

Quality Culture Framework

Version 6

August 2024



Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	BASIC PRINCIPLES	2
3	QUALITY ASSURANCE IN YUFE PARTNERS	3
4	QUALITY ASSURANCE OF YUFE'S EDUCATIONAL OFFER	4
4.1	Open YUFE	5
4.2	YUFE Minors	6
4.3	YUFE Degree Programmes	8
4.3.1	Joint Bachelor Urban Sustainability Studies	8
4.3.2	Six-year QA cycle	9
4.3.3	Continuous monitoring	10
4.3.4	Mid-term internal review	12
4.3.5	Self-reflection with external review	13
5	QUALITY ASSURANCE OF YUFE ACTIVITIES & OUTPUTS	14
6	QUALITY ASSURANCE WORKFLOW	17
7	QUALITY ASSURANCE GOVERNANCE	18
7.1	YUFE Quality Assurance Board	19
7.2	YUFE External QA Advisory Board	20
8	MONITORING AND REPORTING	23
8.1	QA reports	23
8.2	YUFE QA Intranet	24
8.3	YUFE QA Dashboard	25

9	ANNEXES	26
9.1	European Standards and Guidelines for QA	26
9.2	YUFE template: quality assurance roadmap	28
9.3	Abbreviations	29

Figures

Figure 2-1: YUFE Basic principles of QA.....	2
Figure 4-1: YUFE 3-layered educational offer	4
Figure 4-2: YUFE Bachelor structure.....	9
Figure 4-3: YUFE six-year QA cycle	9
Figure 4-4: PDCA cycle of YUFE Bachelor programme	11
Figure 4-5: Evaluations in YUFE Bachelor lifecycle	12
Figure 5-1: YUFE Quality Indicators	14
Figure 6-1: YUFE QA workflow	17
Figure 7-1: Overall YUFE governance.....	18
Figure 7-2: Degree programme YUFE governance.....	19
Figure 8-1: YUFE reports.....	23
Figure 8-2: YUFEnet.....	24
Figure 8-3: YUFE QA Dashboard.....	25

1 Introduction

The YUFE Quality Assurance Board (QAB) coordinates overall quality assurance (QA) activities, the building of a quality culture, and general evaluation, monitoring and QA reporting within the YUFE Alliance.

The YUFE Quality Assurance Framework describes the governance system, basic principles and quality assessment dimensions of the YUFE Quality Assurance System. It contains relevant quantitative and qualitative key performance indicators, that can be used for a regular YUFE benchmarking exercise. The aim of the exercise is continuous improvement of quality of activities and outputs.

It remains the responsibility of YUFE management to ensure that all planned YUFE activities are carried out to the best possible extent, but it is the YUFE QAB's task to assess and monitor the quality of these activities.

Dynamic instrument

The YUFE QA Framework is a flexible and dynamic instrument, that can adapt to and grow with the different stages of YUFE. The first version was approved by the YUFE Strategic Council in September 2020, with subsequent versions in Sep 2020 (v2), Nov 2023 (v3), Mar 2024 (v4), May 2024 (v5) and the current version 6 (Aug 2024).

Effective quality assurance

This framework provides an overview of the principles, procedures, processes and instruments YUFE wants to use for its internal quality assurance system. Effective quality assurance assumes the presence of a quality culture. This quality culture refers to the set of shared values and norms about quality and it manifests itself in the specific behaviour of people. Quality culture is improvement-oriented.

Therefore, quality assurance does not only consist of the functioning of procedures and systems, but it has a dynamic character that focuses on progress, innovation and sharing best practices among the partner universities, and takes into account the evolving system it aims to support.

Dual focus

The YUFE QAB's approach to quality assurance has a dual focus:

- On the one hand, we evaluate, monitor and report on the quality of YUFE's activities and outputs. This is done through a lean system: a PDCA approach with quality indicators and quality assessment instruments, such as surveys, focus groups, personal development plans, etc.
- On the other hand, this framework covers the quality assurance of YUFE's educational offer. The whole educational portfolio of YUFE, encompassing academic courses and programmes as well as skills and activities. Quality assurance of the educational offer has another focus (compliance with ESG standards is key) and requires a more long-term vision that goes beyond project phases.

2 Basic principles

The YUFE QA System is built on five basic principles, with quality culture at the centre.



FIGURE 2-1: YUFE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF QA

1. Trust and appreciative approach

Universities collaborate in teaching activities, underpinned by mutual trust in the quality of each other's education. All partners and their programmes hold accreditation by an EQAR-registered QA agency, meeting ESG standards. The appreciative approach fosters a quality culture, assuming shared responsibility for education quality from each institution's unique context.

2. Subsidiarity, decentralised responsibility, shared ownership

Quality responsibility should rest as much as possible with those directly involved. YUFE activities must be jointly initiated, developed, and monitored. Subsidiarity, while important, doesn't eliminate the need for central coordination. General principles, instruments, and methodology are outlined in a shared mission and implemented at the alliance's appropriate level.

3. Continuous improvement, sharing (best) practices, PDCA

All activities rely on the PDCA cycle, familiar to all YUFE partners. It offers a suitable framework for launching and improving plans, policies, and objectives systematically, fostering continuous improvement. The ten YUFE partners collaborate and share ideas and best practices towards advancement.

4. Transparency

Subsidiarity and an appreciative approach require transparency in all processes, procedures, and outcomes. This entails providing objective, visible, public, and evidence-based information on activities.

5. Involvement of stakeholders (quadruple helix)

Students, staff, and stakeholders are central to YUFE's quality culture, and contribute together to achieve the best quality of education. The quadruple helix enhances stakeholder engagement, integrating YUFE into society, promoting knowledge transfer, and empowering active citizens.

These five principles are the foundation for all methods and quality assessment instruments in the YUFE QA approach, always in accordance and combination with the ESG Standards and guidelines for QA in the EHEA.

3 Quality assurance in YUFE partners

Quality assurance survey

As it was decided that the common quality assurance policy for YUFE should be based on the expertise of all partners, we conducted an extensive quality assurance survey in the run-up to the official launch of YUFE. All YUFE's full partners at that time completed a questionnaire on the characteristics of their external quality assurance, on the organisation of their internal quality assurance, on stakeholder involvement, on quality indicators and on internal and external reporting.

Common principles and values in the various internal quality assurance systems of all full partners are: university-wide values and high quality objectives, decentralised responsibilities and shared ownership, the application of a Plan-Do-Check-Act system (PDCA) or quality loop and continuous improvement, the role of feedback, the strong involvement of stakeholders, especially students, alumni and external experts, the dissemination of best practices, and the focus on quality culture. These principles are applied through different types of procedures, which meet the requirements of the accreditors, but with similar and complementary instruments, and with recurring indicators.

Trust and transparency

All partner institutions and their programmes are accredited or recognised by an EQAR-registered quality assurance agency and they all meet the standards of desired quality of education as set out by the ESG. They all strive to achieve the highest possible quality and nurture continuous improvement in everything they do. Therefore, we believe that no additional layer of YUFE quality assurance is required for existing processes, products and activities.

The individual recognitions also ensure that the necessary trust, which is crucial when ten partners choose to work closely and intensively together, is a reasonable assumption in the YUFE Alliance. Together with transparency on individual quality assurance processes and results, both between the YUFE partners, and between the partners and the alliance, this trust provides a solid basis to build the YUFE initiatives upon the experience of the ten partner universities.

Strengthening the quality culture

At the same time, the partnership in YUFE also offers an excellent opportunity for individual partners to improve the quality of their own programmes and initiatives, by exchanging knowledge and experience. Every institution will therefore share quality assurance best practices and provide information on existing internal and external quality assurance and the results thereof to each other, to YUFE management and to other YUFE stakeholders. This will strengthen the quality culture in each of the partners and of the alliance.

We strive towards a modus operandi where all partners share best practices at annual YUFE events, such as workshops, open days and conferences. Additionally, they provide information on their own websites, while a general overview of YUFE quality assurance will be available on the YUFE Alliance website.

4 Quality assurance of YUFE's educational offer

Already in December 2020, the YUFE Alliance opened applications for its educational offer. The original offering has been upscaled to allow for even more inclusive and flexible student-centred education within the format of Open Programmes and currently a three-layered educational system is being implemented.

The three layers of this approach can be seen below: layer 1 – Open YUFE, layer 2 – YUFE Minors and layer 3 – YUFE Degree Programmes.

