

EU-CONEXUS Joint Minor Programmes Agreement

09 December 2020



Joint Minor Programmes Agreement

between

(1) Universite de la Rochelle, coordinator of the EU-CONEXUS - European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability

Based 23 Avenue Albert Einstein, BP 33060, 17031 La Rochelle, France

hereafter referred to as LRUniv

and represented by its President Jean-Marc OGIER

(2) Agricultural University of Athens, partner of the EU-CONEXUS - European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability

Based IERA ODOS 75, 118 55 Athina, GREECE

hereafter referred to as AUA,

and represented by its Rector Spyridon Kintzios

(3) Universitatea Tehnica de Constructii Bucuresti, partner of the EU-CONEXUS - European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability

Based LACUL TEI 122-124 SECTOR 2, 020396, BUCURESTI, Romania

hereafter referred to as UTCB,

and represented by its Rector Radu Vacareanu

(4) Klaipėdos Universitetas, partner of the EU-CONEXUS - European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability

Based Herkaus Manto 84, 92294, KLAIPEDA Lithuania

hereafter referred to as KU,

and represented by its Rector Arturas Razbadauskas

(5) Fundacion Universidad Catolica de Valencia San Vicente Martir, partner of the EU-CONEXUS - European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability

Based CALLE QUEVEDO 2, 46001, VALENCIA Spain

hereafter referred to as UCV,

and represented by its Rector Jose Manuel Pagan Agullo

(6) Sveučilište U Zadru, partner of the EU-CONEXUS - European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability

Based ULICA MIHOVILA PAVLINOVICA 1, po box: 000, 23 000, ZADAR Croatia

hereafter referred to as UNIZD,

and represented by its Rector Dijana Vican

Hereafter referred to individually as '**partner**' and collectively as '**partners**'.

Preamble

The European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability (EU-CONEXUS) is a transnational European higher education and research institution that covers the smart urban sustainable coastal development from a global point of view. EU-CONEXUS is formed of 6 European universities, which are located in Croatia, Greece, France, Lithuania, Romania and Spain:

- Universite de la Rochelle (LRUniv),
- Agricultural University of Athens (AUA),
- Universitatea Tehnica de Constructii Bucuresti (UTCB),
- Klaipedos universitetas (KU),
- Universidad Católica de Valencia (UCV),
- Sveuciliste U Zadru (UNIZD).

Universities and research institutions have a central role to play in promoting the 'Blue Economy' and 'Blue Growth' and to contribute to the skills and competences of the graduates who can work in a complex and challenging labour market. A new approach is needed regarding the organisation of studies and research, therefore, 6 universities joined together to merge their strengths and know-how in interdisciplinary short-term and degree programmes and to offer the students to study at an international inter-campus European University.

Article 1: Purpose

The purpose of this Agreement is to concur with the implementation and management of the two EU-CONEXUS Minor Programmes:

1. Minor in Blue Economy and Growth
2. Minor in Coastal Development Sustainable Maritime Tourism

The EU-CONEXUS Minor in Blue Economy and Growth provides the competences and professional skills related to the main industrial and service sectors of the blue economy, which are among the main established and emerging economic maritime sectors:

- Aquaculture and Fisheries
- Marine Biotechnology
- Ocean Energy
- Transport and Shipbuilding
- Coastal and Maritime Tourism

The EU-CONEXUS Minor in Coastal Development and Sustainable Maritime Tourism provides the competences and professional skills in five key sectors:

- Biodiversity and Coastal Zone Management
- Environmental Education
- Human Geography
- Sustainable Tourism
- Coastal Engineering

A Minor programme (sometimes called specialisation) is a specific interdisciplinary set of courses in the same or different field of studies, that undergraduate students select freely and combine their own set of courses choosing 30 ECTS throughout their studies.

EU-CONEXUS joint Minor programmes (hereafter 'programme') aim to construct flexible, international, multidisciplinary curricula and to receive up-to-date competencies that are highly required in the labour market.

The Minor programme consists of the courses, offered by each partner. Each of the six partners of EU-CONEXUS should offer at least two courses in each of the Minor programmes.

Article 2: Basis

This Agreement has been prepared on the basis of:

- Academic Council's decisions approved by the Governing Board of EU-CONEXUS.
- The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) of the European Higher Education Area and principles of automatic mutual recognition. ECTS allows credits taken at one higher education institution to be counted towards a qualification studied for at another. ECTS credits represent the volume of learning based on defined learning outcomes and their associated workload.

