

## QUALITY ASSESSMENT BY EU PARTNERS (PARTNER P4 Martin-Luther University Halle)

### New course: “(ECO238) Landscape Architecture Ecology”

### Mongolian University of Life Sciences, School of Agroecology

### BSc Course

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"> <li><i>Evaluation</i> The course is split into various units: lectures, field trips, assigned readings and student presentations. Overall, the course has a balanced approach between in-class, seminar and independent assignments. Moreover, the in-class activities are split into an even workload between lectures and seminars. In addition, students have the opportunity to deepen their knowledge on the theoretical inputs with independent activities outside of the lectures and seminars. The number of credits allocated to the units is correctly designed.</li> <li><i>Strategies for improvement</i> The syllabus is currently missing vital information on tasks as well as summary and course assignments. While these are mentioned in the text as well as in the online presentation in the e-learning part of the course, they are missing in the syllabus. It is recommended to update the syllabus as soon as possible and to fill in this information.</li> </ul>
<p>Quality criteria 2: Total number of credit units in the course is correct and appropriate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Evaluation</i> The course is intended to provide students with 3 ECTS (6 MCTS). According to the syllabus, the course is scheduled to run for 9 weeks. During that period, students will listen to lectures (32 hours) and participate in seminar exercises (32 hours). These in-class activities are complemented with independent activities. In particular, the course plans a group work which students later have to present during the seminar. The independent activities (i.e. assignments) are suggested to contain a total workload of 64 hours. As such, the total workload of the course would be 128 hours. Given that one ECTS is valued at ~25-30 hours of workload, the ECTS calculation is too low. Assessing the course at 4 or even 5 ECTS would be more suitable.</li> <li><i>Strategies for improvement</i> The course on landscape architecture ecology contains 64 hours of in-class activities and 64 hours of independent group assignments, hence a total workload of 144 hours. As such, it is recommended to increase the ECTS provided by this course. The accepted calculation is 25-30 hours per ECTS. As such, depending on the judgment of the course designers and instructors, it would be possible to raise the ECTS to either 4 ECTS (using a 30h per ECTS calculation) or 5 ECTS (using a 25h per ECTS calculation). The final decision is left to the instructors, but it is apparent that the current calculation of 3 ECTS is too low and not in line with accepted ECTS calculations.</li> </ul>
<p>Quality criteria 3: Positioning of the courses in Curricula is appropriate based on the progressive level of difficulty</p>

- *Evaluation*

It is difficult to judge the positioning of this course in the curricula, due to missing information in the syllabus. Considering it is a Bachelor's course, it is acceptable for this course to be accessible without much prior knowledge on the subject. A course on Ecology is required to participate in this course. The list of lecture topics is extensive and provided a variety of content on the subject.

- *Strategies for improvement*

The intended topics are quite varied but considering it is a bachelor's course, great care should be taken to not overload students with information that they would otherwise learn perhaps only in MSc courses.

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

- *Evaluation*

Individual and group assignments are well described and framed within the course. Grading is based on quizzes (30%), Discussions and active participation (40%) and a final exam (30%). This seems adequately sufficient to test students' knowledge and judge how much they learned during the course period. Each grading unit is described in detail in the syllabus and is clear in its intent. The number of quizzes, tasks during discussions and time period of the final exam is properly denoted.

- *Strategies for improvement*

Distribution of grade weighting is sensible and no adjustments are necessary.

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

- *Evaluation*

Teaching and learning methods are mixed and include taught classes, field assignments, group presentations and practical assignments. The intended structure of the course is thus well-designed to gauge student's progress and their understanding. A course on Ecology is required in order to take this course on landscape design, although there is no classification of the course, so it is difficult to judge the content of the required course. It is hence unclear in which way this course builds upon the foundation of the required course (Ecology).

The compulsory reading list contains two entries, both of which should provide a good foundation for students and should ideally be provided to students at the beginning of the course (if not prior to course start).

The assignments outside of class-activities are mentioned but not explained in detail. Field assignments are also mentioned but it is unclear how they are carried out or what tasks they require.

- *Strategies for improvement*

It would be good to mention how this course builds upon the foundation provided to students in the prerequisite course. The required course is a course on "ecology", and due to the broadness of the topic, it is not clear in what way it would prepare students for this course on landscape architecture ecology, especially considering that this course contains introductory lectures to the topic at hand. Likewise, group assignment and field assignments are mentioned, but not explained in detail. It would be good to add this information to the syllabus to properly prepare students for what assignments will take place.

Some interesting references that could perhaps help to deepen the theoretical knowledge are listed below, but their use ultimately depends on the instructors.

- Chang, Q. and Wang, H. (2019). **Research Progress on Application of Landscape Ecology in Landscape Architecture**. *The Journal of Applied Ecology* 30:11, 3991-4002.

- Nassauer, J. (1997). **Placing Nature**. Island Press. ISBN: 1-55963-559-2

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

- *Evaluation*

Both the theoretical and practical components of the course are described in detail and the skills to be developed are mentioned in detail as well. The intended learning outcomes and skills development are very much in line of what can be expected of a BSc level course.

- *Strategies for improvement*

It is unclear how the assignments will contribute to the learning outcomes and they are not yet described in the syllabus. Adding this information to the syllabus would help in judging how these activities would help in imparting the intended learning skills.

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