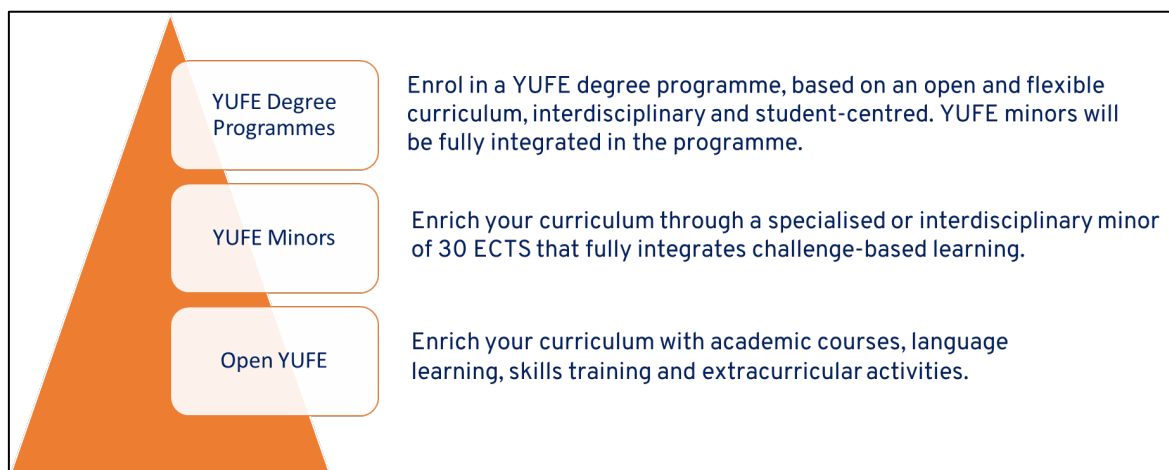


FIGURE 4-1: YUFE 3-LAYERED EDUCATIONAL OFFER

Open YUFE was designed and implemented in 2020, while the YUFE Minors are currently running in a pilot version and the YUFE Joint Bachelor (Degree Programme) is under development.

All three layers will be available to offer YUFE education as inclusively as possible, both to students already enrolled in academic degree programmes at YUFE universities and to students who are not yet enrolled at a YUFE institution, but who wish to participate in a full YUFE degree programme.

Ground rules

This quality assurance dimension is fully directed to students, teaching and learning, and it is developed within the framework of ESG standards, as is also the case for the educational portfolio at all YUFE partners.

All three layers of the YUFE educational offer are subject to this QA Dimension. There is, however, substantial interaction between the two first QA dimensions. A significant number of courses and activities in the YUFE course catalogue originate from the individual YUFE institutions portfolio and fall under the existing QA procedures of the partners. On top of that, we create a lean new layer of YUFE QA, that focuses on YUFE added value, coherence, consistency and stakeholder satisfaction.

In line with our five basic principles, continuous improvement is a key aspect of YUFE quality assurance. In this chapter we show how the PDCA-cycle is implemented, and which evaluation and monitoring instruments are put in place for the two first layers.

Student evaluations are important instruments to monitor the quality of the various YUFE components. Wherever possible, we try to combine evaluations or use and adapt evaluations already present at the YUFE partners in order to minimise the total number of evaluations.

4.1 Open YUFE

Students from all YUFE universities are able to register for Open YUFE, meaning they can enrol in YUFE courses and activities offered by the ten YUFE partners. The YUFE course catalogue contains over 800 courses and activities which fall within the scope of the YUFE focus areas. YUFE students can apply for one or more of these courses either as part of, or complementary to their curriculum.

The acceptance of the ECTS credits into the curriculum depends on the regulations of the partner institutions where the students are enrolled.

PDCA cycle

For all courses and activities included in the YUFE catalogue, the PDCA cycle is carried out by the organising partner university. This includes:

- Plan => the design of the course
- Do => the implementation of the course
- Check => the quality assurance of the course
- Act => any necessary adjustments

Information

For each YUFE course, an ECTS sheet is accessible, containing information on the level of the course and admission criteria, the number of ECTS credits, the learning outcomes, a description of the content and planned learning activities, the examination method, and a contact person.

YUFE monitoring

Next to qualitative data, YUFE collects quantitative information on inflow and outflow, and monitors the number of participating students and their results.

QA of Open YUFE in practice

The quality assurance of Open YUFE entails a combination of QA procedures applied at two levels.

Quality assurance of Open YUFE components

As mentioned before, trust, subsidiarity, and transparency are vital in the YUFE QA framework. Quality of academic courses, language learning, and skills training provided by YUFE partners through Open YUFE is assured through the implementation of QA mechanisms within each partner university. Each university has an effective QA system, including tools and processes to guarantee the PDCA-cycle, and is thus responsible for teaching and learning quality.

Quality assurance of Open YUFE as a whole

Ensuring the overall quality of Open YUFE involves an additional layer of quality assurance.

Each year two surveys are distributed amongst Open YUFE stakeholders: one targeted at students, the other at lecturers. These questionnaires examine expectations and experiences in addition to the classic education-related course evaluations of the

partner institutions. We aim to balance the collection of necessary information for optimisation while avoiding survey fatigue among participants.

YUFE admission officers maintain close communication with YUFE students and staff, serving as the primary contact for administrative support.

Participation data is stored in the Virtual Campus and undergoes annual monitoring. In the future this process will be facilitated by the forthcoming QA Dashboard.

Evaluation results are shared within the alliance for analysis and follow-up, and necessary adaptations and changes are implemented within a few months to complete the quality loop.

4.2 YUFE Minors

Since 2023, YUFE students can participate in YUFE minors. These are all larger modules of 30 ECTS that are rewarded by a diploma supplement or a certificate, but that do not yield to a degree.

Minors are offered by partner universities in both the spring and fall semesters. By registering for a minor, students can earn credits through a combination of compulsory and elective courses, and by participating in a Challenge Team. This Challenge Team is a form of teamwork with problem-based learning organised by the partner university around a topic related to the focus of the minor and in close cooperation with the community and/or other stakeholders.

Minor courses are held on-site at the host university with online courses from another alliance university contributing to it. Each minor defines specific learning outcomes (ILOs) attained through courses and challenges, with students enjoying considerable elective choices.

PDCA cycle

The overall follow-up of the YUFE minors is carried out by the Student Journey colleagues. This includes:

- Plan => the conditions and design of the minors
- Do => the implementation of the minors
- Check => the quality assurance of the minors
- Act => any necessary adjustments

The follow-up of the different components of the YUFE minors in the Check-stage is done by the existing QA procedures at the partner institutions.

Information

A description sheet is drawn up for the YUFE minor, with information on the learning outcomes, a description of the components, and a minor coordinator contact.

YUFE monitoring

Next to qualitative data, YUFE collects quantitative information on inflow and outflow, and monitors the number of participating students and their results.

YUFE collects quantitative information on inflow and outflow, and monitors the number of participating students and their results.

QA of YUFE Minors in practice

Similar to Open YUFE, the quality assurance of YUFE Minors involves QA procedures at two levels.

QA of Minor Components

In alignment with YUFE QA principles and dimensions, the quality of minor components (courses, activities and challenge teams) is assured by the QA mechanisms at the partner university with oversight from YUFE. Additional support is provided for new elements, such as Challenge Teams.

To strengthen quality and quality assurance at YUFE level, minimum expected QA standards for minor components align with YUFE QA indicators. These minimum expected items cover detailed course content, study material, quality of teaching and general course satisfaction through surveys or focus groups.

Each university guarantees that the evaluation of minor components is performed annually. This regime counts for both existing courses and courses newly created for the minor.

Via the PDCA-cycle, the follow up of QA activities and procedures stays with the partner university, but aggregate information on all minor components can be provided to the YUFE QAB through its different QA expert members who serve as liaison officers.

QA of Minors as a whole

Ensuring the overall quality of YUFE Minors rests with YUFE Student Journey and the YUFE QAB and involves an additional lean layer of quality assurance.

