

## GUIDELINE FOR PREPARING A SELF-EVALUATION REPORT (SER) FOR PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION VERSION: MAY 2019

### General information

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These guidelines are intended for universities applying for accreditation of one or more study programme(s) for the first time or as reaccreditation. It is to provide orientation with regard to the structuring and contents of the SER.

The guidelines are based on the AQAS criteria for programme accreditation which reflect the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG, *version May 2015*), the compliance with which must be assessed in the accreditation procedure. In these guidelines, you will find references to the individual criteria for each question.

We ask you to

- not view the guidelines as a questionnaire but to prepare a continuous text for each chapter,
- present special characteristics of a study programme not addressed in the guidelines in a suitable place in the SER,
- disregard questions in the guidelines which do not apply to your programme,
- avoid repetitions in the SER and, if necessary, to use references,
- please contact the office of AQAS in case of questions or uncertainty to avoid unnecessary work resulting from misunderstandings.

In cases in which several related programmes are assessed in one procedure (“cluster accreditation”), please describe all aspects applying generally to these study programmes only once. We recommend writing separate chapters on single programmes only for aspects which vary between these programmes and for which it is necessary to differentiate.

The guidelines may be used for both first-time accreditation procedures and reaccreditation procedures as the criteria are identical in both cases. However, for first-time accreditation the focus of the procedure lies more on the concept and for reaccreditation more on the implementation, observation and further development of a study programme.

Questions only relevant for reaccreditation are marked with an “R”.

**The required documents are:****a) self-evaluation report (including data annex)**

The SER serves to present the main characteristics of the study programme(s) to be reviewed and accredited and, if applicable, to present changes undertaken since the previous accreditation.

The *addressee* of the SER is the panel of experts which undertakes the evaluation of the study programme(s). For them, transparency and comprehensibility of the SER are important aspects. The addressees must be able to recognise the structure of the study programme(s) with its essential structural elements and possible unique characteristics, as well as further developments undertaken since the last accreditation based on the SER, and without the need to refer to detailed regulations (e.g. the examination regulations). Thus, the SER should be self-explanatory, and the annex should serve as a means to prove the statements in the SER (e.g. further information on the specific contents of a module/course by the handbook).

The *data annex* is supposed to show the most important quantitative and qualitative data on carrying out the study programme(s). As this data is not self-explanatory, we ask you to provide explanations and interpretations of the collected data and findings at various points. If the study programme(s) has/have already commenced in the case of first-time accreditation, we ask to you to enclose data that is available (e.g. number of students, success rate, etc.).

**b) module/course handbook**

The module/course handbook is primarily intended to give detailed information on the learning outcomes and contents of modules and courses to your students. In addition, it describes formal aspects e.g. the scope of the modules/courses, the ratio of contact hours and time for self-study, or the assessment. The module/course handbook must be made available to students as a handout or on the internet. The module/course handbook must reflect the current status of the study programme(s) at the time of the review.

**c) examination regulations**

Examination regulations are needed to assess whether the structure of the study programme(s) presented in the SER is also reflected in the currently legally valid documents. AQAS does not legally assess the regulations; this is the responsibility of the university.

**d) Diploma Supplement or equivalent**

Diploma Supplements or equivalent documents create transparency on the structure of the study programme(s), the individual design of the studies and the acquired skills of the graduates with regard to third parties (sending and receiving higher education institutions in exchange programmes, employers). Thus, this document informs about the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed. It is supposed to be handed out after graduation.

**Information on the education system**

Please note that short information on the national higher education system, which are helpful for the experts to understand the surroundings, including the national/regional qualification framework (if applicable), should also be added to the annex.

## Please consider the following advice on drawing up an SER

### Structure of the representation of information

In order to help the experts to understand the context of the programme(s), the SER should have at least three chapters. The first chapter (“Embedding of the study programme in the university”) serves to provide the peers with a brief overview of the higher education institution, the general services and the position that the study programme or programmes has/have within university (max. 2–3 pages). The second chapter (“Embedding of the study programme in the department/faculty”) aims to provide the peers with an insight into the organisational unit within which the programme is located. It should clearly be shown how responsibilities are shared between the various levels (max. 2–3 pages). The third chapter is the key chapter for the accreditation procedure covering all important aspects of the specific study programme(s).