Article 3: Structure and Content of the Programme

Each Minor programme is focused on five thematic areas (**sectors**); each of them is composed of three topics. A **topic** is a field of study that could be comprised of one or more courses with similar or compatible contents.

A **course** refers to a series of lectures, discussions, or other lectures on a particular subject. The courses per sector, the course description and the sector description are presented in the Course Catalogue, as well as the course activities, soft skills and prerequisites (see ¡Error! No se encuentra el origen de la referencia. and ¡Error! No se encuentra el origen de la referencia.).

A course lasts one semester and is measured in European credits (ECTS). All courses of EU-CONEXUS joint Minor programme consist of 6 ECTS. The partner, who offers a course belonging to one of the Minor programmes, is responsible for the course learning outcomes, teaching and quality assurance based on institutional practices.

In order to complete a Minor programme, students must have chosen five courses (30 ECTS), from minimum two sectors, and at least from three different universities (one of them can be their home university, however maximums two courses could be selected from their home institution), by the end of their undergraduate studies. If all the prerequisites are accomplished, a special reference shall be included in the Diploma Supplement.

Students can follow Minors as part of or additionally to their study curricula. Besides, it is allowed to take courses without accomplishing completely the 30 ECTS Minor programme.

Students can choose freely the sectors of their interest or the ones most relevant to their undergraduate studies.

Article 4: Coordination of the Programme

Article 4.1: General and Sector's Coordinators

Each Minor programme is coordinated by one university (General coordinator) which is responsible for

- overall programme,
- coordination between sectors,
- establishment of a calendar of the courses that will be offered in each sector per semester (adapting the offer to the student's preferences),
- initiation, review and update of the Minor programmes offer, upon the agreement of all partners,
- quality assurance and follow-up.

Every academic year, there would be an end-of-year meeting managed by the General coordinator with all the sector's coordinators to analyse the implementation of the Minor programme.

Sectors have a coordinating university. The General coordinator is responsible for organising the launching and follow up meetings with the sector's coordinators.

Sector's coordinators shall

- coordinate the creation of the 'introductory virtual course' corresponding to their sector (video format).

- avoid overlaps in contents between courses in the sector in close coordination with the teaching staff.
- arrange coordination meetings among the professors of the courses that belong to the same sector, managed by the sector coordinator, before the initiation of the semester and at the end of the semester (or if needed).

General coordinator and sectors’ coordinators for each Minor programme are presented in Table 1 and Table 2. The partners shall appoint the contact persons for General coordinator and sector coordinators.

Table 1. General coordinator and sectors’ coordinators for the Minor in Blue Economy and Growth

Sector	University
General coordinator	UCV
Aquaculture and Fisheries	AUA
Marine Biotechnology	LRUniv
Ocean Energy	UTCB
Transport and Shipbuilding	KU
Coastal and Maritime Tourism	UNIZD

Table 2. General coordinator and sectors’ coordinators for the Minor in Coastal Development Sustainable Maritime Tourism

Sector	University
General coordinator	UTCB
Sustainable Tourism	UNIZD
Human Geography	KU
Coastal engineering	UTCB
Biodiversity and Coastal Zone Management	UCV
Environmental Education	AUA

Article 4.2: Minor Officers

Each partner shall appoint a Minor Officer for the coordination within and between the six universities of EU-CONEXUS.

The Minor Officer has an administrative role in fulfilling the following tasks:

- To present and promote the Minor programmes among the students at local university level: added value, requirements, mobilities.
- To organise general admissions for the Minor’s courses (general requirements, language requirements).
- To coordinate the learning agreements with EU-CONEXUS Mobility office and academic (international) coordinators based on institutional practices for academic mobility of students.
- To perform the administrative work related to the coordination of the Minor programme and communication between the partners, the General coordinators, Sectors’ coordinators, the teaching staff and the students.

- To coordinate the information transmission regarding class timetables and exams.
- To track statistics, supervise the students to complete the requisites of the Minor.
- To organise the orientation day and the monitoring of the studies.
- To draft reports and reviews for the stakeholders (teachers, administration).

Article 5: Academic Calendars

For academic year 2020/2021, individual institutional calendars will be applied (incoming students will follow the academic calendar of the hosting university). For the academic year, 2021/2022 and later the partners shall seek for the synchronisation of the academic calendars for the EU-CONEXUS Minor courses.