- During the preparatory stage QA focuses on minor design, emphasising ILOs and course alignment. All minor ILOs contain the same three types of skills: content-specific skills, research skills and transferable skills, defined at European Qualifications Framework level 6 (Bachelor). A matrix connects course outcomes to minor ILOs, demonstrating student acquisition. This stage also considers minor prerequisites, admission processes, and mobility arrangements.
- After establishing a minor, QA shifts to evaluating teaching and learning quality, ILOs, and student satisfaction. ILOs assessment relies on the matrix, supplemented by individual sheets for each student in the minor, particularly if the minor involves elective courses.
- A key element of the QA process involves the introduction of a survey for minor students, which may be supplemented by interviews or focus groups. This evaluation is centred on assessing overall student satisfaction, with a specific emphasis on information related to minors and their components, the application process, the quality of teaching and learning, and the sense of belonging in the YUFE community.
- Student feedback is augmented by staff interviews, encompassing both academic and professional services staff members.

The results of these evaluations are carefully analysed for each cohort, and the gathered information is used to enhance and refine the YUFE minors.

QA of Minors timeline

- Start of semester – after approval of the mobility agreement
 - Conversation/meeting “how to get started – expectations management” by minor coordinator/advisor/decentral admission officer (DAO)

- Mid-semester
 - Conversation/meeting "how is everything" by minor coordinator/advisor/ DAO
- End of the semester
 - Minor as a whole
 - Qualtrics survey, supplemented with interviews or focus group discussions by the YUFE QAB (surveys) & minor coordinators (interviews & focus groups)
 - Minor components
 - Course evaluations by partner institutions' existing processes
 - Quantitative data
 - Overview of pass rates by YUFE QAB

Evaluation results are shared within the alliance for analysis and follow-up, and necessary adaptations and changes are implemented within a few months to complete the quality loop.

4.3 YUFE Degree Programmes

4.3.1 Joint Bachelor Urban Sustainability Studies

The YUFE Joint Bachelor, starting in Fall 2025, is a three-year (180 ECTS - 360 CATS) programme for personalised urban sustainability studies education across Europe.

Students enrol and start at one of the degree awarding starting universities and complete the first year. In the following three semesters they can freely combine minors offered by all YUFE universities, with one to three mobility semesters. The last semester is mostly dedicated to the bachelor's project capstone and is again carried out at the starting university.

The programme will be offered by seven degree-awarding partners offering the whole programme, and three mobility partners offering minors. Successful completion of this bachelor leads to a joint diploma that fulfils the requirements of the laws of all countries involved and is legally valid in those countries.

Initial accreditation in the countries of all degree-awarding partners will be based on the result of the peer review process of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes.

The YUFE Joint Bachelor aligns fully with the open curriculum philosophy - students own their curriculum and enjoy multilateral mobility, choosing their starting university, minors, and electives based on their interests and future plans.

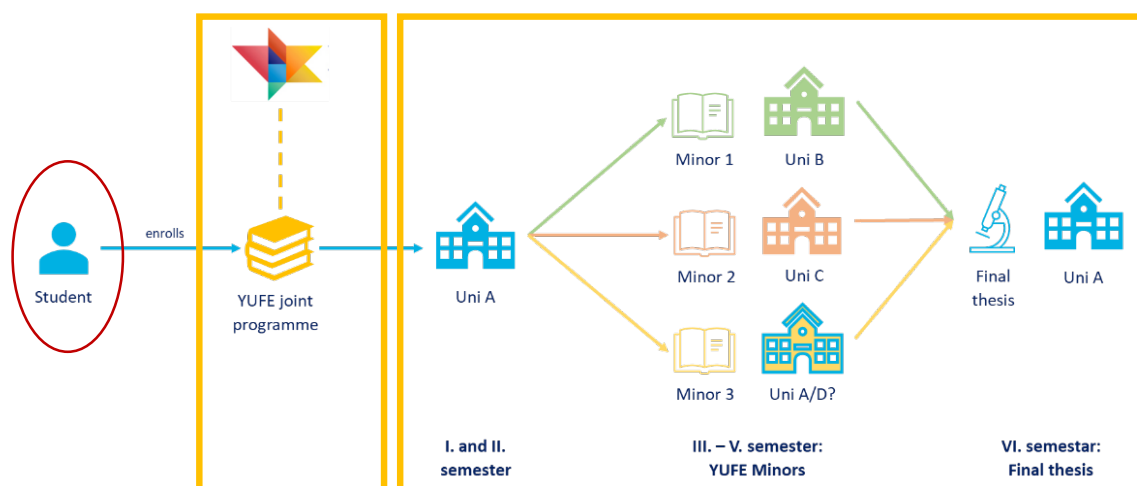


FIGURE 4-2: YUFE BACHELOR STRUCTURE

4.3.2 Six-year QA cycle

The quality assurance of the YUFE Joint Bachelor, and all other future degree programmes, will follow a six-year cycle that consists of three components:

- Y1-6: Continuous monitoring at YUFE and partner institutions
- Y3: Mid-term internal YUFE review
- Y6: Self-reflection and external peer review

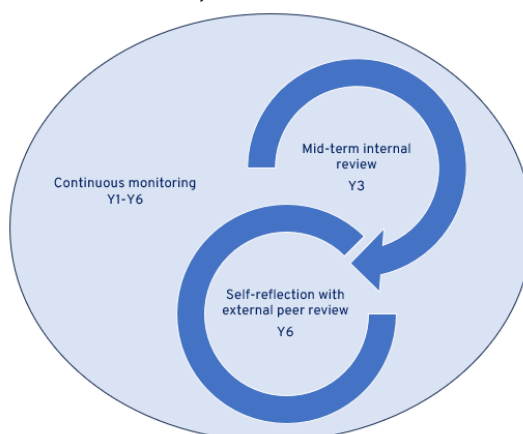


FIGURE 4-3: YUFE SIX-YEAR QA CYCLE

A six-year cycle is well-suited, as it accommodates two complete lifecycles of the bachelor's programme and coincides with the period between two accreditations using the European Approach for Joint programmes. The whole process is supported and monitored by the YUFE QAB.

Continuous monitoring

Throughout the six-year cycle the programme undergoes different evaluations, analyses and follow-up both on the YUFE overarching level as on the level of the partner institutions. Minimum QA requirements, as defined by the YUFE QAB, outline essential topics, stakeholders involved, and the timing of these evaluations. The resulting documents or actions are stored in the programme portfolio of the YUFE Bachelor.

The YUFE QAB oversees quality assurance across all levels via liaison officers, conducting monthly online meetings and convening in person once per semester.

Mid-term internal review

We approach the extensive six-year QA cycle by breaking it down into two more manageable three-year cycles, each aligned with the duration of a bachelor's programme. At year three, the YUFE QAB plans a moment of comprehensive internal process monitoring and guidance, based on the preceding three-year cycle.

This internal process monitoring requires no additional materials as it relies on existing documentation. Based on the programme portfolio, the YUFE QAB conducts an analysis to identify strengths and weaknesses, and discusses the conclusions with the Programme and Coordinating Committee, resulting in a development plan for the next three-year cycle.

Self-reflection and external peer review

By completing the three-year cycle twice within the six-year cycle, we can prepare for re-accreditation in year six, based on the development plan established after the initial three-year cycle and implemented during the second cycle.

4.3.3 Continuous monitoring

QA instruments and processes

Trust, subsidiarity, and transparency are foundational to the YUFE QA Framework, which leverages existing QA processes from partner universities. Each university within the alliance ensures high standards of teaching and learning through mature QA systems. To uphold and enhance quality at the YUFE level, the YUFE QA indicators set minimum standards for bachelor courses, covering detailed course content, study materials, teaching quality, and overall satisfaction, evaluated through surveys, interviews, and focus groups.

Universities ensure that course evaluations follow internal guidelines. Given the novelty of open programmes for many YUFE institutions, during the early stages of the programme's delivery, evaluations may occur more frequently. Supplementing partner university QA procedures is a YUFE-specific QA layer focusing on overall student and staff experiences related to learning, teaching, support, resources, learning outcomes, and mobility. YUFE QA procedures incorporate good practices from partner institutions, with necessary upgrades or alignments.

Assessment instruments include surveys, focus groups, pre- and post-evaluations, reflection documents, and user testing. Partner monitoring instruments are used where possible to minimise administrative burden and leverage existing expertise. Data analytics support the assessment of study effectiveness and the implementation of improvements, tracking student progress from enrolment to graduation.

PDCA cycles

We adhere to the PDCA cycle at every level, with oversight by the QAB. The Plan phase of the minors and the Bachelor is based on agreements made by the Programme Committee and the YUFE QAB, to ensure the programme's coherence. All QA actions are carried out in consultation with the Programme Committee and the Coordinating Committee.

