially for prospective students is available from www.posig.info.

For **internal communication** between partners **eMail** is the tool of choice as well as occasional online meetings; in addition to the meetings of the **coordinators board** and the **annual teaching academy**.

Student progress: The **completion of courses** is registered at the respective partner and also communicated to the Executive Director who adds these courses to the student's **Examination Book**.

The **certification of the joint degree** starts after the student has completed his/her studies in accordance with the PoSIG curriculum by attending two to four partners (90 ECTS from courses of the programme, 30 ECTS for the Master's thesis and its defence). This is documented in the examination book, listing all courses and requirements the student has successfully completed.

The **joint diploma** will be issued as an official legal record of awarding by the last partner a student attends. It will be signed by the responsible person (rector, dean) following the regulation at each partner. Additionally, the student receives a certificate containing the logos of all partners and signed by all relevant degree signing persons of the partners the student has attended in the course of his/her PoSIG studies (Art. 5 of the Partner Declaration). This is of course accompanied with a **diploma supplement** ([see appendix G of the partner declaration](#)).

The PoSIG **Executive Director** is in charge of the management of this **diploma issuing process**. He or she will be provided with all the necessary documents and information from the PoSIG coordinators of all partners a student has attended.

2.9 Quality Assurance [EA, Standard 9]

Of course, during the 2015-2016-Erasmus-project, the PoSIG consortium initially designed a shared model for quality management. This was described in a first version of the **PoSIG Quality Handbook** as part of the

annexes of the partner declaration. Turned out, not all of these requirements could be implemented as planned, hence in preparation for re-accreditation an updated version of the [Quality Handbook](#) was compiled.

The most important features of PoSIG QA can be summarised as follows:

- Each partner nominates one person into the **Quality Board**.
- Additionally, a **Student and Alumni Board** is established.
- Nevertheless, the **Executive Director, local coordinators** and the **Coordinators Board** are key for all aspects of quality assurance. Here, in the Coordinators Board, all relevant aspects of the programme and its implementation are discussed and decided on; incl. eventual quality issues.
- Then, the **Teacher Academies** are really crucial for quality assurance. Here, PoSIG teachers can deepen connections, expand their network, collaborate, discuss teaching topics, reflect on quality, and receive annual updates on PoSIG teaching standards. This fosters a shared understanding of the PoSIG teaching approach.
- The **annual meetings** of the Executive Director with local coordinators together with other representatives (like heads of departments, deans, members of the rectorate) **at their home institutions** is another important aspect of quality assurance.
- The aforementioned **Quality Week** in July 2022 was a starting point for the reform of the curriculum and the update of the Partner Declaration, taking into account the evaluation results mentioned below. It was also the start for the re-accreditation process 2023/24, discussing the options available (e.g. separate accreditation where necessary, further joint accreditation, no accreditation where possible) and looking at the criteria for European Approach accreditation.
- **Re-accreditation** could be completed with full accreditation from ZeVA in June 2024. Because of the major expansion of the PoSIG network in the course of the JoPScip project (with additional changes within the old PoSIG network) and as this is part of the project deliverables the consortium had to apply to a new accreditation shortly after. The two accreditations are referred to as **Accreditation 2023/24** and **Accreditation 2024/25**.
- As with any accreditation, the accreditation 2023/24 included a number of recommendations. The way in which these have been addressed is detailed in the table below.
- In the JoPScip framework another **Quality Week** took place (Skopje in May 2024), also a **Pre-accreditation Workshop** was organised (Salzburg in October 2024). In Skopje general quality issues and esp. the quality handbook were discussed, in Salzburg consortium members collaboratively worked on the update of the self-evaluation report.
- **Course evaluation** and **workload monitoring** is the responsibility of every single partner university; local regulations are to be applied.
- In 2022 a series of (so called) **Round Table Talks** took place, addressed to actual students, dropouts and alumni of PoSIG. On three occasions two members of the quality team had the chance to meet with students, dropouts, and alumni. Topics discussed included motives for joining the programme and whether they were fulfilled, reasons for dropping out of the programme, welcome services at the attended universities, support and supervision, quality aspects of the curriculum ("studyability", contents, integration of practical perspectives, ...), the quality of the teachers of the programme, role, relevance, influence of peers, social integration, the management of internships, supervision during writing the master's thesis, rating of the academic and professional perspectives after finishing PoSIG, and even more.



