

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

New course: “(ENVI402) Environmental Management”

National University of Mongolia, School of Engineering and Applied Sciences

MSc and PhD 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"> <p><i>Evaluation</i></p> <p>The course has a balanced approach between seminar and lecture units, whereby each week, 2 hours are spent for lectures and two hours are spent in seminars. The proposed topics seemingly cover all of the necessary knowledge and expertise that the students would require to successfully achieve the course goals. A great emphasis seems to be allocated to giving students important background information in system thinking and the new paradigm shift towards “People-with-nature” rather than “people-in-nature”. The balanced approach should provide students with a good level of learning as theoretical input is equal to practical student-done work.</p> <p><i>Strategies for improvement</i></p> <p>Considering the suggested approach of studying best-practices, case studies and intending for students to practically apply the course materials, it might be recommended to expand upon the self-study aspect and allocate more individual self-study hours outside of both lectures and seminars. This would also allow the course to uphold its intended ECTS goal.</p>
<p>Quality criteria 2: Total number of credit units in the course is correct and appropriate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p><i>Evaluation</i></p> <p>As of the course syllabus, the course is scheduled to run for 16 weeks with weekly lectures (2 hours) and weekly seminars (2 hours), thus a total workload of 64 hours is foreseen. As such, the intended credits of 6 ECTS / 3 MCTS is unfortunately too high. On average, one ECTS is equal to approximately 25-30 hours of workload. Hence, with a total workload of 64 hours, the course would be better ranked at ~3 ECTS. It has to be said though, that the syllabus makes mention of a “course group assignment”, although no workload is mentioned.</p> <p>In order to achieve 6 ECTS worth of credits, it is highly recommended to either increase the self-study part of the module, which would very much align itself with the course goals and intended level of the course (MSc/PhD course). If students would independently or in groups spend time working on developing a case study or writing a report with an allocation of ~3-4h per week, the total workload would reflect the necessary time for an allocation of 6 credits.</p>
<p>Quality criteria 3: Positioning of the courses in Curricula is appropriate based on the progressive level of difficulty</p>

- *Evaluation*

The course seems to be adequately positioned in the curricula, although great emphasis seems to be devoted to background knowledge, which perhaps can already be assumed to be present in MSc and PhD students.

- *Strategies for improvement*

Considering that the course is high level and intended even for MSc students, it might be prudent to allocate less time on basic concepts such as “knowledge of natural systems” or “understanding human’s role in nature”, and instead to focus on some more elaborate concepts that could be developed further, such as for example:

- Design Thinking
- Degrowth
- Environmental Policies

Developing these new and focal topics in the current scientific discourse regarding environmental management of natural resources could greatly strengthen the profile of the course and provide students with valuable knowledge.

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. However, the workloads are not yet properly designed and would have to reflect the necessary hours (150h) for the course to be worth 6 ECTS.

- *Strategies for improvement*

Attendance and academic activity makes up 10% of the students’ grade and it is not exactly clear how that will be graded. Perhaps mention on how academic activity would be graded would be good.

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, case study discussions and practical exercises with a large group work at the end of the course. The intended structure of the course is thus well-designed to gauge student’s progress.

Lastly, the compulsory reading list is correctly mentioned and reflected in the syllabus.

- *Strategies for improvement*

The syllabus needs to be updated with regard to the course workload. As of right now, the course is correctly categorized into in-class activities and independent work, but the hours for each step in the course are not reflected in the table. In order to achieve the 6 ECTS (3 MCTS) goal, the workload should be no less than 150 hours, and as of now, only 64 hours are explicitly mentioned in the syllabus.

It should be specified exactly how many hours are foreseen for each step in the curriculum and to also expand upon the assignments. In-class and in-field assignments are mentioned and it would be good to have an overview of these tasks.

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

- Kallis, G., Kostakis, V., Lange, S., Muraca, B., Paulson, S. and Schmelzer, M. (2018). **Research on Degrowth**. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 43:1, 291-316
- Kallis, G., Kerschner, C. and Martinez-Alier, J. (2012). **The economics of degrowth**. *Ecological Economics* 84, 172-180
- Ahmad, S. and Nisar, T. (2015). **Green Human Resource Management: Policies and Practices**. *Cogent Business & Management* 2:1

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

- *Evaluation*

The practice-oriented components of the course are sufficiently described in nature, but the actual tasks to be carried out could be specified more. The lectures are well designed and seem to properly build upon each other to reach the course's goals.

- *Strategies for improvement*

Given the high level of the course, it is recommended to perhaps slightly adjusted some of the lectures in the second half of the course and rather than focusing on basic scientific concepts (e.g. human population size and distribution, or atmospheric pollution) which should be well known at this level, it would perhaps be better to focus on specific in-depth topics with regard to environmental management such as prevalent scientific discussions surrounding the topic of growth/degrowth or sustainable environmental management. While these topics are mentioned, based on the information provided in the syllabus, it is unclear if they are adequately discussed within the lectures and seminar.

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