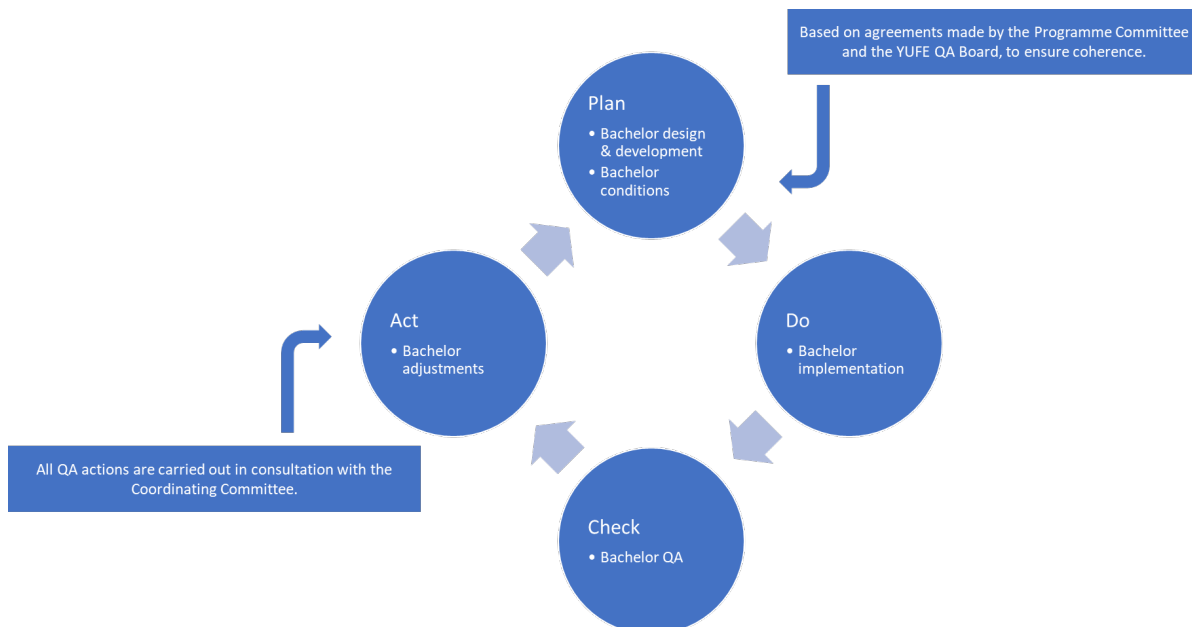


FIGURE 4-4: PDCA CYCLE OF YUFE BACHELOR PROGRAMME

For all courses and activities included in the YUFE Bachelor, the PDCA cycle is carried out by the host university. This includes:

- Plan => the design of the course
- Do => the implementation of the course
- Check => the quality assurance of the course delivery
- Act => any necessary adjustments

The overall follow-up of the YUFE minors is carried out by the Programme Committee. This includes:

- Plan => the conditions and design of the minors
- Do => the implementation of the minors
- Check => the quality assurance of the minor tracks
- Act => any necessary adjustments

The overall follow-up of the YUFE Bachelor is carried out by the Programme Committee. This includes:

- Plan => the conditions and further development of the Bachelor and its components
- Do => the implementation of the Bachelor and its components
- Check => the quality assurance of the Bachelor and its components delivery
- Act => any necessary adjustments

4.3.4 Mid-term internal review

The mid-term internal review takes place at the end of the first three-year cycle.

In collaboration with the Programme Committee, the YUFE QAB evaluates the programme, and examines to what extent the systematic care of educational development is sufficiently and qualitatively embedded in the daily functioning of the Programme Committee.

If deemed necessary, a conversation with the Programme Committee and the Coordinating Committee will follow. Regardless, there will be a moment of feedback which will result in a development plan. The report will be presented to the Programme Committee and the Coordinating Committee.

The evaluations taking place within the bachelor lifecycle are visualised below.

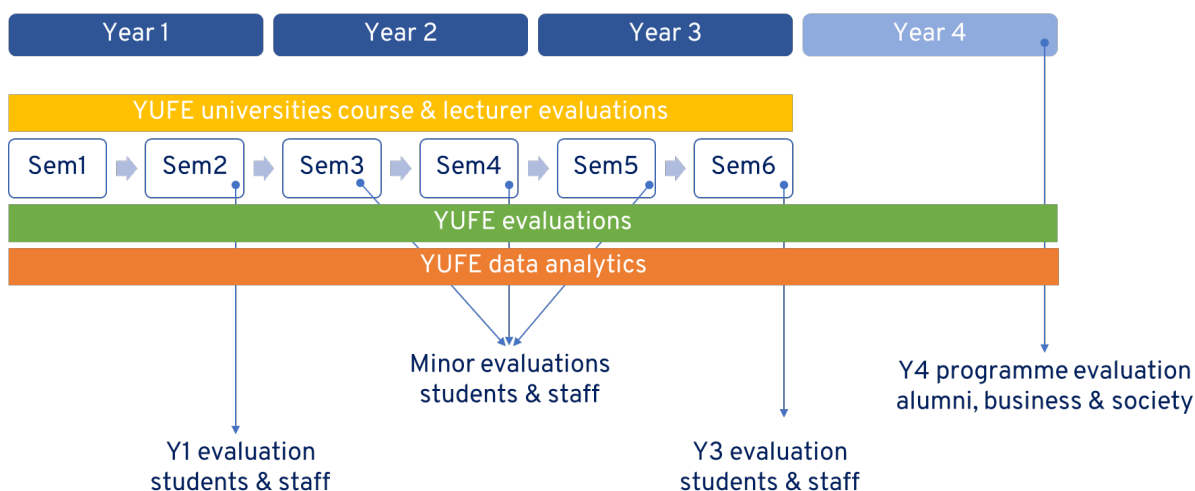


FIGURE 4-5: EVALUATIONS IN YUFE BACHELOR LIFECYCLE

The YUFE approach to curriculum development involves several key components to ensure alignment with the ILOs and overall quality assurance standards on all levels.

The process starts with the collaborative development of programme ILOs, which are further subdivided into ILO versions for year 1 and for the minors. This additional level is used in order to ensure that all students complete year 1 with a comparable set of competences (even though they participate in educational offer at seven different universities) and that a very diverse set of YUFE Minors delivers a comparable level of ILOs. Year 1 faculty meetings, organised per building block, serve as an added guarantee for ensuring a comparable set of competences.

Constructive alignment between the curriculum and the ILOs is maintained, supported, and evidenced through ILO matrices, ensuring coherence and effectiveness. Curriculum development occurs within a collaboratively defined framework, integrating Dublin descriptors and programme-specific building blocks to maintain consistency and relevance across disciplines.

To evaluate the different components of the programme, the YUFE QAB conducts comprehensive surveys supplemented by interviews or focus groups involving the following stakeholders:

- Year 1 - students, teaching and academic staff, Y1 coordinators, and professional staff
- Minors - students, teaching and academic staff, minor coordinators, academic advisors, and professional staff

- Whole Bachelor - students, alumni, teaching and academic staff, minor coordinators, academic advisors, professional staff, as well as representatives from business and society

Additionally, we use data analytics to monitor success rates, student inflow and outflow, and overall academic advancement, providing valuable insights for continuous improvement initiatives.

The evaluation results and analytics will also be presented to the External QA Advisory Board for external perspectives and feedback.

4.3.5 Self-reflection with external review

Every six years, the Bachelor programme undergoes re-accreditation under the European Approach for Joint Programmes. During this period, the Programme Committee and the Coordinating Committee will engage in systematic and thorough reflection on the programme's quality, outcomes, and future challenges.

A self-evaluation report will be compiled, including a thorough analysis and identification of both strengths and weaknesses, along with a vision for the future. All stakeholders involved in the programme can contribute to this process, including the External QA Advisory Board.

An external peer review team will conduct a site visit to assess the quality of education through documentation review and discussions. This external perspective serves as a mirror for the programme, facilitating its evolution and improvement.

5 Quality assurance of YUFE activities & outputs

To ensure the quality and continuous improvement of activities and outputs within the YUFE Alliance, the YUFE QAB developed a workflow that describes high-level quality indicators, quality assessment instruments and links these together in quality assurance matrices and quality assurance roadmaps in order to facilitate continuous improvement.