- A summary of the results of these Round Table Talks was reported at the Quality Week as well as to the Coordinators Board and is summarized in a [PoSIG Quality Report 2023/24](#). The next Quality Report is planned for the middle of the accreditation period (see 5.12 of the quality handbook).
- The **Teaching Handbook**, developed in the initial EuroPS project (2015-2017) and also updated in the course of JoPScip ([appendix F of the Partner Declaration](#)), is still the basis for the inputs during various meetings as mentioned repeatedly above. This manual contains the following topics:
 - o elaboration of PoSIG's European Teaching Approach to higher education,
 - o respective requirements for PoSIG-instructors,
 - o regulations regarding module and course descriptions,
 - o the general PoSIG-didactical approach - how to teach PoSIG (especially focusing on constructive alignment),
 - o tips for online-collaborations, online-teaching
 - o various didactical scenarios as good practice to follow on.

Additionally, from the preparing phase (2015-2017, EuroPS) the following tools should be mentioned:

- During the preparation of PoSIG two so-called **Quality Weeks** (i.e. meetings of the quality board) took place. There, the QM tools to be applied were discussed and the initial quality handbook was prepared.
- During a **Quality Tour** in spring 2017 all PoSIG-instructors were (in most cases repeatedly) informed about quality issues (mainly based on the contents of the teaching handbook).
- Regarding **curriculum design** there have been ...
 - o a checklist, building on various literature about joint degree programmes,
 - o the form for module descriptions,
 - o the form for course descriptions,
 - o the process of selecting courses for the actual implementation of PoSIG.

Recommendations from the Re-Accreditation 2023/24

Recommendation	Implementation/consideration
Due to the high complexity of the different possible mobility pathways, it is recommended to develop a visualization (e.g. in the form of a flowchart or interactive timeline) on the website to make it easier for potential students to choose.	See section 2.3.1.4 Mobility scheme and exemplary study tracks of this report and also posig.info .
The obligatory internship is well described in the appendix to the consortium agreement but for students' sake it should also be covered by a module description. Then, it becomes immediately clear which competences are expected to result out of the internship and how they relate to the overall curriculum.	Internship is not a module, so we can not have a module description here. But the student handbook was updated respectively with a more detailed elaboration on the internship and its objectives.
To attract even more qualified students, it is desirable to better define the uniqueness of the degree program, present the associated career opportunities and make them visible to the outside world.	This was/is part of the website renovation in early 2025; also, a new alumni network on LinkedIn is in preparation.
It is recommended that documentation of selected Teaching Academy sessions be made accessible online. This could include formats such as recordings or other suitable media, shared through appropriate channels to attract new students and faculty.	In principle, the network lacks the resources for this activity. However, this will be considered as far as possible for future Teaching Academies.
The expert group also recommends to regularly update the literature used in classes to meet high quality academic standards.	This was done in the framework of the syllabus renovation 2023/24 and, for PLUS and UKIM-courses, once again in the JoPScip framework.
In order to increase the transparency of the program, it is recommended to encourage partners to regularly check and update websites or links in case of changes. This includes that the PoSIG website provides links to current examination regulations at partner universities in English language.	Currently being done as part of the website renovation.
Partners should be encouraged to make their local examination requirements always available in English.	Examination requirements are part of the course descriptions, which are only available in English anyway.
It should be made transparent that the recognition of academic achievements and the awarding of degrees in the consortium will always be based on the definitions and criteria of the Lisbon Convention. Therefore, the Lisbon Convention should be clearly named e.g. in the appendix A of the consortium agreement as reference for recognition. In addition, it should be evaluated under which circumstances the recognition of prior learning is possible at partner universities.	The Lisbon Convention is applied whenever there is an application for recognition. The consortium does not see the need for an explicit mention in the curriculum. With regard to ROPL, none of the partners has experience in this area. This will have to be evaluated in the future in accordance with local regulations.

Chapter 5 of the Quality Handbook (Annex D of the Consortium Agreement) should include a more formalized approach to student and graduate surveys. These surveys should include a formal assessment of student workload.	Here, the consortium decided on a qualitative approach with the Round Table Talks mentioned in section 5.7 of the handbook. At PLUS a graduate survey is implemented, which in principle covers all alumni who have studied in Salzburg (by now all graduates), but the response rate is low. More intensive encouragement of graduates to complete the survey could be considered.
It is highly recommended to strengthen the alumni network. This may include upgrading the ongoing social media activities but should also go beyond. An alumni survey can also be used to gather further ideas and to assess the impact of the program.	A LinkedIn community is currently being set up. An alumni survey will be considered for the next quality report, which is planned for the middle of the accreditation period.



