



INTERNATIONAL CROSS-DISCIPLINARY GENERAL ACADEMIC OFFER

Report and recommendations

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1. Introduction

This study results from a part of the works performed within the project 'Cross-disciplinary Academic Offer: CROCODILE', financed by the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership programme and carried out at universities operating in various cultural areas represented by four countries: Bulgaria, Lithuania, Poland and Spain. The general goal of the project is to create an innovative model of academic teaching on the international level – International Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer (ICGAO) – in order to build an educational offer that will be applicable in different cultural, organizational and legal contexts.

The subject matter innovation brought by the approach proposed in the project is based primarily on deeply cross-disciplinary and cross-field thinking about education. Cross-disciplinarity is key in academic research, but its presence in education remains insufficient. Universities have not offered systemic solutions allowing their students to participate in classes prepared and co-conducted by specialists in various disciplines. The proposed approach also assumes certain organizational innovations: the creation of stable organizational conditions and an appropriate legal framework for a flexible offer which could be modified to meet the changing needs and challenges of the surrounding world, and which could function on the level of whole universities, not of individual faculties or study programmes. Moreover, the proposed project changes the thinking about the internationalization of teaching. Not only does it introduce an element of virtual mobilities and 'internalization at home', but it also suggests thinking about drafting cross-disciplinary courses in an international formula (where representatives of the disciplines preparing common courses come from various academic centres). Furthermore, it enables students to form a habit of solving problems (whether scientific or professional) via broadly defined cooperation – both cross-disciplinary and international.

One of the paths leading to the development of the model of International Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer (ICGAO), which has resulted in this report, consisted in gathering experience in subject matter planning and organization of the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offers (CGAO) available at various universities in the countries participating in the project. The aim of that questionnaire was to indicate the chances and hazards for the International Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer (ICGAO) defined as fixed elective elements of curricula attended by students of the universities forming the consortium. The result of the works designed this way carries an obvious European value: it permits more

intensive cooperation between European universities within Transform4Europe (T4E), increases the virtual mobility of students and academic teachers, and guarantees the possibility of adjusting the offer to changing European challenges (if each university builds its academic offer in isolation, there is always a danger that the results will be too local in nature; selection of content via international cooperation guarantees relevance on the European level). The solutions and recommendations contained in the report will facilitate building a complementary, versatile academic offer which takes into account the specializations and expert fields of each university participating in the project. The development of such offer exceeds the abilities of any single institution.

Formulation of subject matter and organizational assumptions by analysing the current situation, determining the goals and indicating the ways of their achievement results not only in the preparation and implementation of the discussed offer at the universities in the consortium. The findings in the presented report are applicable on a much wider scale. The report can be a template for other universities which consider introducing a common offer as a fixed element of the curricula pursued by their students.

The questionnaire was carried out in 2022 among university management teams. We applied one research model in four partner countries; the model included identical research methods and techniques, and it followed the same procedure of selecting the sample.

Importantly, already the stage of working on the methodological concept of the research revealed the diversification of problems and their solutions concerning the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offers available at various universities in Europe. Thus, the introduction of International Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer (ICGAO) has been shown to generate diversified challenges depending on the cultural context or academic tradition in the respective countries or at their universities. This observation means that the developed recommendations require a general framework.

The study is divided into three main components. In the first component, chapter two discusses the methodological grounds for the research. It also defines the aim and the subject, presents the research problems and delineates the applied methods and techniques. Finally, it characterizes the sample and provides an account of conducting the questionnaire.

Chapter three describes the results of the quantitative research carried out at 22 universities in four European countries. It is divided into several parts for a clear structure. The first part determines the presence of Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offers (CGAO) at all the surveyed universities and identifies reasons for the introduction of those offers. Then, the chapter presents the results of defining the positions of those offers in the organizational structure of the surveyed universities, taking into account such variables as study levels, modes of studies and study programmes. The next part discusses the scale of the universality / common nature / general nature of the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offers

(CGAO) functioning at the surveyed units. Universality has been categorized using the following levels: faculty – university – country – Europe, study levels, and disciplines and fields of knowledge. After that, the evaluation investigates the nature of and access to the CGAO as perceived by students at a given university. It states whether the CGAO is obligatory to students (and if so, then to what extent) and describes the scope in which the full offer is available to a student. The next part of the chapter identifies the organizational solutions in the process of shaping the subject range within the ICGAO. The last part cites the opinions given by the surveyed universities regarding the possibility of improving their ICGAO.

Chapter four describes the good practices for the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offers (CGAO) at the universities in the consortium. This part of the report contains case studies written by the project partners. Each case study describes and analyses the offer functioning at a given partner's university. The universities that have presented their offers include: the University of Silesia in Katowice (Poland), the Sofia University (Bulgaria), Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania) and Universidad de Alicante (Spain).

Chapter five (the last one) gathers the conclusions and recommendations stemming from the already presented sets of good practices followed by the universities in the consortium. Those are combined with the conclusions drawn from the evaluating descriptions included in chapter three. That paragraph is supposed to be applicable in practice. The presented experience, backed by the results of empirical research, can be used by organizers of the education process to improve international cooperation regarding academic teaching.

2. Research problems and methodological assumptions

2.1. Aim and subject of the research; research problems

The report presents the results of the research aimed at determining the conditions and experience regarding the functioning of Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offers (CGAO) at universities operating in various cultural areas represented by four countries: Poland, Bulgaria, Spain and Lithuania. We wished to establish whether universities in the studied countries had such offers in place, and how those offers (if present) were shaped and organized. Another aim was to describe the good practices concerning the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offers (CGAO) functioning at the universities of the project partners, and to generate recommendations for the development of such offers on the international level.

Our project is in line with European ambitions regarding the value of education set out in the 'Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions' on achieving the European Education Area by 2025. Therefore, our main goal is to create a truly international, cross-disciplinary and modern student education project, taking into account the recommendations regarding legal regulations, the organizational framework, and the methodological foundations of this solution, defined as the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer (CGAO).

We wished to learn the experience of European universities in the organization and implementation of cross-disciplinary, cross-programme, cross-university and international academic offers.

The research pursues two fundamental goals: exploration and description. The exploration covers the experience of 22 European universities in the organization of Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offers (CGAO) in their units. A more detailed survey concerns the relevant practices at four universities participating in the project: the University of Silesia in Katowice (Poland), the Sofia University (Bulgaria), Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania) and Universidad de Alicante (Spain).

The exploration results are described in a systematic and ordered manner. The description distinguishes the aspects relevant to the planning of Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer (CGAO) on the international level. It also includes the perspective of different academic centres in various European countries and thus permits comparative analyses.

A wide-scope evaluation taking into account the above goals is expected to help model the shape of International Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer (ICGAO) as a common element in the offer of all the universities participating in the project. This will take the form of a catalogue of indications and recommendations facilitating the development and implementation of an International Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer at European universities.

Our main research problem is the organization and implementation of cross-disciplinary, cross-university and international General Academic Offers. Thus, the main research question was formulated as follows:

What are the ways in which a Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer (CGAO) is/could be created at a university?

When operationalizing the research problems, the above research question was made more specific by defining five research areas supplemented with detailed questions. An outline of the research problems is presented below.

1. Does the university offer general academic subjects which are not limited to the curricula of individual study programmes?
2. Is the motivation for introducing the CGAO top-down (whose recommendation?) or bottom-up (what kind?) in nature?
3. Does the university implement its CGAO in cooperation with other domestic universities or with foreign universities?
4. What are the target groups of students for whom the CGAO is intended (first/second/third-cycle, full/part-time)? Can students from various groups among those listed above attend the same CGAO subject?
5. Is selection of CGAO subjects obligatory to a student? If so, is it obligatory to every student? In what scope is it obligatory? How is the obligation justified (a study programme curriculum, additional benefits in the course of the studies etc.)?
6. Can a student choose subjects from the full scope of the offer or is the scope limited? If so, then how and why?
7. To what extent is the CGAO cross-disciplinary? Is it limited to certain disciplines?
8. How is the subject selection for the offer carried out? Who makes the decisions? How often does the set/shape of the CGAO subjects change? Why?
9. How/To what extent(s) should CGAO implementation at the university be changed?

2.2. Research methods, techniques and tools

The research project was carried out using mixed methods, based on the quantitative and qualitative approaches. This allowed us to grasp various aspects of the identified research problem.

To gather accurate and reliable empirical material, we used an array of research techniques and tools, taking into account the effectiveness of data collection.

The reactive study utilized a computer-assisted web interview (CAWI) filled in by the teaching management teams at the surveyed universities. The second part of the research consists of case studies with a uniform description outline (the specific nature of the individual cases has been retained). The templates of the research tools are included in the attachment to the report.

2.3. Characterization of the sample and the course of the research

To obtain reliable and diversified research material, we decided that the questionnaire would be filled in by at least five universities in each partner country, including the university represented by the project partners. Eventually, the quantitative research covered 22 universities from four countries, with the same research procedure in each country. A detailed characterization of the studied population can be found on the first pages of chapter 3 (paragraph 3.1.1.).

The qualitative research (the case studies) was carried out at four universities represented by the project partners: the University of Silesia in Katowice (Poland), the Sofia University (Bulgaria), Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania) and Universidad de Alicante (Spain). A detailed characterization of the studied population can be found on the first pages of chapter 4 (paragraph 4.1.1. (the University of Silesia in Katowice (Poland)), 4.2.1. (the Sofia University (Bulgaria)), 4.3.1. (Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania)), 4.4.1 (Universidad de Alicante (Spain))).

The research procedure was identical in all four studied countries. This means that the same methods, techniques and tools were used, the same research procedures were followed, and the research in those countries was carried out at the same time.

3. Description of Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offers (CGAO) existing at different Universities in all countries participating in the Project

3.1. Results

3.1.1. Characterization of the studied population

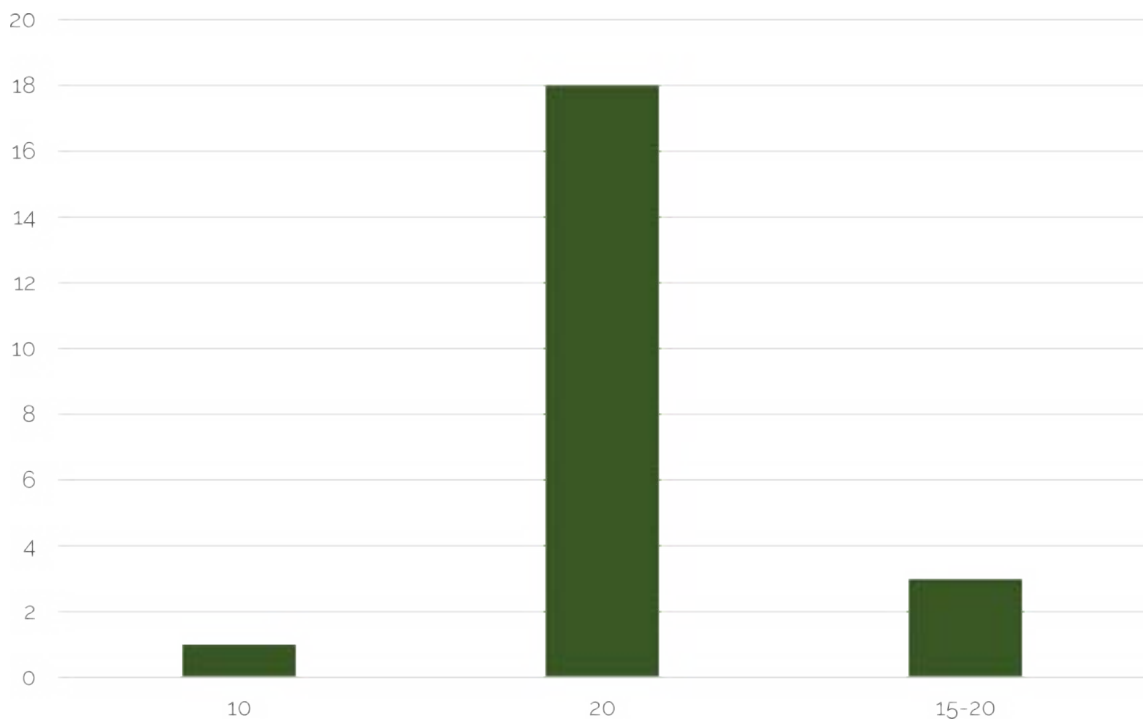
The questionnaire was filled in by 22 universities from four countries being members of the consortium:

- nine universities from Poland (University of Opole, Jagiellonian University, University of Białystok, University of Szczecin, University of Łódź, University of Silesia, University of Gdańsk, University of Wrocław, University of Warsaw),
- five universities from Bulgaria (Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen, South-West University 'Neofit Rilski', St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo, Sofia University 'St. Kliment Ohridski', University of National and World Economy),
- seven universities from Lithuania (Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, Kaunas University of Technology, Klaipėda University, Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Vilnius University, Vytautas Magnus University),
- one university from Spain, the University of Alicante, which is a member of the consortium and completed the questionnaire in the name of the universities in Spain (the structure of the interdisciplinary academic offer in Spain is determined by state-wide regulations (Organic Law 6/2001, of 21 December 2001, on universities), so other Spanish universities would have given the same responses).

The surveyed universities were requested to state the number of disciplines represented by their academic teachers, the number of students and the number of academic teachers conducting classes.

The overall structure of the studied population according to the number of disciplines represented by the academic teachers is shown below in Chart no. 1. The obtained data clearly show that the number of disciplines at a vast majority of the universities exceeds 20, falling within the range of 15–20 only at one university (out of nine) in Poland, one (out of seven) in Lithuania and one (out of five) in Bulgaria; in addition, one Bulgarian university indicated the range of less than ten disciplines¹.

Chart 1: The number of disciplines represented by teachers conducting classes at the university

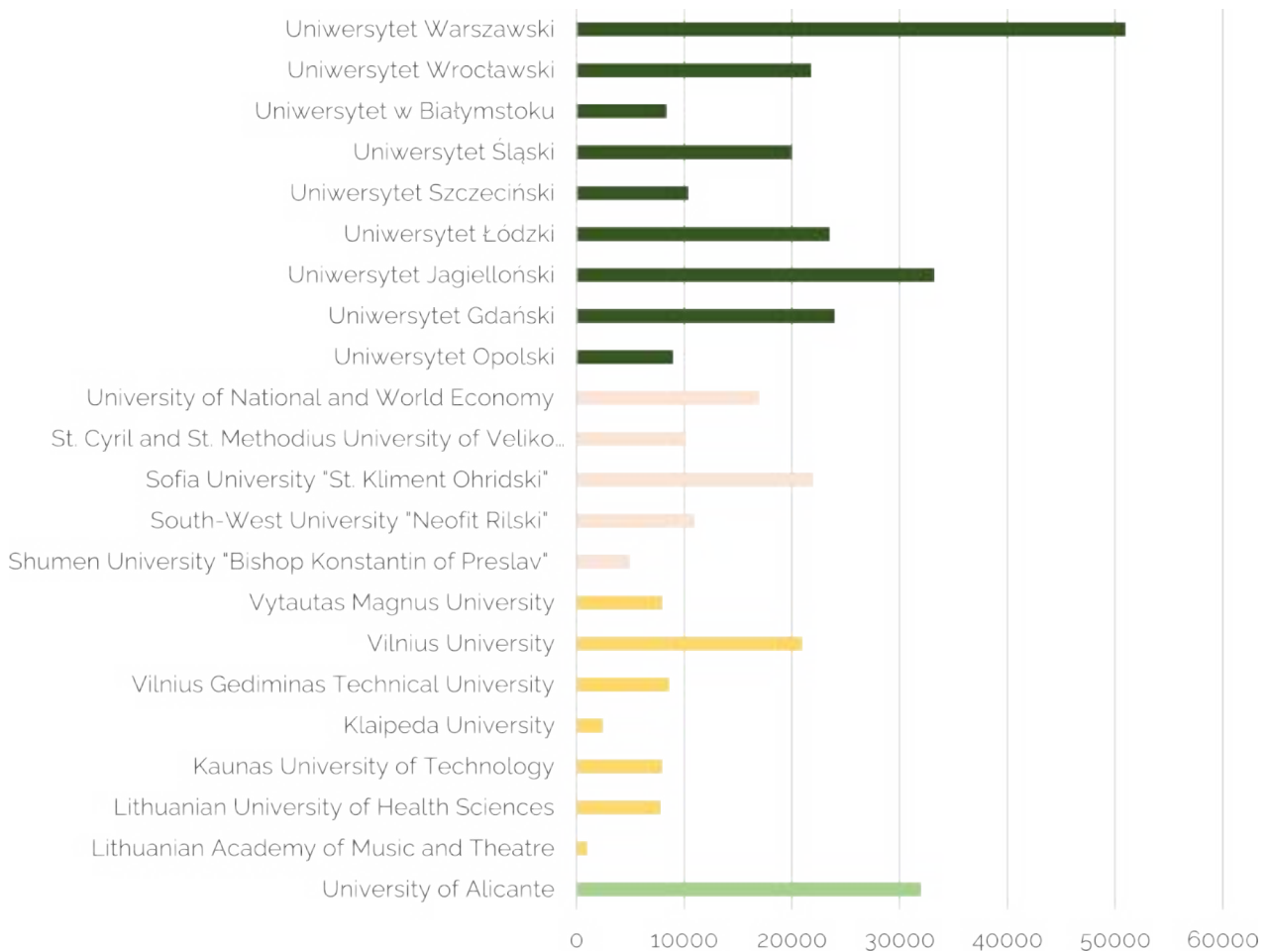


Source: own research and calculations.

The universities which took part in the survey differ in the number of students. The data show that most of them have 5000–10,000 students (as many as eight out of 22) or 20,000–30,000 students (six out of 22). Three out of 22 universities teach over 30,000 students, one stated the range of 15,000–20,000 students, other three have a little more than 10,000 students, and the remaining two gather only up to 5000 students. It is worth noting that the highest numbers in this category were given by the University of Alicante and by the Polish universities, while the lowest numbers belong to the Lithuanian universities. The overall data are presented in Chart no. 2.

¹The detailed data on the number of disciplines represented by the academic teachers, the number of students and the number of academic teachers conducting classes according to country are presented in Table no. 1 in the Annex.

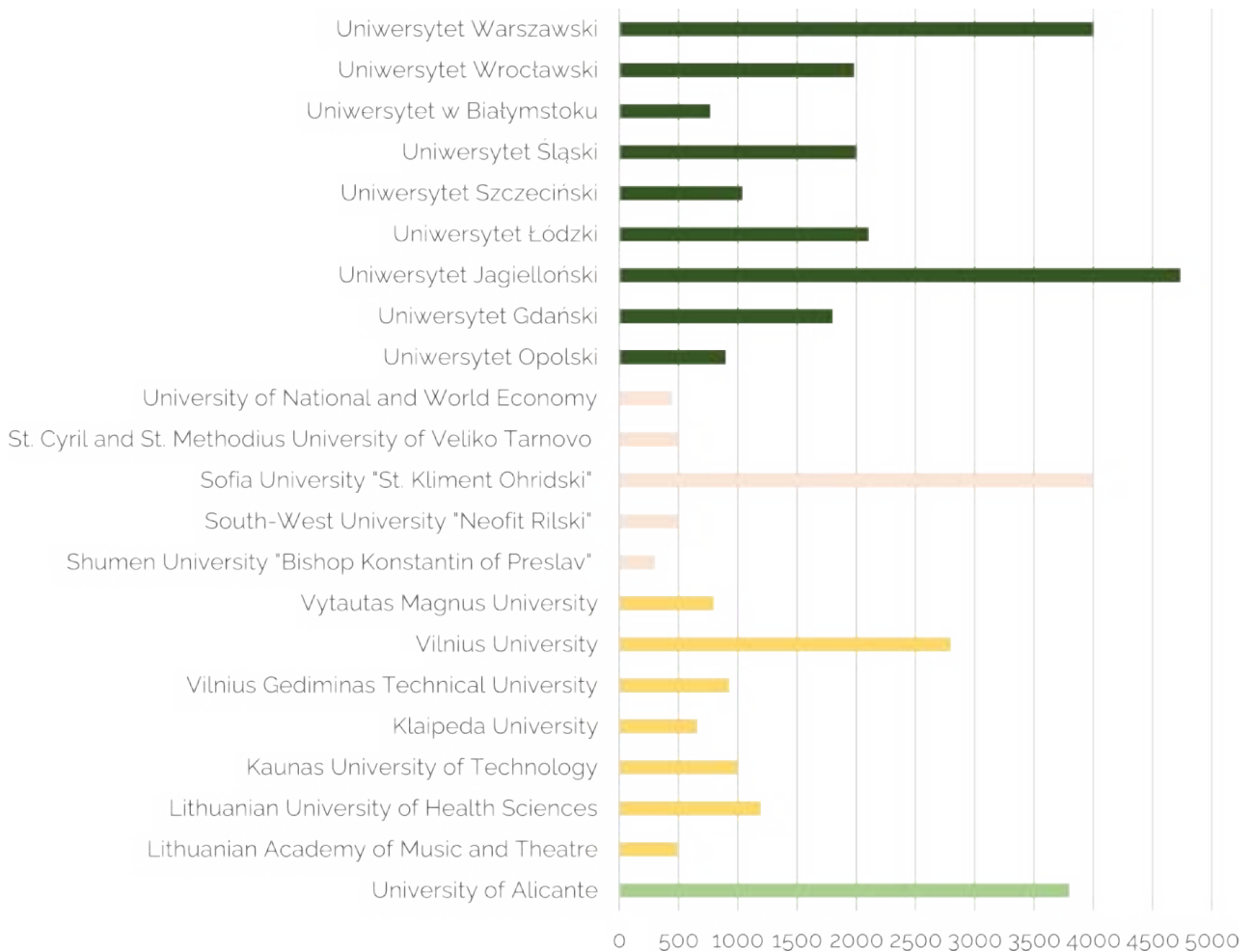
Chart 2: The number of students at the university



Source: own research and calculations.

The number of academic teachers conducting classes does not usually exceed 1500 (in 14 out of 22 universities, almost exclusively in Bulgaria and Lithuania), including the following ranges: up to 500 (four universities), 500–1000 (six) and 1000–1500 (the remaining four). Other four out of the 22 surveyed universities, all of them Polish, employ 1500–2500 academic teachers (two: 1500–2000, two: 2000–2500). Five large universities representing each of the consortium member countries employ the following numbers of academic teachers: 3000–3500 (Lithuania), 3500–4000 (Spain), 4000–4500 (Bulgaria, Poland) and over 4500 (Poland).

Chart 3: The number of teachers conducting classes at the university



Source: own research and calculations.

3.1.2. Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offers (CGAO) already existing at different universities in all countries participating in the project

3.1.2.a. Presence of CGAO

The participants were requested to fill in the questionnaire based on the following definition of *cross-disciplinary academic offer*:

'an offer of subjects'

1. that are characterized by their interdisciplinary content

or

2. that are not characterized by their interdisciplinary content, that is every module offers content from one discipline only, however it is a different discipline than the leading discipline of the study programme of the students choosing these subjects from the offer, e.g. a student of biology chooses a module from a discipline that is different than biology (such as music, engineering, sociology)

or

3. some of which are interdisciplinary as defined in point 1 and other ones are interdisciplinary as defined in point 2

(excluding foreign language and physical education courses)'.

Having adopted such a definition of *cross-disciplinary academic offer*, all the respondents confirmed the presence of CGAO at the universities they represent.

3.1.2.b. Reasons for introducing CGAO

The question concerning the reasons for introducing a cross-disciplinary academic offer produced various answers without clear country-related tendencies (excluding the single questionnaire filled in by the Spanish university).

Top-down recommendations were cited by three out of nine Polish universities, two Lithuanian universities, one Bulgarian university and the Spanish university. The latter indicated that the current Spanish university law applies to all the universities in Spain and governs all the aspects touched upon in the questionnaire.

Bottom-up motivation for introducing CGAO appeared at four (out of five) universities in Bulgaria, three (out of seven) in Lithuania and three (out of nine) in Poland.

Moreover, two Lithuanian universities admitted to both types of reasons, i.e. top-down and bottom-up causes. One of them elaborated on its answer as follows: 'We are a humanistic university and we follow an interdisciplinary approach on all the levels and in all the curricula and courses, including individual and minor ones'.

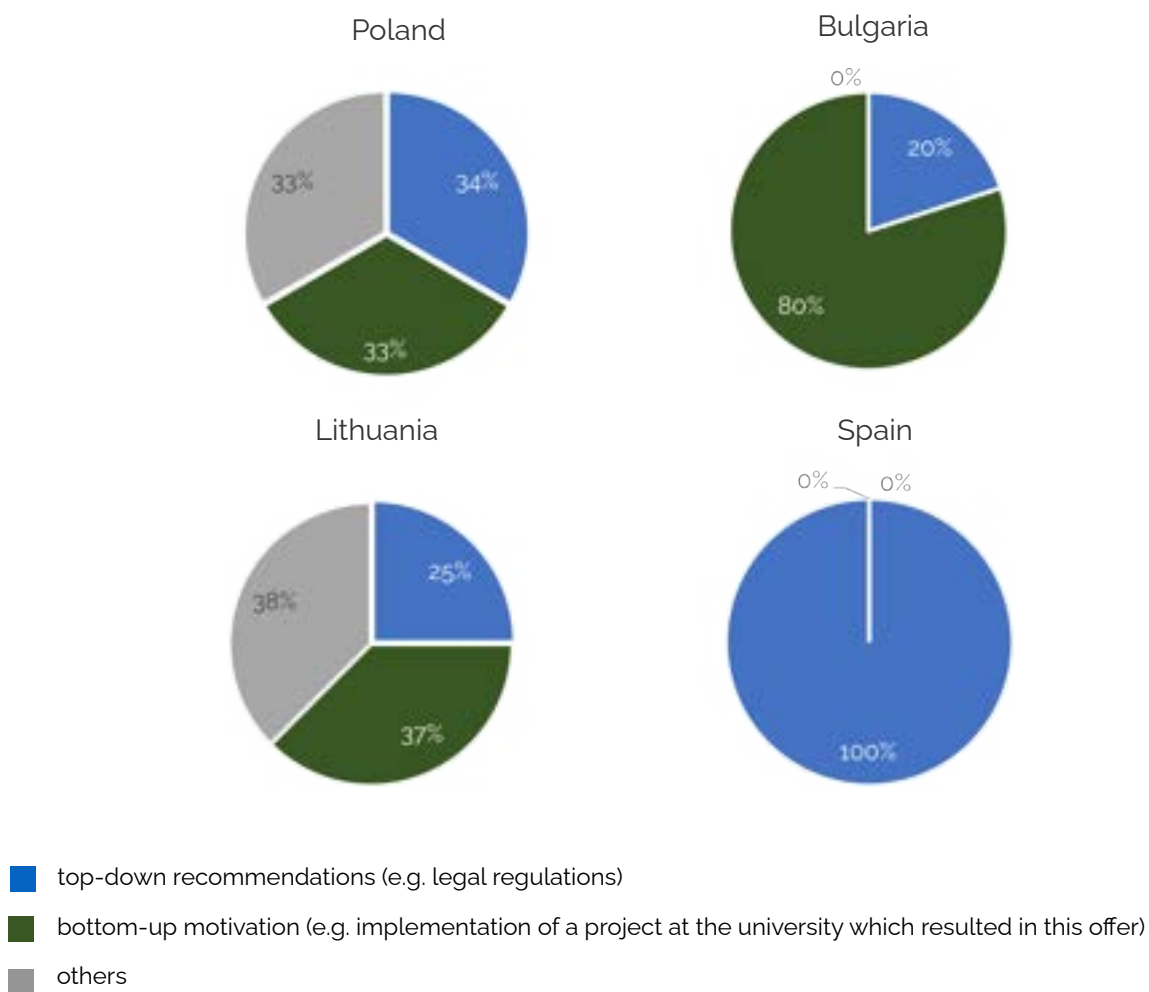
Three out of nine Polish universities stated other reasons for introducing CGAO. One of them was 'broadening the offer of courses to choose from (as part of the obligation to choose at least 30% of elective courses)', while another one cited 'making it possible to achieve the teaching load by the employees who represent narrow scientific subdisciplines as the faculty was not able to ensure their teaching load as part of "standard" courses due to enrolment declines affecting a given study programme'. Moreover, one questionnaire mentioned 'the students' interest in the classes/research related to yet separate from their programme

(e.g. political science, journalism and law)'. Furthermore, the respondents cited 'the students' wish' as the cause of introducing CGAO.