Article 6: Language of Teaching

Courses will be taught in English during the spring semester of 2020/2021 and the autumn semester of 2021/2022, which is foreseen to be the transitional period for introducing multilingual courses and courses in national languages of the partners in the teaching process of Minor programmes.

Teaching staff will have to demonstrate a minimum B2 English level. Support and training will be made available for raising this English level to C1.

Article 7: Student Administration via Mobility Programme

Article 7.1: Timeline

The timeline for the organisation of the Minor programme and the selection of the students is decided by the EU-CONEXUS Academic Council minimum two months* before the Call for application (aiming to plan for the upcoming academic year) and includes two calls per semester. In each call the following dates are defined:

- information to students about the Call for application,
- quota per university to ensure students' diversity,
- student application deadline (to submit applications at home university to local Minor's Officer),
- student selection by home university and submission of the nomination to host university,
- student approval/ranking by the host university,
- student's admission (communication to students),

* Flexibility is foreseen in the pilot phase of Minor's implementation in the academic years of 2020/2021 and 2021/2022.

A minimum of 10 students and a maximum of 25/30 students will be accepted for each course of the Minor programme.

Article 7.2: Eligibility and Admission Requirements

Minor programmes and their courses are open for applications of all Bachelor and 'one-cycle' degree programme students (flexible curricula) of EU-CONEXUS.

Applicants have to demonstrate a B2 English level.

Additional prerequisites may be applied by the institution and/or the scholarship programme.

Applicants must meet the prerequisites of prior knowledge of the chosen course(s) as indicated in the Minor catalogue.

Article 7.3: Selection Procedure and Criteria

Applications submitted to the home university shall be evaluated by a Selection committee set up at the partner following internal regulations. It is recommended to include the Minor's Officer, representatives of faculty/department, student board and international office.

Each partner has an equal number of places (quota) in each course.

The partners agree to apply common students' selection criteria as described in Table 3 and guarantee a transparent and non-discriminative selection procedure.

Table 3. Selection criteria

Academic performance – average grades from last semester (Grade Point Average, GPA), or any way in which the home university usually measures the academic performance for mobility programmes	50% (100% GPA = 50 pts)
English level – the way of evaluating the level can be up to the home university.	10% C1 – 5 pts C2 – 10 pts
Motivation – verified through a short interview, in order to evaluate the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> probability of successful completion of the course, based on the student's high interest in this particular course probability of completing the whole Minor programme, based on the student's high interest in the whole Minor 	30% 15pts - 7.5 pts - 0 pts 15pts - 7.5 pts - 0 pts
Acceptation for Erasmus mobility at the host institution which offers the selected Minor course.	5% 5 pts – 0 pts
Active participation in local international activities and EU-CONEXUS local or international activities (buddy, ESN, EU-CONEXUS Student Board, working groups, etc.)	5% 5 pts – 0 pts

In case of a tie, priority should be given to:

- Students who have already completed at least three courses (out of five) of the given Minor programme and are missing only one or two courses to complete the Minor.
- Students who have not yet participated in a mobility programme during their studies (EU-CONEXUS or Erasmus+).

In the 1st Call, the quota would be 5 nominations per university per one course (5 nominations multiplied by 6 universities, 30 students in total). AUA will not participate in this Call because of non-compatible internal deadlines, but a quota of 5 nominations for AUA will be reserved for them in the 2nd Call.

At the end of the 1st Call, Minor Officers will have a coordination meeting to take any other decisions necessary for the communication of the results to the students and the 2nd call.

In the 2nd call, once the 5 positions for AUA have been fulfilled, the additional free spots will be divided and distributed evenly between the 5 universities which participate in the 2nd call (all universities but LRUUniv).

At the end of the 2nd Call, before communicating the results to the students, all Minor Officers will have a coordination meeting.

During running the selection process at each sending university, it is recommended ranking all applications and keeping a "waiting list" of those who are outside of the university quota (5), in case there are spots left and redistributed during the meeting at the end of the 2nd Call.

The results of the selection shall be available to the applicants. Each applicant has the right to address to the chairperson of the Selection committee a request for revision and explanation of the selection results within 5 working days after the date of their announcement. The chairperson of the Selection committee examines the motivation of the request for revision within 5 working days and can refuse this request by providing a reasoned appeal with the selection decision and organise a new meeting of the Selection committee.

