

MASTER'S IN GLOBAL CHALLENGES FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Academic rules and regulations

Framework

Academic year 2026-2027

Version 6.1 May 2026

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SECTION 1 GENERAL PROVISIONS

Art. 1.1 – Applicability of the Academic Rules and Regulations

These Academic Rules and Regulations framework apply to the academic year 2026-2027 and apply to the admissions procedure, enrolment, education, internships, assessment, fraud and plagiarism and the final review of requirements to be awarded the degree of the Joint Degree Master's Programme in Global Challenges for Sustainability, hereinafter referred to as MGCS, and to all students who are enrolled in the MGCS and to all those who request to be admitted to the Joint Degree Programme.

The MGCS is jointly provided by the nine universities of the CHARM-EU Alliance: University of Barcelona (UB), Trinity College Dublin (TCD), Utrecht University (UU), University of Montpellier (UM), Eötvös Loránd University Budapest (ELTE), Åbo Akademi University (AAU), Julius-Maximilians-University Würzburg (JMU), Ruhr West University of Applied Sciences (HRW) and the University of Bergen (UiB).

Art. 1.2 – Definition of Terms

In these academic regulations, the following terms mean:

- a. *CHARM-EU student*: Anyone who is enrolled for the Joint Degree Programme at the CHARM-EU universities participating in the programme and who is thus eligible to take modules and sit the assessments of the Joint Degree Programme.
- b. *Credit, also referred to as EC*: Unit expressed in European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System credits (ECTS) whereby one credit is equal to 25 - 30 hours of study.
- c. *Joint Degree Programme*: The Joint Degree Master's Programme referred to in art. 1.1 of these Academic Rules and Regulations.
- d. *Tuition Fee*: Fees paid to participate in the MGCS. It includes lectures, seminars, tutorials, access to library and information technology facilities and course administration. It does not include living expenses, accommodation, travel and visa costs, textbooks or additional services. Neither does it include the application fee nor the student levies and charges that can be compulsory in some universities of the CHARM-EU alliance participating in the programme.
- e. *Low stakes assessment*: Judgment of student's performance in line with the Programme Learning Outcomes domains (PLOs) and Module Learning Outcomes (MLOs) as registered in the student's e-portfolio.
- f. *High stakes assessment*: Final assessment and mark for the entire phase.
- g. *The Board of Examiners (BoE)*: The board that objectively and professionally determines whether a student has met the conditions outlined in the joint programme and in the regulations in terms of the knowledge, insight and skills necessary for obtaining the degree. The joint Board of Examiners consists of one representative from each of the partner universities.
- h. *Contact hours*:
 - (a) Hours spent in class where a lecturer, teaching assistant or supervisor is physically or virtually present, such as lectures, hackathons, workshops, capstone supervision, assessments etc.;
 - (b) other structured hours scheduled by the Joint Degree Programme and which are characterised by contact between the students themselves, either virtually or in real time and/or virtual contact with lecturers or mentors.
- i. *Inclusiveness*: One of CHARM-EU's [core values](#) is inclusiveness. It is understood that diversity, and the barriers and challenges that people face, can take many forms and

are often intersectional in nature. CHARM-EU takes a person-centred approach to removing barriers and supporting its students to succeed, providing accommodations and flexibility where possible and reasonable in line with the capacity and resources of CHARM-EU.

- j. *The CHARM-EU Needs Report*: A report based on a needs assessment of a student with a disability or chronic illness or other inclusion grounds. It outlines the necessary and reasonable accommodations to which the student is entitled.
- k. *Phase mobility*: CHARM-EU students changing location from one phase to the next phase.
- l. *Graduating*: Process of obtaining a degree, from fulfilling the final requirements to obtaining the diploma parchment.
- m. *Degree*: The official title awarded to a student after graduation from the master programme.
- n. *Diploma*: The parchment in the name of the graduating student with the date and specifics of the joint degree.
- o. *Diploma supplement*: A document appended to the diploma which provides a description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed by the student named on the original qualification. This Diploma Supplement model was developed by the European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO.
- p. *Transcript of records*: A document which provides the grades and ECTS obtained by the student.