Reasons for introducing CGAO other than top-down recommendations (e.g. legal regulations) or bottom-up motivation (e.g. implementation of a project at the university which resulted in that offer) were indicated by one Lithuanian university, which wishes to 'provide the students with interdisciplinary knowledge and additional competence'.

Detailed data are presented in Chart no. 4

Chart 4: What are the reasons for introducing the Cross-Disciplinary Academic Offer at Polish, Bulgarian, Lithuania and Spanish Universities



Source: own research and calculations.

Summary

All the universities that completed the questionnaire confirmed having adopted a definition of cross-disciplinary academic offer as well as the presence of CGAO at the universities they represent.

The question concerning the reasons (top-down recommendations (e.g. legal regulations) or bottom-up motivation (e.g. implementation of a project at the university which resulted in that offer)) for introducing a cross-disciplinary academic offer produced various answers without clear country-related tendencies. Only the single questionnaire filled in by the Spanish university shows that the main reason for introducing a cross-disciplinary academic offer is based on legal regulations of the Country.

The existing CGAO at different universities, included in the survey, include courses that are characterized by interdisciplinary content or option students to select different discipline. This can be used also for the design of the international CGAO. The accounted reasons for introducing CGAO, divided as top-down and bottom-up motivation and the example for integrating both approaches, highlights the need of taking both extrinsic and intrinsic factors into account.

What remains to some extent underestimated are the prospective student interest and demands surveys and labour market prospective forecast. Students interests in classes are included in the responses primary retrospectively - are there enough students who have chosen the different classes.

Top-down – legal regulations, including the requirement for percent of elective courses, students interests, teachers load and availability and professional demands, are all important indicators that have to be integrated in the CGAO design.

3.1.2.c. The position of CGAO in the organizational structure of teaching at universities

One set of aspects covered by the questionnaire concerned the position of CGAO in the organizational structure of teaching at the surveyed universities. The respondents were asked questions about the study levels on which CGAO is offered to students and whether it is offered to full-time and part-time students and to students of all the programmes (and if not, then what criteria are used to make the selection or restrict offer availability). The respondents were also requested to justify their answers.

- Study levels

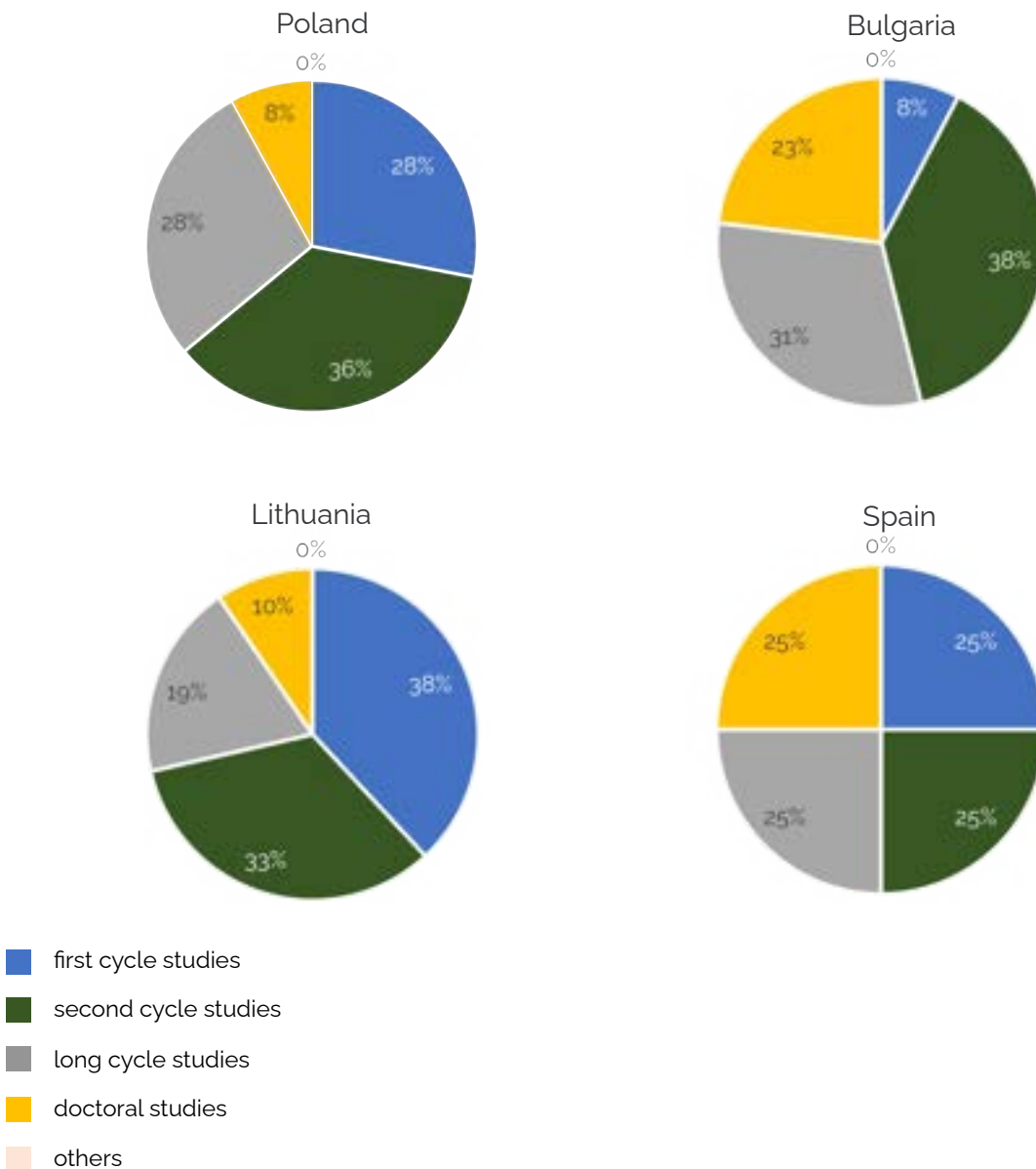
In the relevant multiple-choice questions, the respondents from Poland confirmed the presence of CGAO for first-cycle studies (seven answers) and second-cycle studies (eight answers) as well as for long-cycle studies (seven answers). Only two answers indicated the presence of CGAO at doctoral studies.

The universities from Bulgaria provided different responses: they selected first-cycle studies only once, indicating other options much more often instead (second-cycle studies: five, long-cycle studies: four, doctoral studies: three).

The picture created by the answers of the Lithuanian universities deviates from the Polish and Bulgarian responses alike. All the surveyed Lithuanian universities indicated first-cycle studies and almost all (seven) of them selected second-cycle studies. Long-cycle studies were ticked only four times, while doctoral studies – twice.

The University of Alicante in Spain selected all the study levels as those which offer CGAO at universities in Spain.

Chart 5: The presence of CGAO for various study levels at the surveyed universities in Poland, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Spain



Source: own research and calculations.

The requested optional justifications differed too.

The Polish universities highlighted, among other things, 'broadening the offer of courses to choose from (as part of the obligation to choose at least 30% of elective courses)'. Another indicated reason, albeit related to the previous one, was a Senate resolution. The respondents also cited 'the good of education'.

The universities from Bulgaria provided, among other things, the following justifications: 'ensuring broader competence and knowledge', 'the possibility of acquiring knowledge from various professional fields', 'the possibility of listening to lecturers from various fields of studies' and 'preparing students to function better on the labour market'. One justification cited 'the internal policy of the faculty and the university'. Another response highlighted the need for providing interdisciplinary education on all the study levels, with another one remarking that, 'due to longer duration (four years), the first-cycle programme can accommodate a greater number of subjects from various disciplines'.

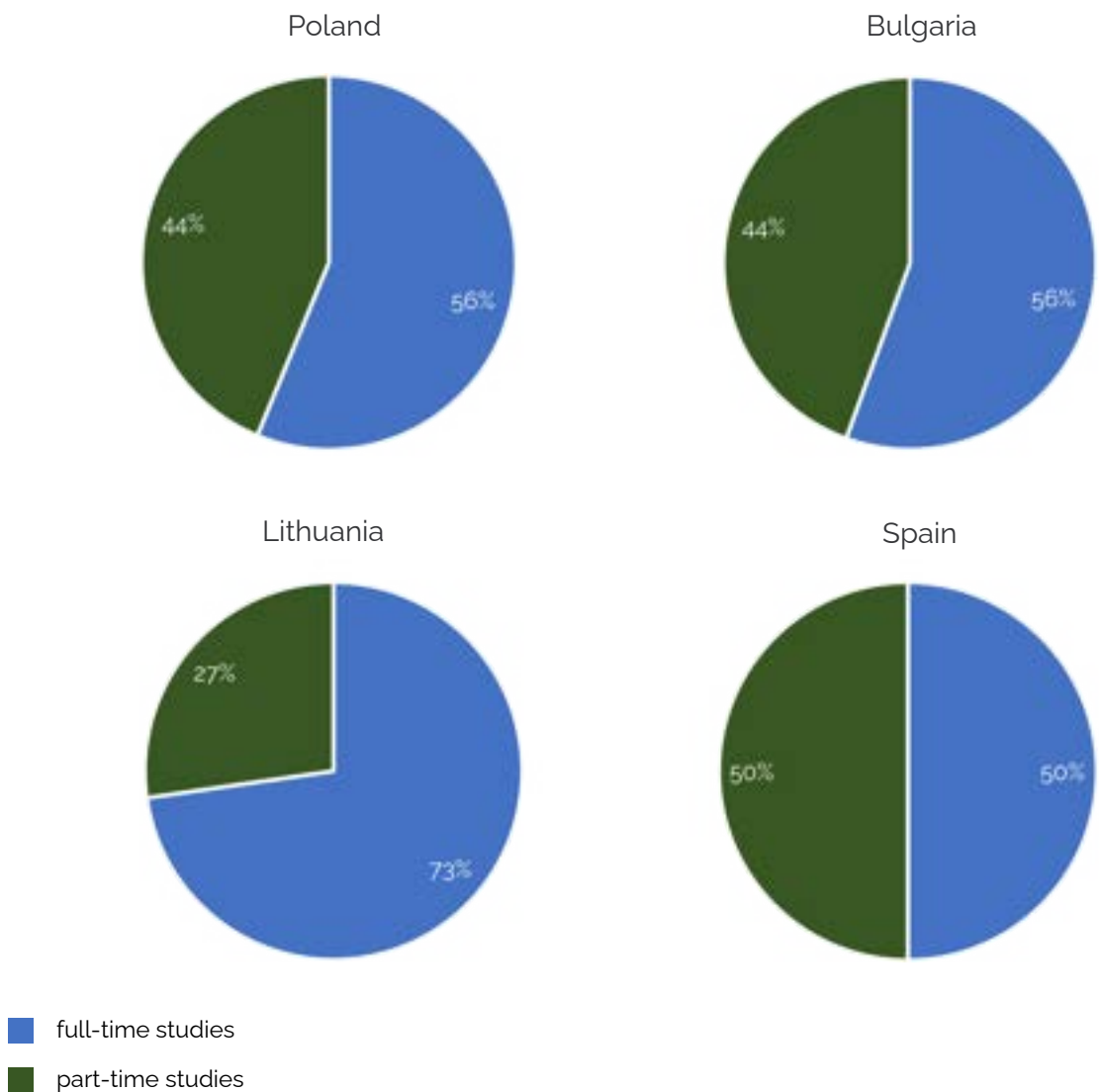
The Lithuanian universities mentioned such reasons as 'state-wide and institutional regulations' or the need to 'improve the programme quality'. The presence of CGAO was also linked with 'the development of "broader" education' and 'the need to acquire diversified competence in order to solve real-life problems etc.'.

The university from Spain highlighted once again that CGAO is available at all the Spanish universities and on all their study levels as a result of 'state-wide legal regulations'

- Modes of studies

In the relevant multiple-choice question, the respondents indicated that the CGAO offer applies to both the full-time mode and the part-time mode of studies. The full-time mode was selected more often, but, as noted in one elaboration of the answer, the reason is that not all the universities offer part-time education.

Chart 6: The implementation of CGAO in full-time and part-time programmes at the surveyed universities in Poland, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Spain



Source: own research and calculations.

Some respondents took the opportunity of providing a justification of the organizational decisions made at their universities.

The Polish universities repeated the reason they had stated when answering the question about the study levels on which CGAO is offered, i.e. 'broadening the offer of courses to choose from (as part of the obligation to choose at least 30% of elective courses)'. They cited the 'principle of equal treatment of students', highlighting that 'the number of study hours for part-time students equals 60% of the number of study hours for full-time students.'

The principle of equal treatment of full-time and part-time students was also cited by the Lithuanian universities. One of them stated: 'Full-time and part-time programmes should differ only in the intensity of studying, not in the content'. Moreover, they mentioned 'state-wide and institutional regulations'.

The university from Spain had already highlighted the necessity of obeying state-wide regulations while organizing the CGAO. Its answer to the discussed question stated that 'the organizers can make decisions about the student enrolment conditions'.

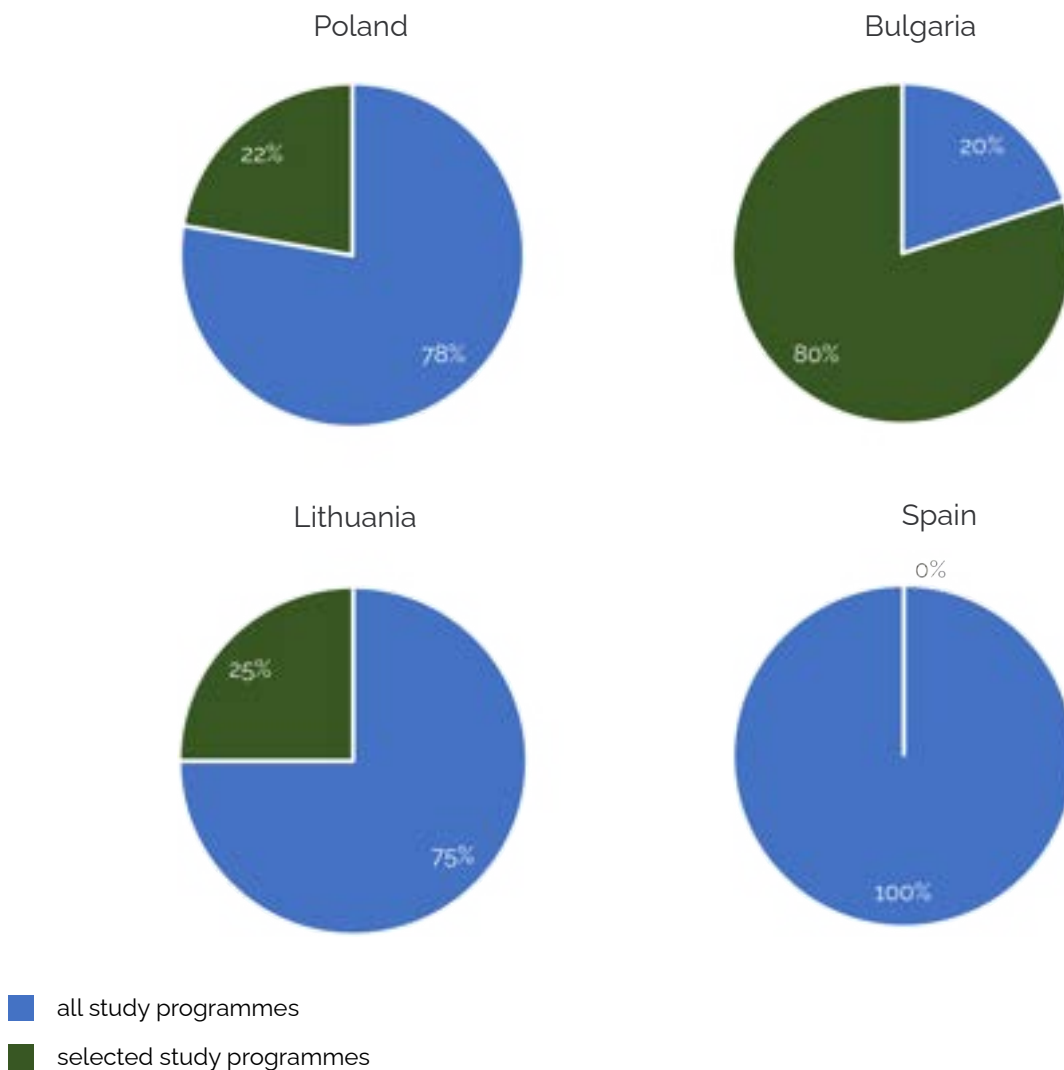
- Study programmes offered at the universities

When answering the question whether CGAO is provided for all the study programmes or just for selected ones, most of the surveyed universities from Poland and Lithuania as well as the Spanish one indicated that their CGAO offer applies to all the programmes. Only two out of nine Polish universities and two out of seven Lithuanian universities admitted that their CGAO is available for selected study programmes. In the next question, which concerned the basis for selecting the study programmes at which CGAO is introduced, both Lithuanian respondents indicated the answer 'the decision of the authorities of the faculty/department concerned'. The same answer was chosen by one of the two Polish universities, while the other one cited university regulations.

The answers provided by the Bulgarian respondents revealed different proportions. Only one out of the five Bulgarian universities surveyed offers CGAO to all the study programmes. Three universities cited university regulations, while the remaining one indicated the answer 'the decision of the authorities of the faculty/department concerned'.

The discussed results are presented in Chart no. 7.

Chart 7: CGAO at the surveyed universities in Poland, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Spain depending on offer availability to all or selected study programmes



Source: own research and calculations.

Summary

Concerning the study levels despite the difference in the offers number, all the four levels – first and second-cycle students, PhD studies and long-cycle studies - are represented in all universities and countries. Also despite the differences, both extrinsic and intrinsic justifications are highlighted – broadening the offered elective courses, targeted educational quality – broader competence and knowledge, preparing students for career development, indicating the CGAO in the same way as the programmes are based on regulatory requirements, conformed to constant quality assurance and update of the offers depending on the social and economic demands. This applies both to full-time and part-time offers, the unanimous opinion of the respondents is that just the number of study hours, but not the content, differ in the two forms of studies.

Most of the CGAO are declared to apply to all programmes, in other cases the decision is on the department/faculty due to the academic load and programmes profile.

Both indicators are relevant to the design of new CGAO, as some of them may be broad, however always remain related to profile and available expertise. Both forms can be offered – to selected programmes and to all programmes, especially when it comes to elective offers, awarding or not awarding ECTS, which concerns also students load and recognition.

3.1.2.d. The scale of CGAO universality / common nature at universities

Another set of questions concerned the levels of CGAO *universality / common nature* at the surveyed universities (as perceived by the teaching organizers there). The criteria used to scale the *universality / common nature* of the offer were of three types.

- Faculty – university – country – Europe

The universities were asked to state whether their CGAO offer is common for various faculties of a given university, for various universities in the country or for universities on the international level. The answers varied depending on the country, but no university chose the option 'one offer at the level of one country', and only one respondent (from Bulgaria) indicated 'one offer for various universities from more than one country'. Two Lithuanian universities gave individual answers by elaborating on the category 'other'. One of them wrote: 'The selection takes place on the faculty level, on the university level and as a pilot experiment in the form of interdisciplinary courses created by several city universities together and available to students from various universities'. The other one remarked: 'These are selective courses, so the actual answer is: several offers to choose from both internally (the university level) and externally (various universities from more than one country)'.

A vast majority (seven out of nine) of the Polish universities indicated 'one offer at the level of one university'. Only two out of nine universities have a common CGAO offer just at the faculty level.

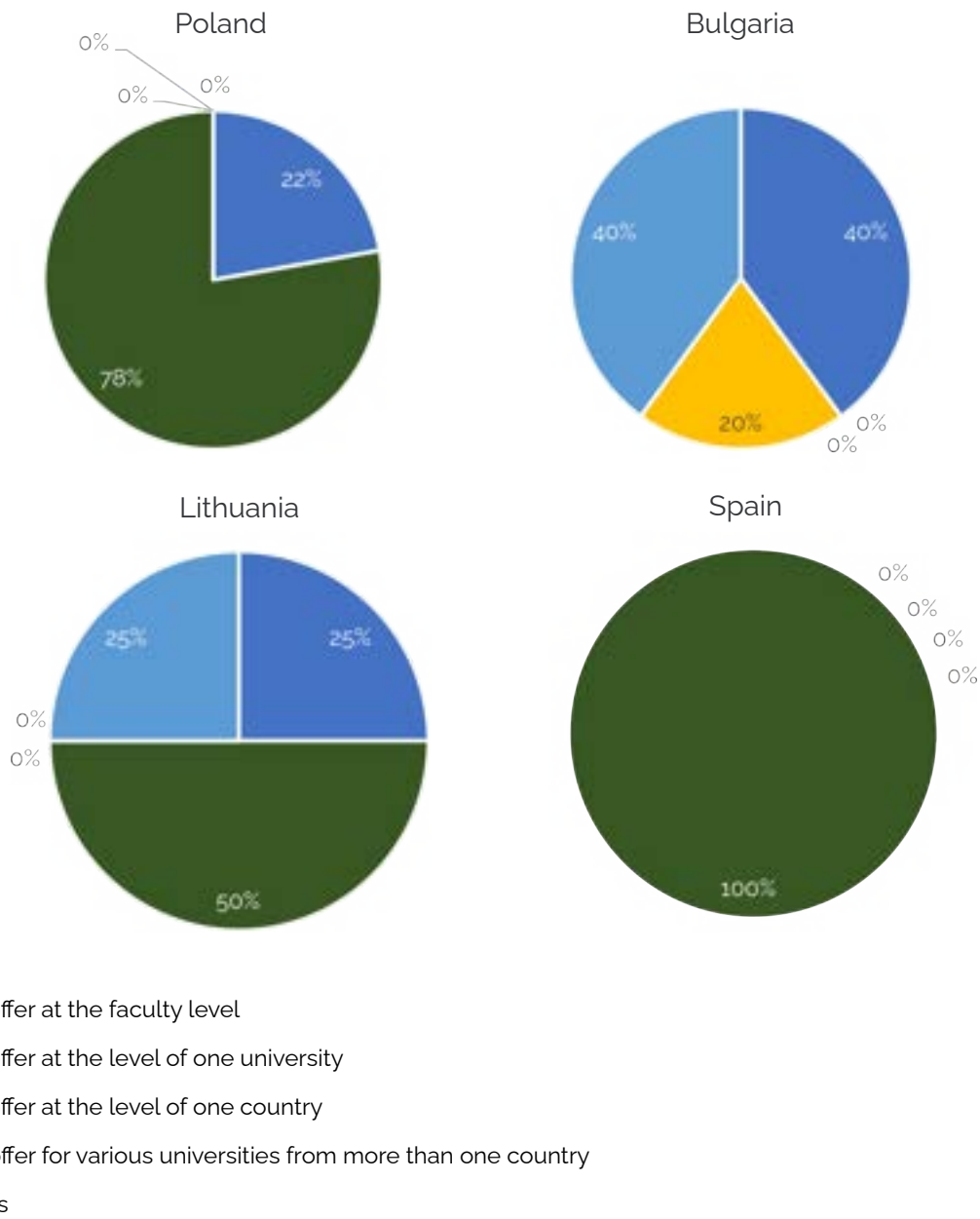
The answers given by the universities from Bulgaria are dispersed. The option 'one offer for various universities from more than one country' was chosen once; two out of five respondents indicated the *common nature* of the CGAO offer at the faculty level, and the remaining two selected 'other'. One respondent noted the existence of 'several offers at the faculty level', while another one wrote: 'I do not believe that any of the available answers is suitable'.

Four out of seven of the Lithuanian respondents noted the existence of one CGAO offer at the university level, while two indicated that a *common* CGAO offer is available at the faculty level. Moreover, one response read as follows: 'We offer a selection of mandatory courses available to all the first-cycle students (course group A), included in the study programme, but the range of the programmes is wide. We also teach courses on the faculty level. For example, the Faculty of Social Sciences offers a selection of elective subjects available to students of all the master's degree programmes at the faculty (one pool for all the master's degree students at the faculty)'. (The individual answers given by the remaining two universities have already been cited above.)

The respondent from Spain chose the option 'one offer at the level of one university' and additionally explained that the answer stemmed from the fact that the basic structure of CGAO in the Spanish higher education is common for the entire country as indicated above, but each university is completely free to design the content of its interdisciplinary offer. Importantly, the Spanish respondent added that the students choose subjects on the university level, but those who have completed university courses (subjects/modules) can apply for counting the points toward the enrolment at other first- or second-cycle studies. The previous studies can have taken place at any university in Spain or abroad and can be approved regardless of the fact whether the student has graduated and obtained the relevant qualifications. The validated points are counted toward the new study programme and positively influence graduation. They are also recorded in the new diploma supplement. As mentioned above, this applies to all Spanish universities.

The answers are collectively presented in Chart no. 8.

Chart 8: CGAO at the surveyed universities in Poland, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Spain: the existence of one offer for the for the faculty, university, country or Europe



Source: own research and calculations.

