

What were the conditions and steps taken that have contributed most to the success of the measure?

Particular institutional conditions contribute to the successful implementation of the ETD Master's Programme: • Readiness for change and openness towards innovation among teaching staff; • International cooperation with partner universities; • Training in ICT at UNED; • Infrastructure available at the faculty of pedagogy, psychology, and arts; • Close collaboration between the university's international and academic departments; • Management support; • Peer and inter-generational learning. Crucial elements for further effective implementation of ETD are the sustained uniqueness of the programme's content, its permanent update and cooperation practices with students (use of thematic group works of students on different themes and in the framework of different modules), response to the current needs, as well as enthusiasm of the new programme director.

Which stakeholders were involved in identifying needs and in the planning and design of the measure?

The ETD Master's programme was designed by a consortium of four universities: National University of Distance Education, UNED, Madrid, Spain; Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic; University of Latvia, UL, Riga; and Ludwigsburg University of Education, Reutlingen, Germany).

Who was involved in implementing the measure?

Four universities: National University of Distance Education, UNED, Madrid, Spain; Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic; University of Latvia, UL, Riga; and Ludwigsburg University of Education, Reutlingen, Germany).

Who has key responsibility for implementation?

University of Latvia, UL, Riga

How are the different people involved in implementation being supported (e.g. do they receive specific training?)

Most professors working in the programme are regular university staff. Professors of other participating universities are members of the university lecturer team serving as 'participative professors' or 'co-professors'; they are paid by their universities. Depending on the availability of financial resources (income from the programme), professionals with relevant academic training and practical experience are invited. Currently, 12 professors ensure the implementation of the programme (University of Latvia, 2015). Usually two to three professors are involved in a module, working collaboratively in tandems or teams. The coordinator of the Master's degree provides continued professional education at UNED. Professors also have good opportunities for professional training in international academic and research networks.

What have been the obstacles to introducing the measure? How have they been addressed?

The lack of participating students limits the programme's sustainability. UL does not support small groups in Master's studies. There are several limiting factors: high programme costs, lack of scholarships, professors' workloads, high overhead costs, limits to access the programme (high registration costs for foreign students), as well as long-term process for diploma recognition.

What is monitored?

The ETD programme has been accredited until 2019. UL is eager to continue the programme, as well as to introduce some of its elements in ITE Bachelor's programmes. According to the first joint report of the 2012 international expert commission, the programme was rated as sustainable and assessed as an innovative best practice example of Master's-level programmes in Latvia. To make the programme more sustainable, the programme's director started the application process to the Erasmus+ Joint degree programmes competition.

What has been the impact of the measure?

In six years (2010-2015) 38 persons have graduated from the programme (University of Latvia, 2015). The Council of Higher Education's 'Evaluation of Higher Education Study Programmes and Proposals for Quality Improvement' rated the programme as sustainable and assessed as a best practice example of Master's-level programmes in Latvia (Maslo, 2015). According to programme's implementers, the main results are: 1) Changes in the organisational cultures (in favour of social cohesion) of the education institutions where graduates are working; 2) Extended understanding of the European framework of qualifications in Latvia; 3) Fostering plurilingualism. According to the 2008-2010 and 2011 evaluations, students gain opportunities to enrich their experience by making use of varied sources of information, new technologies, and several languages. The programme provides opportunities to construct various previously unfamiliar situations for transcultural communication, which promotes students' capacities. Intercultural communication positively affects the quality of student-student and student-staff interactions, as well as the quality of diversity-related experiences through students' participation in problem-solving and information exchange during the e-learning process. Student teachers reflect upon their own cultural diversity and how it influences their professional teamwork during studies. The programme provides an understanding about different concepts used in inclusive education as well as the opportunity to learn about historical developments, concepts and understanding of diversity at the national and international levels. The main strengths of ETD are to ensure the high qualification of experts in diversity-related issues in education to become future trainers, programme directors, or leaders in diversity management. The programme supports the development of multilingualism, the international dimension of students and guest lecturers, and competences (pedagogical, intercultural, linguistic, ICT, communicative, management/organisational competences). It also provides high employability prospects (through internship/research practicum); possibility of specialisation according to the mobility tracks (special education).

Further info (website, contact person e-mail, organisation details)

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Relevant documents, photos or videos

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