SECTION 2 ADMISSIONS

Art. 2.1 – Admissions Rules and Regulations

The [Admission Rules and Regulations](#) are outlined in a separate document approved by the Academic Council.

SECTION 3 ENROLMENT

Art. 3.1 – Enrolment Rules and Regulations

The [Enrolment Rules and Regulations](#) are outlined in a separate document approved by the Academic Council.

SECTION 4 CONTENTS AND STRUCTURE

Art. 4.1 – Aim of the degree Programme

1. The learning objectives of the MGCS allows students to:
 - Develop creative and critical thinking skills;
 - Research and evaluate complex societal challenges from different stakeholder and intercultural perspectives;
 - Assess and integrate different disciplinary and transdisciplinary knowledge and research methodologies;
 - Demonstrate expertise in the identification and application of the latest technological tools to source, analyse, handle, use and communicate complex bodies of data ethically;

- Acquire expertise and communicate effectively on complex issues;
 - Formulate an advanced understanding of transdisciplinarity and demonstrate expertise in the facilitative, communicative, reflexive, and collaborative skills to support its practice;
 - Acquire advanced transversal competencies in problem solving, entrepreneurialism, innovation, digital skills, and a life-long learning disposition.
2. The learning objectives are the basis of the Programme Learning Outcome (hereafter PLO). These are connected to the outcomes of each module in the Module Learning Outcomes (hereafter MLO) and at the core of all Module assessments. During the master's programme students' development will be assessed based on these PLO .
3. The Joint Degree Programme has the following PLO :
1. Sustainability
 2. Transdisciplinarity
 3. Challenge Solving
 4. Collaboration
 5. Communication
 6. Scholarship
 7. Reflexivity/Professional & Personal Development
 8. Digital Skills

Art. 4.2 – Attendance mode

1. This is a full-time Joint Degree Programme.
2. The number of contact hours comes to an average of 14-20 hours per week but the number of contact hours may differ per phase.

Art. 4.3 – Language of the Joint Degree Programme

1. The MGCS is taught in English.
2. The official language used in administration is English. In case of discrepancies between the translation and original text, the English text prevails.

Art. 4.4 – Credit load

The credit load for the Joint Degree Programme is 120 European Credits.

Art. 4.5 – Programme start

The MGCS starts between the last week of August and the first week of September. The official starting date is set by the Programme Board and the Academic Council each year with the approval of the Academic Calendar.

Art. 4.6 – Structure of the Joint Degree Programme

1. The Joint Degree Programme encompasses the following required phases, the credit load of which has been determined as:
 - a. Phase 1: Preparatory phase, 30 ETCS, three mandatory modules, 10 ECTS each.
 - b. Phase 2: Flexible phase, 30 ECTS, four tracks from which students must choose one.
 - i. Water

- ii. Food
- iii. Life & Health
- iv. Energy and Sustainable Cities

It is not possible to combine modules from different tracks. Each theme consists of three 10 ECTS modules.

- c. Phase 3: Experiential phase, 30 ECTS made up by two 5 ECTS modules (Internship Preparation and Capstone Preparation) and one 20 ECTS Internship module.
 - d. Phase 4: Capstone phase, 30 ECTS, project group work with individual components. Students collaborate with their peers, academic staff, and extra- academic actors (e.g., business and society) on an authentic sustainability challenge in a transdisciplinary manner.
2. The CHARM-EU module descriptors give the following details relating to each module:
 - a. The learning objectives (PLOs and MLOs)
 - b. The assessment activities
 - c. The module coordinator and teaching staff

Art. 4.7 – Courses taken outside of the Master in Global Challenges for Sustainability.

1. Students enrolled in the degree programme are only allowed to take credit-bearing modules offered by the Master in Global Challenges for Sustainability within the framework of the MGCS.
2. Physical mobility among the CHARM-EU universities participating in the Master's is in some cases compulsory (Phase 2 mobility) and in others encouraged (short mobility or other phase mobility), further described in art. 5.4.