### Scope

Based on experience, AQAS assumes that the SER for one study programme does not need to exceed 30 pages of text (excluding the data annex, module/course handbook and other enclosures). If several study programmes are to be reviewed in one procedure, the scope may be larger.

### Technical instructions

For easier handling of applications, the following procedures have proven to be successful and we ask the applicant to observe them:

- For the initialisation of your accreditation procedure, please **send us** an **electronic version** via e-mail (for HE in Europe a printed copy of the SER would also be nice to have).
- We do require the **final version** of your SER (the version we will forward to the panel of experts) preferably eight weeks prior to the site visit, latest six weeks beforehand. We will ask you officially to hand in the final version in **electronic form**.

**Cover sheet for the SER**

Please add a cover sheet for each programme to your SER based on the following sample:

University	
Department/Faculty	
Dean/Head of Department	
Contact in the department (name, address, telephone, fax, email)	
Title of the study programme:	
Final degree	Bachelor / Master of Arts / Engineering / Science etc.
Scientific category	<input type="checkbox"/> Languages and Cultural Studies <input type="checkbox"/> Social Sciences, Law, and Economics <input type="checkbox"/> Art, Music, Design, Architecture <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Sciences, Mathematics <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering, Computer Science <input type="checkbox"/> Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences
Standard time to degree in semesters	
Type of degree programme	<input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate/First Degree <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate <input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate <input type="checkbox"/> other
When did the study programme start?	
Planned admission number and admission cycle for the study programme	XX students per semester/year
Type of studies	<input type="checkbox"/> Full-time <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time <input type="checkbox"/> Distance studies

	<input type="checkbox"/> Career-integrated <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative education <input type="checkbox"/> Other(s):.....
Tuition fees	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Programme website	
(R) Date of last accreditation	DD.MM.YY
(R) Accredited until	DD.MM.YY
(R) Result of last accreditation	Accreditation with/without conditions
(R) Time limitation for fulfilment of conditions	DD.MM.YY
(R) Date of fulfilment of conditions (confirmation of the agency)	DD.MM.YY

## I. Embedding of the Study Programme in the University

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The introductory chapter serves to provide the peers with a brief overview of the higher education institution, the general services and the position that the study programme has within the university (**max. 2–3 pages**).

1. Please briefly outline the **university's structure** (university profile, faculties/departments, number and distribution of students, core teaching and research areas, etc.).
2. What is the study programme's/programmes' position within the scope of the university's overall **strategic planning**?
3. What **general support, advice and guidance-counselling services** does the university offer to students?
4. How are **financial resources** allocated to the faculties/departments and to the study programme? Are there key indicators for the funding of learning and teaching activities?

## II. Embedding of the Study Programme in the Department/Faculty

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This chapter aims to provide the peers with an insight into the organisational unit within which the degree programme is/are located. It should clearly be shown how responsibilities are shared between the various levels (**max. 3 pages**).

1. Please briefly outline the **profile of the department/faculty**. Is it a large or a small department/faculty? What internal branches exist (seminars, institutes, etc.)?
2. How does the **programme fit** into the department's/faculty's teaching profile? What other programmes are offered at the department/faculty? To what extent is/are the programme integrated into the department's/faculty's teaching and research profile?
3. To what extent does the **department/faculty** generally support its study programmes concerning:
  - coordination of the programme(s)
  - advise and guidance-counselling services for students
  - organisation of assessments
  - internationalisation of studies (for example, through cooperation agreements, consultative bodies, etc.)
4. Please briefly outline the **human resources structure** and distribution at the faculty/department so that there is transparency concerning the distribution of staff resources.
5. How are financial resources allocated by the faculty/department to the study programme? Which processes are in place to ensure that sufficient resources are available to the programme? Which criteria are applied when distributing the **financial resources** within the faculty/department?

