

AESOP Quality recognition for the European dimension in Planning Programmes

Preliminary document to be discussed at HoSM Lisbon, March 2014

Why?

AESOP's mission is Promoting Excellence in Planning Education and Research. It is our responsibility to enhance the plural qualities of our teaching programmes. Through its categories of membership, AESOP *already* delivers recognition to planning schools, which share joint values and principles. At the occasion of several debates in the Heads of Schools meetings, it became clear that, in addition to this existing framework, a **further active implication** of AESOP is needed in order to enhance, improve and support planning curricula.

For this purpose, we propose to develop a **recognition process** that will **highlight certain dimensions of quality** in our Planning Programmes. **We are now focusing on a specific quality of planning education which enhances the International European dimension of planning professional profiles.**

The European dimension in Planning Education:

Future planners that we educate will need to:

- develop an attitude coherent with European values of cities;
- be capable of working internationally, in particular in Europe;
- understand the European context in which their practice is embedded.

For this, planning programmes need to develop :

- The transfer of knowledge, know-how, ideas, between European planners;
- The mobility of students and teachers;
- Teaching experiences that put students in different European contexts in the exercise of planning practice.

Our definition of quality recognition

By quality recognition, we understand making **the best of the plurality and diversity of approaches of our schools**. The core of our interest is the coherence between the principles, the contents and the way of implementation of a programme. We want to initiate **a process based on the cooperation (not a competition) between our schools**. Such quality recognition is not to be mistaken for an accreditation, which occurs at national level.

The overarching principles are expressed by :

- The AESOP Core curriculum requirements (the background)
- The European dimension in the planning programme

An incremental approach:

- Developing a concept and methodology proposal. We need **easy, fast, transparent and efficient procedures**, that do not generate an excessive amount of work, time and costs.
- Test of the methodology
2014 HOS Lisbon meeting
- Pilot study with a group of voluntary programmes.
In 2014/15
- Analysing the outcomes of the experience
2015 HOS meeting

How does it work? Example

Procedure

The pilot study is *voluntary* and performed *without cost*.

The pilot schools - who voluntarily apply - deliver a report according to the structure (annex 1).

A panel of 3 people prepare the evaluation for each programme of the pilot schools. Each panel (one for programme) is compound of 2 AESOP academics from other countries (different from the country of the school) and 1 practitioner (to be defined). They may benefit of the support of 1 "cultural mediator", an AESOP academic from the country of the evaluated programme/school, available to explain how it works there. Contacts will be also established with the programme coordinator.

Report structure and guidelines

1. Background (coherence with AESOP core curriculum)

- School description (history, basic information, staff, number of students)
- Programme description
- Annexes. ECTS if applicable, Diploma supplement if applicable.

2. European dimension

How does the European dimension appear:

- In the courses?
- In practical activities?
- In the final thesis / projects?
- In the involvement of foreign academics and/or practitioners?
- In research activities?
- In international collaborations?

Information for and structure of the Quality recognition report

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME	
Scientific objectives	Of the Programme. Ex specific focus?
Professional objectives	Of the Programme. Ex jobs prepared.

II - CONTEXT	
Position in the academic environment (university, etc)	
Team	List of staff and qualifications
Programme structure	Curriculum, credits, etc.
Number of students	

III - EUROPEAN DIMENSION	
In the courses	Examples. Comparative planning. European Spatial Planning.
In the practical activities	Examples. Placement periods abroad. Workshops abroad, study tours.
In the final thesis and/or project	Examples. Comparative or European topics for the thesis. Projects in foreign countries. Possibility to submit in different languages.
Involvement of foreign teachers	Examples. Visiting professors. Reviewers.
Language(s) of tuition	
Relation to research	Examples. Research programmes with European scope and/or funding
International collaborations (eventually joint diplomas)	Examples. Active cooperation agreements. Erasmus. Joint diplomas. Mobility of students, mobility of staff. Summer schools. Intensive programs. Distance learning