- Study levels

The questionnaire authors wished to know whether CGAO is common for various study levels at a given university. The distribution of the answers varies depending on the country yet remains considerably similar within a country itself.

The Polish respondents and the Spanish respondent clearly indicated that the CGAO offer is *common* for various study levels. That answer was selected by seven out of nine Polish universities, with only one denying (noting that the question does not apply to it because its CGAO offer is available only at one study level).

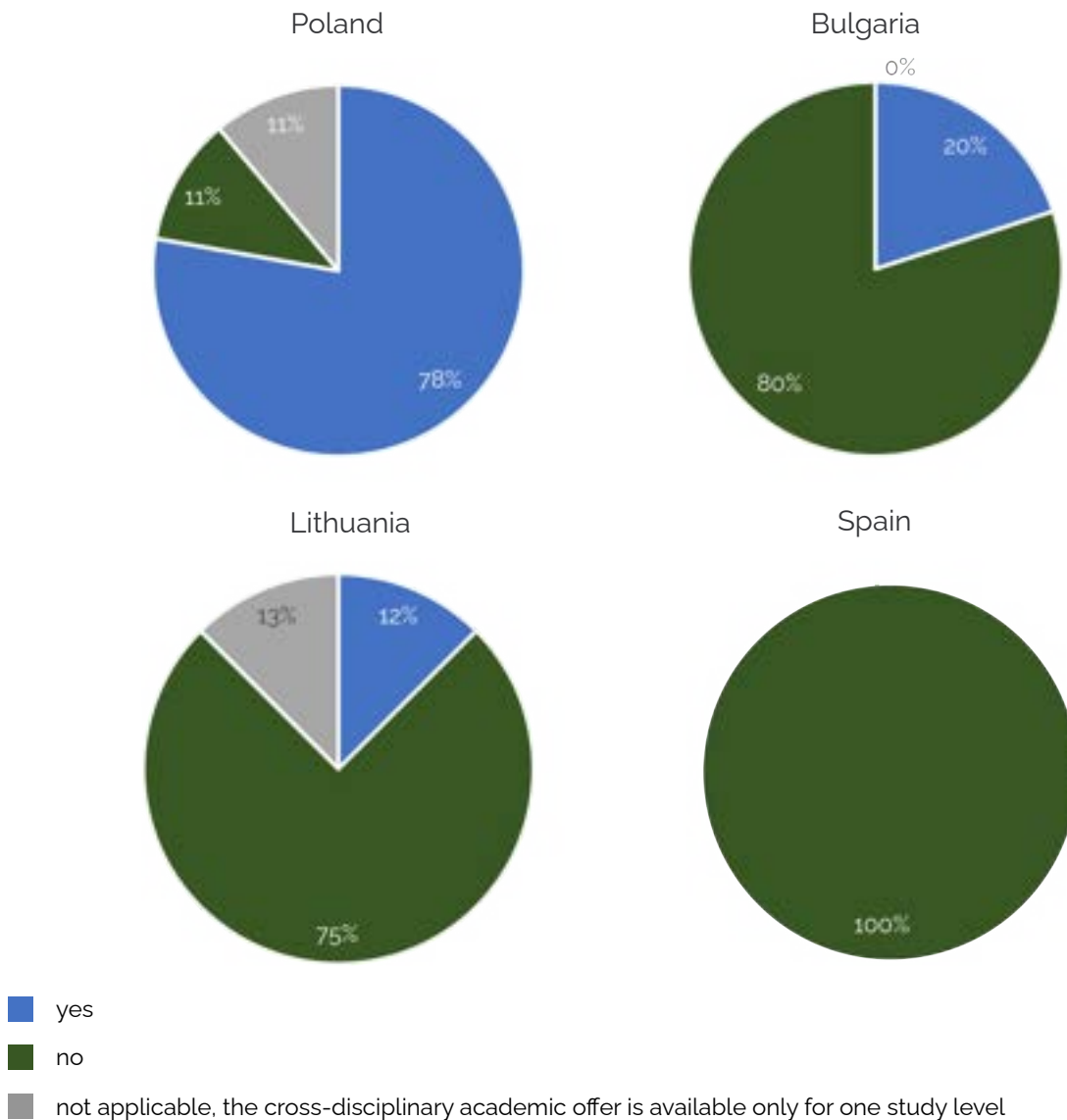
In the optional justification, the Polish respondents mentioned 'broadening the offer of courses to choose from (as part of the obligation to choose at least 30% of elective courses)' and 'the good of education'. The university from Spain remarked that the access requirements differ depending on the course level and this applies to all the academic levels and all the university offers.

Only one out of five Bulgarian respondents indicated the existence of one CGAO offer for various study levels. This was justified by the fact that 'there are various requirements in place for the skills and knowledge one has to acquire on different levels' and 'the first-cycle, second-cycle and doctoral studies offer various subjects'. It was also mentioned that 'interdisciplinary education has specific features depending on the study level'.

Six out of eight Lithuanian respondents indicated lack of a *common* CGAO offer for different study levels, one university confirmed the existence of such a *common* offer, and the remaining one noted: 'Does not apply because the CGAO offer is available only at one study level'. The Lithuanian respondents justified their answers by citing 'state-wide and institutional regulations' as well as the fact that 'the validation of subjects is restricted as regards combining the first- and second-cycle studies and recording them in the diploma supplement. There are other options available which cannot be recorded in the diploma supplement but can be studied based on free choice (without a student status)'. They also remarked that 'it depends on the specific nature of the study programme' and that 'first-cycle students are offered courses corresponding to the first-cycle level, while second-cycle students are offered courses corresponding to the second-cycle level'. Other mentioned factors were 'internal faculty and university policies' and the fact that 'the idea is to enable both the OCS Bachelor and OCS Master students to acquire knowledge from various scientific disciplines'.

The data presented here are visualized in Chart no. 9.

Chart 9: CGAO in Polish, Bulgarian, Lithuanian and Spanish universities the same for different study levels



Source: own research and calculations.

- Disciplines of knowledge – fields of knowledge

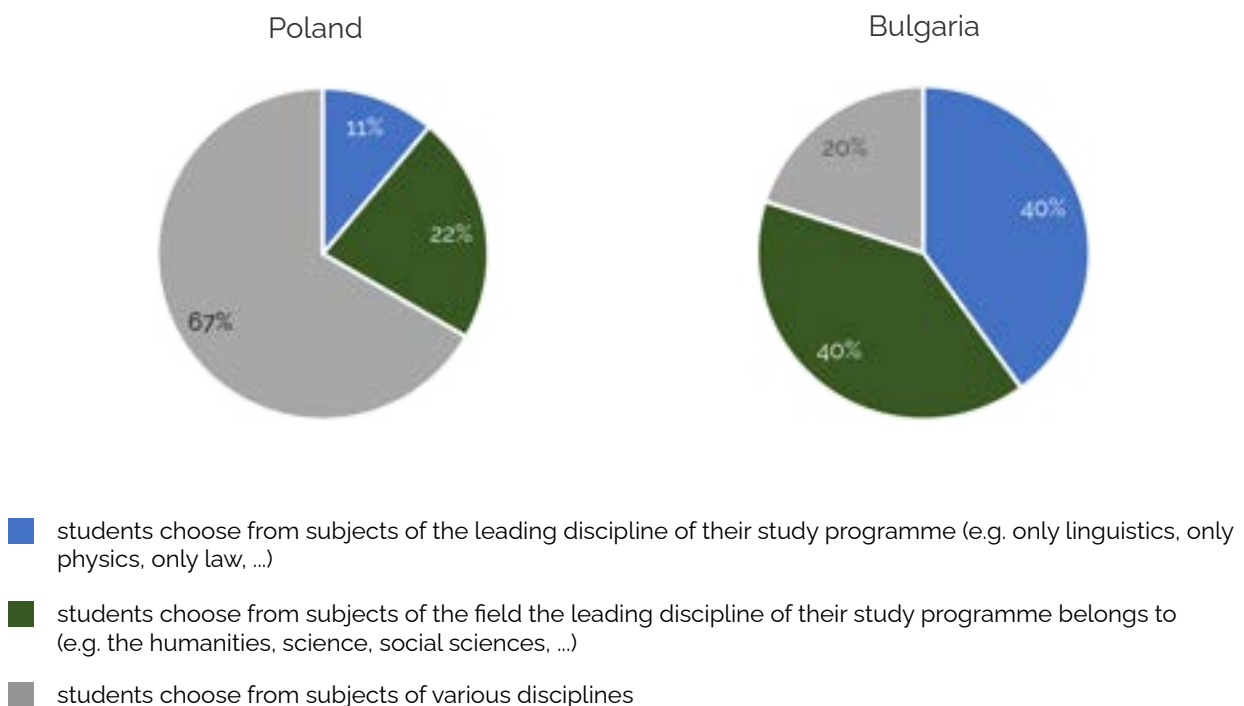
Another criterion for the *common nature* of the CGAO offer in the surveyed universities, albeit different in its character than the previous criteria, was disciplines and fields of knowledge. The respondents were requested to indicate whether and to what extent the content taught within the individual subjects of the CGAO offer deviates / may deviate from the leading discipline of a given study programme. They were asked whether the CGAO offer at their

university is structured in such a way (the *common nature* of the disciplines and fields of knowledge is on such a level) that the students can choose from subjects of the leading discipline of their study programme (e.g. only linguistics, only physics, only law, ...), from subjects of the field the leading discipline of their study programme belongs to (e.g. the humanities, science, social sciences, ...), or from subjects of various disciplines.

The dominant offer at the Polish universities is cross-field CGAO: the answer 'students could choose from subjects of various disciplines' was indicated by six out of nine respondents. Two universities noted the presence of a single-field yet multidisciplinary offer, while the remaining one confirmed that its students choose from subjects of the leading discipline of their study programme.

The answers provided by the Bulgarian respondents produce a different picture. Two out of five universities confirmed that their CGAO offer includes only subjects of the leading discipline of the study programme (e.g. only linguistics, only physics, only law, ...), further two stated the presence of a single-field yet multidisciplinary offer (with subjects teaching content belonging to the field of the leading discipline of the study programme), and only one replied that its students can choose from subjects of various disciplines.

Chart 10: CGAO at the surveyed universities in Poland and Bulgaria: the existence of one offer for different study levels



Source: own research and calculations.

Summary

Concerning the CGAO offering for various faculties of the university, for various universities in the country or for universities on the international level most of the CGAO turn out to be university based and inter-university practice depends on project or established cooperation. International cross-discipline cooperation is not common, a pilot examples for national offer and from more than one country are stated.

The experience of Spain, where regulation provides clear transfer of the completed university courses (subjects/modules) deserves attention, as transfer and recognition of the completed CGAO, is important issue to be considered to the newly designed CGAO, especially international ones.

In respect to the various levels some responses reveal that the CGAO is common for various study levels, however access requirements pose some restrictions and this issue shall also be considered for first-cycle, second-cycle and doctoral studies. CGAO design can be flexible in this respect – to be adaptable for the different levels along with the inclusion in the diploma supplement.

Most CGAO are designated for the different study levels. All levels offer may be possible only for wide CGAO and survey of students perceptions can give specific highlights in this respect.

Concerning the common nature of CGAO and the extent of deviation from the leading discipline respondents included in their answers subjects of various disciplines, single-field, yet multidisciplinary offer and subjects of the leading discipline of the study programme. All these options can be employed. For the international CGAO suggested survey of students interest and demand can account for preferences of the target groups and the recognition of the course remains important issue to be considered.

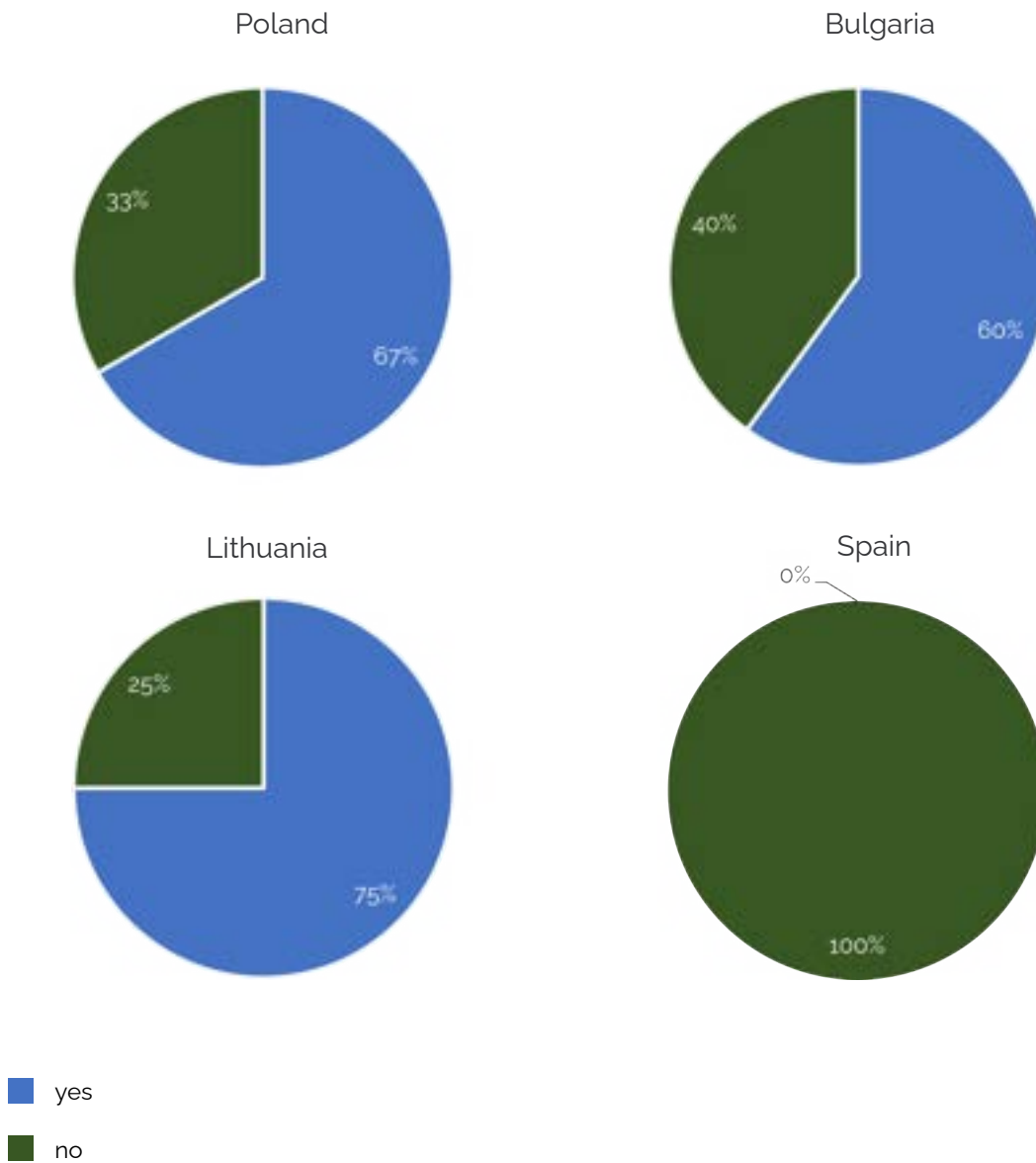
3.1.2.e. Character and scope of access to CGAO from the students' perspective

The next set of aspects in the questionnaire included questions regarding the students' perspective. The questionnaire authors were interested in two fundamental matters: whether the CGAO offer is obligatory to students (and if so, then to what extent) and the scope in which the full CGAO offer is available to a student.

- The obligatory nature of CGAO

The respondents were asked whether the CGAO offer is obligatory to the students. A vast majority of the Polish, Bulgarian and Lithuanian universities confirmed (Poland: six out of nine; Bulgaria: three out of five; Lithuania: six out of seven). The university from Spain, which, as already mentioned, filled in the questionnaire in the name of all the Spanish universities due to top-down unifying regulations, replied that the state-wide provisions do not allow for the possibility of making the CGAO subjects obligatory to students.

Chart 11: The obligatory nature of CGAO at the surveyed universities in Poland, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Spain



Source: own research and calculations.

The respondents that denied the obligatory nature of their CGAO offer (three out of nine universities in Poland, two out of five in Bulgaria and two out of seven in Lithuania) were requested to explain what it means that the completion of the CGAO subjects at their respective universities is optional.

The question contained two answers to choose from:

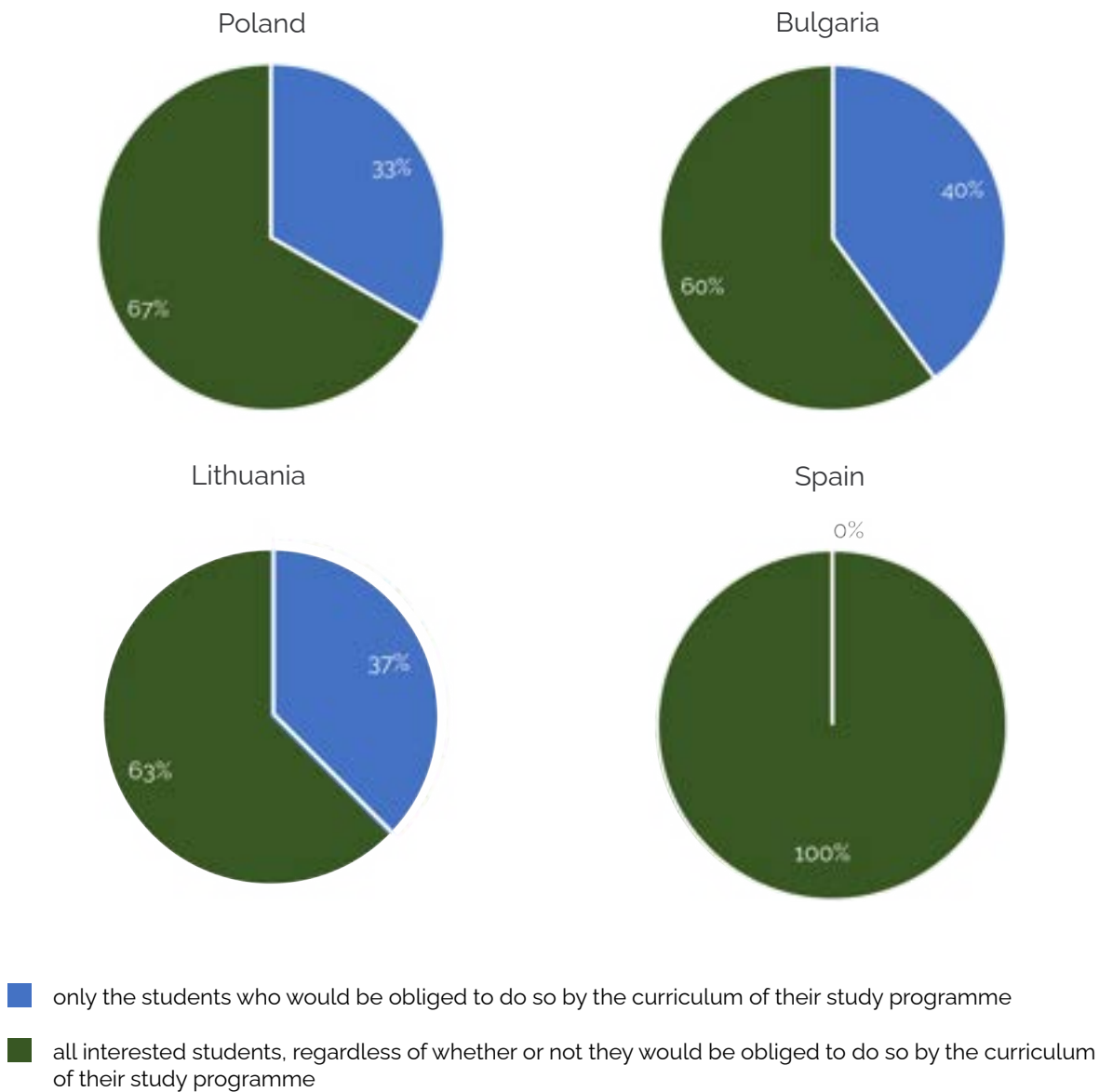
1. The completion of a course from the cross-disciplinary academic offer would not be necessary for graduation, but students could choose courses from the cross-disciplinary academic offer and gain additional competences.
2. Students would not be obliged to choose courses from the cross-disciplinary academic offer (it would not be a condition for graduation), but if they chose them, they would have additional opportunities in the course of their studies, e.g. the possibility to apply for a particular specialization, a particular diploma seminar or taking advantage of a particular educational path.

The Polish universities indicated the first option three times, the Bulgarian ones selected either option once, and the Lithuanian respondents chose the second option once and provided one individual explanation as follows: 'Some offers are obligatory at certain study programmes and some are optional. In the latter case, each student can choose studies at an interdisciplinary course where they work in interdisciplinary teams solving the challenges faced by the society'.

In question 5, the respondents were asked who can choose subjects from the cross-disciplinary academic offer at their universities: only the students who would be obliged to do so by the curriculum of their study programme or all interested students, regardless of whether or not they would be obliged to do so by the curriculum of their study programme. The answers were similar (except for Spain – see below). A slight majority among the Polish, Bulgarian and Lithuanian universities claimed that their offer is fully accessible to all their students (Poland: six out of nine, Lithuania: six out of seven, Bulgaria: three out of five). The University of Alicante gave the same answer in the name of all the Spanish universities.

At some of the Polish, Bulgarian and Lithuanian universities, students are obliged to complete CGAO subjects by the curriculum of their study programme, but those universities form a minority (Poland: three out of nine, Lithuania: three out of seven, Bulgaria: two out of five).

Chart 12: The obligatory nature of CGAO depending on the study programme curriculum at the surveyed universities in Poland, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Spain

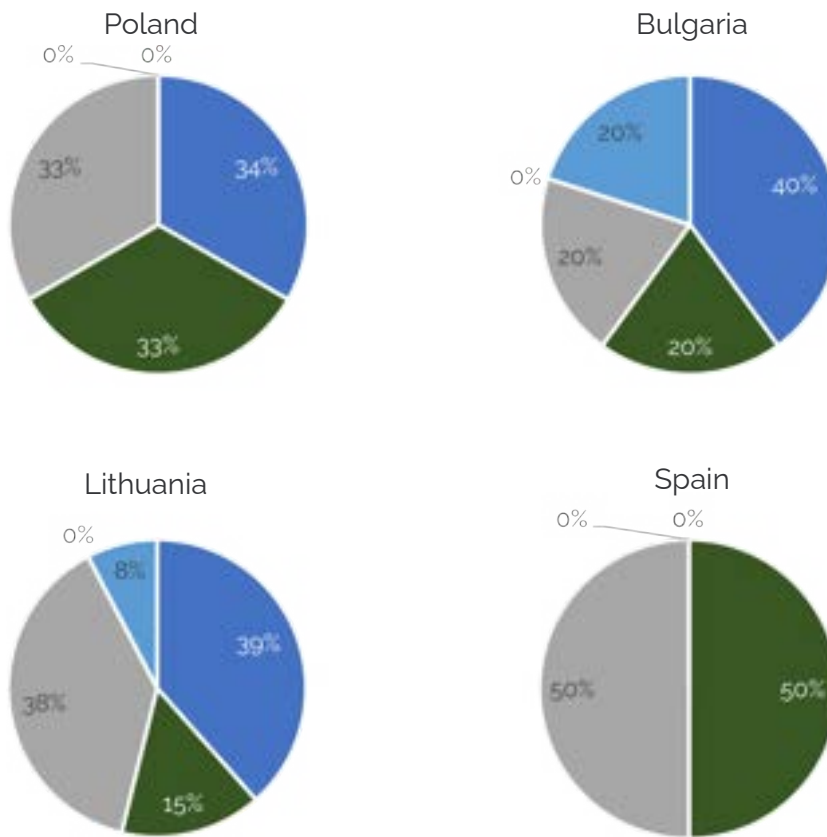


Source: own research and calculations.

The universities where students are not obliged to complete CGAO subjects by the curriculum of their study programme were further asked to state if and how the completion of a CGAO subject is reflected in the course of the studies. All the universities confirmed that they do record the students' participation in CGAO. Allowed to choose multiple answers, the respective countries selected various options, indicating each of the following three solutions to a varying degree: the module is recorded in the diploma supplement; the grade for the module is included in the average overall grade; ECTS points are awarded. The Polish

universities selected each option four times, while the Lithuanian ones less often (only twice) indicated the inclusion of the grade for the module in the average overall grade, choosing each of the two remaining solutions five times instead. The answers given by the universities from Bulgaria are dispersed, as shown in Chart no. 13. Moreover, one Lithuanian university gave an individual answer by elaborating on the category 'other': 'If it can be included as a learning option within the programme curriculum, then it is recorded in the diploma supplement. If it is chosen as an elective subject, then it is also recorded in the diploma supplement. Restrictions arise where a different cycle of studies is considered. The diploma supplement also features programmes which cannot be considered part of the curriculum and are interdisciplinary (e.g. incomplete or individual studies). We value interdisciplinary courses as part of education'.