### III. The study programme

#### 1. Quality of the Curriculum [ESG 1.2]

*The intended learning outcomes of the programme are defined and published. They reflect both academic and labour market requirements and are up-to-date according to the scientific field. The design of the programme supports the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.*

*The academic level of the outcome corresponds with the requirements of the appropriate level of the European Qualifications Framework.*

*The curriculum's design is transparently published.*

#### *Intended learning outcomes*

1. Which **intended learning outcomes** of subject-related and cross-subject nature are applied with the study programme?
2. Please describe the **curricular structure of the study programme**, the main curricular elements and their function. Clarify how subject-related knowledge and cross-subject knowledge as well as subject-related, methodological and generic skills are acquired by the students (achievement of the learning outcomes).
3. (R) To what extent did the **subject-related and non-subject-related learning outcomes** of the programme prove to be achieved? Please provide documentation. Is the assessment supported by results from the quality assurance process (e.g. through graduate placement surveys, evaluations etc.)? What changes were made in this regard?
4. How are **teaching and research** interlinked in the study programme? How are students included in research projects of the teaching staff?
5. Based on the **European Qualifications Framework** or the national qualification framework, please specify to which level the curriculum
  - broadens or deepens the students' existing knowledge based on their prior education,
  - promotes the development of instrumental, systemic and communicative skills.
6. Please present **an ideal-typical plan for the course of study in graphic form** (e.g. Gantt chart). The presentation should clearly show the position and scope of the modules/courses (in credits/hours) in the course of study. If applicable, please explain which elements of the programme are flexible with regard to the point of time at which the course/module can be taken.
7. Which parts of the curriculum are **compulsory elements** and which are **elective**?
8. Which parts of the curriculum are **offered exclusively** the study programme to be accredited and which are also offered in other study programmes?
9. Please explain what kind of workload and/or credit system is used at the faculty/department. Is the system aligned with the European credit system (ECTS)?
10. (R) Since the last accreditation, what **changes have been made** to the structure, didactic concept, workload and/or content of the curriculum?

*Module/course descriptions*

11. Please describe the process how the **module/course handbook** is **regularly updated**.
12. How do the **learning outcomes address employability requirements**? In this context, please also state potential career fields in the respective country/region.
13. Which measures and **curricular elements support the career orientation/employability** of the study programme (e.g. traineeships, exchange with practical representatives, use of visiting lecturers)?

**2. Procedures for Quality Assurance [ESG 1.1, 1.7 & 1.9]**

*The programme is subject to the higher education institution's policy and associated procedures for quality assurance, including procedures for the design, approval, monitoring, and revision of the programmes.*

*A quality-oriented culture, focusing on continuous quality enhancement, is in place. This includes regular feedback mechanisms involving both internal and external stakeholders.*

*The strategy, policies, and procedures have a formal status and are made available in published form to all those concerned. They also include roles for students and other stakeholders.*

*Data is collected from relevant sources and stakeholders, analysed, and used for the effective management and continuous enhancement of the programme.*

*Quality assurance*

1. Which **quality policy** has the university developed with respect to its study programmes? (It is possible to use the university's mission statement or other documents from the public domain to explain.)
2. Please **describe the quality assurance system** relevant for the study programme. At what level or levels (university/faculty/programme) is quality assurance for teaching and studies placed? How are the **responsibilities** distributed?
3. How is the **process** organised to evaluate the study programme (e.g. instruments, frequencies)?
4. How and where are the different groups of **stakeholders involved (e.g. students, labour market representatives)** in the QA process?
5. How is it ensured that the groups of stakeholders are **informed about the procedures** as well as about the outcomes?
6. How is it ensured that the results of the QA processes are considered in the **further development** of the study programme? Please give **examples** for changes.
7. How is the further **career placement and development of graduates** of the study programme monitored?
8. (R) To what extent have the recommendations from the **last accreditation** of the study programme been discussed and implemented or not implemented with regard to its further development?
9. How do **quality assurance procedures** support guarding **against intolerance** and **discrimination**?