Article 7.4: Mobility and Credit Recognition

Each EU-CONEXUS course given by partner university is considered as learning mobility exchange (similar to Erasmus+), is subject to academic recognition and transfer of credits, and is to be included in the Diploma Supplement to prove an international curriculum. A student, taking a course from the Minor programme at a partner university, is considered a participant of academic mobility with all the rights and obligations (similar to Erasmus+), despite the type of mobility (virtual, blended or physical).

The Minor programmes involve three different possible mobility schemes:

- virtual mobility,
- blended mobility (students follow virtual courses and a 1-2-week physical practical session) – to be introduced as from 2021/2022, depending on the availability of scholarship programmes (such as Erasmus+),
- physical mobility: those students accepted for Erasmus mobility at the host university which offers the selected Minor course.

ECTS recognition is based on learning agreements.

A student has double status at sending university if s/he (1) studies at home university and (2) attends virtual or blended mobility courses at host university. At the host university, the student is registered as a virtual mobility student and can obtain the number of credits of the attended courses.

The student can be on virtual or blended mobility at more than one university during the same semester. For this, two learning agreements are established. It is recommended to take one course per semester, but there is no limitation on the number of courses to be taken.

The partners shall follow the principles and procedures as described in the ECTS Guide issued by the European Commission (https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/education/ects/users-guide/docs/ects-users-guide_en.pdf) before, during and after the credit mobility.

The grading scales of the six universities of EU-CONEXUS and their translation into the ECTS grading system are indicated in **¡Error! No se encuentra el origen de la referencia..**

Article 8: Financial Arrangements

Article 8.1: General Financial Management

The partners are committed to use their existing institutional resources to create and maintain the Minor programmes.

The partners agree that the teaching costs of a course are covered by the 'host' institution which offers the course.

Article 8.2: Tuition Fees

The partners agree that no additional tuition fees are imposed for any student at the host university.

Students that obtain Bachelor ECTS through the recognition of EU-CONEXUS Minor courses will not pay additional fees for their Bachelor program at their home university.

If a Minor programme is additional to the ECTS load of a Bachelor or 'one-cycle' degree programme, the additional courses of the Minor programme are free of charge to all students regardless of the fees of their main study program at their home university.

Article 9: Intellectual Property Rights

Results are owned by the party that generates them. In case results are generated from work carried out jointly by two or more parties, those results shall be jointly owned. The joint owners shall agree on a joint ownership agreement on the allocation and terms of the exercise of their joint ownership, in compliance with their obligations under this Agreement.

Article 10: Legal Clauses

The present Agreement shall come into effect on the date the last party signs and will be valid until 31 August 2022. At the end of the agreed term, the parties agree to provide an assessment of their cooperation activities. The agreement will be extended for a duration that will be commonly decided unanimously unless one of the parties with prior notice of six month decide to leave the Agreement.

Date: 09/12/2020

For La Rochelle University
the President,

Jean-Marc OGIER



For Agricultural University of Athens
the Rector,

Spyridon Kintzios

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Date: 2020.11.30 12:11:29 EET

For Universitatea Tehnica de Constructii Bucuresti
the Rector,



Radu Vacareanu

For Klaipėdos Universitetas
the Rector

Arturas Razbadauskas



30-11-2020

For Fundacion Universidad Catolica de Valencia San Vicente Martir
the Rector



Jose Manuel Pagan Agullo

For Sveuciliste U Zadru
The Rector



Dijana Vican

Dijana Vican

Annex 1. Catalogue of the Minor in Blue Economy and Growth

Annex 2. Catalogue of the Minor in Coastal Development and Sustainable Maritime Tourism

Annex 3. Grading scale

The grading scale applied for the Minor's Programmes follows an A-F marks scale, in line with the European system of ECTS credits. In order to pass a course, the student must at least obtain an E.

Table 4. Grading scale system

ECTS description	Exceptional	Excellent	Very good	Good	Sufficient	Fail
ECTS Grade	A	B	C	D	E	F
Percentage of successful students normally achieving the grade	10%	25%	30%	25%	10%	--
LRUniv (France)	20-18	17.9-16	15.9-13	12.9-11.0	10.9-10	<10
AUA (Greece)	10-9.0	8	7	6	5	<5
UTCB (Romania)	10	9	8-7.0	6	5	<5
KU (Lithuania)	10	9	8-7.0	6	5	<5
UCV (Spain)	10	9.9-9	8.9-7	6.9-6	5.9-5	<5
UNIZD (Croatia)	5	4	3	2	2	<2