Chart 13: The manner of reflecting the completion of a CGAO subject in the course of the studies at the surveyed universities in Poland, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Spain



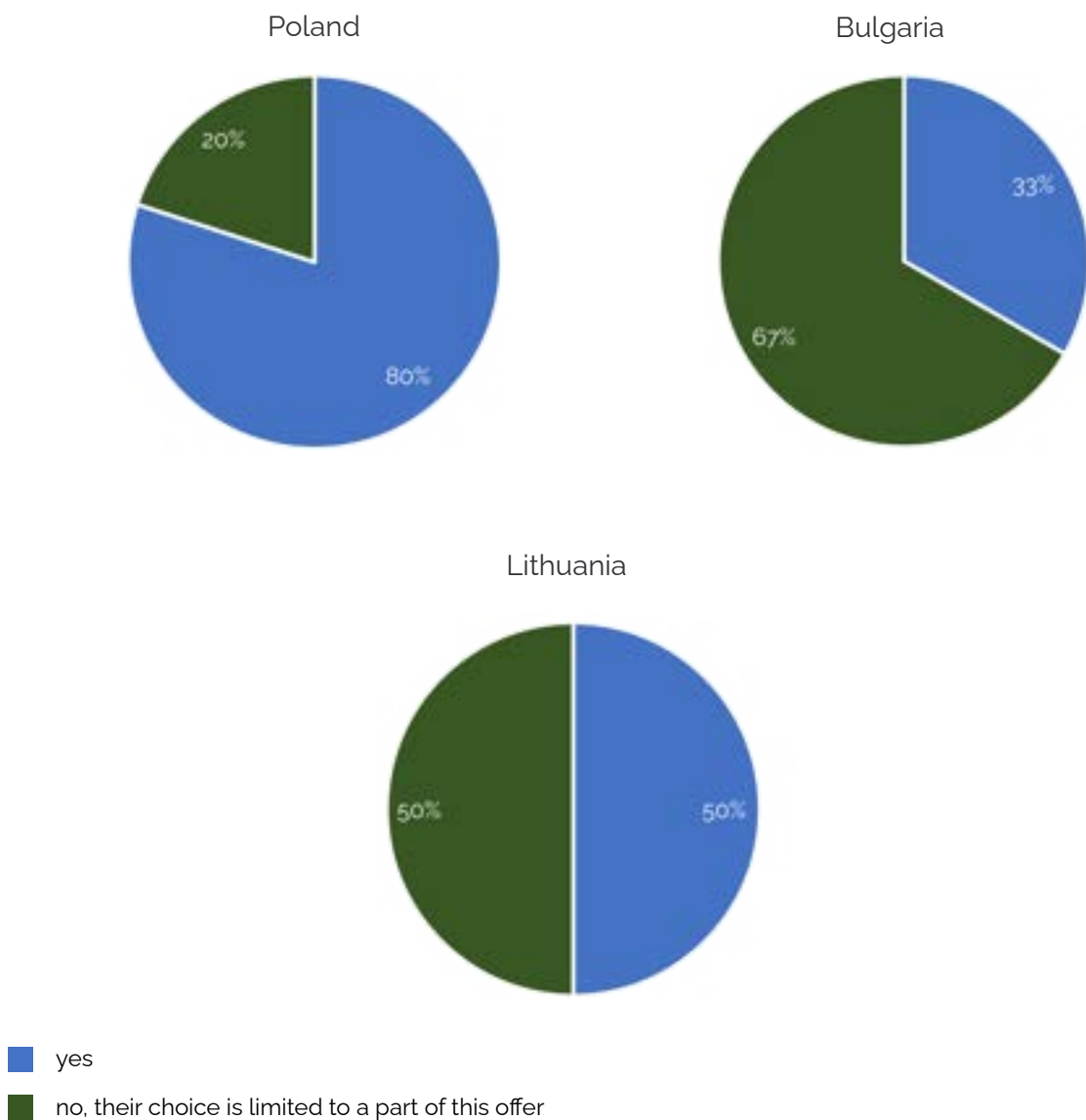
- the subject is recorded in the diploma supplement
- the grade for the subject is included in the average overall grade
- ECTS points are awarded
- the completion of such a subject is not recorded in the course of study in any way
- others

Source: own research and calculations.

- Availability scope of the full offer

Regarding the answers which confirmed that CGAO is obligatory, the questionnaire authors wished to know whether the students have the opportunity to choose from the full cross-disciplinary academic offer or whether the choice is restricted. The distribution of answers varies, as shown in Chart no. 14.

Chart 14: The manner of reflecting the completion of a CGAO subject in the course of the studies at the surveyed universities in Poland, Bulgaria and Lithuania



Source: own research and calculations.

The respondents who confirmed that the students' choice of CGAO subjects is restricted were then asked to explain what restrictions apply at their universities. Everybody pointed to university regulations (Poland and Bulgaria: once, Lithuania: twice), Bulgaria also cited state-wide regulations (once), and Lithuania additionally indicated the decision of the authorities of the faculty/department (once).

Summary

Scope and access of the CGAO reveals differences depending on the regulation and inclusion of obligatory and optional CGAO. Some of the CGAO are and others are not necessary for graduation and just give additional competences to students, without being recognized in the diploma supplement.

There is a slight prevalence of responses that offers are fully accessible to all students and less declared obligatory offers. Important issue remains if and how the completion of CGAO subject is reflected in the course of the studies and especially the cases when completion of a subject is not recorded in the course of study in any way.

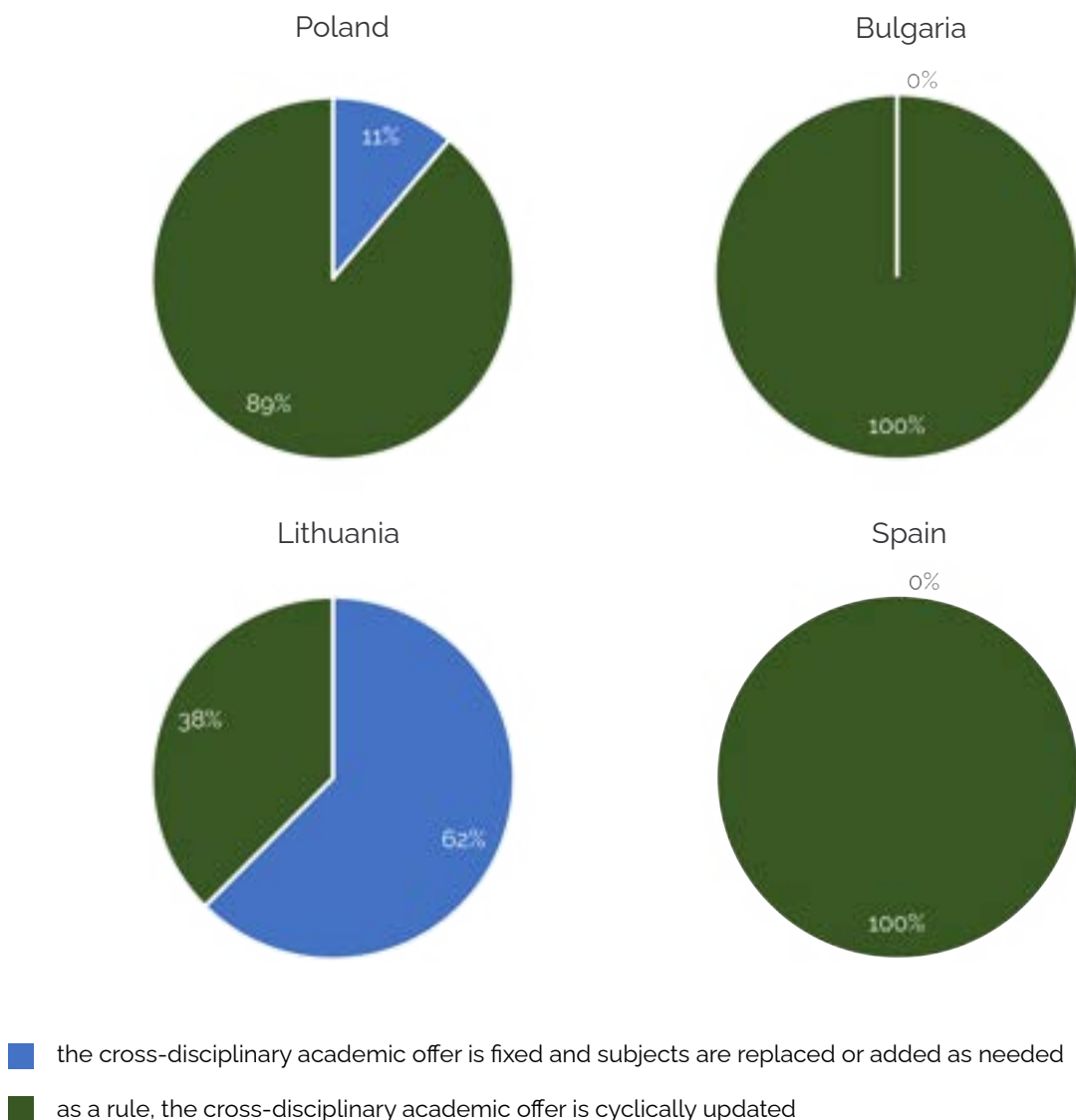
Concerning the scope of the offers – whether students choice is restricted or students have the full option to choose from the full cross-disciplinary academic offer the free choice can be applied to the international CGAO as it is not integrated in the curriculum. The main issue remains that it broadens personal expertise, it is free choice at the respective level and has to be recognized in some way.

3.1.2.f. Creation of the CGAO offer at the universities

A separate thematic set of questions concerned the methods of creating the CGAO offer at the surveyed universities. The respondents were requested to share their experience in the scope of creating and modifying the discussed offer.

Question 17 included two options: 'the cross-disciplinary academic offer is fixed and subjects are replaced or added as needed'; and 'the cross-disciplinary academic offer is updated on a regular basis'. The answers were diversified, but with a clear tendency toward regular updates of the offer. That option was chosen by the university from Spain and all the Bulgarian universities. A vast majority (eight out of nine) of the Polish respondents also indicated that they have such a solution in place. However, only three Lithuanian universities chose that option, while the remaining four confirmed that their CGAO offer is fixed with the subjects replaced or added as needed.

Chart 15: The fixed nature of the CGAO offer at the surveyed universities in Poland, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Spain

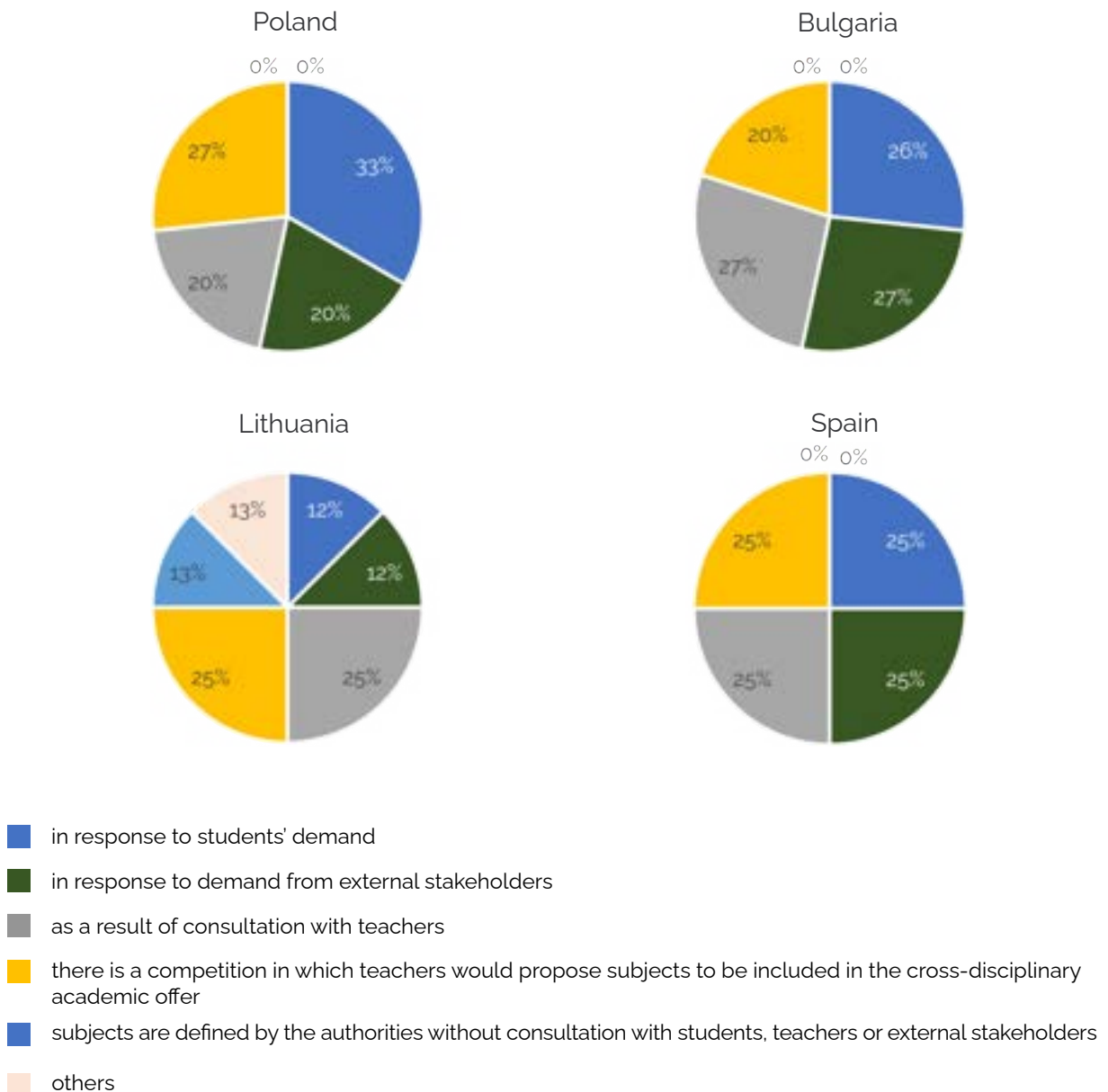


Source: own research and calculations.

The five Lithuanian universities with a fixed CGAO offer were then asked what determines the updating of that offer. They indicated lack of students' interest in a given subject (three times), fulfilment of the university mission (three times) and demand for new courses from students (once). They also provided one answer in the category 'other': 'labour market demands'. The Polish university that confirmed its fixed CGAO offer indicated the demand for new courses from students (once) and lack of students' interest in a given subject (once) as the reasons for introducing changes to the generally fixed offer.

The respondents who confirmed the regular updating of their CGAO offer selected four ways of carrying out the update, and the proportions of their choices did not differ substantially: in response to students' demand, in response to demand from external stakeholders, as a result of consultation with teachers, and by way of a competition in which teachers propose subjects to be included in the cross-disciplinary academic offer (the Spanish universities additionally explained that answers to that question may vary depending on the university, but all of the options are usually possible). Detailed data are shown in Chart no. 16.

Chart 16: Methods of updating the CGAO offer at the surveyed universities in Poland, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Spain



Source: own research and calculations.

Only one Lithuanian respondent confirmed that the subjects are defined by the authorities without consultation with students, teachers or external stakeholders. Another one elaborated on the matter using the option 'other': 'The answer is multifaceted. The study programmes are naturally renewed in a way, due to various circumstances and reasons. The courses are mandatorily renewed every three years too'.

Summary

Methods, applied by the universities in creating the CGAO, are use of fixed subjects that are replaces or supplemented and regular update depending on students interest in particular subjects, university mission, and demand of students for new course and accounting labour market demands. The specified response "subjects are defined by authorities without consultations with students, teachers or external stakeholders" must be taken into account as a possible restriction in view to the possibilities and academic load.

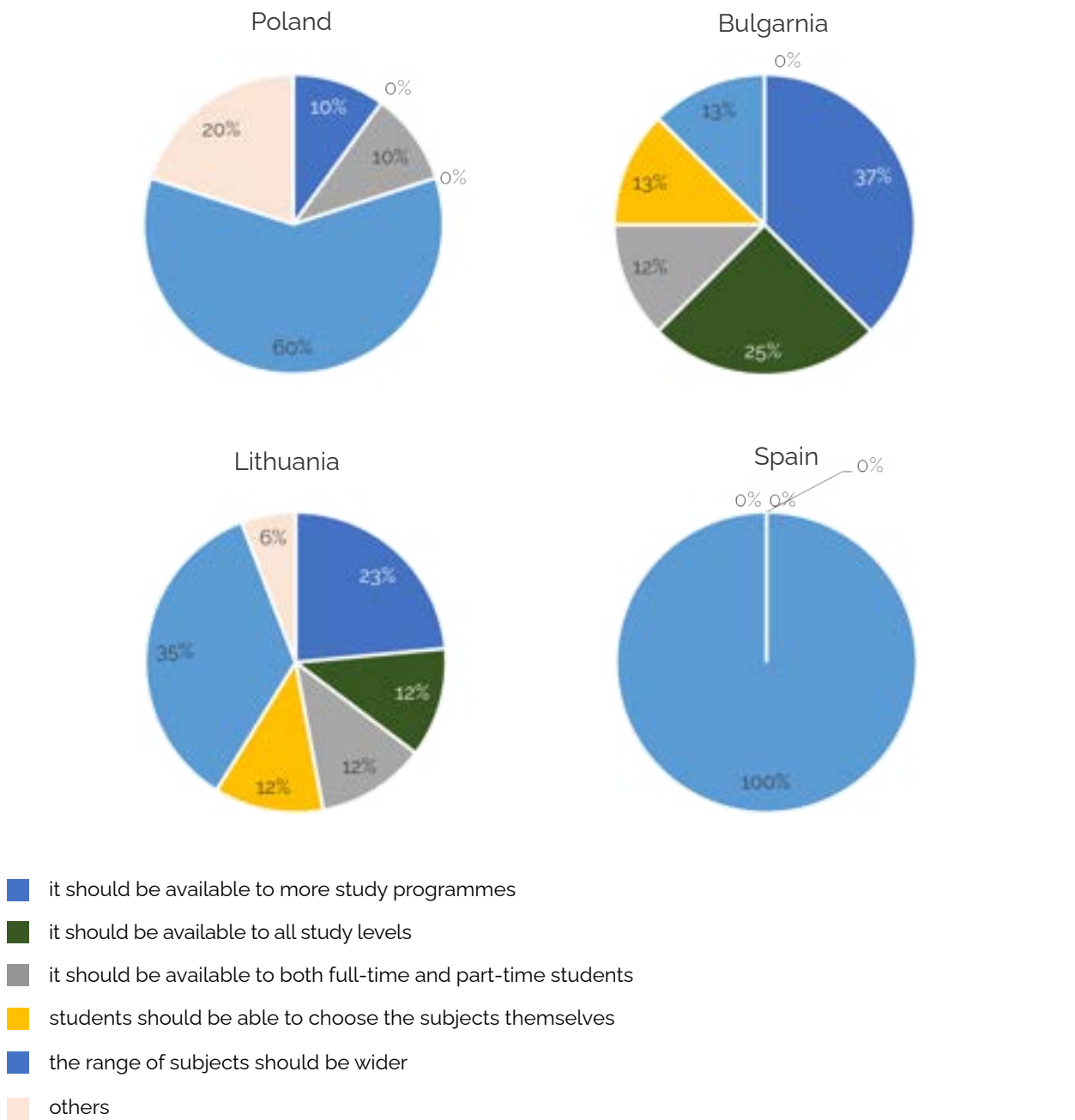
In respect to the design of a new international offer students and external stakeholders demand have to be more focused.

3.1.3. Opinions on the possibility of improving the organization of CGAO at the universities

The last question concerned the conclusions, reflections and suggestions that the respondents might come up with regarding the change of CGAO organization at their universities. The questionnaire provided multiple-choice options and a space for individual answers. The provided options included the following suggestions: the offer should be available to more study programmes, the offer should be available to all study levels (but it does not have to be common for various levels), the offer should be available to both full-time and part-time students, students should be able to choose the subjects themselves, and the range of subjects should be wider.

The distribution of the respondents' answers varied. The most diverse set of improvement paths was observed in the Lithuanian questionnaires, with a wider range of subjects being the most frequent choice (six times). That suggestion was also the most common one among the Polish universities (six times) and was the only one indicated by the Spanish university. The Bulgarian respondents most often selected the option of making the offer available to more study programmes (three times), which was also the second most frequent response from Lithuania (four times). Detailed data are presented in Chart no. 17.

Chart 17: The possibilities of improving the organization of CGAO at the surveyed universities in Poland, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Spain



Source: own research and calculations.

The individually formulated suggestions of improving the organization of CGAO at universities included the following:

'CGAO should be an inter-university offer, at least within a given country.'

'Students should be enabled to access areas which interest them but are not

dealt with by researchers/teachers at their university, and to contact the relevant researchers/teachers.'

'The striving to be relevant on the labour market.'

'Students from each faculty should be sufficiently enabled to participate in various interdisciplinary courses. This has actually been done, but there is always room for improvement here.'

'Changes are necessary due to the dynamics of the relationships between employers, teachers and students.'

'I reckon that the labour market requires graduates to have knowledge of various fields as well as flexible skills.'

'We have been trying to achieve all of the above. A wider range of subjects is always available, but it must be balanced by a sufficient number of students who could choose them. This means a course cannot be started for only two students because it would be unprofitable. Certain exemptions are always available, but not as a rule.'

'Survey data show that students want a wider range of interdisciplinary study subjects.'

'We offer the possibility of choosing interdisciplinary subjects, but not all programmes have a sufficient number of points for free elective subjects. Thus, it is important to extend this offer to further study programmes. Even though we are facing a little challenge – we cannot offer too wide a range of subjects because groups could fail to form – it is still important to add new elective subjects.'

'Changes are welcome, but certain stabilization of the offer is also needed (for instance, gathering the students' feedback or adjusting the demand noticed by the stakeholders requires time). We have a system in place which introduces interdisciplinary courses into the curricula. Committees evaluate and approve the new subjects, which must then be approved by the vice chancellor's office and the Senate, and the subjects must be available to all the (first-cycle) students. Second-cycle students can choose from optional subjects available at other curricula and study programmes depending on their particular study programme.'

'The range of subjects should be wider.'

Summary

Accounted recommendations for improvement of the CGAO reveal several key areas: offer to more programmes, all study levels, forms of studies, and students to be able to choose the subjects themselves and wider range of subjects. All they are relevant and supplemented by the additional recommendations for national level offering inter-university cooperation, awarding points / ECTS for graduation and regular students surveys and feedback.

3.2. Final conclusions

The analyzed practice clearly suggests that there are a number of factors to be taken into account in the design of sustainable international CGAO. It shall have high flexibility to be adapted to national requirements, university-based needs, students' expectations and external stakeholders' demands.

The results clearly highlight the differences in regulatory frameworks and university decisions across countries. The existing CGAO at different universities, included in the survey, include courses that are characterized by interdisciplinary content, option students to select different discipline. This can be used also for the design of the international CGAO. The accounted reasons for introducing CGAO, divided as top-down and bottom-up motivation and the example for integrating both approaches, highlights the need of taking both extrinsic and intrinsic factors into account.

What remains to some extent underestimated are the prospective student interest and demands surveys and labour market prospective forecast. Top-down – legal regulations, including the requirement for percent of elective courses, students' interests, teachers' load and availability and professional demands, are all important indicators that have to be integrated in the CGAO design.

Concerning the study levels despite the difference in the offers number, all the four levels – first and second-cycle students, PhD studies and long-cycle studies – are represented in all universities and countries. Also despite the differences, both extrinsic and intrinsic justifications are highlighted – broadening the offered elective courses, targeted educational quality – broader competence and knowledge, preparing students for career development, indicating the CGAO in the same way as the programmes are based on regulatory requirements, conformed to constant quality assurance and update of the offers depending on the social and economic demands. This applies both to full-time and part-time offers, the unanimous opinion of the respondents is that just the number of study hours, but not the content, differ in the two forms of studies.

Accounted recommendations for improvement of the CGAO reveal offer to more programmes, all study levels, forms of studies, and students to be able to choose the subjects themselves and wider range of subjects. All they are relevant and supplemented by the additional recommendations for national level offering inter-university cooperation, awarding points / ECTS for graduation and regular students surveys and feedback.

All the accounted responses give several key areas to be considered in the design of the international CGAO:

1. free choice of the subjects by students
2. accounting regulatory requirements and restrictions
3. recognition of the completed CGAO
4. flexible design for regular improvement and adaptation to all levels and forms of study
5. regular surveys and feedback from students and stakeholders
6. target group – what type of content to be included in general, eg. for humanities / social sciences or some other form of focusing on the potential beneficiaries.

Chart 18: Key issues concerning ICGAO organization



4. Good practices at the universities of the consortium

4.1. Poland (University of Silesia in Katowice)

4.1.1. Characteristics of the strategy and vision of education at the researched university

University of Silesia in Katowice (USiL) is the most prominent university in the Silesian voivodship and one of the biggest in Poland among those where scientific research and teaching in humanities, some engineering and technical sciences, social sciences, exact and natural sciences, theology and art are conducted. At the University of Silesia in Katowice, teaching is emphasized, which is reflected in a considerable number of study directions, programs, and specializations, as well as in the intensive engagement of academic teachers in didactic activities.

„USiL Development Strategy 2020-2025” aims, among others:

1. Strategic modeling of the didactic offer.
2. Internationalization of education.
3. Improving the effectiveness of teaching methods and the effectiveness of evaluation tools.
4. Constant improvement of the quality of study conditions in accordance with the idea of universal design.

The aims are realized by:

- Strategic politics of creation and modification of study programs, including especially interdisciplinary studies, studies led in foreign languages, and studies connected with research conducted in USiL. The strategy considers both the potential of the University and the needs of the socio-economic environment of the region.
- Strategic development of the offer of commercial forms of lifelong learning, including postgraduate studies, considering the needs of the socio-economic environment, especially in the regional perspective, the potential of the University, enabling efficient lifelong learning.
- Increasing the participation of teachers and students of the University in academic mobility programs such as Erasmus+, realized in traditional, hybrid, and online forms.

In the vision of education at the University of Silesia in Katowice, the teaching combines providing the recent state-of-art and rational image of the world with developing skills useful in specific professions and enabling adaptation to a changeable work market.

The programs are developed according to the Priority Research Areas and expectations of the socio-economic environment and employers. They also consider global challenges. Students can freely choose modules within the faculty offer and can enter cooperation with the mentors. Developing interdisciplinary study programs in foreign languages enhances the university's internationalization.

4.1.2. Reasons for the Introduction of the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer (CGAO) at the University of Silesia in Katowice.

4.1.2.a. Cultural and social transformations of reality

The world changing at an increasingly fast pace, the constant development of science and art, and the political and social transformations are all significant challenges for young people on the verge of adulthood. They in particular must not be indifferent to such changes because it is their generation that needs to actively shape new reality. On the other hand, open borders and subsequent technologies of remote communication allow them to participate in the social, economic, scientific and cultural life of societies all over the world – a possibility which was still exclusive a while ago. At the same time, the immanent traits of youth – curiosity, the desire to discover and understand the world, ambition, craving for knowledge, and rational thinking about the future professional career and social roles – spur the contemporary young people to broaden their knowledge, skills and social competence in various spheres. Consequently, universities (in particular public ones) must

not allow neglect, stagnation or lack of modernity; otherwise they will become unattractive to students sooner or later. Virtually every university meets with challenges when trying to make the academic offer more attractive as the continuous fight for every student (also among public universities) intensifies. This necessitates reflection on the direction that universities should follow, their own desired image (including social image), and the actions and paths they should choose in order to keep up with the changing world and the students' expectations.

The contemporary free world is open to others and to 'otherness'. The divisions caused by nationality, race, religion and culture are fading away. While human rights are maintained, and the differences between languages, religions and cultures are cultivated to an optimal extent, new mechanisms are developed to promote the ideals concerning freedom and equality. All this requires universities to open up to international cooperation in the fields of science and teaching. In particular, they should establish beneficial international relationships with other universities worldwide regarding scholarship programmes (the most popular one being Socrates/Erasmus), and they should create a common academic offer. The latter ought to familiarize students from various countries both with the most universal, common content, and the utterly local issues (which are unknown and specific, and hence interesting) pertaining to a given university in the academic network. Provided that a good evaluation is conducted and appropriate actions are taken on its basis, taking up the challenge in question may lead to the creation of increasingly rich foreign academic offers and thus to considerable achievements of students on the international scene. The desire to discover the world is so deeply rooted in young people that one can already observe their tendency to choose the universities which have the broadest offer of international educational programmes. Consequently, one should make every effort to ensure that universities develop as dynamically as possible in this scope.