*Data collection*

10. How is **information collected from relevant sources and stakeholders**, analysed and used for the effective management and continuous enhancement of the programme?
11. Which **up-to-date information regarding the programme** and its/their qualifications is regularly published?
12. How is information on the **requirements of the labour market** collected and analysed? Is there a clear and comprehensible description of potential fields of employment of graduates? ED
13. How does the **quality-related information systems** cover at least the following data:
  - student progression and success rates,
  - employability of the graduates,
  - students' satisfaction with their programme,
  - effectiveness of the teachers,
  - **profile of the student population (e.g. gender, nationality, maternal language)**, muncul ga di SAT
  - learning resources available and need for improvement,
  - the institution's own key performance indicators?
14. How is the **workload** or assignment of credits or hours in the module/course descriptions **assessed** or **estimated**? How are the results of **student workload assessment** used for the **enhancement** of the programme? Please provide **examples** of adjustments to the programme. OBE
15. Have there been findings regarding the **number of failed examinations** in the study programme? Are there modules in which the percentage is especially high?
16. (R) Please give an overview over the **final grading** of the past three graduate classes. How do you assess the results also with regard to the distribution in the grade scale?
17. Is there an analysis available on the **rates of completion and non-completion** of the programme, and on the reasons for the drop-out of students?

**3. Learning, Teaching and Assessment of Students [ESG 1.3]**

*The delivery of material encourages students to take an active role in the learning process.*

*Students are assessed using accessible criteria, regulations, and procedures, which are made readily available to all participants and which are applied consistently.*

*Assessment procedures are designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.*

*Learning and Teaching*

1. Which **teaching and learning methods** are used in the programme?
2. How are **the needs of a diverse student population** (such as mature, part-time, employed and international students as well as students with disabilities) included in the delivery of the programme?
3. How is student-oriented learning reflected in the study programme? How is a **student-activating process of teaching and learning** supported by the university?

*Study organisation and feasibility:*

4. How is the process organised in which the different **course offers are coordinated** with regard to content and organisation (e.g. completeness, no overlapping in time and contents)? Which boards or committees are responsible for this?
5. Which measures are taken to assess the set **student workload**?
6. (R) What were the central findings in these measurements in the last accreditation period? Which **changes** were undertaken due to these findings?
7. Which **procedures** dealing with **students' appeals** and **complaints** (on study organisation, teaching, assessment, etc.) are in place?

*Examinations and examination organisation*

8. With regard to the skills and knowledge to be acquired in the modules/courses, on which considerations is the **selection of examination types** based? Is it ensured that every student will be familiarised with an appropriate spectrum of examination types over the course of the studies to prove the acquisition of different competences?
9. (R) Have there been **changes to the examination concept** of the study programme since the last accreditation?
10. What kind of support do assessors receive in **further developing** their skills in assessment methods?
11. Which responsibilities and structures are there with regard to the **organisation of the exams**? How are the exams organised timewise? When and how are examination dates announced? When and how often are resits of examinations offered?
12. Has the examination regulation been **legally assessed** in its current form? How are the regulations available for students?

**4. Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification [ESG 1.4]**

*Consistently applied, pre-defined, and published regulations are in place which cover student admission, progression, recognition, and certification.*

*Admission*

1. Which **formal prerequisites for admission** apply to the study programme? Which further prerequisites specific to the study programme (e.g. language skills, professional experience, artistic ability) apply? Where are the prerequisites defined and how are they published?
2. If there is a **selection procedure** for the study programme: How is this structured?
3. Who is responsible for the selection and admission of students? Where are the **responsibilities** stipulated?
4. On average, how many **applicants** are there for one study place in the programme?
5. Are there measures that allow students to **compensate for possible deficits** with regard to the expected admittance qualifications (e.g. bridging courses)?

6. (R) To what extent have the prerequisites for admittance to the study programme **proven to support the achievement of learning outcomes**?
7. (R) Give a brief overview of the **composition of the student body** of the study programme based on the statistical data documented in the annex.

#### *Progression*

8. What kind of procedures are in place to **monitor student progression**?
9. Has the study programme **proved to be feasible** in the past? Please discuss this based on the central findings in the statistical data from the annex of the SER (e.g. share of students in the standard period of study, continuation rate, non-continuation rate).
10. How is the **mobility** of students supported? Which structures support the exchange of students (e.g. specific consultation offers, language courses, learning agreements)?