SECTION 5 EDUCATION

Art. 5.1 – Entry requirements per phases

Participation in the following phase of the Master in Global Challenges for Sustainability is possible only when the student has successfully completed the previous phase or has scored a minimum percentage and submitted a remediation plan to reach a pass mark before the end of the next phase, as described in the [Assessment, Progression and Graduation Rules and Regulations](#).

Art. 5.2 – Attendance obligation and obligation to perform to the best of one's ability

1. The MGCS is not an online programme, therefore all students are expected to attend in person in the classroom the modules for which they are enrolled. In case of class absence, students are expected to follow the procedure for student absences, as outlined in the Absence Policy.
2. Students are not allowed to follow the programme from another university/location than the one they have been allocated to for that specific phase.
3. Besides the general requirement for students to participate in person, the additional requirements for each module are listed in the CHARM-EU module descriptors.
4. In the event that the student's participation is inadequate in terms of quality or quantity, the module coordinator can inform the student's mentor to discuss the low performance of the student.
5. Exceptions/accommodation to class starting time are possible upon request by the student and only after approval of the Board of Examiners. In inclusivity cases, the BoE may consult with the CHARM-EU Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Office to identify an appropriate

solution. Relevant reasonable accommodations may also be listed in a student's Individual Needs Assessment.

6. The obligation to be present at the location on the programme's start date is set out in the [Enrolment Rules and Regulations](#) (art. 3.6)

Art. 5.3 - Class starting time

Classes will start at the indicated starting time and late arrivals will not be admitted.

Art. 5.4 - Mobility

1. Mobility is an integral component of the MGCS learning process with the purpose of achieving the programme learning outcomes and developing their transversal skills. In addition, mobility is one of the graduation requirements. Therefore, all students must complete a compulsory phase mobility in Phase 2 and participate in a Blended Intensive Programme (BIP), a short (5-14 days) physical mobility.
 - a. Phase mobility starts at the starting date and ends on the final date of the given phase.
 - b. All students describe in their personal development plan how they are going to use the mobility to achieve one or more parts of the PLO and/or MLO, with the support of their mentors
2. For Phase 3, students may choose to remain in their Phase 2 location/country or move to another country. This is a non-mandatory mobility and the own responsibility of the student.
3. In Phase 4, students can choose the CHARM-EU University following the capstone project of their choice and assignment. This may or may not involve a mobility, depending on where they were in Phase 3.
4. Students need to take into consideration when planning their mobility that each student can receive a maximum of two semester-grants and one BIP grant during the course of the MGCS. This number may be reduced if the student already received Erasmus+ funding during another Master's programme before starting the MGCS, as the student cannot receive Erasmus+ grants exceeding 12 months total within the same study cycle, according to Erasmus+ rules.
5. The JVAO and local International Relations Offices will provide administrative support for the physical mobility of students.

Exceptionally, if because of unexpected circumstances physical travel for international mobility is not an option for the student due to inclusivity grounds, alternatives may be found upon request by the student and with advice from the CHARM-EU Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Office. These requests and alternatives need to be approved by the Board of Examiners after consultation with the Programme Board.

Art. 5.5 – Quality Assurance

1. The Academic Council is responsible for the standards in teaching and research in the MGCS. The Academic Council oversees the academic matters and quality follow-up of all joint and common educational and research activities of CHARM-EU.
2. The operation and implementation of the MGCS is managed by the Programme Board. The Programme Board is responsible for the agreement on the final design and day to day delivery, admissions, assessment, mobility and implementation in line with the quality standards and procedures set by the Academic Council and resources allocated.
3. The Board of Examiners monitors and advises both the Programme Board and the Academic Council on the quality of the education.

4. The Quality officer designs, implements and monitors the quality review system and presents the results to the Programme Board and to the Academic Council for analysis and improvement actions.

SECTION 6 INTERNSHIPS

Art. 6.1 – Internships Rules and Regulations

The [Internships Rules and Regulations](#) are outlined in a separate document approved by the Academic Council.