In the changing world, young people wish not only to learn, but also to gain the experience necessary to obtain a satisfactory job that corresponds to their skills and knowledge. Students can acquire that experience also by confronting their everyday reality with the reality of other cultures, languages and communities which is conveyed during classes conducted by foreign teachers.

4.1.2.b. Labour market requirements

The students' expectations regarding the academic offer are connected with the above evaluation of reality. They concern the education process itself, the development of international cooperation, and the modernization of universities (and their infrastructure). However, one of the most important challenges already faced by universities is appropriate adjustment of the academic offer, including the curricula, to labour market requirements. Still, as has

already been discussed, one must not forget that a university graduate should broaden the knowledge, skills and competence also in the spheres which go beyond the narrowly defined specialization of the future profession. Such additional knowledge, skills and competence often support and supplement the study programme education. Consequently, they make the graduate a more valuable employee who can, from the graduate's own point of view, be better paid and obtain more interesting work which constitutes an intriguing challenge.

At the University of Silesia in Katowice, the above challenges and student expectations are addressed by the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer.

The Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer meets the needs of the contemporary world. The physical and mental opening of the borders results in the flow of information and data on the one hand, and the appearance of previously unknown phenomena and threats on the other hand. This makes people curious about otherness and forces them to cope with the emerging challenges. Greater self-consciousness and awareness of one's own needs requires answering increasingly complex and demanding questions. Study programme education is focused on a narrowly defined specialization (which employees do need to handle increasingly complicated processes and tasks). Therefore, it cannot ensure appropriate, satisfactory self-fulfilment in non-professional life. Accordingly, students need an academic offer which goes beyond their programmes and allows them to obtain additional knowledge, skills and social competence that at least supplement the study programme education. Examples of such universal competence and skills which are the most useful in the contemporary world include: analytical thinking, effective learning, creativity, communication skills regarding work in interdisciplinary teams, or solving complex problems (which means the ability to acquire and process information and data). Such skills are necessary in all the spheres and aspects of life, not only in the scope defined by the study programme education of a future specialist. This way of building the pyramid of knowledge, skills and social competence corresponds to the concept of T-shaped skills – a well-defined portfolio of knowledge, skills and social competence which allows a professional dealing with complicated matters to function efficiently in the world. This means building deep, well-established knowledge in a specific field in connection with sufficiently broad general knowledge of other fields to understand the complexity of problems. An expert in a field who simultaneously has sufficient knowledge of other areas is able to comprehend the intricacies of the world and solve problems without fear of experimenting or making a mistake. It is tremendously important in modern, sustainable societies based on empathy which appreciate the ability to make mistakes and accept the fact that the humankind does not know everything. This, in turn, requires daily use of soft skills such as, for instance, emotional intelligence.

A Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer which fulfils the needs of the contemporary world is also able to meet the expectations of increasingly conscious and demanding students. Nowadays young people do not desire higher education for the sake of it; instead, they want education which will ensure self-fulfilment and allow them to satisfy their needs. The 21st-century students are well aware of what it takes to achieve the assumed goals. They are also individualists who reluctantly follow the beaten path in one direction. Since the needs and challenges of the contemporary world are complex, the curricula (and hence the scope of knowledge, skills and social competence) should be diversified and freely composed by students in the designated scope. Individually completed study programmes should be flexibly shaped to meet the needs of students (and future graduates) which stem from the diversified tasks they must fulfil in the present reality. This enables the students to take advantage of their particular talents and traits and thus to develop in the ways designed by themselves. Study programme education is universal and general by nature, so it will never allow a student's individuality to be seen or utilized; this matter has always been subject to compromise. A Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer enables the students to create personalized curricula adjusted to their expectations and needs. Moreover, choosing the subjects strengthens the students' sense of responsibility for their development and improves their decision-making competence. Finally, the awareness of needs which translates into a free choice of modules allows the students to notice that they actively shape their own future.

4.1.2.c. The legal context: the universally binding provisions of law in Poland

As far as the legal context is concerned, one reason for introducing the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer into the curricula at the University of Silesia in Katowice was the need for providing all students (i.e. students of all programmes) with an arts or social sciences component within their studies. In accordance with the universally binding provisions of law (called top-down recommendations), i.e. Article 3(1)(7) of the Regulation of the Minister for Science and Higher Education of 27 September 2018 on studies (Journal of Laws of 2021, item 661), a curriculum must state the number of ECTS points that a student has to obtain for classes in arts or social sciences. For study programmes assigned to disciplines within fields other than arts or social sciences respectively, the minimum required ECTS number is 5. In other words, the curricula of study programmes assigned to disciplines within the field of arts must include subjects assigned to the field of social sciences, the curricula of study programmes assigned to disciplines within the field of social sciences must include subjects assigned to the field of arts, and the curricula of study programmes assigned to other disciplines must include subjects assigned to the field of arts or social sciences. The universally binding provisions of law do not stipulate an obligation to provide common subjects within university faculties (or other organizational units), much less an obligation to include the subjects assigned to the field of arts or social sciences in the pools available to a greater

number of universities. The obligation to provide suitable subjects (even if only for one study programme) in the offer rests with a given university, and its fulfilment is verified by the Polish Accreditation Committee (PKA) as part of accreditation procedures. The Committee acts as an independent entity based on the Act of 20 July 2018 – Higher Education and Science Law (Journal of Laws of 2022, item 574, 583, 655, 682, 807, 1010, 1079, 1117, 1459, and 2185), and has the right to conduct programme evaluation procedures. If the Committee negatively evaluates the quality of education within a study programme, the university has to cease that programme at the end of the semester in which the Committee's resolution becomes final. In the event that the semester ends in less than three months, the university has to cease the programme at the end of the next semester.

Therefore, the Polish legal system does not impose common teaching of the subjects required in addition to study programme education as part of a study programme. The relevant decision rests with the university itself. ECTS 5 is the minimum number, and universities can increase it. Moreover, the number of ECTS points for individual study programmes can be increased within one university (i.e. uniformity is not required).

4.1.3. Principles of managing the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offers (CGAO) at the University of Silesia in Katowice

At the University of Silesia in Katowice, the general university subjects – referred to as a 'general academic module', 'general academic module (social sciences)' or 'general academic module (arts)' – are covered by a Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer (CGAO). The goal of introducing the Offer was twofold. First, it was supposed to fulfil the obligation stemming from Article 3(1)(7) of the Regulation of the Minister for Science and Higher Education of 27 September 2018 on studies, which stipulates that a study programme must provide at least 5 ECTS points obtained by students via attending classes in arts or social sciences in the case of study programmes assigned to disciplines within fields other than arts or social sciences respectively. Second, the university wished to enable students to choose subjects from the relevant pool of modules. Where the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer has not been introduced, the obligation in question is fulfilled in the form of mandatory subjects covered by a study programme (which was actually the case before the Offer appeared). Presently, the Offer applies only to second-cycle studies, but it will also cover first-cycle studies and long-cycle studies as part of a teaching reform carried out at the University of Silesia in Katowice.

The Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer enriches the study programme education at second-cycle studies because it introduces content which corresponds to the students' interests and needs as they build their own paths to scientific and professional career. The Offer helps them improve their skills and acquire new competence by providing them with access to the full potential of the educational offer available at the University of Silesia in Katowice (subject to the conditions defined in the curricula of their study programmes).

The introduction of the 'general academic module', 'general academic module (social sciences)' and 'general academic module (arts)' into the curricula of the study programmes is stipulated in Article 5 and Article 9 of Resolution No. 490 passed on 28 January 2020 by the Senate of the University of Silesia in Katowice. Article 5 repeats Article 3(1)(7) of the Regulation of the Minister for Science and Higher Education of 27 September 2018 on studies. Article 9 states that the curricula of second-cycle studies should include modules of classes which can be carried out on the university level. The obligation to determine the organization of those classes was entrusted to the Rector, who fulfilled it by issuing Instruction No. 155 of 13 September 2021 on the manner of organizing the classes carried out on the university level. Under Article 3 of the Instruction, the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer is drafted by the AGO Council appointed by the Rector, who also appoints and dismisses its members. The Council ensures the appropriate subject matter level of the pool of subjects included in the Offer. It also controls whether the subjects fulfil the requirements defined in the Act, the Regulation of the Minister for Science and Higher Education of 27 September 2018 on studies, and Instruction No. 155 issued by the Rector. Finally, it supervises the subjects to ensure that they are appropriately taught. Information about the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer and the works of the AGO Council is published on the University's website. The organizational and administrative service of the Council is provided by the Department of Quality and Strategic Analyses – Office for Educational Quality Assurance of the University of Silesia. The Rector appointed the Council on 14 September 2021 under Article 14(3) of the Statute of the University of Silesia in Katowice and Article 3 of Instruction No. 155. The Council members are specialists in teaching organization who deal with various disciplines and work in different organizational units of the university. Such composition of the Council ensures appropriate subject matter supervision of the subjects taught within the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer at the individual faculties.



4.1.4. Levels of common nature / universality of the offer within the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offers (CGAO) at the University of Silesia in Katowice

4.1.4.a. Position of the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer (CGAO) in the organizational structure of teaching at the university

In accordance with the provisions of national and university law described above, the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer is available to students of all study programmes of second-cycle studies. Since full-time and part-time students should achieve the same learning outcomes, a decision was made to provide both groups with access to the Offer. The only difference is that the number of study hours for CGAO modules at part-time studies is lower (66% of the respective number of study hours at full-time studies) – but the number of points remains the same.

The CGAO modules of classes are divided into three pools: 'general academic modules', 'general academic modules (social sciences)' and 'general academic modules (arts)'. Classes within all the types of modules can be conducted by one teacher or co-conducted by teachers of one or more disciplines. However, the person who coordinates a general academic module of social sciences and conducts at least a half of its classes must be a teacher representing the field of social sciences. In the case of a general academic module of arts, the respective person must represent the field of arts.

4.1.4.b. Inter-university and international cooperation

The University of Silesia in Katowice has been carrying out the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer in its present shape for only two years. Therefore, the staff members prepare the Offer by themselves. The university does not currently cooperate with other schools in Poland or abroad in this scope. In line with the university's strategy, both research and teaching should be international in nature. Consequently, teaching-related actions are taken to create not only an inter-university (domestic) teaching offer, but also an international offer open to students and academic teachers from abroad. That is why persons from outside – both from the cultural, business and economic circles and from other Silesian universities (and, in the future, universities all over Poland) – are invited to cooperate and co-conduct classes. A successful attempt of reaching foreign students with the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer was the event organized as part of Transform4Europe: the Transform4Europe Week (9–13 May 2022). At that time, groups of approximately 20 students each came from seven countries of the Transform4Europe alliance and attended the CGAO subjects con-

ducted by researchers from the University of Silesia and its partner universities. Those included classes in social sciences, arts and new information technologies. Students of environmental sciences participated in field classes, during which, guided by Silesian experts, they discovered the specific nature of the Silesian region and its post-industrial conditions. The teaching offer for foreign participants was made available not only to those who attended the Transform4Europe Week in person: for the majority of 20 subjects, remote participation was also possible. This reflected the assumption of equal access to the entire event and to the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer itself.

One should mention here that the cooperation within the Transform4Europe alliance is based on a conviction that universities may play an important role in the European transformation processes, for instance by the teaching and training of students. That is why the educational programme for the Transform4Europe Week participants rested on three pillars: the digital, environmental and social transformation. Therefore, it corresponded with the assumptions of the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer.

4.1.4.c. The nature of the cross-disciplinarity provided by the subjects/courses in the Offer

The cross-disciplinary nature of the whole General Academic Offer at the University of Silesia in Katowice is evident at a first glance. The subjects forming the Offer are prepared by staff members representing nearly all fields of science, from arts (including music and plastic arts), through social and natural sciences, to exact sciences.

On the other hand, we truly wish for the proposed subjects to be as cross-disciplinary as possible. They should combine knowledge of various disciplines or fields, and their topics should include elements which come from or merge more than one discipline, field or even area of knowledge.

We also place particular emphasis on the universal nature of the modules, which means that students do not need to know the scientific basics in the discipline to which the outcomes of a given module refer.

The modules forming the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer present aspects of broadly defined knowledge of the world and the humankind, the current global problems and the opinion-forming concepts facilitating the understanding of human civilization and evolution in every sense of the word.

It is our priority to enable second-cycle students to choose from a wide range of subjects which follow diversified scientific approaches, combine various areas of scientific reflection, and include the most significant issues and phenomena of contemporary life.

The curricula include elective subjects – a general academic module, a general academic module (arts) or a general academic module (social sciences) – depending on the study programme. A student of each study programme chooses one, two or three subjects from the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer in accordance with the requirements defined in the relevant curriculum.

Before the next semester begins, the students are contacted using commonly available communication channels. We ask them to familiarize themselves with the syllabuses of the modules and to choose the one they consider the most interesting. All the subject syllabuses are drafted in advance and uploaded to the student management information system (USOS).

4.1.5. Shape and method of choosing/creating the offer of subjects within the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer (CGAO) at the University of Silesia in Katowice

The Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer enriches the study programme education at second-cycle studies because it introduces content which corresponds to the students' interests and needs as they build their own paths to scientific and professional career. The Offer is a pool of elective subjects chosen from among those proposed by the academic teachers employed at the University of Silesia in Katowice. Consequently, the Offer is not fixed: it is drafted every year, and its final shape is decided by the CGAO Council appointed by the Rector. Every academic teacher can propose subjects to be included in the Offer, acting either individually or as a representative of a two- or three-person team of teachers – authors of the syllabus of that subject, who would also conduct the classes afterwards (subjects forming the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer can be co-conducted). The subjects to be included in the final Offer for the next academic year are selected via a contest held in the preceding academic year, in accordance with the adopted rules and regulations. The contest is supervised by the CGAO Council, which is also responsible for the final shape of the Offer, i.e. the three pools of elective subjects (the 'general academic module', 'general academic module (social sciences)' and 'general academic module (arts)').

In view of the need for the education which ensures versatile development of students at the University of Silesia in Katowice, the content of the subjects within the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer includes cross-disciplinary problems elaborated and taught at the meeting of different fields and disciplines. However, it does not repeat directly the issues covered by the core classes of the study programmes carried out at the university.

The students choose the relevant number of subjects from the individual categories of the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer to obtain the number of ECTS points which they must gather on the general academic level as required by their study programme (the num-

ber of those points may differ among the programmes). The curricula of study programmes do not impose the form of the general academic classes (lecture, conversation, laboratory etc.); they only state the number of hours and ECTS points. The form of the classes, along with the number of hours and ECTS points, is defined by the academic teacher who enters the subject in the contest for the Offer. As a result of the students' choices, one subject may be attended by students of different programmes or even different faculties.

The Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer at the University of Silesia in Katowice is directed at students of various programmes. For example, a group may consist of students of law, mathematics, biology and English studies. The subjects within the Offer end with a graded credit (not an exam), and the way of obtaining the credit is set by the subject coordinator.

The subjects forming the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer can be conducted by one teacher or co-conducted by teachers of one or more disciplines. The teachers can cooperate according to various patterns; for instance, they can conduct a specified number of hours alternately (e.g. 10 + 20), or they can conduct classes alternately (e.g. every other class). The classes can be taught on site or remotely using appropriate methods and techniques of remote education. However, remote classes must be planned in the synchronous form. Since the classes may be attended by students of various programmes and faculties, remote teaching is actually the preferred form. The necessity of moving between the buildings of a campus or travelling between the campuses of the University of Silesia in Katowice would exclude a considerable group of interested students from attending classes on site.

Each subject within the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer can be taught in one of the following forms:

- lecture – limit: up to 150 students;
- conversation – limit: up to 30 students;
- practical exercises – limit: up to 25 students.

The teacher can propose another form of classes, and the AGO Council makes a decision concerning its acceptance. The Council may order a change of the number of class participants in justified cases. The subjects are taught in standard cycles (i.e. in regular distribution throughout the semester) or intense cycles (as blocks) – but always in the Polish or English language. They must be assigned an appropriate number of ECTS points (two or three), taking into account the conversion rate according to which one ECTS point corresponds to 15 hours of classes. The subjects should not assume such preliminary conditions of participation which would limit wide access for students. The designed classes can be more pragmatic in nature and thus practically applicable in the areas of the students' current interests and future professional projects. Alternatively, they could be more theoretical, e.g. metascientific,

allowing their participants to conduct a more comprehensive student research activity owing to the presentation or highlighting of cross-disciplinary or cross-field interlaces. The topics planned for the subjects within the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer can cover the basic knowledge of a given discipline, presented in a manner accessible to non-specialists, inspiring them to undertake self-development activities. At the same time, the subjects could deal with current problems which require scientific approaches and polyphonic discourses crossing the boundaries of fields.

Each academic teacher (or a team of two, three or four) can enter any number of subjects in the contest of the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer, taking into account the criteria and requirements defined in the contest rules and regulations.

The proposed subjects entered into the contest of the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer are evaluated according to the following criteria:

- universality: the access requirements do not include knowledge of the scientific basics in the discipline to which the learning outcomes refer;
- cross-disciplinarity: the discussed issues contain elements which come from or merge more than one discipline, field or even area of knowledge, including elements dealing with current problems which require scientific approaches and polyphonic discourses crossing the boundaries of fields;
- openness: the discussed issues permit open and flexible forms of teaching, allowing for the participation of students from various programmes and specializations at the University of Silesia in Katowice;
- stimulation potential: the subjects contribute to the broadening of the study programme competence by using content and forms which stimulate the students' self-development activities concerning current interests and future professional projects;
- originality: the discussed issues do not repeat directly the content covered by the core classes of the study programmes.

4.1.6. Implementation of Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer (CGAO) at the University of Silesia in Katowice in an academic year

4.1.6.a. Organization of administrative service

An administrative coordinator has been appointed at each faculty to ensure administrative service of the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer and thus facilitate the teaching of its subjects.

The names of subjects which win the contest are published in the USOS by the administrative coordinators of the faculties that employ the relevant staff members. Then, the coordinators of those modules are asked to supplement and approve the syllabus.

Before the (winter or summer) semester begins, electronic registration prepared by the administrative service staff is carried out: the students choose subjects by registering for a given module. Occasionally, a few modules from among those which won the contest are not launched. The administrative coordinator also has to find a classroom if the subject is to be taught on site.

Toward the end of the semester, the administrative coordinators generate credit reports.

4.1.6.b. Subject matter care

Each member of the AGO Council exercises subject matter care of the group of staff members at a given faculty or other inter-university units. The care consists in dealing with all matters concerning the teaching of a subject. In particular, it includes supervision of entering the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer into the USOSweb system. The Council member must also ensure that the academic teachers timely enter the module syllabuses and the students' learning outcomes into that system. After a module is completed, the Council member reads the results of the relevant student survey to verify the teaching of that subject i.a. on this basis.

4.1.6.c. The students' perspective

The modules within the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer have been given specially designated time slots.

At full-time studies, all the modules are taught on Mondays during afternoon blocks (01.45–08.30 pm). The subjects follow either standard cycles (i.e. regular distribution throughout the semester) or intense cycles (as blocks). The classes can be organized on site or in a remote

form. On-site classes take place mainly in the university buildings, but field classes are also allowed. In the case of remote classes, emphasis is placed on synchronous teaching.

Part-time students attend their Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer modules on Fridays from 05.15 pm. As is the case with full-time programmes, the classes can be scheduled in blocks or regularly distributed throughout the semester. The main teaching form is remote synchronous classes, but the hybrid form is also introduced at times, with one or two classes on site in addition to the dominant remote teaching. These aspects depend on the topic of the subject and the teacher's vision.

Both full-time and part-time students can find all of that information in the syllabuses prepared by the teachers.

Each subject within the Cross-disciplinary General Academic Offer ends with a credit (not an exam). The credit can take any form, which is defined by the teacher and presented to the students for mutual approval during the first class. The credit for each module is obtained in line with the same principles as those which govern any other subject within the study programme.

4.2. Bulgaria (Sofia University “ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI”)

4.2.1. Characteristics of the strategy and vision of education at the researched university

Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski is the main national high academic, research, cultural and information center of high international reputation in Bulgaria. The university excels in its scientific research and educational pursuits, both of which hold significant cultural and social value. It serves as the core of Bulgaria's scientific and cultural elite, enlightening the national self-consciousness and playing a vital role in the country's global contribution to science and education. Moreover, the university actively engages in shaping policies of national, regional, and international significance.

The university has been taking part in Erasmus program since 1999 and, referring to the excellent results achieved so far, expresses the will of the entire academic community to be actively involved in the Programme activities during the period 2021-2027, and confirms its commitment to the principles of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education.

The Vision of Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski:

Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski aspires to assert its position as a distinguished academic, scientific, and cultural center of European standing. The university's educational programs consistently meet rigorous European quality standards and strive to approximate the leading global benchmarks. It aims to maintain the highest level of best practices in the development, management, and implementation of scientific achievements that are vital to the progress of social life and individual experiences. Additionally, Sofia University seeks to expand its pivotal role in the establishment and development of projects, policies, and strategies that contribute to the overall advancement of the country. It dedicates its efforts to secure a leadership position in education, science, and key projects related to social development.

To achieve these objectives, Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski adheres to the following guiding principles:

- Principle of Professionalism: The university upholds top professional competence and demands impeccable performance from both faculty and personnel.
- Principle of Stakeholder Focus: Sofia University places a strong emphasis on catering to the needs and expectations of stakeholders, including clients and users of educational services and university activities.
- Principle of Continuous Improvement: The university is committed to a perpetual quest for better quality and endeavors to continuously enhance its educational services and activities.
- Principle of Prevention: Through ongoing monitoring, analysis, and prognostication, Sofia University proactively works to prevent the occurrence of negative events in its activities and the delivery of educational services.
- By upholding these principles, Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski aims to fulfill its mission, realize its vision, and maintain its esteemed position as an outstanding institution of higher education, groundbreaking scientific research, and profound cultural significance.

In view the sustainable results and multiplier effect to be outlined the analysis of the good practice includes description of the approach and the paths, underlying the design and delivery of CGAO at Sofia University. This gives an idea of the state-of-the-arts and outlines the future guidelines for the design, organization, and delivery of CGAO. Sofia University has presented in details 11 summer schools, covering different forms of summary schools in respect to target groups, student levels, scope, validation of completion and recognition, design, national and international scope.

4.2.2. General framework of The Cross-disciplinary Academic Offers (CGAO)

The main advantage of summer schools and offers are in their design (that takes into account both the bottom-up and the top-bottom approach), interactive methods of work and flexibility (annual feedbacks and updates). This ensures they are best tailored to the relevant target. All offers are subject to ongoing assessment and improvements in response to students and market demands, educational objectives, profile of the delivering institutional faculty and scientific advances.

The flexibility of the delivery is described below – there is no one size for all – so accounting for the positive effects it can be stated that both narrow and broad targeted offers, combining the external needs and academic profile, have their place. Diversity of the offers can cover all needs and there is no better form – they can be aligned with ECTS recognition and also optional in view to the difference in programmes, professional requirements, and their congruent and coherent supplementary role in respect to curricula.

What can describe the good practice of the university are the pillars underlying the offers.

The path of successful CGAO design and delivery includes two possible paths: bottom-up and top-bottom approaches, both of which have their benefits and can be considered complementary, not exclusive. The good practice includes good communication among departments and faculties of the university, among universities on national and international level. This specific networking is key for updated and demands oriented offer with sustainable results.

Departments and faculties have the best idea of their target groups, needs and wider area of expertise, beneficial for students. They follow the national and international demands, the interests of students and keep in line with the common expertise. They are also most aware of the national and international recognition requirements. Cross-disciplinarity is attained due to the fluent communication and joint efforts, combining different expertise in finding answers to the social, economic, and technological challenges.

The CGAO in broadest extent has to meet students' expectations and market demands and to be in line with the legal requirements in the respective professional areas. The environmental factors have also significant impact. The new global trends, accenting on competence and lifelong development, the new professional and career paths, pose the important question of soft skills development and formation of attitude to transdisciplinarity and constant track of developments not only in profession, but also on the related disciplines.

Thus, the CGAO fulfils two goals – it delivers specific expertise and personal competence for development and competence for career development. Education received at school and university today is not sufficient for competitiveness in the labour market because

of the dynamic environment and the gap of constant changes in demands and expectation. Within this broad framework CGAO can be viewed as a promoter of knowledge, skills and competences for lifelong development and strive for it. This mindful attitude is extremely important today, but it should be remembered that this mindset has a long history. Just two more recent examples are the famous phrase "Once you stop learning, you start dying" - Albert Einstein and Alvin Toffler, who said in 1930 that the illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read or write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn.

Today we don't speak about professional, but for career development – statistical data reveal the average number of seven occupations, changed through the personal career life. The relatively new theory of emerging adulthood extends the period of psychosocial maturity to 29 years of age, the period 18-29 referred to as "the age of identity explorations, instability, self-focus, feeling in-between (adolescence and adulthood), and possibilities.

The pressure of the social and economic environment, posing new musts to young people and reorganizing the labour market and the demands of students on the other hand change also the educational environment, posing more and more focus on interaction and use not only of attractive methods, tailored to students' needs, but also change of the focus and shift to cross-disciplinary and trans-disciplinary approach and integration of much wider range of competences.

This background is accounted for in offers general design with focus on learning by doing. Retention rates of various learning methods clearly give preference to the learning by doing method – the average retention rates of various learning methods are learning by doing / teaching others 80%, practice by doing 75%, discussion groups 50%, demonstration 30%, audio visual 20%, reading 10% and lectures 5%.

Below are summarized 11 summer schools. They have different specificity and common points, outlining the same general concept to the design.

Good example is given in the summary of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Sofia University:

The summer school is conceived as avant-garde oriented, in the spirit of free choice, without parallel sections, with a strong discussion character, improvised, low-cost. In the modern conditions of rapid scientific and technical development in all areas of human activity, the constant construction of a high level of methodological knowledge of young researchers in the field of economic management is an imperative necessity. The delineation of long-term research tasks in this field has a strategic importance, especially for young researchers, assistants, PhD students and students. Last but not least is the issue of strengthening the methodological training of young researchers in the process of developing their research and shaping it as the backbone of Bulgarian economic and management science.

The summer school sets itself the following tasks:

- Creating an attitude to study and apply scientific methods in research;
- Winning the hearts and minds of learners to apply the scientific method;
- Permanent change in the attitudes of the trainees;
- Upgrade of knowledge and skills for scientific work compared to the previous editions of the Summer School;
- Highlight cutting-edge, long-term relevant research directions in the field of management science;
- Indication of the possibilities of application in practice of the most modern management methods;
- A major emphasis is on learning essential and current research methods;
- Special attention is paid to active teaching methods in order to improve teaching qualifications, especially for young assistants.