3 Key Statistical Data

3.1 Application, Accepted Students, Enrollments and Graduates

		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2024	Total
Applications	Total	25	21	26	14	20	24	22	152
Accepted students									
	<i>Nationality</i>								
	ALB	4	6	6	2	2	2	1	23
	AUT						1	1	2
	AZ							1	1
	BIH	3	3	2	1	3	4	2	18
	GE			1		2		1	4
	GER							1	1
	HR				1				1
	ITA					1			1
	KOS	5	3	2	6	6	7	3	32
	LEB				1			1	2
	MK			1					1
	MNE		2	3	1	2			8
	NIG							1	1
	RUS							1	1
	SRB			1					1
	Total	12	14	16	12	16	14	13	97
Enrolled students	<i>Nationality</i>								
	ALB	4	5	4	2	2	2	1	20
	AUT						1		1
	AZ							1	1
	BIH	2	3	2		2	4	2	15
	GE			1		2		1	4
	Ger							1	1
	HR								0
	ITA								0
	KOS	4	3	2	5	6	7	3	30
	LEB				1			1	2
	MK			1					1
	MNE		1	3	1	1			6
	SRB			1					1
	Total	10	12	14	9	13	14	10	82
Alumni (by year enrolled)	<i>Nationality</i>								
	ALB	2	3	4	1				10
	AUT								0
	BIH	2	2	2					6
	GE			1					1
	HR								0
	ITA								0
	KOS	3	2		1				6
	LEB				1				1
	MK			1					1
	MNE			3					3
	SRB			1					1
	Total	7	7	12	3	0	0	0	29



3.2 Degrees per year

Degrees per year	
2019	2
2020	7
2021	5
2022	8
2023	5
2024	2
Total	29
Average	4.8

3.3 Students in year 2

(as far as we know)

University in year 2	
-/-	26
SSST	1
UBT	2
UET	3
UKIM	4
UNSA	21
UTIR	14
Total	71

3.5 Students by country

Student status by citizenship		n	%
A		1	
	enrolled	1	-/-
AL		20	
	alumni	10	50.0
	enrolled	2	10.0
	dropout	3	15.0
	dropout - alumni PoWi	1	5.0
	dropout - still enrolled in MA PoWi	4	20.0
AZ		1	
	enrolled	1	-/-
BiH		15	
	alumni	6	40.0
	enrolled	3	20.0
	dropout	4	26.7
	dropout - still enrolled in MA PoWi	2	13.3
GE		4	
	alumni	2	50.0
	enrolled	2	50.0
Ger		1	
	enrolled	1	-/-
Kos		30	
	alumni	6	20.0
	alumni at UBT	1	3.3
	enrolled	8	26.7
	dropout	4	13.3
	dropout/alumni PoWi	3	10.0
	dropout; 2024/25 still enrolled in MA PoWi	8	26.7
Leb		2	
	enrolled	1	
	alumni	1	
MK		1	
	alumni	1	
MNE		6	
	alumni	3	50.0
	enrolled	1	16.7
	dropout	2	33.3
SRB		1	
	alumni	1	
Total		82	



3.6 Student and graduation status by year of application/enrollment

Student status by year of application		n	%
2017		10	
	alumni	7	70.0
	dropout	2	20.0
	dropout - alumni PoWi	1	10.0
2018		12	
	alumni	7	58.3
	dropout	4	33.3
	dropout - still enrolled in MA PoWi	1	8.3
2019		14	
	alumni	12	85.7
	dropout	2	14.3
2020		9	
	alumni	3	33.3
	dropout	2	22.2
	dropout - alumni PoWi	1	11.1
	dropout - still enrolled in MA PoWi	3	33.3
2021		13	
	alumni	0	-
	alumni at UBT	1	7.7
	enrolled	4	30.8
	dropout	1	7.7
	dropout - alumni PoWi	1	
	dropout - still enrolled in MA PoWi	6	46.2
2022		14	
	alumni	0	-
	enrolled	7	50.0
	dropout	2	14.3
	dropout/alumni PoWi	1	7.1
	dropout; 2024/25 still enrolled in MA PoWi	4	28.6
2024		10	
	enrolled	10	76.9
Total		82	



3.7 Students by status and gender

Student status by gender		n	%
Female			
	alumni	20	40.0
	enrolled	11	22.0
	dropout	9	18.0
	dropout - alumni PoWi	3	6.0
	dropout - still enrolled in MA PoWi	7	14.0
		50	100.0
Male			
	alumni	9	28.1
	alumni at UBT	1	3.1
	enrolled	10	31.3
	dropout	4	12.5
	dropout/alumni PoWi	1	3.1
	dropout; 2024/25 still enrolled in MA PoWi	7	21.9
		32	100.0

3.8 Students by status and previous Erasmus stay in Salzburg

Student status by previous Erasmus at PLUS		n	%
no			
	alumni	21	40.4
	enrolled	10	19.2
	alumni at UBT	1	1.9
	dropout	10	19.2
	dropout - alumni PoWi	3	5.8
	dropout - still enrolled in MA PoWi	7	13.5
		52	100.0
yes			
	alumni	8	26.7
	enrolled	11	36.7
	dropout	3	
	dropout - alumni PoWi	1	3.3
	dropout - still enrolled in MA PoWi	7	23.3
		30	90.0