Monitoring and assessing the quality of the YUFE activities and outputs is broad in nature: it encompasses quality assurance of the YUFE Alliance, as well as all activities and outputs of the various WP's and as such requires a more general PDCA approach than the quality assurance of the educational offer.

When assessing the quality of YUFE's activities and outputs we differentiate between deliverables on the one hand and quality indicators on the other hand.

Deliverables indicate the quantifiable item that was created during this commitment of time, resource and effort and their success can be measured by the reaching of the deliverable, usually a number or a yes or no answer. Following up on the deliverables is the responsibility of YUFE management.

Deliverables do not to give good feedback on performance or quality, because they only indicate whether the initiatives have been implemented. They do not give information about whether those initiatives have worked nor on the quality thereof. Knowing what works and what does not is a fundamental condition for continuous improvement. This is the core task of the YUFE QAB.

Quality indicators are specific key performance indicators that link quality of activities and outputs to the YUFE vision and targets. Quality indicators allow monitoring, measurement and reporting on quality to internal and external stakeholders.

Quality indicators

In order to keep YUFE's QA system lean and consistent, we selected three quality indicators that are applicable to all of YUFE's activities and outputs and that link back to our basic principles. The three quality indicators are:



FIGURE 5-1: YUFE QUALITY INDICATORS

Quality instruments

To evaluate the quality of the realised deliverables, we need to choose adequate instruments. Quality assessment instruments allow the YUFE QAB to keep track of the indicators throughout their quality assurance activities. They include surveys, focus groups, pre- and post-evaluations, user testing, etc.

As much as possible, we will use or start from existing monitoring instruments of the partners, both to limit the administrative burden, but more importantly to build on the expertise of the partners. In the matrices below, various possible instruments are listed, but the intention is not to use them all. Instead, the goal is to select, to limit and to rotate.

To keep track of the various deliverables and quality indicators and to link them to monitoring instruments, we develop a quality assurance matrix and a quality assurance roadmap for all work packages.

Quality matrix

The YUFE QA matrix links YUFE's quality indicators to possible quality assessment instruments as can be seen below.

Quality Indicator	Type	Possible Instruments	Location
Accessible information	Qualitative	Factsheets Infographics Manuals Tutorials	YUFE website YUFE Virtual Campus
Stakeholder satisfaction	Qualitative Quantitative	Surveys Interviews Focus groups Pre- and post-evaluations Personal development plans User testing Feedback button Reflection documents	YUFEnet QA pages YUFE QA Dashboard
Stakeholder participation	Quantitative	Power BI analytics Desk research Web statistics	YUFEnet QA page YUFE QA Dashboard

Quality roadmaps

Quality roadmaps (see annex 9.2 for a template) give a clear overview of chosen QA actions during a specific academic year and contain detailed information on timing, internal and external stakeholders, quality assurance set-up, results and actions. The stakeholders are specified for each activity.

The results of all the activities and procedures detailed in the quality assurance roadmaps will be the input for the annual YUFE QA reports.

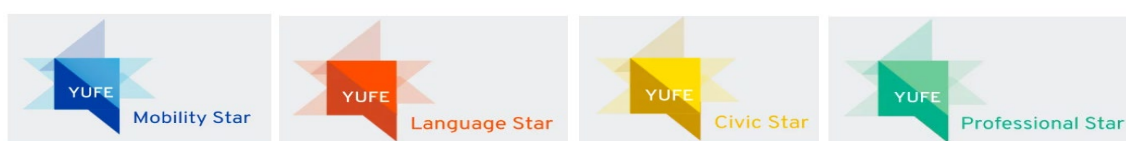
The translation of the high-level quality indicators through the QA matrix into QA roadmaps enables us to create a flexible QA approach:

- Each YUFE work package can choose which stakeholder/instrument combination(s) is the most important at any given time.
- Stakeholders and instruments can be included in a rotation system: not everything has to be evaluated all the time.
- The targets to be achieved can evolve with the project: short-term versus long-term targets can differentiate, while the overarching objective can stay the same.

QA of the YUFE activities in practice: YUFE Stars

The YUFE Star system, YUFE's innovative recognition system, undergoes a quality assessment process that closely aligns with the evaluation procedures applied to other offerings within the YUFE framework.

YUFE Stars are awarded for physical or virtual mobility, language learning, professional training and job shadowing, and community volunteering, in order to fully pursue personal and professional development.



The quality assurance of YUFE Star System involves QA procedures at two levels:

QA of YUFE Star Components

Similar to the QA of the Minor Components and the Open YUFE Components, the quality of the Star System Components is assured by the QA mechanisms at the partner university with oversight from YUFE.

QA of YUFE Stars as a whole

- Star satisfaction is part of the Open YUFE student survey.
- All students taking up a YUFE activity in order to obtain a star are asked to work with a Personal Development Plan (PDP), specific to each star. This Personal Development Plan, including a Reflection Report, is used to track students' personal and professional skills performance and growth, as well as evaluating expectations and experiences in terms of the YUFE values. The Personal Development Plan is an example of using an existing tool for quality assurance in order to keep the monitoring lean.
- The information gathered from the evaluations and surveys is analysed and used to enhance the quality and organisation of the YUFE Star System.

6 Quality Assurance Workflow

Across QA dimensions, we have implemented a quality assurance workflow that comes into play when monitoring instruments need to be developed. The figure below visualises the various steps, responsibilities and collaborations between work packages before and after data collection.

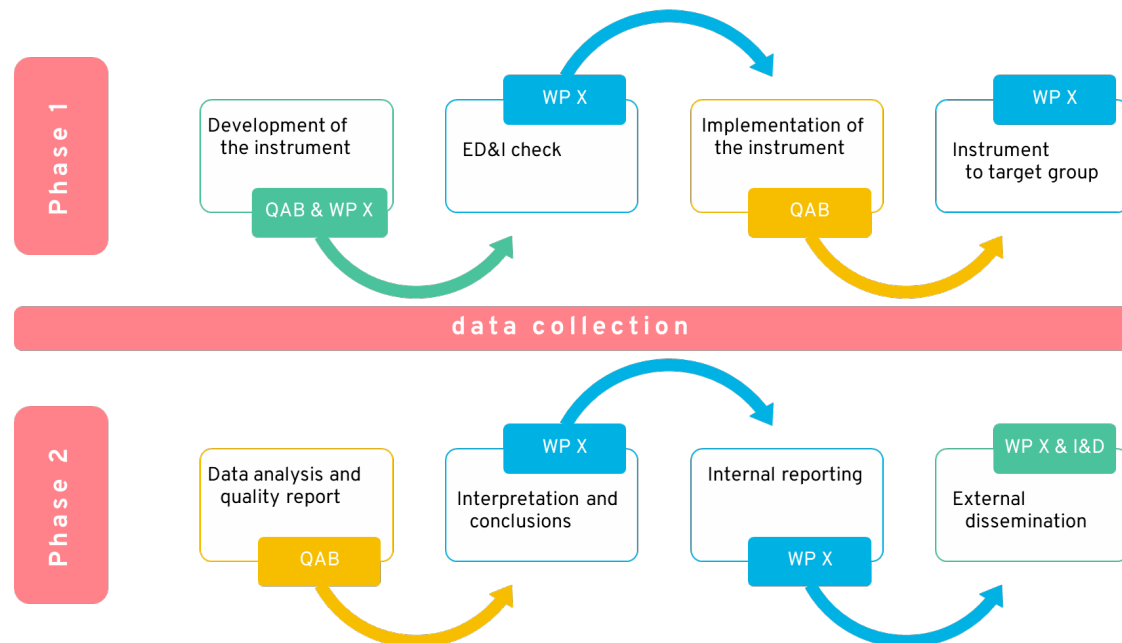


FIGURE 6-1: YUFE QA WORKFLOW

Phase 1 goes from conception and development of the instrument to the delivery of the instrument to the target group.

1. Step 1: The YUFE QAB and work package representatives collaborate on the design and development of an appropriate quality instrument. As much as possible we start from or use existing instruments.
2. Step 2: The WP representatives perform an ED&I check using the YUFE ED&I checklist.
3. Step 3: The YUFE QAB implements the instrument, e.g. a Qualtrics survey.
4. Step 4: The WP representatives distribute the link to the instrument among participants.