Having this framework below are outlined the summer schools and the paths – target groups, validation, terms of organization, delivery and update, scope, methods, and last is given the summary of the consolidated good practice.

4.2.3. Reasons for introducing the CGAO at our university

The good practice for Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski is described in 11 summer schools, offering subjects that are characterized by their interdisciplinary content. Despite the specificity of each summer school, the design of all of them follow the universality and interdisciplinary approach. The individual disciplines included are coherently organized in response to the need of wider supplementary training. Summer schools are within the profile of the university and most of all, of the faculties, enriching and extending the general preparation of students. Below are the national summer schools. International offers are included in the description of the next path.

The Faculty of Economics and Business Administration delivers *Summer School on Research Methods 2019*, *Summer Academy for Taxes and Duties*, and *Summer school on modelling and complex systems 2022*.

The Faculty of Geology and Geography organizes *Summer field practice „Natural and Socio-Economic Geography of Bulgaria”*. The selection of the Summer field practice Natural and Socio-Economic Geography of Bulgaria has been made after a detailed review of 21 summer study practices, an integral part of the curricula of the Bachelor programs:

„Geography”, „Regional Development”, „Geospatial Systems and Technologies”, „Tourism”, „Geology” - Faculty of Geology and Geography, Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski”.

The Faculty of Educational Studies and the Arts offers *field practices*, organized all-year-round, including in summer in addition to the curriculum in its own centres, opened for users - university staff and the general public – the *Kids Academy and the Therapeutic Centre*, delivering care and training for children and speech therapy services. The practices in Kid's Academy and Therapeutic Centre are conformed to the specificity of education and holidays of children and pupils and fewer service users' demand during holiday periods.

The Faculty of Slavic Studies has *Summer School of Bulgarian Language and Culture*. The summer school has been held every summer since 1962. The duration of the training is three weeks and usually takes place in the last three weeks of July. About 60-90 students take part in the School.

The Faculty of Philosophy organizes *Crisis, conflict, integration: crosscutting thematic areas and practices in the social sciences and the humanities*. Target group are PhD students. The Faculty has various types of doctoral summer schools, responding to the interests of PhD students in different disciplines: One-week to 10 days with mostly local lecturers, some foreign lecturers and a lot of practical work with doctoral students from Sofia University (conducted in Bulgarian); International doctoral summer schools with participants from different countries in which collaboration between them is a main purpose (duration of a week and a mixture of lecturers from different countries); Shorter doctoral summer schools with one foreign institution (leading, innovative in doctoral studies) with the aim of exchanging of best practices and improving quality of doctoral education. Interdisciplinary doctoral summer schools involve lectures and doctoral students from different academic fields.

4.2.4. CGAO management rules

In general, the summer schools at Sofia University are separate offers, chosen by students. Usually offers are managed on faculty level, having coordinator and involving academic staff. Students, choosing to participate, are both students, selecting obligatory courses, included in the study programme, and interested students, including students from other faculties and postgraduates.

Summer schools of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration are two types – specialized and general. The first ones are designated to advanced level master students and early-stage PhD students, and the second to students – bachelor, master, PhD, and postgraduates - lawyers, practitioners from the public administration, consultants, business. The groups are combined groups of students from various cycles, years, directions, universities. Summer schools take place at the end of the academic year (June) and in August (at the beginning of the academic year for the advanced schools and in July for the wider targeted Summer Academy for Taxes and Duties).

The all-year-round practice, delivered by the Faculty of Educational Sciences and the Arts is open for all university students, bachelor, master, PhD, from the seven faculty departments, combining and extending their knowledge, skills and competence in education, speech therapy, social services, etc.

The summer school of the international offer of the Faculty of Law has as a target the group of master students.

The summer school of the Faculty of Slavic Studies targets students of all levels of study, as well as teachers, translators, diplomats, journalists.

The PhD summer schools organized by the Faculty of Philosophy, are open for the PhD students from all the 16 faculties of the university. PhD students can choose which summer school to attend, but it is mandatory to have ECTS from a summer school or similar event with a longer than 5 days duration.

4.2.5. CGAO commonality levels

The good practice can be found in offers both for selected degrees, modes of study, or fields of study and offers designed for all educational level and different areas / specialties. The interdisciplinary nature of the offer is best seen when looking at the offer as a whole.

Sofia University has experience in creation of joint offers with other countries, whereas the organization and delivery are divided between the delivering universities depending on the particular subjects included.

The master's program Customs and Tax Control team at the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski together with Ernst & Young Bulgaria organizes in the period 15-19 July 2020 *Summer Academy for Taxes and Duties*. The training is implemented remotely from the Center for Educational Services of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration.

The summer school of the *Faculty of Law Sofia Human Rights Summer School*, organized jointly with Erga Omnes Center for International Law has lecturers from Sofia University, Georgetown University, University of Essex and University of Oxford and Faculty/University administration - the selection of the Summer field practice.

Faculty of Philosophy offers International summer schools for PhD students *The idea of Europe and its borders in social sciences and the humanities* - 25.06-02.07.2016, *Interdisciplinary Summer Doctoral School* and jointly with Sofia University and European University Institute, Florence Summer school for doctoral students *Research Methods in Social Sciences and the Humanities* 24-27.06.2019.

4.2.6. Implementation of CGAO in a given academic year

Offers of the faculties are visible and students get information from the official web pages. Provided is complete information concerning registration, protocols of credits, etc. Each offer is subject to monitoring the quality of education and has rigorous rules for offer evaluation. The offers differ in number of days and place of organization. Some offers include remote classes. The specificity of the offers relates to reflection and recognition of the results and some of them give ECTS, while other are part of the studies or are not recorded in the academic record.

The summer school organized by the Faculty of Geology and Geography is for bachelors in their third year of a four-year curriculum (semester VI)/ in different bachelor programmes, it is organized in June and gives 4 ECTS for the 160 hours. The module is included in the curriculum and is a compulsory one.

The practice, organized by the Faculty of Educational Sciences and the Arts is available to bachelors, masters, and PhD students. The Kid's Academy and the Therapeutic Centre provide an opportunity for field practice – observation and work under supervision for students in their second year of study until completion of their studies. The offer is open throughout the year, whereas each year the content of the curricula and programmes is updated. New modules offered to children and pupils are developed. Since 2022 one of the new modules is peer-to-peer exchange, students from Speech therapy programs promote language skills to students of Media pedagogy, who in turn promote the rhetoric competence to students in Speech and Language Therapy programmes. It is an additional module freely chosen as a supplementary offer (e.g., as an additional form of gaining competence outside the education program at the University). Concerning the Therapeutic Centre, it is an open offer at the Faculty, a part of the 300 hours practice.

Summer schools of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration have 45 hours for the general form and for the advanced summer schools there is no official recognition of ECTS credits, roughly 50 contact study hours lectures, and about 25 working hours for group assignments. The practice is the offer to be new each year, although if the demand and the interest remain stable, the offer can stay several years. Academy for Taxes and Duties is an ongoing initiative. The Academy was held on 22-24 April 2021 and in November 2022 with representatives of Tax and Customs administration. The aim of the offer is gaining competence outside the education program at the university. The advanced summary schools are supplementary modules for everyone else and elective modules for some of the PhD students.

Faculty of Law organizes the summer school between the first and the fifth year of a five-year curriculum (semesters I-X) „Law” and between the first and fourth year of a four-year curriculum (semesters I-VIII) „International relations” with combined groups of students from

the MA Program in Law and the BA Program in International relations. The students have lectures on several different topics: Introduction to Human Rights, Absolute rights, Freedom of speech, Legal representation of minor migrants, The right to life: positive and negative obligations and others and also participate in moot court simulations. Summer school of the Faculty of Law does not give ECTS and is an additional module freely chosen as a supplementary offer.

Faculty of Slavic Studies organizes the summer school after completing a language test, students are assigned to 6 language groups with different levels. Participants from advanced groups can participate in seminars in Bulgarian language and translation or in Bulgarian literature and cultural anthropology of Bulgarians. In the groups for students and underdeveloped students there are five academic classes General Bulgarian language, and in the advanced logs - 3 hours of General Bulgarian language and 2 hours of seminary classes. Lectures in language, translation, literature and anthropology are mandatory. Afternoon classes on learning Bulgarian folk songs and dances are optional.

PhD summer schools, organized by the Faculty of Philosophy are included in the individual plan of doctoral students in accordance with the Doctoral Programme Curriculum. Participation is accredited as listed. There are three categories of activities: 1) studies; 2) research activities and 3) pedagogical activities. Summer (winter depending on the time) schools come under doctoral studies. Different Doctoral Programme Curricula accredit differently this activity. For example, the Doctoral Programme in Political Science and European Studies envisages 5 ECTS for participation in Summer schools with a duration of 30 academic hour lectures and 120 academic hours attendance and preparation. Presentations and seminars on the topic of the dissertation are accredited separately (on average 5 ECTS). In any case awarding ECTS is a must if the doctoral programme is credit-based. The ECTS are 3 either 5 credits for attendance/participation in discussions; 10 credits for presentation and discussion of their work.

4.2.7. Organization and methods delivery and update of CGAO

In most of the cases academic offers are fixed and subjects are replaced or added as needed. All offers are regularly updated based on the research of demand (bottom-up and top-bottom) and the feedback from the participants. Update of offers include the demand from external stakeholders and discussions and consultations involve all teachers who are part of the offer.

The summer school organized by the Faculty of Geology and Geography is organized outside the university: Thematic itinerary of 1500–2000 km, including representative geographical sites in the country and is renewed annually.

The practice, organized by the Faculty of Educational Sciences and the Arts is all-year-round and ECTS are not provided, since at this stage the practice is designated to volunteers and additional qualification, attested by a certificate.

Faculty of Economics and Business Administration organizes the summer schools in two forms. Those targeted at broader audience with training was implemented remotely from the Center for Educational Services of the Faculty of Economics using MsT. The advanced schools include as a key element of the summer school the location – being very important that the school is held at a remote (mountain & woods) area, so that there are conditions for concentrated work while staying away from the temptations of big cities and resorts.

Summer school at the Faculty of Law takes place in August / September at the University and the offer is fixed and permanent.

The Faculty of Slavic Studies holds the summer school annually in July. The seminar is held in a training base, which is located at the foot of Lozen Mountain - 15 km from the centre of Sofia.

The summer schools of the Faculty of Philosophy (involving PhD students from all faculties of the Sofia University and open for international students from universities with which Sofia University is collaborating) are for doctoral students at any of the three years of their studies, before or just after defence / examination and MA students with potential and interest in PhD studies. The Offer of the Faculty of Philosophy is annual. Conference/resort centre in Kiten is a traditional place for organization of summer schools in June and September. Schools are also organized at points, specially chosen for the concrete event.

4.2.8. Methods of CGAO delivery

The summer school organized by the Faculty of Geology and Geography comprises a combination of lectures (including guest lecturers or meetings with local business representatives, authorities, academics), practical seminars, discussions, group research tasks and post-practicum presentations. The form of students' learning is teamwork during practical sessions and additional reporting on an individual assignments. Verification of learning outcomes is constant monitoring of participation / public presentation with discussion.

The practice organized by the Faculty of Educational Sciences and the Arts is a combination of lectures, demonstrations and observation of consulting practice at the therapeutic hall, work under supervision and development of own programmes both at Kid's Academy and the Therapeutic Centre. The form of learning is individual work and work with a tutor. For verification of learning outcomes students develop their own education and consulting programmes as part of their coursework and practice and the final assessment is for the authored education and consulting programmes.

Summer schools of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration are delivered as lectures, workshops, projects (about 1/3 each); active - independent work of the participants before and during the training; interactive - active interaction between the trainer and the participants, group work, discussions, work/interaction of the participants with modern information technologies. Verification of learning outcomes is by means of monitoring of participation, public presentations with discussions, constant monitoring of participation and Q&A sessions, requirement for presentation of newly learned skills at a scientific conference.

The international offer of the Faculty of Law includes a combination of lectures (including guest lecturers from Georgetown University, University of Essex, Merton College, University of Oxford and Jesus College, University of Oxford) and moot court simulations with teamwork during practical sessions (the moot court simulations).

The offer of the Faculty of Slavic Studies includes as methods of teaching lectures, seminars, practical classes, discussion, individual and teamwork. Verification of results is constant monitoring of participation, language tests, final exam.

PhD summer schools of the Faculty of Philosophy are organized as team work projects for students (for summer schools of one week or longer). Schools are outside the university for longer doctoral summer schools and university-based for short doctoral summer schools, especially when organized in collaboration with other institutions (avoid travelling inside the country). Outside the university is used the Conference/ Resort house of the University in Kiten (Black Sea coast) and at the University - Hall 1 with 80 seats.

Methods of delivery are: Q&A sessions, practical classes for presentation and discussion of own research; sessions for discussion of difficulties doctoral students' meetings; lectures by researchers and professors from different faculties and international guest lecturers (whereas each lecture ends with discussion); moderated sessions for presentation of PhD research with moderators young researchers; seminars and workshops; special sessions during which the participants present their own research and receive feedback from reviewers (keynote speakers); presentation of PhD research before other PhD students. Forms of work include Individual preparation, participation in discussions, individual projects, workshops with a tutor: special thematic sessions and workshops for review of their own work. Verification of learning outcomes: Certificates for 3/5 ECTS credits, which are recorded in the individual annual reports.

4.2.9. Summary

The summer schools differ in general and specific competence, target groups, scope, and recognition, compulsory and optional schools. Some of them are narrower targeted, others are open to the wide audience including practicing postgraduates. Delivery is indoor and outdoor, including a blended form. All they, however, have common pipeline – widening

competences and expertise, interactive form of work, promoting an interdisciplinary view, Interactive form of work and learning by doing and constant strife after quality.

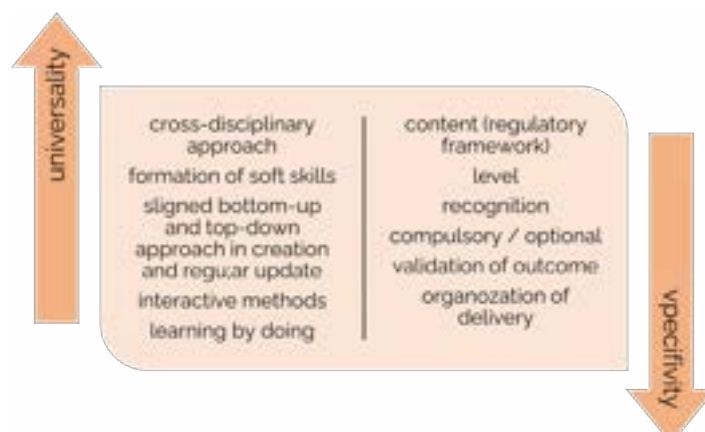
Concerning the study levels all the four levels – first and second-cycle students, PhD studies and long-cycle studies – are represented. Also, despite the differences, both extrinsic and intrinsic justifications are highlighted – broadening the offered elective courses, targeted educational quality – broader competence and knowledge, preparing students for career development, indicating the CGAO in the same way as the programmes are based on regulatory requirements, conformed to constant quality assurance and update of the offers depending on the social and economic demands.

All offers are interactive in respect of methods and even when include the traditional lectures, they are followed by discussions. Methods include discussions, individual and group projects, presentations, research, workshops; practical classes in individual and group work and work with tutor.

It has to be noted also the common path of creation and update of the offers, which is annual and includes external demands, students' interests and consultation with the academic staff. Update is further based on the feedback from participants and all accounted risks, as a key to quality management. Fixed subjects are replaced or supplemented and are regularly updated depending on students' interest in particular subjects, university mission, and demand of students for a new course and accounting for the labour market demands.

Also, despite the differences, both extrinsic and intrinsic justifications are highlighted – broadening the offered elective courses, targeted educational quality – broader competence and knowledge, cross-disciplinary approach, preparing students for career development, indicating the CGAO in the same way as the programmes are based on regulatory requirements, conformed to constant quality assurance and update of the offers depending on the social and economic demands.

The analysed practice clearly suggests that there are a number of factors to be considered in the design of sustainable international CGAO. It shall have high flexibility to be adapted to national requirements, university-based needs, students' expectations and external stakeholders demands and always the bottom-up and top-bottom approaches to go hand in hand.



4.3. Lithuania (Vytautas Magnus University)

4.3.1. Characteristics of the strategy and vision of education at the researched university

Vytautas Magnus University (hereinafter VMU) is a classical university based on the common beliefs and values of freedom, openness and dialogue, and orientated towards humanistic culture. VMU provides degree studies of all three cycles – bachelor, master and PhD studies which cover a broad spectrum of fields ranging from humanities, social sciences and arts to the fundamental sciences, environmental sciences and biotechnologies.

Vytautas Magnus University's Liberal Arts education profile, with core emphasis on studying broadly themed subjects, ensures that the studies offered at VMU are comprehensive, they are not restricted to specialized, pre-defined subjects. VMU's liberal study policy lets students themselves plan their studies by choosing general study courses and part of the study field courses, they also have the possibility to move from one study programme to another and change the form of studies. Alongside a bachelor's degree diploma of their major specialty, VMU graduates can also get a certificate of minor studies and later apply for master's degree programme of another study field.

The mission of VMU is to be a community-based research, art and study institution, which pursues the mission of the University of Lithuania, established in Kaunas in 1922, creates liberal learning conditions for an individual, develops partnerships, takes active part in the life of Lithuania, advances the future of the country, and contributes to the global cultural and academic development.

The Strategic Plan of VMU is based on 5 fields with more detailed groups of objectives:

1. Community in harmony and consolidation.
2. International research university.
3. Studies 360.
4. Integrity of self-governance and responsibility.
5. University impact on societal development.

Strategic goals are implemented on the basis of predetermined tasks and in order to achieve the intended indicators.

The goals and objectives are defined in the VMU Strategy, and the VMU Strategic Plan for 2021-2027 specifies the measures and indicators aimed at responding to the University's vision – to be one of the strongest, wide-ranging universities in the Baltic region, fostering the principles of Artes liberales, bringing together a community to build the future of Lithuania and Europe.

4.3.2. Reasons to introduce Cross disciplinary General Academic Offer

Vytautas Magnus University focuses on interdisciplinary study offer and wide scope education. Studying at VMU means obtaining an all-round education conveying core competencies and abilities such as a broader understanding of global issues and society, the capacity for problem analysis and critical thinking, a spirit of inquisitiveness enabling one to adapt to new knowledge and promoting an attitude of lifelong learning, all of which empower one to make informed judgements as an individual and act confidently as a leader.

The intention for Vytautas Magnus University to focus on the inter or cross disciplinary study offers is based on various reasons. Inter-disciplinary studies that train students to adapt more easily in an uncertain, ambiguous environment. It also allows and encourages the freedom of communication, creativity and lack of hierarchy in the university community, encouraging curiosity and entrepreneurship. Cross disciplinary approach ensures the development of critical thinking, analytic thinking, encourages the development of problem solving competencies. Ability to tackle problems from various perspectives, thinking outside the box. Also in line with the life long learning, the cross disciplinary approach paves the way for stackability of competencies, building your own study path and joining unexpected study fields in the search for solutions, learning and seeking maximum knowledge from different fields.

In accordance and seeking to adapt to ever changing modern world, University encourages students and staff to focus on building competencies for the future, working in interdisciplinary, inter-cultural environments and being able to reach solutions – being able to network. It is important to build competencies of resilience: staying aware of new info, making sense of it and reinventing, innovating and solving problems and at the same time nurturing the imagination and helping achieve the creation of meaning. The Artes liberales approach allows various pathways, including lifelong learning offers and a flexible academic recognition process.

4.3.3. Cross disciplinary offer commonality levels

4.3.3.a. Artes liberales courses for students

Vytautas Magnus University offers various ways for cross disciplinary education. The university follows the liberal study policy, which lets students themselves plan their studies, decide when and what subjects to take, they also have the possibility to move from one study programme to another, and change the form of studies.

During the Bachelor studies, a student is obligated to choose a significant part of his study courses from the Artes Liberales group of subjects. Artes liberales general university study subject groups – courses of the main science and art area studies provided at the University which aim at the development of generic skills, including foreign languages. The BA level subjects all in all are divided into three groups: A, B and C. Group A (Artes liberales courses) consists of introductory courses to various branches of science and areas. They are divided into 4 subgroups (Biomedical and Physical Sciences, Humanities, Social Sciences, Arts) and Foreign Languages group. During the first 2 years one has to choose at least one subject from all 4 subgroups.

During BA level studies, a lot of attention is paid to teaching foreign languages. Students are offered the opportunity to study languages at the Centre of Foreign Languages. VMU students have to reach level C1 of the English language and acquire the basics in computer literacy, if they do not have them as obligatory subjects.

The Group B comprises the subjects which are chosen freely. Group C consists of the subjects of the student's chosen study programme (speciality).

In a study program design, the first-cycle **one-field** study programme shall consist of 210 or 240 credits, including study field courses (including practice and final thesis), which shall comprise not less than 120 credits, artes liberales general university study courses, which shall comprise not less than 56 credits. If the programme requires taking studies in another field (including minor studies in pedagogics) which are allocated 60 credits, then artes liberales general university study courses shall comprise less than 40 credits.

The first-cycle **two-field** 240 credit study programme shall require taking study courses in both fields and artes liberales general university study courses shall consist of not less than 16 credits. A two field programme shall comply with the requirements indicated in descriptions of both fields.

The first-cycle **interfield** study programme shall consist of 210 or 240 credits, including courses of the main study field (including practice and final thesis), which shall consist of not less than 120 credits, artes liberales general university study courses, which shall consist

of not less than 40 credits and study courses of another/other study field(-s), which shall consist of the rest credits.

A student shall choose at least one study course from all four science field course groups (not less than 16 credits), except for a course of the same study field as the student's major study programme. Group A study courses shall be taken during the first two study years.

As an examples, these are the possible courses for Artes liberales subject groups:

1. Nature Science, Technological and Agricultural Sciences group:
 - a. Bioethics
 - b. Biology
 - c. Information society technologies
2. The Humanities group:
 - a. Lithuanian history
 - b. Philosophy
 - c. Rhetoric
3. Creative Arts and Design group:
 - a. Media art
 - b. Architecture
 - c. Cinema
4. Social Sciences group:
 - a. Psychology
 - b. Political science
 - c. Media literacy
 - d. Education sciences.

4.3.3.b. Minor study programmes

Alongside a Bachelor's degree diploma of their major specialty, VMU graduates can also get a certificate of minor studies and later apply for a Master's degree programme of another study field. Minor studies – studies covering the fundamentals of a specific study field, the completion of which provides preparation for further studies or for professional activity.

A certificate of minor studies is issued after completion of these studies. Combination of major and minor studies ensures the possibilities for students to venture and collect competencies in various study fields while studying in their chosen primary study programme. VMU encourages you to learn and seek maximum knowledge from different fields, not to mention, the vast amount of languages available to learn.

Minor studies shall be provided in compliance with the Description of procedure for organisation of minor studies, approved by the Rector. The programme consists of the courses taught in the first cycle or integrated study programmes. Minor study programme may be chosen by the first-cycle and second-cycle, also integrated and professional study programme students and unclassified students. The first-cycle and integrated study programme students may start their studies in the minor study programme from the first semester, and may continue minor studies while studying in a Master's degree programme as unclassified students. The courses taken in other programmes may be recognised as minor study programme courses if they help to achieve the set minor study programme learning outcomes. A minor study programme certificate shall be issued having completed minor studies.

Vytautas Magnus university gives the possibility to choose from 45 minor study programmes in 13 study fields, mixing and matching different study fields. There are up to 30 languages to add to students profile. A student shall choose language courses the volume of which is not less than 12 credits and not more than 24 credits from the Subgroup of Foreign Languages, which consists of the mandatory English language and other foreign language courses taught at the University.

Besides typical minor degree study programmes, available as an individual study path, Vytautas Magnus university develops additional alternative choices of Individual study programme for early research with tutoring and Minded VMU entrepreneurship academy minor studies. These are specific individual study programmes available as an option for students to study alongside their major study programme and gain either research experience and skills, or entrepreneurship competencies.

4.3.3.c. Alternative introductory courses

Vytautas Magnus University in a students' individual plan has programmed an opportunity to include alternative introductory courses. Group B – alternative introductory courses of various fields taught in another study programme than the one studied by the student. The list of Group B study courses shall be approved by the Rector annually. Credits allocated for this group (16 credits) may be used by the student freely, choosing study courses from both Group B and Group A (mentioned above artes liberales courses).

In general these are the introductory level courses from other study fields and or study programmes, usually from the first or second BA study programmes year that do not need specific prerequisites and a student from any study programme can take the course as an alternative one. Examples for alternative introductory courses are these: Critical social work (Social work study programme), Labour law (Law integrated study programme), Leadership (Business management study programme), Italian art history (Italian languages and cultures study programme), Crop science (Agronomy study programme), Language of contemporary art (New media art study programme), Technologies, innovations and entrepreneurship (Biology and genetics study programme).

4.3.3.d. Other cross disciplinary options

Vytautas Magnus University, paying a lot of attention and encouraging interdisciplinary approaches for students always seeks new ways of incorporating various cross disciplinary offers in the curriculum. A very important path is international cross disciplinary offers that are ensured through flexible though quality academic recognition processes and regulations. University, being part of the alliance of European universities – **Transform4Europe** – joined the initiative to prepare and or create **Bachelor tracks** – a collection of specific competencies oriented courses, leading to one of many specialty certificates. The three main areas of BA tracks, developed together with the alliance member universities are Environmental transformation and sustainability, Digital transformation and smart regions and Societal transformation, inclusivity and community building. A track, amounting to 15-24 ECTS is created by courses from different universities according to some special subtopic, leading to a certificate. The selection which is being expanded every semester not only gives the possibility of interdisciplinary studies, but also the international aspect as well.

The Transform4Europe alliance is convinced that successful transformation to face future challenges like digital, environmental, and societal transformation processes needs individuals who are capable and prepared to act as smart agents of change and as true and committed European citizens. It describes the mindset and competences needed to become active agents in the European transformation process now and in the future.

The creation of a transversal portfolio of integrated modules and joint curricula is a central task within the Transform4Europe alliance. It represents the precondition to scale up and enhance structured collaborative programmes in education that allow the students to better design their study tracks with the guarantee that their choices will be relevant, coherent, and fully recognized and integrated into programmes offered within the consortium.

Another option being designed for students, that seek additional interdisciplinary study offers is created as an interuniversity study offer in Kaunas city universities. **Academic Kaunas** – a one of several collaboration schemes among Kaunas city universities – Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuanian University of Health Sciences and Lithuanian Sports University. The idea is to allow students from all those four universities to choose freely subjects from other Kaunas universities and through the academic recognition process recognize them into or above their study programme. Every year a selection of courses from all the universities are offered for students to choose from and students are registered in those courses, get assessed, graded and later can get those courses recognized in their or above their study programmes. The selection of courses is expanded every year, 5 BA courses from each of the universities are being offered for the selection, a list of foreign languages and 2 MA courses. The initiative proved to be a very successful one, more than 150 students applied for the courses in the year 2022.