SECTION 7 ASSESSMENT

Art. 7.1 – Assessment Progression and Graduation Rules and Regulations

Assessment and Progression Rules and Regulations are set out in the [Assessment, Progression and Graduation Rules and Regulations](#).

Art. 7.2 – Board of Examiners

1. The Academic Council has appointed a Board of Examiners for the MGCS with sufficient guarantees that this Board will work in an independent and expert manner.
2. The Academic Council appoints the Chair and the members of the Board of Examiners for the period of the Joint Degree Programme.
 - a. Their appointment is based on their expertise in the MGCS and/or in the field of studies.
 - b. Each CHARM-EU university participating in the Master has a representative on the Board of Examiners.
 - c. Re-appointment of representatives is possible. Before making an appointment, the Academic Council will consult the members of the Board of Examiners.
3. Persons holding a management position with financial responsibility for a programme of study may not be appointed as member or Chair of the Board of Examiners.
4. Membership of the Board of Examiners will terminate upon expiry of the period of appointment. In addition, the Academic Council will discharge the Chair and the members from their duties at their request. The Chair and the members will also be dismissed by the Academic Council in the event that they no longer fulfill the requirements stated in paragraph 2 of this article. In addition, the Academic Council may dismiss the Chair and the members in the event that they fail to perform their statutory duties adequately.
5. The Academic Council will make the composition of the Board of Examiners known to the students and teaching staff.

Art. 7.3 – Appointment of Portfolio Assessment Committee (PAC)

1. The Board of Examiners appoints members of the academic staff and experts from outside the study programme charged with the role of phase examiner as a member of the Portfolio Assessment Committee. The examiners are responsible for the assessment of the phase resulting in a high-stakes phase decision.
2. The Board of Examiners may withdraw the appointment of an examiner if the examiner fails to comply with the applicable regulations or guidelines of the Board of Examiners, or if the competence of the examiner repeatedly proves to be of insufficient quality.
3. The Board of Examiners will keep a record of all examiners so that it is known which persons are authorized to administer assessments and determine the students' results.
4. The requirements of the Phase assessment committee and the phase examiners are

stipulated in the [Assessment, Progression and Graduation Rules and Regulations](#).

SECTION 8 FRAUD AND PLAGIARISM

Art. 8.1 - Fraud and Plagiarism

1. Fraud and plagiarism are defined as an action or failure to act on the part of students, whereby a correct assessment of their knowledge, insight and skills is made impossible, in full or in part.
2. Fraud includes:
 - cheating during tests. The person offering the opportunity to cheat is an accessory to fraud;
 - being in possession of (i.e. having/carrying) tools and resources during tests, such as pre-programmed calculators, mobile phones, smartwatch, smart glasses, books, course readers, notes, etc., consultation of which is not explicitly permitted;
 - having others carry out all or part of an assignment and passing this off as own work;
 - gaining access to questions or answers of a test prior to the date or time that the test takes place;
 - making up survey or interview answers or research data;
 - wrongly signing or having someone else sign the attendance lists. This includes attendance lists of educational and/or mobility-related activities.
3. Plagiarism is defined as including data or sections of text from others/the student's own work in a thesis or other paper without quoting the source. Plagiarism includes the following:
 - cutting and pasting text from digital sources such as encyclopaedias and digital publications without using quotation marks and referring to the source;
 - cutting and pasting text from the internet without using quotation marks and referring to the source;
 - using excerpts from printed material such as books, magazines, other publications and encyclopaedias without using quotation marks and referring to the source;
 - using a translation of the abovementioned texts without using quotation marks and referring to the source;
 - paraphrasing of the abovementioned texts without giving a (clear) reference: paraphrasing must be marked as such (by explicitly linking the text with the original author, either in text or a footnote), whereby the impression is not created that the ideas expressed are those of the student;
 - using visual, audio or test material from others without referring to the source and presenting this as own work;
 - resubmission of the student's own earlier work without source references, and allowing this to pass for work originally produced for the purpose of the course, unless this is expressly permitted in the course or by the lecturer;
 - using the work of other students and passing this off as own work. If this happens with the permission of the other student, the latter is also guilty of plagiarism;
 - in the event that, in a joint paper, one of the authors commits plagiarism, the other authors are also guilty of plagiarism, if they could or should have known