#### *Recognition*

11. What are there regulations and processes for the **recognition** of courses/modules/credits gained at other higher education institutions and outside of the university? How are they documented in a legally binding way and are they available to the students?
12. Which **mechanisms** are in place and which **criteria** are applied to recognize **periods of studies and prior learning**?
13. Which mechanisms are in place and which criteria are applied to recognize **informal and non-formal learning**?
14. Does the university have policies to support **equal opportunities for students in special life situations** (e.g. students with children), for students with special needs (e.g. health issues) or for students with special social backgrounds? How are these policies applied with regard to the study programme?

#### *Certification*

15. Which **academic degree** is awarded to the graduates? In case special degrees are awarded, please explain the background.
16. Which **documents** do students receive upon completion of the study programme reflecting the qualifications achieved (e.g. a diploma supplement)? Please add a sample to the annex.

### **5. Teaching Staff [ESG 1.5]**

*The composition (quantity, qualifications, professional and international experience, etc.) of the staff is appropriate for the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.*

*Staff involved with teaching is qualified and competent to do so.*

*Transparent procedures are in place for the recruitment and development of staff.*

1. Which **human resources** are available to ensure instruction and assistance of the students in the study programme?

Please list the staff according to the following sample:

Position + Full time/Part time	Denomination	Name	Study programme instructional areas	Expiring of contract	Teaching hours for the study programme to be accredited	Further served study programmes
Assistant professor Full time	Ancient History	Prof. Dr. ....	The History of Rome, Numismatics	XX.XX.20XX	4 hours per semester	Teacher Training Programme History Master Ancient Culture
...						

2. If **contracts expire** in the accreditation period: is a new filling of the position intended?
3. What is the **process for staff recruitment** and are there conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching? How are transparency and fairness assured for these procedures?
4. To what extent are the **teaching hours** in the table above and assigned to the study programme to be accredited used in a polyvalent manner for other study programmes? Are teaching hours imported from other subjects or disciplines/faculties to the study programme under review?
5. For full-time instructors, please state the most important **research projects and publications** and/or the most important and pertinent activities outside of the higher education institution (e.g. collaboration with partners outside of the university) in the last five years. Please add this list to the annex.
6. How is the **link** between **teaching** and individual research supported?
7. What is the **policy for staff development and qualification**?
8. If there are **part time lecturers** involved, please explain the procedures in place to assure the qualification of these lecturers and how they are made familiar with the requirements of the programme.
9. Are **opportunities for the professional development** of teaching staff offered? Is special attention paid to the new employed professors concerning their teaching abilities (courses, consultancy, etc.)? Does the university encourage innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies?
10. Please list **external lecturers** (e.g. experts from the labour market) according to the following sample:

Name	Academic background	Current professional career	Teaching areas	No. of teaching hours	Further qualifications
Dr. Klaus Mül-	Study of Business Administra-	Tax consultant, law firm Müller	Business	2 hours per	Member of the Ger-

ler	tion RWTH Aachen, Degree: MBA (1993) Doctorate RWTH Aachen (1998)	&Partner, Cologne	Taxation	semester	man Tax Law Society
...					

11. How is the **administrative and technical staff** trained for the tasks and how is this staff supported in developing their competences?

### 6. Learning Resources and Student Support [ESG 1.6]

*Appropriate facilities and resources are available for learning and teaching activities.*

*Guidance and support is available for students which includes advice on achieving a successful completion of their studies.*

#### *Material resources*

1. How is the **study programme financed**? How high are the tuition fees for the study programme? Does the university offer scholarship or fee waiver opportunities?
2. Which **material resources** (rooms, library, computer workplaces, laboratories, etc.) are available to the study programme?
3. How is the equipment sufficient for the **achievement of the intended learning outcomes**, and how are the needs of a diverse study population regarded (e.g. students with special needs)?
4. Does the university follow a **maintenance** plan for laboratories and other equipment?
5. Which **processes are in place to secure the availability of material resources** which are necessary to provide the study programme on an adequate and professional level?
6. How does the institution ensure that there is an appropriate **amount of literature, journals and information sources** to enable the achievement of the learning outcomes?