Academic Kaunas also has been developing an interdisciplinary course, designed by teachers from all 4 Kaunas universities, highlighting their areas of expertise and combining interdisciplinary approaches, innovative teaching methods and collaboration, team work from all the different study fields. The course is being designed and will be ready for selection from the 2023 Autumn semester. It is a complex design not only in a conceptual way, but also a challenge in organisational aspect in a study processes in different universities. An ambitious collaboration is a new way to introduce and expand the possibilities for interdisciplinary studies – at a course level, which is not always a usual way.

Cross disciplinary offer for MA students differs from the one for BA students. It rarely includes University wide selection of courses, except from Foreign languages that are available for everyone. It depends on the study programme – how interdisciplinary or oriented towards one study field it is, but it is up to a study programme committee to include interdisciplinary choices. Some faculties have a selection of elective courses available for all the MA study programmes in that faculty. Having in mind that MA study programmes do not have an integrated Artes liberales courses, University encourages study programme committees to include more elective options for MA students. Elective courses are designed in every BA and MA programmes, so the source for elective courses can become a way to integrate courses from other study fields or interdisciplinary courses as such.

Summer schools, winter schools, intensive mobility weeks are also a common practice to include cross disciplinary offer for students. A course prepared for summer school, intensive mobility week is offered as an open call for not only Vytautas Magnus university students, but for international collaboration also, such as T4E alliance partnering universities. The course, taken by students, can and is almost always recognized into or above their study programme. For such courses relevant problems are chosen that are usually either cross disciplinary by nature or delves into another study field.

4.3.4. Management rules

Some cross disciplinary offers are created as a separate offer, a list of subjects for the whole university students. For example Artes liberales courses, A group, is a list of subjects that go through series of approval in various University committees. It is a list that is being renewed through time, according to labour market needs, relevancy and so on. For example the most recent course added to the list is media literacy, concerning the digcomp framework and clearly expressed need to distinguish propaganda and disinformation.

For a course to be approved for Artes liberales list, available every semester for selection by BA students, the course must be accredited by the special commission. According to [course attestation procedure](#), the course for Artes liberales list must firstly be approved as an idea by the Rectorate of VMU, it must be accredited by the faculty/academy and then submitted to the attestation commission of the Artes liberales courses. 5 commissions are confirmed for 5 subgroups of Nature science, technological and agricultural sciences, the Humanities, Social sciences, Arts and Foreign languages. These rules are confirmed in Study regulations:

Group A, artes liberales courses, include the University study courses of science and art areas, which aim at acquisition of knowledge and skills in various study areas, and foreign languages. The study courses of A group shall be attested by A study group attestation committees and approved by the Senate. They shall consist of 4 science field groups and one foreign language subgroup:

- Nature Science, Technological and Agricultural Sciences;
- The Humanities;
- Social Sciences;
- Arts;
- Foreign Languages.

Alternative introductory courses, available for selection of BA study programme students – Group B courses shall be selected from the list of Group C, specialty, courses and do not require individual attestation, because they are already accredited by the study programme committee and renewed obligatory every three years. Every year faculties and academies submit their alternative introductory courses for confirmation and publish them for students to choose every semester.

Minor study programs shall be prepared by the units that provide studies and shall be approved by the councils of faculties or academies. They consist of study courses taught in the first cycle or integrated study programs of a particular study field. University artes liberales study courses studied in the major study program may be validated as the courses of the

minor study programme. Minor study programme is accredited by the council of a faculty or academy and is available for students to choose from. Some minor study programmes require a contest to be accepted (such as Individual Academia Cum Laude study programme, Minded entrepreneurship minor study programme, New media art, Pedagogy or Performing arts study programme). Courses that a minor study programme consists of are already included and accredited in the study programme and included in the quality assurance process for the study programme.

All the alternative options for cross disciplinary offers have various ways of management and include different units of University. For example a summer school course can be accredited by the council of a faculty, BA tracks, available for international interdisciplinary offer are accredited within the study programme they come from and selected every semester according to additional parameters, such as distant course or course, taught in English.

4.3.5. Student perspective

Vytautas Magnus University prides itself as being a liberal arts university and promotes various ways of cross disciplinary studies, so the student is mostly informed about the possible options. During the orientation week all the possibilities are introduced and student can put his individual study plan by himself according to several major rules. Every semester students shall design their individual study plans in compliance with the study timetable, specific study programmes and the requirements of the Study Regulations.

Designing their individual study plans, full-time students shall be obliged to choose study courses to be studied during the semester, the volume of which shall be not less than 24 and not more than 36 credits. The students of integrated studies choose courses the volume of which shall be not less than 14 and not more than 26 credits. The volume of one study year of full-time studies shall be 60 credits, of integrated studies – 45 credits. If a student studies in a minor or individual study programme, the volume of semester study courses shall not exceed 42 credits.

During the first 4 semesters the first-cycle students shall complete Group A study courses (not less than 16 credits) and foreign languages (not less than 12 and not more than 24 credits) as well as alternative introductory study courses.

The student who intends to study in the minor study program shall apply to the University unit which supervises the program and shall agree on the sequence in which the student intends to study the courses of the minor study program. If the student decides to study in the minor study program, he/she shall submit an application to the head of the faculty or academy where he/she is studying, not later than before the start of the registration for the study courses of the next semester. The student shall be admitted to minor studies within the first

two weeks of the semester on the basis of the Rector's Order. The Minor Study Program Certificate that certifies the completion of minor studies shall be issued by the Rector's Order upon the recommendation of the head of the faculty or academy. The Certificate shall be awarded together with the Diploma and the Diploma Supplement on the date scheduled in the academic calendar. Upon completion of minor studies in Pedagogy, a Study Certificate shall be issued and the qualification of a teacher shall be awarded.

In general individual BA liberal arts study plan for a student comprises of 50-85% of study field courses, courses from the main study field, including practice and final thesis, 15-25% of artes liberales courses, 20-25% of minor study programme courses and 0-15% of other alternative choices, depending on the individual path a student chooses.

4.4. Spain (University Of Alicante)

4.4.1. Characteristics of the strategy and vision of education at the researched university

According to its Strategic Plan, the University of Alicante's essential mission is to provide a comprehensive education for its students, to promote innovative scientific research and to promote its effective transfer to our economic and social environment. The University of Alicante (UA) aims to be a public institution of recognized prestige in teaching and research, a benchmark of excellence, innovation, and social commitment.

The University of Alicante's commitment to lifelong learning is reflected in the wide range of courses it offers. Lifelong learning courses are designed to cater to the educational needs of people at all stages of life, from young adults to seniors. These courses are often cross-disciplinary courses. The institution recognizes the value of providing students with access to a range of academic disciplines and areas of study, which is why it has established partnerships with other universities and academic institutions. These partnerships allow the University of Alicante to offer a diverse range of cross academy courses that provide students with the opportunity to explore a variety of subjects and perspectives.

In addition to its lifelong learning courses, the Permanent University of the University of Alicante is a scientific, cultural, and social development program of the UA which has as its aim to promote Science and Culture, as well as intergenerational relationships, to improve the quality of life of seniors (older adults) and encourage their participation, within their life context.

The University of Alicante also offers a variety of summer courses (UA Rafael Altamira courses). These courses are typically intensive and focused, designed to provide students with a deep understanding of a particular subject or area of interest. The courses are taught by experienced faculty members and often include hands-on learning experiences, such as field trips, site visits, or laboratory work. Summer courses also offer students the opportunity to network with peers and professionals in their field, as well as to explore the local culture and attractions.

The University of Alicante Centre for Continuing Education (ContinUA) —assigned to the Office of the Vice President for Study Programs, Quality Standards and Languages— is responsible for the coordination, centralization and management of lifelong learning courses at the University of Alicante. ContinUA conducts its mission in coordination with the university departments, centers, institutes, and services, informing and advising to promote lifelong learning in accordance with the University of Alicante values.

4.4.2. Reasons

Within the framework of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), lifelong training is considered one of the pillars of the knowledge society and, therefore, universities are urged to offer other alternatives to official teaching that provide flexible answers to the growing needs for specialization and updating of knowledge, with the rigor that characterizes university teaching. These teachings intend to unite academic activity and professional competitive environments and offer the opportunity to continue learning and updating knowledge in order to remain active according to advances in technology and innovation.

Continuing Education is a fundamental tool to update knowledge, grow professionally and acquire specific training on a specific subject in a short period of time.

Despite there is not any legal obligation for the universities to offer this kind of teachings, the RD 822/2021 (law regulating the organization of university education in Spain) states that within their own university studies, permanent training will be made up of teachings whose purpose is to strengthen the training of citizens throughout life, updating and expanding their knowledge, skills (specific or multidisciplinary) in various fields of knowledge.

We can divide the cross-disciplinary academic offer at the University of Alicante into three types of courses:

- Summer Courses Programme;
- Courses proposed by academic staff of the University of Alicante (called Cursos de Formación Continua: Lifelong learning courses: LLC);
- Senior Courses Programme.

In fact, Summer Courses Programme and Senior Courses Programme are considered as LLC but they follow their own rules in terms of organization.

4.4.3. Management rules

Many of our Lifelong learning courses are cross-disciplinary as they are taught by lecturers from various Faculties. So here we consider UA Lifelong learning courses as UA Cross Academic Offer.

At the UA, the list of fields of knowledge are:

- Sciences;
- Health Sciences;
- Social and Legal Sciences;
- Culture and Sports;
- Engineering and architecture;
- Language Teaching.

The courses are proposed by the University of Alicante academic staff at any time and once reviewed by the administrative and academic staff of the [Centre for Continuing Education](#), they must first be approved by the Studies Commission (CEFUA) and then by the Governing Council.

The Studies Commission is formed by the Vice-president for Studies, Deans of all Faculties and Schools, representatives of academic departments heads, and representatives of administrative staff.

All the new courses proposals are reviewed by this Commission members and they can examine the content, objectives, assessment system or academic staff of the proposal. They can make as many claims as they consider in order to guarantee the quality of the courses and the participation of the university teachers. If it was necessary to make any change, the Centre for Continuing Education requests it to the course director. If these changes are not made, the course cannot be approved and, therefore, will not be offered to students.

The Governing Council is composed by the University President and Vice Presidents, representatives of university academic and administrative staff, students, deans and head of academic departments.

Both Studies Commission and Governing Council meet once a month.

Once the course has been approved by the Governing Council, can be offered and published on the Centre for Continuing Education website.

4.4.4. Commonality levels

LLC at the University of Alicante is a separated offer addressed to all university students, trying to make it composed of all fields of knowledge.

Nowadays there is not a joint offer with other countries. There is, however, courses in which, the academic staff is from other universities together with lecturers from the University of Alicante.

4.4.4.a. Transparent information about the courses content

All the information about the courses is sent to all the university academic departments in order that any person can examine the content (program, objectives, academic staff) and make the allegations which considers before its definitive approval and the course is carried out.

4.4.4.b. Admission

To attend a course it is not required to have a university degree, just being interested in the topic or content. So, the target audience is wider and facilitates the updating of knowledge and skills to people that, otherwise, couldn't access this kind of training.

4.4.4.c. Different types of education modalities

- The University of Alicante offer of cross-disciplinary courses has different formats to choose from:
- In-person: face to face learning which allow interaction among all those present.

- Hybrid: Students attend on-campus classes at designated times and engage in virtual learning activities, which may be synchronous or asynchronous. In this modality, coursework is intentionally designed to be delivered virtually for specific activities and in-person for others. For example, lectures are delivered via videoconferencing tools while learning activities, such as a labs/active learning projects, are delivered in-person.
- Fully online classes: offer all of the advantages of virtual education, including the ability to learn anytime, anywhere, and on any device. This way it is not necessary to make long journeys to attend the course, especially in case of working or having family responsibilities.

4.4.4.d. Updated offer during all the academic year

University's academic staff can propose courses during all the academic year so students can find a continuously updated courses offer.

4.4.4.e. Wide range of subjects

All the cross-disciplinary offer of the University of Alicante includes a wide range of topics of all fields of study such as Humanities, Health, Science, Art, Technology or Engineering.

4.4.4.f. Courses are carried out in several locations

Courses are held at the main campus and the university venues located in different towns throughout Alicante province. This way, people can have an easier access to attend a course not being necessary to travel far away. Moreover, cultural activities are brought to those towns which are part of the network of university venues.

4.4.4.g. Permanent feedback

Before promoting a course or once it has finished, there is continuous feedback between students and organizer. Surveys are carried out to find out needs and subjects of interest in order to design courses with those topics. When the course has finished a satisfaction survey is sent to students with the aim of knowing their level of satisfaction in different aspects such as the course content, academic staff or course Schedule.

Furthermore, trough the surveys can be assessed assessing the impact of the courses on the student curriculum.

By having all that information that surveys provide, organizers can design future courses improving all aspects that have been detected that can be enhanced.

4.4.4.h. Partnerships with external institutions

Many courses are designed in partnership with external institutions such as professional associations (medical, lawyers), companies or another public institution. Those external institutions collaborate sponsoring the course, allowing their staff to be lecturers or spreading the course among their workers and affiliates.

4.4.5. Shape offer

Referring to the interdisciplinary nature of the offer, at the University of Alicante there are courses which combine various disciplines and fields of knowledge, for example "Identification, Prevention and Intervention against Gender Violence" which combines subjects of psychology, sociology and law.

Furthermore, students can choose courses made up of different fields of knowledge and build their "own" interdisciplinary record.

The offer is not only for a specific degree but is offered to all the students of the university and they choose depending on the theme and the relationship with the degree they are studying.

From the point of view of students, CGAO offer is seen:

- on the one hand, for university students, such as the possibility of taking training courses with content related to the degree they are studying;
- on the other hand, for those interested who are not currently studying or have not a degree, as the possibility of updating their knowledge or improving their skills.

In the offer of courses, it is recommended to include aspects such as crossdisciplinarity, a content adapted to the needs of companies, putting special emphasis on having a gender perspective in all proposed activities.

In addition, it is tried that courses are held at the main campus but as well at the university venues located in different towns throughout Alicante province. This way, people can have an easier access to attend a course not being necessary to travel far away. Moreover, cultural activities are brought to those towns which are part of the network of university venues.

Many courses are designed in collaboration with external institutions such as professional associations (medical, lawyers), companies or another public institution. Those external institutions collaborate sponsoring the course, allowing their staff to be lecturers or spreading the course among their workers and affiliates.

Candidates for our LLC offer is not only university students but all interested in the course topic or content, facilitating the updating of knowledge and skills to people that, otherwise, couldn't access this kind of training.

The Centre for Continuing Educations publishes an annual call that establishes the rules for the offer of new LLC course proposals.

The call is not a competition in which only a certain number of courses will be selected. All proposals that have the requested requirements (number of credits, academic content or suitable teaching staff) are likely to be approved and the courses can be taught.

4.4.6. Implementation

The steps we follow are as follow:

1. The course proposal is sent to the Centre for Continuing Education and its administrative staff proceeds to review it: number of credits, contents, assessment system, academic staff, schedule.
2. Once the submitted documentation has been reviewed, it is supervised by the Centre academic direction.
3. All the proposals to be approved that month are sent to the CEFUA members so that they can examine them, make the allegations they consider and propose changes, if needed.
4. Proposals for new courses are approved by CEFUA and later by the Governing Council.
5. Once approved by the Governing Council, the courses can be offered to students.
6. The administrative staff of the Centre for Continuing Education register the courses in the academic management program of the University of Alicante and publish them on its website.
7. The online form is enabled so that students can pre-register and enrol.
8. Once the course has finished, students can consult all the courses taken on the intranet of the University of Alicante and request to validate the credits of the courses taken for optional credits in their undergraduate studies. The number of elective credits that can be validated depends on the Degree being studied, but normally there are up to 6 credits.

Once the course has finished, the Centre for Continuing Education sends students a survey using an online form in which they ask questions about the content, teaching staff or degree of general satisfaction with the course.

All the rules are very clear for the organizers of the LLC. They are published at the website: <https://web.ua.es/es/continua>

We extract here some rules:

4.4.6.a. Organization of Life-long learning courses at UA (LLC): Accounting of academic work

It is established as a unit of measurement in the curricula the credit ECTS in accordance with the regulations of the University of Alicante: 1 credit = 25 hours = 10 teaching hours+15 student's work.

Life-long learning courses at UA (LLC): its purpose is the expansion and updating of knowledge, competences and training or professional skills that contribute to a better labor insertion of citizens without a university degree. A certificate with the name of the respective course will be delivered. They are distinguished: Higher Continuing Education Courses (between 15 and 29 ECTS) and Continuing Education Courses (between 1 and 14 ECTS).

In the case of LLC, it is understood that the curriculum consists of a single subject.

4.4.6.b. Organization of Life-long learning courses at UA (LLC): Modality

The courses can be taught in face-to-face, blended or virtual (or non-face-to-face) teaching modality.

A blended teaching modality is understood as one in which the teaching activity includes subjects in face-to-face and virtual (non-face-to-face) mode. The proportion of non-presential credits for a degree to be considered blended will be in a range between 40% and 60% of ECTS credits of teaching.

Virtual teaching modality is understood as one in which the whole of the teaching activity is articulated through the academic interaction between the teaching staff and the student body that does not require the physical presence of both in the same teaching space. This type of university education is fundamentally characterized by the intensive use of digital information and communication technologies. A teaching may be defined as taught in virtual mode when at least 80% of ECTS credits that make it up are taught in that teaching modality.

4.4.6.c. Organization of Life-long learning courses at UA (LLC): Students

The students enrolled in the continuing education courses will have the consideration of University of Alicante student from the moment of the effective formalization of the enrollment until the end of the period foreseen in his program of studies.

Those who enroll in these studies will not be included within the scope of the school insurance. These students will be included in the cheapest accident insurance among those offered by the university, unless they prove that they have contracted accident insurance with the same coverage or are holders of the right to health protection.

4.4.6.d. Organization of Life-long learning courses at UA (LLC): Teaching staff: dedication and functions

The teaching staff who teach in LLLC must be in possession of the university degree and have the specialization related to the corresponding field of knowledge. However, people with extensive professional experience or recognized prestige may be part of its teaching staff even without having the corresponding university degree, with the authorization of the Governing Council, after a favorable report from CEFUA.

At least 20% of the teaching hours of any LLC must be taught by lectures of the University of Alicante.

A reduction of these percentages when there are sufficiently justified causes, upon reasoned request of the academic direction, is possible.

4.4.6.d.1. Types of teaching staff

The following categories are distinguished: Lecturers of the University of Alicante (UA lecturers) & External lecturers.

In any case, the planning of the subjects, monitoring of the students and evaluation will correspond to UA lecturers.

It may not fall on the same person, in the same academic year, the condition of teacher and student of the same own education.

The participation of the UA lecturers must be approved by the Council of Department to which he or she belongs. In all cases, they must have obtained a favorable report of the teaching evaluation in the official studies in which they participate.

In order to receive the remuneration corresponding to their participation in these courses, the UA lecturers must comply with the regime of dedication stipulated in the Plan of Edu-

ational Regulation of the corresponding academic year, according to the criteria proposed by the vice-rectorate with competences in academic organization and in the conditions that dispose of said plan.

4.4.6.d.2. Organization of Life-long learning courses at UA (LLC): Academic direction

The director must be a teacher of the UA and have a contract of equal or greater duration to the development of the activity.

There may be co-directions in those cases in which the agreements set up with other universities and institutions so contemplate. In this case, the co-director belonging to the agreed university or institution will not necessarily have to meet the characteristics established above.

The director may appoint one or more study coordinators who will act as support for his or her tasks of direction, supervision, and control.

The management tasks of the director and the coordinators of the LLC are remunerated according to the criteria established by the regulations of the UA.

The director is responsible for all the procedures related to the academic, economic and personnel management necessary for the proper functioning and quality assurance of the course. Likewise, those other tasks derived from the representation before bodies or administrative services of the University of Alicante and other public or private institutions in relation to the observance of the present normative.

4.4.6.e. Organization of Life-long learning courses at UA (LLC): Access and admission

The access requirement will be established in the study proposal that will consider the subject in question, the number of places available and the public to which it is directed.

The admission process corresponds to the direction of the own education under the conditions established in the proposal approved by the Governing Council.

When the number of applicants exceeds the number of places offered, the study management will apply the selection criteria approved in the proposal and the results will be published.

Accreditation of linguistic competence in the course language may be required with the same requirements established for official education.

4.4.6.f. Organization of Life-long learning courses at UA (LLC): Registration

4.4.6.f.1. Registration

The registration will be paid in a single or fractional payment in accordance with what is established by the body with competences of the UA. The direction of each course will propose the payment schedule if it is divided and may also propose discounts for prompt payment and other types of discounts provided that the principle of self-financing of own education is met.

4.4.6.f.2. Cancellation of registration

The cancellation of the registration may be requested by the students at any time, at that time, they may also request the refund of the fees they had paid and whose reimbursement may correspond as indicated in this regulation.

The service with competences in refund of fees of the UA will oversee processing the refund of the amounts paid in concept of registration.

This refund will be made in the following cases:

1. Failure to hold the course;
2. Non-admission of the student;
3. Modification of the course delivery calendar;
4. Due to the impossibility of the student attending the course due to serious illness, justified by medical certification;
5. For the impossibility of attending the student to the course by transfer of accredited domicile outside the province of Alicante. This assumption will not apply to teaching in virtual mode.

Any request for reimbursement that is not based on the aforementioned reasons will be informed by the management of the Continuing Education Centre that will collect documentation by means of a report to the direction of the study, of mandatory issue, but of non-binding effects. Finally, it is up to the vice-rector with competence in the matter to resolve this request.

In no case will be subject to refund the amount of the partial payment of the registration for non-payment of the subsequent deadlines and that are not justified by the assumptions mentioned in the first paragraph of this section. Such non-compliance, in addition, will mean cause for withdrawal as a student of said own title.

4.4.6.g. Organization of Life-long learning courses at UA (LLC): Recognition and transfer of credits

The recognition and transfer of credits of the LLC will be regulated following the regulations of the UA for official studies. To this end, a Credit Recognition Commission of the Continuing Education Centre will be formed for the recognition of credits. This commission will be chaired by the person who holds the direction of Centre for Continuing Education, a person representing the study to which the recognized credits are incorporated, a person representing the administration and services staff, a person representing the students and the person who holds the academic secretariat of Centre for Continuing Education who will act as secretary of the commission.

4.4.6.h. Organization of Life-long learning courses at UA (LLC): Qualifications and Minutes

The LLC will be evaluated in accordance with the provisions of the teaching guides of the subjects of the curriculum and the current regulations.

Grades will be reflected in a single record. The teaching staff must establish a period of review of qualifications, within a maximum period of 15 calendar days from the publication of the results. The student may claim in writing to the academic direction of the study, the revision of the grades obtained and this, once the parties have been heard, must proceed accordingly, to maintain or change the grade. If the discrepancy persists, the student may submit a reasoned complaint addressed to the management of the Continuing Education Centre. This claim will be transferred to the Centre for Continuing Education Claims Commission that will resolve within a maximum period of 15 calendar days from the presentation of the claim and after obtaining a report from the direction of the teaching itself object of claim. This commission is formed by the person who holds the direction of Centre for Continuing Education who will act as president, the person who occupies the direction of the secretariat with competences in studies and the person who holds the secretariat of Centre for Continuing Education, who will act as secretary of the commission.

4.4.6.i. Organization of Life-long learning courses at UA (LLC): Certificates

Once passed, the LLLC will lead to the issuance of the corresponding certificate, according to a standardized format, whose name, description of competences and content, in no case, may coincide with official degrees or professional specialties or lead to confusion with them.

4.4.6.j. Organization of Life-long learning courses at UA (LLC): Administrative management

The tasks of administrative and economic management of the LLC may be carried out by the Continuous Learning Centre or by the administrative unit of the UA that proposes the academic direction of each education.

The management not carried out by the Continuing Learning Centre may be carried out by:

- Staff of the University of Alicante. The conditions of participation of these personnel will be established by the University.
- The School of Business of the General Foundation of the University of Alicante.
- Exceptionally and in duly justified cases, specific personnel may be hired or appointed to carry out these tasks according to the ordinary legal procedures and of general application to the Administration and Services Staff of the University.

In this case, the costs of administrative and financial management shall be borne by the income of own education.

In the case of LLC organized with other entities, the management conditions must be indicated in the corresponding agreement.

4.4.6.k. Organization of Life-long learning courses at UA (LLC): Financing

LLC must be self-financing. In no case may funds from the ordinary budget of the University be used to subsidize all or part of these studies, except for the expenses derived from the start-up, which will be borne by the proposing body and will be compensated later from the income of the study itself.

However, the University of Alicante may grant to an own teaching the recognition of activity of social interest or of cooperation to the development, provided that by its object and its recipients it is part of the policy that the University of Alicante develops in this field and so formally recognizes the viceerectorado with competences in that field. In this case, the University of Alicante, through its calls, may co-finance the title and endorse the application for external funding before other public and private bodies.

4.4.6.l. Organization of Life-long learning courses at UA (LLC): Public prices

For the purposes of financing, a public price shall be established to ensure that the costs necessary for the proper development of the education concerned are covered.

The Governing Council will propose for each academic year the minimum public price for own education. The fees to satisfy the provision of university academic services for secretarial tasks (issuance of degrees, certificates, etc.) are not included in the tuition fee and will be the same as those established for official degrees by state or regional regulations.

4.4.6.m. Organization of Life-long learning courses at UA (LLC): Revenue

The income must include the amount received as tuition of the students, the amounts obtained as subsidies and other contributions if they are not intended for the payment of fees. In the case of grants and contributions, the necessary documentation must always be attached.

4.4.6.n. Organization of Life-long learning courses at UA (LLC): University canon

The canon is the proportional part of the income of the own education that goes to the ordinary budget of the University of Alicante, in concept of recognition of the title, expenses of general management, use of the basic facilities, adoption of systems of guarantee of the quality and using the image of the own University.

The amount of this fee will be 10%. In cases in which, for strategic interests of the UA, the teaching is imparted outside the University of Alicante, the canon will be of a 7% being necessary also, before the approval of the study, the corresponding agreement between the institution where it is imparted and the UA.

If the Centre for Continuing Education does all the administrative tasks, then the fee will be 15%.

The fee will be the result of applying the percentage set up in the previous section to all expected revenue. In the case of subsidies, the destination of these will be considered for the payment of the fee. In the case of enrollment, the fee will be paid for each education, depending on the actual enrollment, carrying out a review of the income once it is finished.