- that the other was committing plagiarism;
 - submitting papers obtained from a commercial institution (such as an internet site offering excerpts or papers) or having such written by someone else, whether or not in return for payment;
 - misrepresent Artificial Intelligent (AI) generated content as student's own work.
4. Free-riding is defined as the clear unequal contribution of a student to groupwork or group assignment. Free-riding is considered as failure to act on the part of students, whereby a correct assessment of their knowledge, insight and skills is made impossible, in full or in part.

Art. 8.2 - Procedure in Case of fraud

1. In all cases in which fraud, free-riding or plagiarism is found or suspected, the module coordinator will inform the student and the Board of Examiners of this in writing.
2. The Board of Examiners will give the student the opportunity:
 - a. to respond to this in writing;
 - b. to be heard.
3. The Board of Examiners will determine whether fraud or plagiarism has occurred and will inform the student of its decision and possible sanctions in writing, stating the possibility of appeal to the CHARM-EU Appeals Board.
4. Fraud and plagiarism will be punished by the Board of Examiners as follows:
 - a. in any event:
 - i. invalidation of assessment activity submitted;
 - ii. a reprimand, a note of which will be made on the student record submitted to the Portfolio Assessment Committee and added to the student information system of CHARM-EU;
 - b. depending on the nature and scale of the fraud or plagiarism, and on the student's phase of study in addition to the sanctions under 4a the removal from the module and thus removal from the programme can be sanctioned;
 - c. in the event that the student has already received a reprimand:
 - i. complete exclusion from participation in the Joint Degree Programme and thus removal from the programme.
5. In the case of extremely serious and/or repeated fraud or plagiarism, the Board of Examiners may recommend that the Joint Degree Programme Board permanently terminate the concerned student's registration for the Joint Degree Programme.
6. If the Board of Examiners determines that there has been widespread or organised fraud, on a scale which would affect the assessment results in their entirety, the Board of Examiners will decide without delay that the assessment concerned is invalid and that all the participants must re-sit the assessment at short notice. The Board of Examiners will set the date before which the assessment must be retaken

SECTION 9 REQUIREMENTS FOR AWARDING THE JOINT DEGREE

Art. 9.1 – Final review of requirements to be awarded the Master’s Degree

1. As soon as the student has fulfilled the graduation requirements of the Joint Degree Programme, the Board of Examiners will validate the final result and award a degree certificate.
2. Prior to carrying out the final review of requirements, the Board of Examiners may conduct their own examination of the student's knowledge of one or more components or aspects of the Joint Degree Programme, if and in as far as the results of the relevant assessments give them reason to do so.
3. The date of completion of the programme will be the last working day of the month in which the Board of Examiners has determined that the student has fulfilled the requirements of the Joint Degree Programme. The student must be enrolled for the Joint Degree Programme on that date.
4. The degree will be awarded on condition that all programme phases have been completed successfully (120 ECTS) and the compulsory mobility has been done.
5. Furthermore, only students who have been enrolled on the Joint Degree Programme for all 4 phases may be submitted for final review and receive the degree. In cases where a student does not meet this condition, the Academic Council decides if the final review may be conducted or not. The degree can be issued only once the student has paid the tuition fees and any administrative charges owing.
6. The final examination date cannot be postponed. This is, unless an extension is granted by the Board of Examiners.

Art. 9.2 – Degree

1. A joint degree awarded by the nine universities participating in the Master’s will be delivered to students who pass the final examination of requirements.
2. The title of the degree awarded will be stated on the joint diploma parchment in accordance with the national legislation of the partner universities participating in the Master’s.
3. CHARM-EU will issue the joint diploma parchment and the joint diploma supplement with the logos/crests of the partners who are part of the joint degree programme as outlined in the [Assessment, Progression and Graduation Rules and Regulations](#).
4. In addition to the joint diploma parchment, graduated students receive the joint diploma supplement which provides insight into the nature and contents of the completed joint degree programme, the national higher education systems in the countries of the nine partner universities as well as clarifications of the grading system.