Phase 2 goes from analysing the data to the dissemination.

5. Step 1: The YUFE QAB analyses the collected data and prepares the quality assurance report.
6. Step 2: The WP representatives interpret the data in the quality assurance report and draw conclusions.
7. Step 3: The WP representatives report their conclusions (and possible actions) within the YUFE community.
8. Step 4: The WP representatives, possibly with help of the Impact & Dissemination colleagues, disseminate the results (and possible actions) to external YUFE stakeholders.

7 Quality Assurance Governance

On 29 February 2024 the YUFE Strategic Council approved YUFE QAB's proposal to establish an External QA Advisory Board. The distinction and separation of responsibilities between the two boards is as follows:

- The YUFE QAB is responsible for monitoring the quality of the totality of YUFE's offer, designing and implementing joint quality enhancement policies and monitoring progress towards targets, in line with the ground rules and the three-layered approach. The YUFE QAB also remains the place for exchanging knowledge and expertise on QA in the partner institutions in order to further strengthen quality culture throughout the whole alliance.
- The External QA Advisory Board, will play a vital role as an advisory body. Its primary function is to provide support to the YUFE QAB. The latter, in turn, is accountable to the Strategic Council, reporting as necessary and deemed appropriate.

Position of QA Boards in YUFE governance structure

The two images below visualise the overall YUFE structure and the degree programme structure.

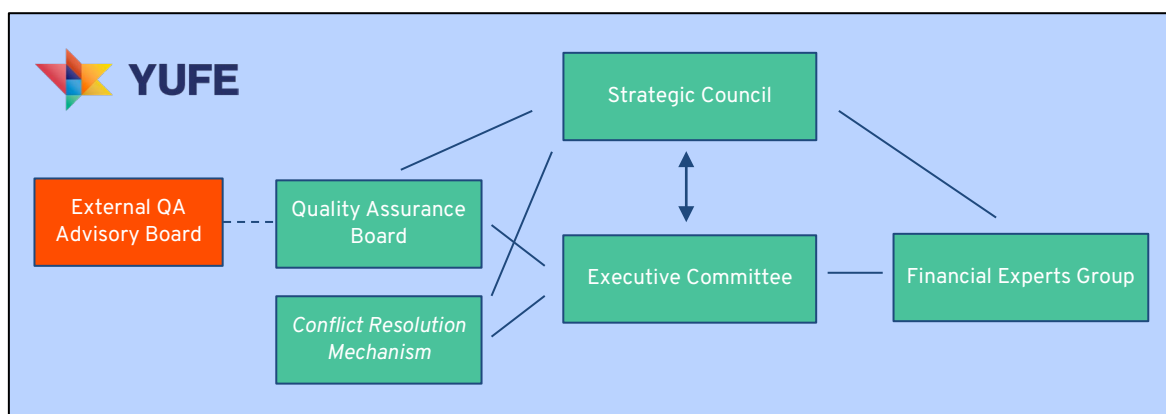


FIGURE 7-1: OVERALL YUFE GOVERNANCE

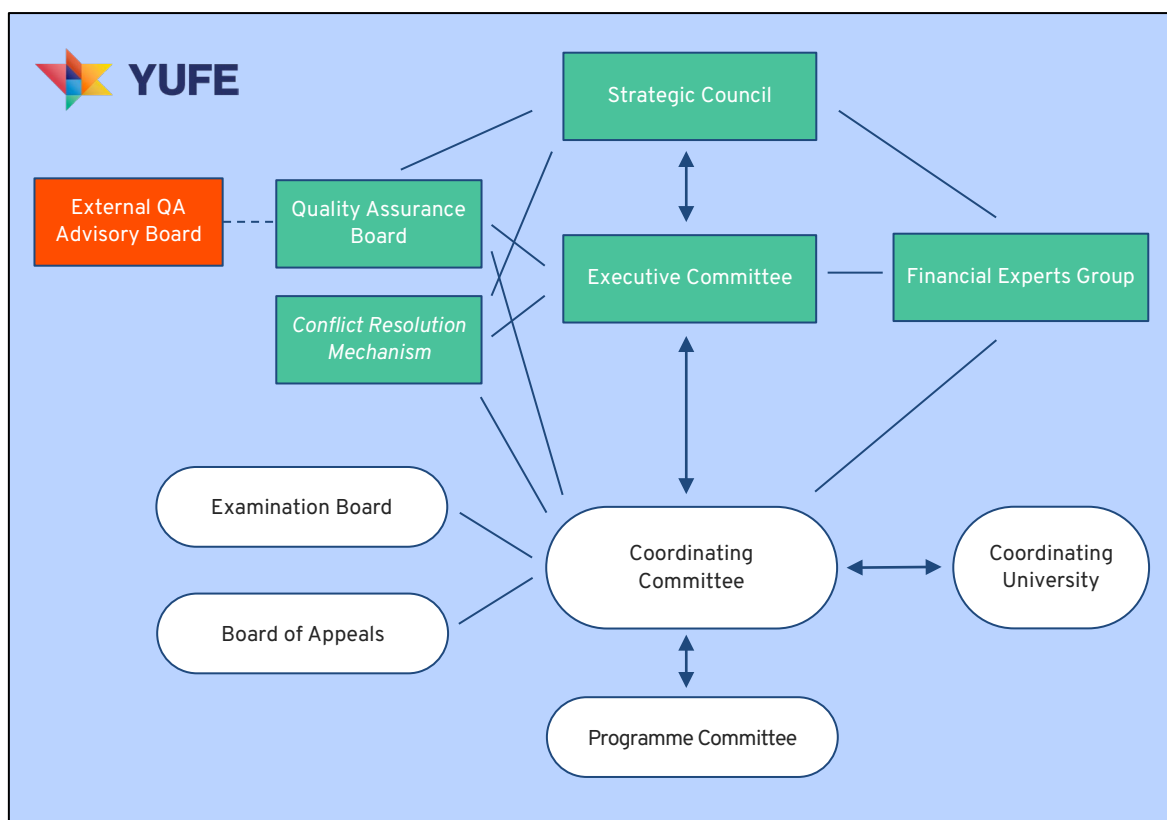


FIGURE 7-2: DEGREE PROGRAMME YUFE GOVERNANCE

7.1 YUFE Quality Assurance Board

Mandate and formality

- **Dimension 1 – Institutional QA**
No formal mandate needed; the YUFE QAB fully endorses and welcomes the established institutional QA processes, focusing on the cultivation of knowledge sharing and the adoption of best practices. This approach ensures the ongoing enhancement of the quality culture across all partner universities.
- **Dimension 2 - QA of the YUFE 3-layered educational offer**
Formal responsibilities - outlined in consortium agreements - are essential for overseeing the YUFE degree programmes. Compliance is necessary for accreditation and smooth functioning of educational activities. The governance structure and decision-making processes need to be clearly defined and visualised.
- **Dimension 3 - QA of all other YUFE activities and outputs**
No formal mandate needed; the YUFE QAB prioritises collaboration and support to work package representatives and colleagues in fostering development and continuous improvement.

Independence and governance

The YUFE QAB is designed to function as an independent governance body. For the YUFE joint Bachelor in particular, the YUFE QAB works distinct from the coordinating committee as illustrated in the organisational chart. This autonomy is crucial in maintaining objectivity and impartiality in its oversight functions. Recognising the evolving landscape of academic programmes, the board's structure is adaptable to accommodate future degree programmes, eliminating the need for the creation of separate QA boards for each programme.

Tasks and responsibilities

The YUFE QAB is responsible for monitoring the quality of YUFE's educational offer with the YUFE Joint Bachelor in particular, designing and implementing joint quality enhancement policies and monitoring progress towards targets, in line with the basic QA principles and QA dimensions as laid down in the YUFE QA Framework. Additionally, the QAB actively promotes the exchange of knowledge and expertise, further strengthening our commitment to the YUFE quality culture.

Membership and institutional representation

Institutional representation is not just encouraged but mandated for the YUFE QAB, emphasising a commitment to the YUFE Quality Culture, inclusivity and broad stakeholder engagement. This representation extends to the Student Forum, recognising the invaluable perspective and input of students in maintaining and enhancing educational quality.

The composition of the board reflects the expertise of its members, all of whom are QA specialists, comprising both policy professionals and academics. Importantly, each member holds a mandate at the central level of their respective institutions.