4.4.6.o. Organization of Life-long learning courses at UA (LLC): Expenses

In the expenditure section, all the concepts established in each call must be included and will necessarily include the following concepts:

1. University canon;
2. Management and coordination: regardless of the number of people involved, it may not exceed 15% of the total expenses;
3. Teaching staff: all teachers participating in the same teaching will receive the same remuneration per hour taught. Your payment will be subject to the legislation and regulations of the UA that regulate them;
4. Travel, accommodation, and teacher allowances;
5. Promotion;
6. Administrative support and teaching support;

7. Computers or other IT items;
8. Extraordinary expenses derived from the use of facilities;
9. Material for students;
10. Amount allocated to scholarships;
11. Other expenses: may not exceed 5% of the total budget.

All expenditure shall be justified in accordance with the procedures laid down by the unit responsible for budgetary control of the AU. It is recommended that scholarships be included to students among the eligible costs.

In all cases, the costs derived from the different concepts, both material and personnel expenses, will be borne by the income of the study itself. Expenditure may not be charged if it is not directly linked to the development of one's own teaching.

4.4.6.p. Organization of Life-long learning courses at UA (LLC): Organization

The proposal and academic organization of the LLC will correspond to the Faculties, Polytechnic School, Departments, University Research Institutes or Vice-rectorates, and any type of collaboration between them may be established, in which case, a single coordination of the studies must be designated.

They may also organize these courses in collaboration with other universities, entities, and institutions under the conditions established by an agreement provided for this purpose.

4.4.6.r. Organization of Life-long learning courses at UA (LLC): Applications for the organization

The UA will establish the necessary calls, through the vice-rectorate with competences in own education, to guarantee an adequate and quality training offer.

Proposals for new LLC will be sent to the Centre for Continuing Education in the calls established for this purpose. These proposals will be informed by the Commission with competences after a period of exposure of 7 calendar days, with period of allegations included. The favorably informed proposals will then be submitted for approval by the Governing Council.

4.4.6.s. Organization of Life-long learning courses at UA (LLC): Quality assessment

The LLC will be subject to the evaluation and quality monitoring that are established in collaboration with the vice-rectorate with competences in this matter. The teaching staff of the LLC must undergo an evaluation under the conditions that are established. The positive evaluation will be an indispensable condition to be able to participate in future editions.

5. Conclusions and recommendations concerning a cross-disciplinary academic offer as a common element in the didactic offer of all universities participating in the project

5.1. Management of the Cross-disciplinary Academic Offer (CGAO)

The Cross-disciplinary Academic Offer (CGAO) is an integral component of study programmes in all partner countries. The extent of this offer, as well as its significance for specialised education, varies among individual countries. Nonetheless, in line with the adopted system framework, organisational structures (entities, collegial bodies) have been established in each country to introduce or manage the cross-discipline academic offer. These structures conduct competitions aimed at selecting modules to be included in the offer, update the offer, and ensure its attractiveness, relevance, and correctness. This includes both legal aspects – compliance with generally applicable regulations and university rules – and „technical“ aspects, such as whether the modules from the cross-disciplinary academic offer achieve the expected learning outcomes, have an appropriate number of hours and ECTS points assigned, and are taught by qualified and competent academic staff. Additionally, these entities carry out activities aimed at compiling a selection of subjects for students during recruitment and conduct evaluations (classroom inspections) to ensure quality. These entities (organisational structures, collegial bodies) in the partner countries are: the CGAO Council in Poland, Studies Commission (CEFUA) and Governing Council, Centre for Lifelong Learning in Spain, Special Commission in Lithuania).

It is recommended that entities responsible for the cross-disciplinary academic offer in each partner country possess similar competencies in the organisation and management of the offer. Another important recommendation in this regard is the harmonisation of the organisational structure of entities (collegial bodies) responsible for the operation of the CGAO in individual partner countries. Thanks to convergence in this area, the flow of information will be facilitated, as well as the coordination of efforts aimed at standardising the offering at the level of partner countries. These objectives can be achieved by appropriately shaping the competencies and organisational structure of entities responsible for the CGAO in the legal acts creating them, following consultations based on recommendations.

5.2. Levels of commonalities of the cross-discipline academic offer (cross and inter)

The cross-disciplinary academic offer tailored to the needs of the modern world should meet the expectations of increasingly aware and demanding students. Specialisation and professionalisation, which require a thorough specialized education, must not overshadow the necessity of broadening students' horizons in the realm of general education. Young people's ambition is not simply to possess higher education as such, but to acquire an education that enables self-realisation and the fulfilment of their needs. The cross-disciplinary academic offer should rise to these challenges.

The CGAO, depending on the partner country and even the institution involved in the research, is proposed to students at various levels of study. Among the institutions examined, this offer is directed solely at undergraduate or postgraduate courses; there are also higher education institutions that propose common subjects for students at all levels of study (first-cycle, second-cycle, uniform master's studies, and doctoral studies).

It is recommended that the cross-disciplinary academic offer be directed at all partner countries and their higher education institutions for studies at every level. There are no substantive reasons for imposing any limitations in this regard. The assumptions and objectives of the CGAO are relevant to every level of higher education. It is important to remember that the offer should be selected so that the scope and content of the classes correspond to the appropriate degree level, although it is not excluded to direct the offer of a given pool of subjects to students at various degree levels (in particular, second-cycle and uniform master's studies). In such cases, special attention should be paid to ensuring the appropriate level of learning outcomes that are suitable for each degree level.

It is recommended that the cross-disciplinary academic offer should have, or be able to have (depending on the needs), not only an internal character (within a given higher education institution, available to students from various disciplines led by the institution), but also an inter-university one (as is currently the case in Lithuania). This can achieve a synergy effect, manifested by the opportunity to benefit from the knowledge, competencies, and skills of a broader group of academic teachers, often with unique expertise. Not every institution has staff with such diverse education to offer students classes covering a wide spectrum of subjects. Moreover, the specific research focus of a given academic teacher, combined with extensive specialisation, often does not allow for the launch of classes within a single higher education institution due to the narrow group of potentially interested students (this is not about the low substantive value of the classes or the low merits of the lecturer, but about the niche nature of the topics addressed by the teacher). Creating a cross-institutional offering will enable niche topics within the subjects to reach a wider circle of potential recipients. An example in this regard can be the offer proposed for the academic institutions in

Kaunas, where an inter-university offer has been built, allowing students from all four universities to freely choose subjects from other Kaunas universities, credited towards their studies at their home institution. Desirable in the longer term, and thus recommended, is the creation (initially on a limited scale) of the cross-disciplinary academic offer at the international level. A good platform for trial implementations in this area is the creation of a selection of subjects for students from institutions involved in the Transform4Europe alliance. In most cases, these will be remote classes, but it is not excluded that offers will be created within so-called summer or winter schools (which will be discussed further). An additional advantage of extending the cross-disciplinary academic offer beyond the home institution or, in particular, the country where the institution is located, is the openness and mission that higher education institutions have in European transformation processes – among other things, through education and training of students. Therefore, the educational programme within the cross-disciplinary academic offer directed abroad should be as universal, inclusive, pro-European as possible, and shaped based on three pillars: digital, environmental, and social transformation.

It is recommended that the range of the cross-disciplinary academic offer, and thus the number of modules proposed to students, depend on the programme of the given studies, which in turn may be regulated by law (most often, but not exclusively – national). This effect can be achieved by creating so-called baskets of elective modules. The key factor determining the assignment of a given module to a particular basket will be legal regulations that shape the study programme in a specific way and impose the obligation to cover certain content within the programme, enabling students of that discipline to acquire the required knowledge, competences, and skills. These can be highly interdisciplinary subjects, available to many study programmes when legal regulations require students to acquire knowledge, competences, and skills only from a given, broad area, or oriented towards a single study programme when these regulations are very individual and specific. The choice of the appropriate type of offer should therefore belong to the study programme committee (or another body responsible for the given study programme), and the structure of the offer (its construction, substantive content, and the number and type of baskets), as previously indicated, depends on the entities (collegial bodies) that introduce or manage the CGAO. In most cases, the proposed offers already have an interdisciplinary character, both in terms of the entire offer (as in Bulgaria, in the form of summer and winter schools), and the individual modules proposed (as in Poland, Lithuania, and Spain).

It is recommended that the cross-disciplinary academic offer should enrich the knowledge, competences, and skills of students across all study programmes by implementing subjects from other disciplines. However, these subjects should not be faithful copies of course subjects carried out in these other disciplines; instead, they should be adapted to the level of students for whom these subjects deviate from the main focus of their education. The opening of borders, particularly within the European Union, has led to an increased flow of information and data on one hand, and the emergence of previously unknown phenome-

na and threats on the other. This requires higher education institutions to meet the students' demand for understanding new phenomena and challenges. Specialised education, focused on narrowly defined specialisation (which is necessary due to the significant complexity of processes and tasks faced by employees), does not allow for proper and satisfying self-realisation in the non-professional sphere of life. For this reason, it is necessary to have an educational offer beyond the main discipline that enables the acquisition of additional or supplementary knowledge, skills, and social competences to the main area of study.

It is recommended not to limit or mandate the implementation of subjects from the cross-disciplinary academic offer in a defined form or frequency. The specific nature of the CGAO resulting from its characteristic features described above, implies that the implementation of subjects should not be confined to only lectures or, on the opposite side, to tutorials or workshops. Bodies responsible for shaping the offer should adopt a flexible approach to these issues and allow academic teachers to choose a teaching formula that is convenient for both students and themselves and, most importantly, best suited to the specifics of the content being taught. Sometimes a lecture format is the best way to convey the intended knowledge, competences, and skills, while at other times, it may be tutorials, workshops, laboratories, field trips, or outdoor classes. The role of the bodies responsible for shaping the offer is to moderate and advise academic teachers on the appropriate approach to this issue. A similar approach should be taken to the form in which the classes will be held. In today's world, it is not necessary and sometimes even undesirable for classes to be held in-person. Distance learning might be a better solution for subjects within the CGAO. Hybrid classes should also be allowed, with in-person attendees and students connecting online. Mixed forms, both synchronous and asynchronous, should not be ruled out. The principle should be that the broader the range of potential recipients (i.e., students from not only one faculty of the university but also from multiple faculties), the more classes should be available remotely. It is therefore advisable to recommend hybrid classes in such cases. This form should be recommended for the CGAO aimed at students from different higher education institutions in one country or for international offers. Logistical reasons should not limit access to elective modules, as this would make the offer only illusorily open. An additional negative consequence of such an apparent opening of the offer to students from outside a given centre (campus) would be the perception of actual exclusion. These students would be aware that they potentially have the opportunity to participate in the classes they are interested in, but this does not translate into a real opportunity to benefit from them, with the feeling that the only barrier to exclusion is the distance beyond their control. It is therefore recommended that the form of conducting classes should always be thoughtfully considered (ideally developed as part of a strategy) and adapted primarily to the specifics of the subject and, ultimately, to the convenience of the teacher conducting the classes.

It is recommended that entities (collegial bodies) responsible for shaping the cross-discipline academic offer be given the freedom to determine the schedule of classes proposed within

its framework. It is possible to plan for cyclical, weekly classes throughout the semester, or block classes (combined) in a single week. The latter option is particularly available when the CGAO is implemented as part of so-called summer (winter) schools, i.e., training cycles conducted outside the regular education cycle for students. When creating a schedule for classes within the CGAO, it is essential to remember that it is aimed at students from different fields, faculties of a given university, and even students from different higher education institutions. For this reason, it will be practically impossible to synchronize the schedules of course classes for students with the schedule of classes from the CGAO in any other way than by reserving (imposing at various levels) time slots designated for elective classes. In other words, course class planning should be carried out in such a way that they do not interfere with the reserved time slots on a specific day and at specified hours, during which classes from the CGAO would be held. This allows students to attend both types of classes without compromising their ability to choose from the elective module offer. Otherwise, their participation in the latter would be regulated (enforced) by the course subjects, to whose schedule they would have to adapt. In the case of creating inter-university or international cross-discipline academic offer, it becomes necessary to agree on a timetable of designated time slots between the entities (collegial bodies) responsible for shaping the CGAO.

It is also recommended to implement the cross-discipline academic offer through summer (winter) schools or in the form of intensive mobility weeks. By block scheduling classes, students acquire knowledge, competencies, and skills assumed by academic staff more comprehensively and quickly and thus more effectively, which is reflected in study programmes. A good example in this regard is the class format available at universities in Bulgaria. Issues addressed within summer (winter) schools or during intensive mobility weeks should be interdisciplinary in nature or pertain to another field of study and fulfil the objectives of the CGAO. Naturally, even with the aforementioned class format, the subjects attended by students should be recognized as part of the study programme and treated as such, not as supplementary, remedial, or course-based classes. Summer (winter) schools or intensive mobility weeks should serve as a means of implementing the study program, adding appeal to the conveyed content, and allowing for block scheduling, which is not always feasible with the traditional model of education in weekly cycles.

It is recommended that, for the preparation of subjects within the cross-discipline academic offer (both in terms of the idea, subject description, intended objectives, and actual teaching), collaboration with academic teachers and external stakeholders should be sought. This includes individuals from outside universities – representatives of various professional associations, federations, chambers, and practitioners who benefit from the knowledge, competencies, and skills of graduates (companies or public institutions). A good example of such cooperation, which enriches the CGAO, can be found in the practices developed in Spain. Thanks to this collaboration, the assumptions and objectives of education within the CGAO can be carried out to a greater extent.

5.3 Organization

It is recommended that the teaching staff responsible for conducting classes within the cross-discipline academic offer possess higher education and specialisation related to the appropriate field of knowledge, documented by scientific publications in this area. However, individuals with extensive professional experience or recognised prestige can be part of the teaching staff even without a relevant university degree, subject to the consent of the entity (collegial body) responsible for the shape of the CGAO. Good examples of such conduct and selection of teaching staff can be found in Spain.

It is recommended that the CGAO be subject to continuous evaluation and improvements in response to the needs of students and external stakeholders, as well as educational goals and scientific progress. Both the method of assessment and its frequency (annual competition, subject updates as needed, or the inclusion of all offered subjects while leaving full choice to students) should be left to the entity (collegial body) responsible for the shape of the CGAO.

It is recommended that students select subjects from different fields of science (apart from those required by law), enabling them to build their own interdisciplinary achievements.

It is recommended that a student's participation in selected courses or specialized modules, as well as summer (winter) schools, can be confirmed by appropriate certificates or micro-credentials.

Annex

Table 1: Universities Participating In The Survey

country	the name of the University	the number of disciplines represented by teachers conducting classes at the university	the number of students at the university	the number of teachers conducting classes at the university
Poland	Uniwersytet Opolski	over 20;	9 000	900
	Uniwersytet Gdański	over 20;	24000	1801
	Uniwersytet Jagielloński	over 20;	30593	4 737
	Uniwersytet Łódzki	over 20;	23542	2106
	Uniwersytet Szczeciński	over 20;	10421	1040
	Uniwersytet Śląski	over 20;	20000	2001
	Uniwersytet w Białymstoku	15-20	8408	770
	Uniwersytet Wrocławski	over 20;	21 819	1 983
Bulgaria	Uniwersytet Warszawski	over 20	51 000	4 000
	Shumen University "Bishop Konstantin of Preslav"		5000	304
	South-West University "Neofit Rilski"		11000	500
	Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"	over 20 - 3 15-20 - 1	22 000	4 000
	St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo	below 10 - 1	10181	490
	University of National and World Economy		17 000	450
Lithuania	Lithuanian ACOemy of Music and Theatre	15-20	1040	490
	Lithuanian University of Health Sciences	over 20;	7836	1195
	Kaunas University of Technology	over 20;	8000	1000
	Klaipeda University	over 20;	2500	660
	Vilnius Gediminas Technical University	over 20;	8650	930
	Vilnius University	over 20;	21000	2800
	Vytautas Magnus University	over 20;	8000	800
Spain	University of Alicante	over 20;	32000	3800

Source: own research and calculations.

Questionnaire

*Please complete the questionnaire basing on the following definition of the phrase 'cross-disciplinary academic offer':

1. an offer of subjects that are characterized by their interdisciplinary content
or
2. an offer of subjects that are not characterized by their interdisciplinary content, that is every subject offers content from one discipline only, however it is a different discipline than the leading discipline of the study programme of the students choosing this subject from the offer, e.g. a student of biology chooses a subject from a discipline that is different than biology (such as music, engineering, sociology)
or
3. an offer of subjects from which some are interdisciplinary in the meaning defined in point 1, and some – in the meaning defined in point 2.

The cross-disciplinary academic offer excludes foreign language and physical education courses.

1. Has the university where you teach introduced subjects as part of its cross-disciplinary academic offer?

- a. yes; -> 2.
- b. no. -> 20.

2. What are the reasons for introducing the cross-disciplinary academic offer at your university?

- a. top-down recommendations (e.g. legal regulations);
- b. bottom-up motivation (e.g. implementation of a project at the university which resulted in this offer);
- c. others: [...].

3. Is the cross-disciplinary academic offer at your university provided for:

- a. all study programmes; -> 5.
- b. selected study programmes. -> 4.

4. path to 3.b. What is the basis for selecting the study programmes in which the cross-disciplinary academic offer is introduced?

- a. state-wide regulations;
- b. university regulations;
- c. the decision of the authorities of the faculty / department concerned;
- d. others: [...].

5. Who can choose subjects from the cross-disciplinary academic offer at your university?

- a. only the students who are obliged to do so by the curriculum of their study programme; -> 7.
- b. all interested students, regardless of whether or not they are obliged to do so by the curriculum of their study programme. -> 6.

6. path to 5.b. How is the completion of a subject from the cross-disciplinary academic offer at your university reflected in the course of the studies?

- a. the subject is recorded in the diploma supplement;
- b. the grade for the subject is included in the average overall grade;
- c. ECTS points are awarded;

- d. the completion of such a subject is not recorded in the course of study in any way
- e. others: [...].

MULTIPLE CHOICE

7. At which level has your university introduced the cross-disciplinary academic offer?

- a. one offer at the faculty level;
- b. one offer at the level of one university
- c. one offer at the level of one country;
- d. one offer for various universities from more than one country;
- e. others: [...].

8. What is the pool of subjects students can choose from?

- a. students choose from subjects of the leading discipline of their study programme (e.g. only linguistics, only physics, only law, ...);
- b. students choose from subjects of the field the leading discipline of their study programme belongs to (e.g. the humanities, science, social sciences, ...)
- c. students choose from subjects of various disciplines.

9. Which study level is the cross-disciplinary academic offer available for at your university? (the offer may be different for different study levels)

- a. first cycle studies;
- b. second cycle studies;
- c. long cycle studies;
- d. doctoral studies;
- e. others: [...].

What is the justification for such an organisation of the cross-disciplinary academic offer at your university (optional answer)?

[...].

MULTIPLE CHOICE

10. Is the cross-disciplinary academic offer at your university the same for different study levels?

- a. yes;
- b. no;
- c. not applicable, the cross-disciplinary academic offer is available only for one study level

What is the justification for such an organisation of the cross-disciplinary academic offer at your university (optional answer)? [...]

11. Which study modes is the cross-disciplinary academic offer addressed to at your university?

- a. full-time studies;
- b. part-time studies.

What is the justification for such an organisation of the cross-disciplinary academic offer at your university (optional answer)?

[...]

MULTIPLE CHOICE

12. Are the subjects from the cross-disciplinary academic offer at your university obligatory for students?

- a. yes; -> 13.
- b. no. -> 15.

13. path to 12.a. Do students have the opportunity to choose from the full cross-disciplinary academic offer at your university?

- a. yes; -> 16.
- b. no, their choice is limited to a part of this offer -> 14.

14. path to 13.a. What is the students' choice of subjects restricted by?

- a. state-wide regulations; -> 16.
- b. university regulations; -> 16.
- c. decision of the authorities of the faculty / department; -> 16.
- d. others: [...]. -> 16.

15. path to 12.a. What does it mean that the completion of the subjects from the cross-disciplinary academic offer at your university is optional for students?

- a. the completion of a subject from the cross-disciplinary academic offer is not necessary for graduation, but students can choose subjects from the cross-disciplinary academic offer and gain additional competences;
- b. students are not obliged to choose subjects from the cross-disciplinary academic offer (it is not a condition for graduation), but if they choose them, they will have additional opportunities in the course of their studies, e.g. the possibility to apply for a particular specialization, a particular diploma seminar or to take advantage of a particular educational path;
- c. others [...].

16. How is the cross-disciplinary academic offer created at your university?

- a. the cross-disciplinary academic offer is fixed and subjects are replaced or added as needed; -> 17.
- b. as a rule, the cross-disciplinary academic offer is cyclically updated. -> 18.

17. path to 16.a. What determines the updating of the cross-disciplinary academic offer at your university?

- a. demand for new subjects from students; -> 19.
- b. students' lack of interest in a given subject; -> 19.
- c. fulfilment of the university mission; -> 19.
- d. others [...]. -> 19.

MULTIPLE CHOICE

18. path to 16.b. How is the cross-disciplinary academic offer at your university cyclically updated?

- a. in response to students' demand;
- b. in response to demand from external stakeholders;
- c. as a result of consultation with teachers;
- d. there is a competition in which teachers propose subjects to be included in the cross-disciplinary academic offer;
- e. subjects are defined by the authorities without consultation with students, teachers or external stakeholders;
- f. others [...].

MULTIPLE CHOICE

19. In your opinion, to what extent should the functioning of cross-disciplinary academic offer at your university be changed? (multiple choice)

- a. it should be available to more study programmes;
- b. it should be available to every study level (the offer may be different for different study levels);
- c. it should be available to both full-time and part-time students;
- d. students should be able to choose the subjects themselves;
- e. the range of subjects should be wider;
- f. others [...].

What is the justification for your view concerning changes in the cross-disciplinary academic offer at your university (optional answer)?

[...]

20. What are the reasons for not introducing the cross-disciplinary academic offer at your university?

- a. legal regulations introduced by authorities at a higher level than the university;
- b. internal university regulations;
- c. no concept for the cross-disciplinary academic offer;
- d. no need for the introduction of the cross-disciplinary academic offer;
- e. negative experiences connected with the introduction of the cross-disciplinary academic offer;
- f. others: [...].

If there was a chance of introducing the cross-disciplinary academic offer, then:

21. Should the cross-disciplinary academic offer at your university be provided for:

- a. all study programmes; -> 23.
- b. selected study programmes. -> 22.

22. path to 21.b. What should be the basis for selecting the study programmes in which the cross-disciplinary academic offer would be introduced?:

- a. state-wide regulations;
- b. university regulations;
- c. the decision of the authorities of the faculty / department concerned;
- d. others: [...].

23. path to 21.a. Who should choose subjects from the cross-disciplinary academic offer at your university?

- a. only the students who would be obliged to do so by the curriculum of their study programme; -> 25.
- b. all interested students, regardless of whether or not they would be obliged to do so by the curriculum of their study programme. -> 24.

24. path to 23.b. How should the completion of a subject from the cross-disciplinary academic offer at your university be reflected in the course of the studies?

- a. the subject should be recorded in the diploma supplement;
- b. the grade for the subject should be included in the average overall grade;
- c. ECTS points should be awarded;
- d. the completion of such a subject should not be recorded in the course of study in any way;
- e. others: [...].

MULTIPLE CHOICE

25. At which level should your university introduce the cross-disciplinary academic offer?

- a. one offer at the faculty level;
- b. one offer at the level of one university;
- c. one offer at the level of one country;
- d. one offer for various universities from more than one country;
- f. others: [...].

26. What would be the pool of subjects students could choose from?

- a. students could choose from subjects of the leading discipline of their study programme (e.g. only linguistics, only physics, only law, ...);
- b. students could choose from subjects of the field the leading discipline of their study programme belongs to (e.g. the humanities, science, social sciences, ...)
- c. students could choose from subjects of various disciplines.

27. Which study level should the cross-disciplinary academic offer be available for at your university? (the offer may be different for different study levels)

- a. first cycle studies;
- b. second cycle studies;
- c. long cycle studies;
- d. doctoral studies;
- e. others: [...].

What is the justification for such an organisation of the cross-disciplinary academic offer at your university (optional answer)?

[...].

MULTIPLE CHOICE

28. Which study modes should the cross-disciplinary academic offer be addressed to at your university?

- a. full-time studies;
- b. part-time studies.

What is the justification for such an organisation of the cross-disciplinary academic offer at your university (optional answer)?

[...]

MULTIPLE CHOICE

29. Should the subjects from the cross-disciplinary academic offer at your university be obligatory for students?

- a. yes; -> 30.
- b. no. -> 32.

30. path to 29.a. Should students have the opportunity to choose from the full cross-disciplinary academic offer at your university?

- a. yes; -> 33.
- b. no, their choice should be limited to a part of this offer. -> 31.

31. path to 30.b. What should / could the students' choice of subjects be restricted by?

- a. state-wide regulations; -> 33
- b. university regulations; -> 33
- c. decision of the authorities of the faculty / department; -> 33
- d. others: [...]. -> 33

32. path to 29.b. What does it mean that the completion of the subjects from the cross-disciplinary academic offer at your university should be optional for students?:

- a. the completion of a subject from the cross-disciplinary academic offer would not be necessary for graduation, but students could choose subjects from the cross-disciplinary academic offer and gain additional competences;
- b. students would not be obliged to choose subjects from the cross-disciplinary academic offer (it would not be a condition for graduation), but if they chose them, they would have additional opportunities in the course of their studies, e.g. the possibility to apply for a particular specialization, a particular diploma seminar or to take advantage of a particular educational path;
- c. others [...].

33. How could the cross-disciplinary academic offer be created at your university?

- a. the cross-disciplinary academic offer should be fixed and subjects would be replaced or added as needed; -> 34.
- b. as a rule, the cross-disciplinary academic offer should be cyclically updated. -> 35.

34. path to 33.a. What should determine the updating of the cross-disciplinary academic offer at your university?

- a. demand for new subjects from students;
- b. students' lack of interest in a given subject;
- c. fulfilment of the university mission;
- d. others [...].

MULTIPLE CHOICE

35. path to 33.b. How should the cross-disciplinary academic offer at your university be updated?

- a. in response to students' demand;
- b. in response to demand from external stakeholders;
- c. as a result of consultation with teachers;
- d. there should be a competition in which teachers would propose subjects to be included in the cross-disciplinary academic offer;
- e. subjects should be defined by the authorities without consultation with students, teachers or external stakeholders;
- f. others [...].

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Questionnaire label:

1. the name of the University
2. country
3. the number of disciplines represented by teachers conducting classes at the university
 - a. over 20
 - b. 15 – 20
 - c. 10 – 15
 - d. below 10
4. the number of students at the university
5. the number of teachers conducting classes at the university

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