SECTION 10 STUDENT STUDY RECORDS AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Art. 10.1 – Records of student progress

1. The CHARM-EU Joint Virtual Administrative Office must record the individual study results of the students and make them available through the student information system.
2. The study results are also recorded in the official student record of the CHARM-EU partners.
3. An official transcript of records can be obtained from the CHARM-EU JVAO office.

Art. 10.2 – Student support

1. CHARM-EU as well as the support offices of the CHARM-EU partners must provide support to the students who are enrolled for the Joint Degree Programme. In the [Student Services Policy](#), CHARM-EU outlines the guiding principles to serve the students throughout their studies.

2. Student support encompasses:
 - encouraging students to feel part of the CHARM-EU community;
 - providing support for students with access and participation needs;
 - advising on programme choices;
 - ensuring access to CHARM-EU student services or local services.

Art. 10.3 – Access needs and reasonable accommodations

1. Students with access and participation needs shall be provided with additional support, where needed, and in line with capacity and resources of CHARM-EU and the participating institutions. Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a variety of backgrounds and circumstances according to national and international equality and non-discrimination legislation including those related to students with disabilities.
2. Students seeking to avail of reasonable accommodations are encouraged to seek an Individual Needs Assessment in a timely manner, preferably at the beginning of the academic year.
3. The Needs Assessment Report and resulting accommodations are approved by the Board of Examiners and shared with relevant stakeholders.

SECTION 11 TRANSITIONAL AND FINAL PROVISIONS

Art. 11.1 – Safety-net Scheme

In those cases not provided for or not sufficiently clear in the Academic Rules and Regulations Framework of the MGCS, the decision will be made by:

- a. the Board of Examiners in case of articles in section 7, 8 and 9, after consulting the Joint Degree Programme Board;
- b. the Academic Council in case of articles in section 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 and in all other cases. The Academic Council will consult the Joint Degree Programme Board before reaching a decision.

Art. 11.2 – Responsibility

The Academic Council is responsible for oversight and approval of the Academic Rules and Regulations Framework. The Programme Board is responsible for ensuring these rules and regulations are implemented as approved.

Art. 11.3 – Amendments

The Academic Council can approve changes to the current Academic Rules and Regulations Framework in consultation with the Programme Board.

1. Any amendments will not be applied to the ongoing academic year of the Master's programme, unless it is deemed to be in the interests of the students. In which case the Student Council has to approve them.
2. Furthermore, amendments may not have any adverse effect on any or all students or affect any other decision taken by the Board of Examiners prior to the amendment.

Art 11.4 – Revision

1. The Academic Rules and Regulations Framework are part of the Quality assurance and control cycle and will be revised and updated yearly.
2. During the revision of the Academic Rules and Regulations Framework, the current Academic Rules and Regulations remain valid until the approval of the Academic Council

of the revised Academic Rules and Regulations, and their stated entry into force.

Art. 11.5 – Publication

Once approved, these Academic Rules and Regulations Framework, as well as any amendments, will be published on the CHARM-EU website.

Art. 11.6 – Effective Date

These Regulations take effect once the student is enrolled in the programme.

The Academic Rules & Regulations for Admissions, Enrolment, Internships and Assessment, Progression and Graduation take effect on the date indicated in their specific document.

Related Documents

On the [Charm- EU – policies and regulations](#) website:

- Admissions rules and regulations: 6th Cohort
- Enrolment rules and regulations: 6th Cohort
- Assessment, progression and graduation rules and regulations
- Internship rules and regulations

- Appeals policy and the Appeals procedure
- Student Service policy
- Tuition fee policy
- Refund policy

Approvals:

Programme Board validation: 7 May 2026

Academic Council approval: 28 May 2026