Decision-making process

In a demonstration of commitment to equitable representation, voting rights for issues related to the YUFE joint Bachelor within the QAB are not restricted solely to degree-awarding partners. Mobility partners and students are also integral participants in the decision-making process.

To ensure fairness and balance, the number of votes is capped at one per institution and two for the Student Forum, emphasising an equal voice for all stakeholders. This inclusive decision-making approach reinforces the democratic and collaborative nature of the YUFE QAB.

7.2 YUFE External QA Advisory Board

Tasks and responsibilities

The YUFE QA External Advisory Board, acting as a critical friend with an external perspective, will provide advice and support to the YUFE QAB on a range of quality assurance topics, without decision-making authority.

The YUFE QAB will report to the Executive Committee and the Strategic Council as deemed necessary and appropriate.

Membership and profiles

The YUFE External QA Advisory Board will include:

- One chair with competence in quality management in higher education
- Two experts with complimentary competence in one or more of the fields below:
 - higher education and accreditation systems
 - quality management in the business community, public institutions and third sector organisations
 - design and implementation of QA systems in higher education
- One student representative external to the YUFE alliance
- One YUFE representative as an observing member with a supporting role

Selection

The composition of the External QA Advisory Board will involve a selection process initiated by proposals from members within the YUFE QAB. Competency profiles of the candidates must be outlined in the proposals, and individuals meeting the specified competence criteria will be put forward for the selection process.

The YUFE QAB will conduct a procedure to determine the endorsement of External QA Advisory Board members by another YUFE governance body, like the Executive Committee of the YUFE Strategic Council. The specific details of the procedure (possibly with a voting system in cases where the number of proposed candidates exceeds the available seats) will be developed at a later stage.

Approach towards topics

The YUFE External QA Advisory Board will combine both reactive and proactive strategies in providing guidance to the YUFE QAB.

- Reactively, the YUFE External QA Advisory Board provides advice on specific QA topics upon request by the YUFE QAB.
- Proactively, the YUFE External QA Advisory Board will offer guidance on best practices and seize opportunities related to QA topics within the YUFE QAB.

Timing

Our goal is to assemble the External QA Advisory Board once or twice per year in an online setting, with the aim of reducing both the workload impact on members as well as the financial impact on the Alliance.

In addition to regular meetings, External QA Advisory Board members may receive invitations to attend YUFE events such as townhalls, fostering an interconnected and collaborative approach to our shared objectives.

Membership duration

The External QA Advisory Board functions on two-year terms, recognising the possibility of a student's status evolving upon the completion of their education. We foresee the option of certain members extending their tenure to three years to facilitate knowledge transfer and ensure continuity within the Board.

In the event of a Board member's resignation, the process for appointing a new member will be guided by the unique competences represented by the departing Board Member.

Selection of a new member will follow the same process as described above, with details to be further developed at a later stage.

Operational procedures

Ahead of each meeting, the supporting/observing member from the YUFE QAB will provide the External QA Advisory Board with an agenda and supporting materials. Throughout the meetings, this member will clarify and present the key elements of the topic under discussion along with the provided materials.

Upon the meeting's conclusion, the Chair articulates the Board's recommendations. The administrative support or observing member records these recommendations and subsequently presents them to the Chair for approval.

This structured approach ensures efficient communication and collaboration within the Board's operational framework.

8 Monitoring and Reporting

The YUFE QAB supplies multiple QA reports and is currently developing a QA Dashboard to monitor performance against set targets and milestones and to evaluate and identify points of improvements and opportunities in the overall YUFE Alliance, with a special focus on the YUFE Student Journey and all student-related activities in other work packages.

8.1 QA reports



Each academic year, the YUFE QAB writes a report containing an overview and summarised outcomes of the various QA activities that were undertaken that year.

At the end of the current project phase, we will create a report that reflects on all previous reports and results. The final overarching quality report will include:

- concise public reports with main results on monitoring and improvement;
- detailed internal reports with extensive results.

FIGURE 8-1: YUFE REPORTS

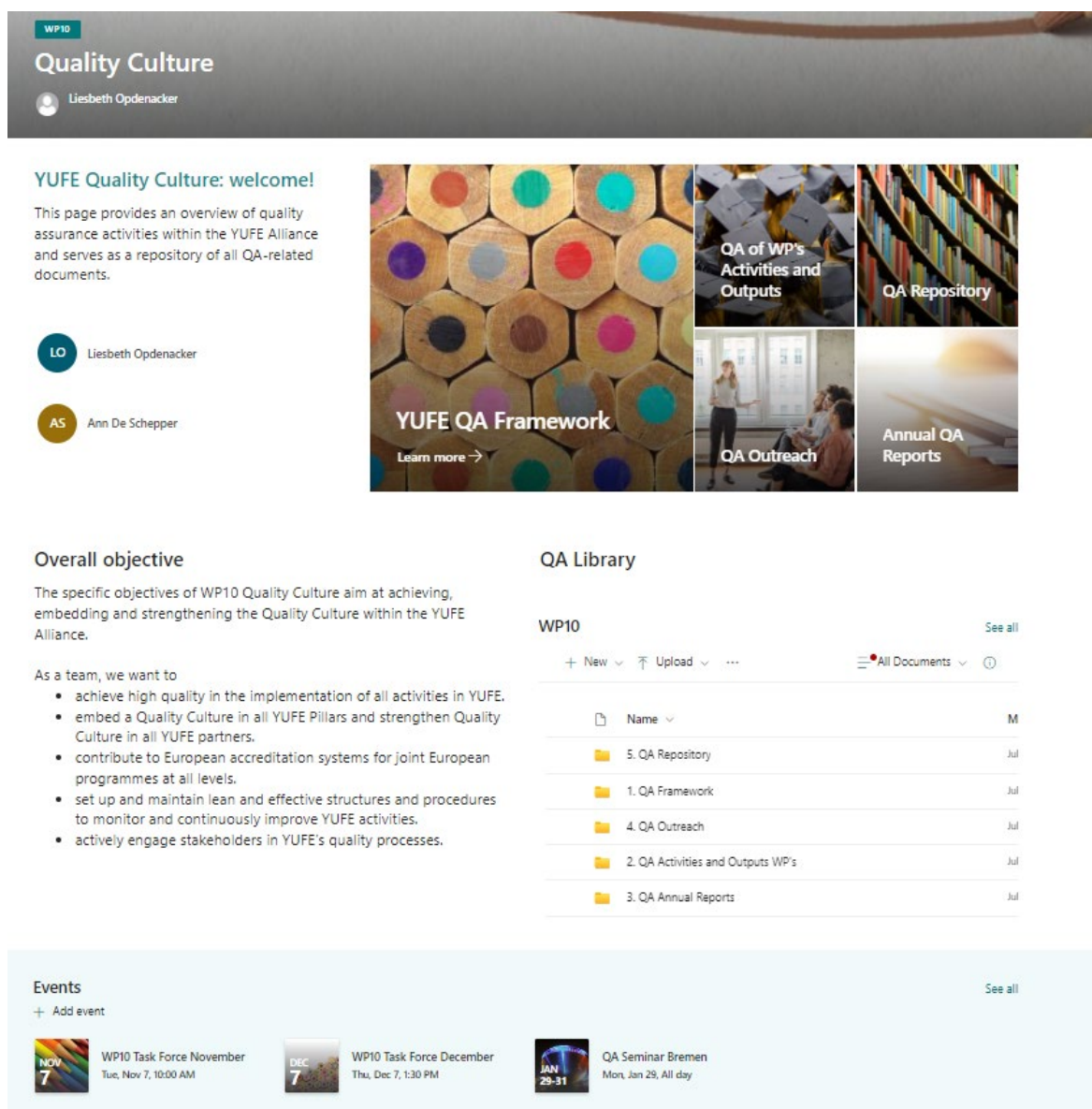
These reports are published on the YUFEnet QA page and will be complemented by

information on the QA Dashboard.

YUFE's participation in the EUNIQ project "Developing a European Approach for Comprehensive Quality Assurance of (European) University Networks" resulted in a first external quality assurance report (January 2021). The report focuses both on YUFE's achievements during the first year of the pilot project, as well as on the long-term vision for the alliance. A summary can be found [online](#).

8.2 YUFE QA Intranet

As mentioned above, all relevant QA reports are stored on the designated [YUFEnet](#) Quality page. The YUFEnet also serves as a repository of QA best practices, outreach and networking activities, and data collection efforts.