#### *Guidance and support*

7. How are the **students informed about the study programme**? Is all relevant information publicly available to students?
8. Are **orientation and introductory events** offered for the study programme?
9. Is a **student advisory service available** to students? Are these services offered continuously and how is information about these services made available to students?
10. Does the teaching staff offer regular **consultation hours** and is the teaching staff available to students?
11. Are **special consultation offers available**:

- for students with special needs or students in special life situations?
- for exchange students/incoming students?

## 7. Public Information [ESG 1.8]

*Impartial and objective, up-to-date information regarding the programme and its qualifications is published regularly. This published information is appropriate for and available to relevant stakeholders.*

1. How are the **public and relevant stakeholders informed** on the following:
  - the programme,
  - intended learning outcomes (including course descriptions/module descriptions),
  - admission requirements and selection procedure,
  - qualification awarded, and
  - teaching, learning and assessment procedures?
2. How are different stakeholder **expectations** reflected in the available information?

## IV. Annex

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### Data on students (at the study programme level)

- Please document the **development of the student numbers** for the study programme under review. (R) The number of beginning students should be continuously followed up over the accreditation period so that the development of the numbers is comprehensible.
- The **continuation or drop-out rate** should also be presented.
- Please give the **share of male/female and foreign students** additionally.<sup>1</sup>
- Please document the (average) **study duration**.
- If possible – please document how many students completed a **stay in a foreign country**, stating the type of stay (traineeship/study/conference attendance etc.) and the target countries of stays abroad.

### Workload assessments

- Please document the results of **workload assessments** based on the corresponding documents (e.g. evaluation reports, meeting minutes, evaluations of learner diaries or similar).

### Examination results

- If applicable: Please provide a list of the last **30 completed thesis papers** stating the subject and grade. If there are fewer than 30 theses, please submit a list of all completed papers to date. From this list, some papers will be randomly chosen that are to be presented for reviewing during the on-site visit.

### Graduate surveys/Graduate destination analyses

- If structured **graduate surveys** have been carried out, please enclose a summary of the results.

### (R) Notification/report of the past accreditation and, if applicable, fulfilment of conditions

- Please enclose a copy of the report and the certificate of the previous accreditation.
- Please enclose a copy of the confirmation of the fulfilment of conditions.

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<sup>1</sup> This data is usually collected as a standard by the university's administration and can be submitted in the present form.

### Module/Course Handbook

The module/course handbook is a compilation of all descriptions of the modules/courses offered as part of a study programme. The “Handbook” briefly presents the individual modules/courses. You will find a sample for a module/course description on the next page.

Please describe each module/course with regard to

- the learning outcomes, i.e. the skills and competences that the students are to acquire,
- the content taught,
- the types of instruction in the module/course,
- the planned group size,
- the anticipated workload of the students in hours (workload) for the module/courses,
- the number of credit points for the module/course,
- the types of examinations/assessment, of grades for the module/course,
- the significance of the module/course grade for the final grade,
- the requirements for the awarding of credit points,
- the requirements for participation in the module/course,
- the duration of the module/course (number of semester/s),
- the frequency in which a module/course is offered,
- the use and usability of the module/course in other study programmes, as well as
- the classification as compulsory, compulsory-elective or elective module/course.

Please also respectively state the names of the instructors who normally carry out the module/course or who are responsible for the contents.



### Example of a module/course description

Module/Course Title					
module/ course code (if used)	Student work- load X hours	Credits (ECTS) X	Semester X. Sem.	Frequency e.g. each semester, each winter term, etc.	Duration X semester(s)
1	<b>Types of courses</b> a) e.g. seminar b) ...	<b>Contact hours</b> x hours	<b>Independent study</b> X hours	<b>Class size</b> X students	
5	<b>Prerequisites for participation (if applicable)</b> e.g. must have successfully completed module xy e.g. requires language skills at level xy				
2	<b>Learning outcomes</b>				
3	<b>Subject aims/Content</b>				
4	<b>Teaching methods</b> e.g. project work, case studies, group work, lectures, discussions, seminars, etc.				
6	<b>Assessment methods</b>				
8	<b>This module/course is used in the following study programme/s as well</b> ...				
10	<b>Responsibility for module/course</b>				
11	<b>Other information</b> e.g. bibliographical references				