



COURSES REVISED AND NEWLY CREATED BY PARTNER P11 (KUMAUN UNIVERSITY)

Work Package 2



QUALITY ASSESSMENT BY EU PARTNERS (PARTNER P2: UNIVERSITY OF SALZBURG)

New course 1: “Climate Change, Impacts and Adaptation in Himalaya”

QUALITY ASSESSMENT
<p>Quality criteria 1: Number of credit units for lectures, practical sessions and self-learning are appropriate to the contents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Evaluation</i> The number of credits devoted to lectures, practical sessions, and self-learning do not suit the course's primary goal. The goal is to empower the student to deal with this big and foremost issue in their future professional career. However, most part of the course is in the form of theoretical lectures, whereas the practical and self-learning part receive little attention. The theoretically-gained knowledge is fundamental, but using the knowledge outcomes in a professional way (the "on the field" aspect) through the provision of practical exercises and self-learning is also very relevant. Theory and practice should be further integrated and interrelated in the course process. <i>Strategies for improvement</i> Theoretical knowledge is required to work on this topic, thus we would recommend that the number of theoretical sessions offered is not reduced. However, to gain professional skills, practical sessions should be developed and fully integrated into the course planning, such as excursions, working with local actors on different topics, etc. This improvement will allow the student to use their knowledge in the field and gain skills by working with real professional cases for more operational outcomes. Furthermore, some theoretical sessions or at least a part of them might be changed to in-class discussions. In-class discussions aim at the provision of dynamism to the lecture and give the students a chance to express themselves and better integrate their already existent knowledge on the topic with the new contents taught. Finally, it would be advisable to link all the assignments to a final practical project that builds on all theoretical and practical aspects acquired. This final practical project might be the short interdisciplinary dissertation that you mention in the syllabus. However, more detailed descriptions should be offered in the syllabus on the topics, methods, etc. that are embraced in the assignments that you suggest (questions and short interdisciplinary dissertation), in order to be able to give you further strategies for improvement. In any case, both teamwork and individual assignments should be offered to the student.
<p>Quality criteria 2: Total number of credit units in the course is correct and appropriate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Evaluation</i> The total number of credits awarded is too high if a workload of approximately 60 hours is estimated. <i>Strategies for improvement</i> As 1 ECTS is equal to circa 28 hours, the course should be awarded 2 ECTS, or the workload increased to approximately 120 hours. We would especially recommend increasing the workload for students, if possible. As the ratio of hours devoted to lectures is too high, workload increases in the form of practice-oriented activities are desirable. This will, for sure, also implies an increase in the number of marks awarded.
<p>Quality criteria 3: Positioning of the courses in Curricula is appropriate based on the progressive level of difficulty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Evaluation</i> The positioning of the course in the third semester of MSc and MA studies is deemed as not appropriate. This subject is of high societal relevance and a fairly general topic. Thus, it is relevant to learn and gain knowledge on it before going more in-depth into other aspects in the following semesters. The location of Nainital justifies the specific focus on the Himalayan region. <i>Strategies for improvement</i> The course's positioning should be earlier (second semester of master's degree) to be appropriate. This course is a pivotal point in understanding and gain knowledge and skills for environmental management. Giving the students the opportunity to learn earlier this subject will provide them the basic knowledge required in environmental

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management and climate change, in order to better follow and integrate the contents of the following courses in the master's degree.

Quality criteria 4: Tests are suitable and appropriate to support transferable skills

- *Evaluation*

The tests and grading system are not appropriate to support transferable skills. This is shown by the fact that 75% of the grade that the students get is based on the successful completion of a single final written examination. The usage of one final exam is not a suitable way to evaluate the level of understanding and skills gained by the students on the subject.

- *Strategies for improvement*

Strategies for improvement are pointed out under “quality criteria 1”: they concern the provision of more practical sessions, which remain very limited in the course. Most part of the grade should be obtained through the evaluation of the quality of practical assignments.

Further, we would strongly recommend to mix lectures, seminars and practical sessions in the timeline. The development of seminars and practical sessions right after the lecture where theoretical knowledge on the concepts worked is provided will help students to better integrate this knowledge and clearly relate the theoretical concepts/ vision and its practical implementation. Students memory is limited and many concepts would be lost in the way before practical sessions take place, which would impact on the skills transferability. The provided structure of the course suggests that first theoretical lectures take place and afterwards the short interdisciplinary dissertation is written, whereas the questions posed on each of the units during the course seem to be theoretical. This should, however, be further clarified in the syllabus, so that strategies for improvements can be more objectively made.

Practical assignments should include tasks involving workgroup, and the grade be a mix of written assignments, oral presentations, discussions and the final exam. The involvement of local stakeholders during the practical sessions would also be very valuable, as they have knowledge on the practicability of the theoretical concepts offered, and on the opportunities and challenges that appear in practice. The practical perspective of students might thus be widened.

Quality criteria 5: TLM and assessment strategy support students in undertaking the course i.e. prerequisites are helpful and relevant, assessments helps gauge students understanding etc.

- *Evaluation*

The prerequisites set up are relevant: the knowledge obtained during all the courses established as a prerequisite will substantially help students to follow better and easily understand the contents provided. However, the lecture materials should not be limited to a listing of recommended publications.

- *Strategies for improvement*

As we do not have access to the e-learning materials, we do not know whether the suggestions that we will mention here can be useful. It might be the case that some of our suggestions have actually already been implemented. First of all, we would suggest providing videos on the theoretical sessions in the e-learning platform, to let the student re-listen and review the contents as a means to enable a better understanding and encourage self-working at home. Furthermore, interactive online practical exercises and an online chat should be developed: to make the learning experience more attractive and allow all students interested in the topic to learn more about it, on the one hand, and to easily interact and discuss with the professors and other students via the chat, on the other hand.

Quality criteria 6: Theory/Practice-oriented components are sufficient to cater the learning outcomes and skills development

- *Evaluation*

Theory-oriented components are sufficient to cater the learning outcomes and knowledge development, but this is not the case with practice-oriented components. The practice-oriented components should be developed in the course planning and evaluation process to value the student work.

- *Strategies for improvement*

The strategies suggested are pointed out under “quality criteria 1 and 4”.