WP10 Quality Culture
Liesbeth Opendacker

YUFE Quality Culture: welcome!
This page provides an overview of quality assurance activities within the YUFE Alliance and serves as a repository of all QA-related documents.

LO Liesbeth Opendacker
AS Ann De Schepper

YUFE QA Framework
Learn more →

QA of WP's Activities and Outputs
QA Repository
QA Outreach
Annual QA Reports

Overall objective
The specific objectives of WP10 Quality Culture aim at achieving, embedding and strengthening the Quality Culture within the YUFE Alliance.

As a team, we want to

- achieve high quality in the implementation of all activities in YUFE.
- embed a Quality Culture in all YUFE Pillars and strengthen Quality Culture in all YUFE partners.
- contribute to European accreditation systems for joint European programmes at all levels.
- set up and maintain lean and effective structures and procedures to monitor and continuously improve YUFE activities.
- actively engage stakeholders in YUFE's quality processes.

QA Library

WP10 [See all](#)

+ New ▾ Upload ▾ ...

☰ All Documents ▾ ⓘ

Name ▾	M
5. QA Repository	Jul
1. QA Framework	Jul
4. QA Outreach	Jul
2. QA Activities and Outputs WP's	Jul
3. QA Annual Reports	Jul

Events [See all](#)

+ Add event

NOV 7 WP10 Task Force November
Tue, Nov 7, 10:00 AM

DEC 7 WP10 Task Force December
Thu, Dec 7, 1:30 PM

JAN 29-31 QA Seminar Bremen
Mon, Jan 29, All day

FIGURE 8-2: YUFENET

8.3 YUFE QA Dashboard

To support our commitment to a data-driven decision-making we are currently establishing the YUFE QA Dashboard to unlock data from the YUFE Virtual Campus and make it accessible through various visualisations in Power BI.

The objective is to gain valuable insights that contribute to the achievement of key objectives. All generated data will be handled in strict compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of YUFE learners and other stakeholders.

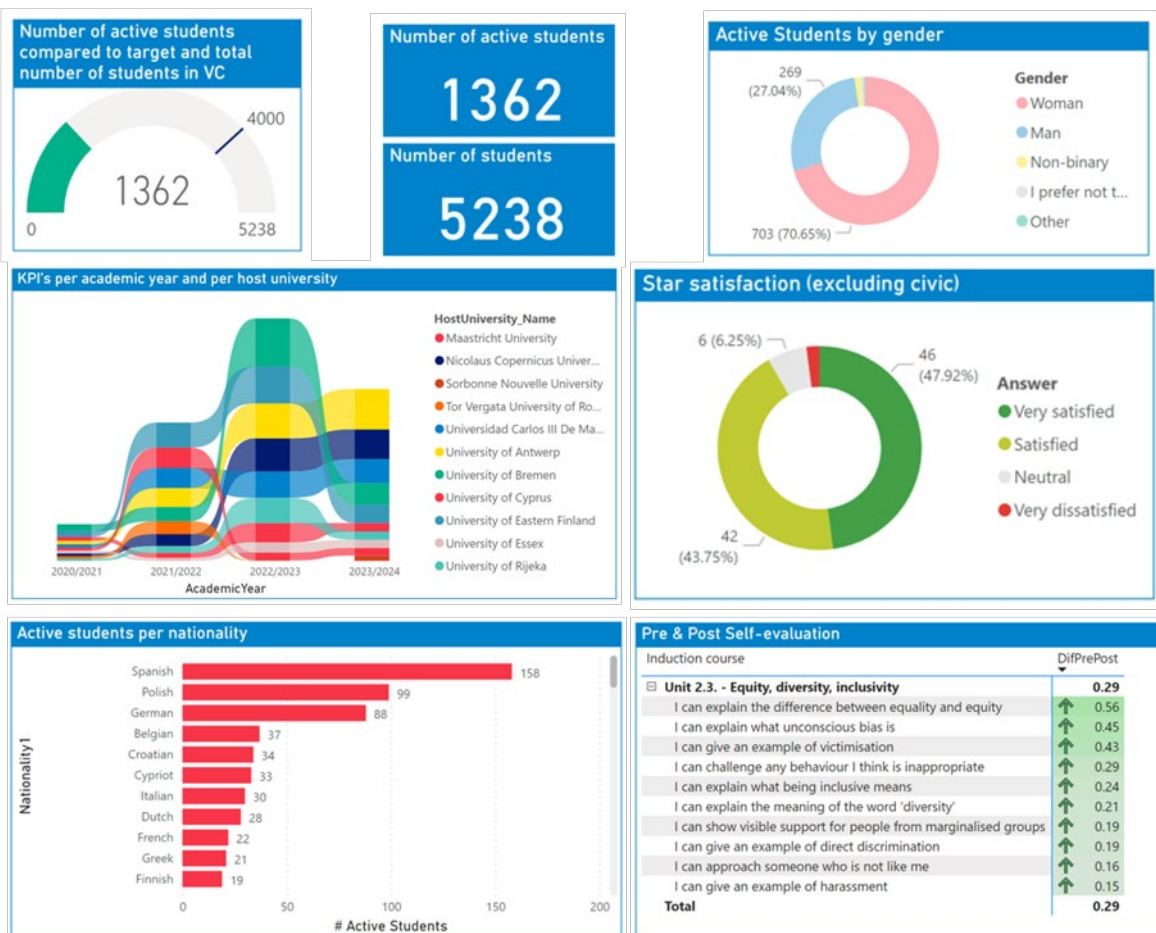


FIGURE 8-3: YUFE QA DASHBOARD

9 Annexes

9.1 European Standards and Guidelines for QA

YUFE partner universities and the YUFE Alliance adhere to the ESG Standards and Guidelines for the Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

The ESG refer to the following aspects:

1. Policy for quality assurance

YUFE partner universities and the YUFE Alliance have a QA policy that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.

2. Design and approval of programmes

YUFE partner universities and the YUFE Alliance have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the ILOs. The qualification resulting from a programme are clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

3. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

YUFE partner universities and the YUFE Alliance ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.

4. Student admission, progression, recognition & certification

YUFE partner universities and the YUFE Alliance consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student life cycle, e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.

5. Teaching staff

YUFE partner universities and the YUFE Alliance assure themselves of the competence of their teaching staff. They apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.

6. Learning resources and student support

YUFE partner universities and the YUFE Alliance have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.

7. Information management

YUFE partner universities and the YUFE Alliance collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.

8. Public information

YUFE partner universities and the YUFE Alliance publish information about their activities and programmes. This information is clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date and readily accessible.

9. Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes

YUFE partner universities and the YUFE Alliance monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result is communicated to all those concerned.

10. Cyclical external quality assurance

YUFE partner universities and the YUFE Alliance undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.

9.2 YUFE template: quality assurance roadmap

Contact information				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead: name, email, institution Co-lead: name, email, institution 				
Activities from Proposal				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Activity 1 Activity 2 Etc. 				
Primary stakeholders				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview of primary stakeholders 				
Quality assurance overview				
Activity	Quality Indicator	Stakeholders	Instrument	Timing

Quality Indicator: Accessible information	
Information	Where can we find relevant information? Website, virtual campus, offline, etc.

Quality Indicator: Stakeholder satisfaction		
P L A N	Goal	What do you want to check for which stakeholder group?
	Set-up	How will you set up the evaluation?
	Timing	When will you evaluate?
	Instrument	Which instrument will you use? Where is the instrument stored (provide link)?
D O	Data storage	Where is the raw data stored (contact person)?
	Result	Can you give short memo style takeaways or refer to short report as annex? Where is the quality assurance report stored (provide link)?
C H E C K	Action / Follow-up	What actions or follow-up are needed?
	Closing the loop / Feedback	When did you provide feedback and to which stakeholders? Long-term: Did your actions result in improvements?

Quality Indicator: Participation	
Metric 1	Which quantitative metrics did you use?
Metric 2	
Metric 3	

9.3 Abbreviations

ED&I	Equity, Diversity & Inclusivity
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
EQAR	European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education
ESG	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
HE	Higher Education
PDCA	Plan Do Check Act
QA	Quality Assurance
QAB	Quality Assurance Board
WP	Work Package
YUFE	Young Universities for the Future of Europe