

EUROPEAN MASTER OF SCIENCE IN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY – A SUCCESSFUL START AT UNIVERSITY OF A CORUÑA

MÁSTER EUROPEO EN CIENCIAS DE LA TERAPIA OCUPACIONAL: UN COMIENZO EXITOSO EN LA UNIVERSIDAD DE A CORUÑA



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DeCS Terapia ocupacional **MeSH** Occupational therapy

The University of A Coruña, Spain, became the new partner university of the European Master's in Occupational Therapy in September 2022. This program is jointly developed by five European universities and has a history of over 20 years. Module 4, "Sociocultural Perspectives of Human Occupation - Scientific and Theoretical Argumentation," is now the responsibility of the University of A Coruña. It was successfully developed by their team of occupational therapists, who are experts in the field, for the first time in June 2023. In this text, we share the experience and initial impressions of this promising collaboration

La Universidade de A Coruña, España, se convirtió en la nueva universidad socia del Máster Europeo en Ciencias en Terapia Ocupacional en septiembre de 2022. Este programa es desarrollado en conjunto por cinco universidades europeas y tiene una historia de más de 20 años. El módulo 4, "Perspectivas socioculturales de la ocupación humana - Argumentación científica y teórica" es ahora responsabilidad de la Universidade da Coruña. Fue desarrollado por su equipo, terapeutas ocupacionales expertas en la materia, por primera vez en junio de 2023 de forma exitosa. En este texto compartimos la experiencia y las primeras impresiones de esta prometedora colaboración.

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In June 2023, 20 students of the European Master of Science in Occupational Therapy were welcomed at University of A Coruña – the first time ever that the module "Socio-cultural perspectives of human occupation - Scientific and theoretical argumentation" took place in Spain!

Historic context

The European MSc in Occupational Therapy programme (OT-EuroMaster) had been founded in 1999 by four European higher education institutions: Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, NL (AUAS); University of Brighton, UK (UoB); Karolinska Institutet, SWE (KI); University College Absalon, DK. In 2010, the Zurich University of Applied Sciences, CH (ZHAW), joined this international consortium. Ever since, the partner institutions offer a research-oriented Master of Science programme, specifically from an occupational perspective, consisting of 6 modules, leading to 90 credits ECTS. Each university is responsible for one module, with the students studying on site for an average of two weeks each. In the sixth module, students work on their Master thesis in their country of residence. Since autumn 2022, University of A Coruña (UDC) is the new partner within this consortium, replacing the Danish partner who had left the programme after more than 20 years of valued collaboration.

Team of University A Coruña is the perfect fit

The fourth module, focusing on socio-cultural perspectives of human occupation, has now been hosted by the team A Coruña for the first time. Natalia Rivas Quarneti (module coordinator), Inés Viana Moldes (Board member), Lisette Farias and Lilian Magalhães are the new module core team. Their expertise in the field of social-cultural aspects of occupation and social transformation within OT fits perfectly to the scope of the module



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and enriches the multitude of perspectives within the international staff team.

A truly international programme

The five institutions work together in a spirit of partnership and mutual respect. Each institution delivers one module, which means that international students experience the culture of five European countries and institutions. Staff from all five institutions work as a team to plan, deliver, assess and evaluate the programme to ensure coherence and progression. All partners contribute to the supervision and examination of the final thesis.

Degree awarding powers for the OT-EuroMaster are held by University of Applied Sciences (AUAS) and by Zurich University of Applied Sciences Winterthur (ZHAW). The Programme Management is also based there: Debbie Kramer-Roy at AUAS (Director Education) and Claudia Galli at ZHAW (Director Organisation) are together responsible for the Management of the programme. The administrative office and hosting of the online teaching and learning environment are held at AUAS.

Internationalisation is a special feature that underpins the programme. In 2016 and again in 2023, the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA) awarded the Certificate for Quality in Internationalisation. The 'carousel' curriculum, with students studying in five countries, epitomises 'internationalisation abroad.' Internationalisation is intended to enhance cultural competence and sensitivity for dealing with diversity and challenging inequalities.

Internationalisation and inter-culturalism are integral to the structure, values and working practices of the OT-Euromaster. We work together in a spirit of cooperation, reciprocity, compromise and agreement. Diversity is valued and respected.

Focus on the relationship between contexts and human occupation at University of A Coruña

In June 2023, students explored Occupational Therapy and/or Occupational Science concepts and theoretical frameworks that illustrate the situated nature of occupation within socio-political contexts and cultural conditions. And consistently, the module supported their development of critical and reflexive skills related to scientific and theoretical argumentation and enabled them to position their practice and/or research within European and global contexts.

During the module, students had the chance to explore the local community with the NGO Ecos do Sur with whom they developed the problem based learning process in partnership. Moreover, students discussed



The new Team at UDC: Lisette Farias, Inés Viana Moldes, Natália Rivas Quarneti, Lilian Magalhães.
(The people in the photograph gave their consent to the authors for the dissemination in TOG (A Coruña) of this image)



Students, module 4 team and Dean of Faculty of Health Sciences on arrival day.
(The people in the photograph gave their consent to the authors for the dissemination in TOG (A Coruña) of this image)



OT-EuroMaster staff at UDC: Natalia Rivas Quarneti (UDC), Nadine Blankvoort (AUAS), Iván de Rosende Celeiro (Secretary, Faculty of Health Sciences, UDC), Ton Satink (AUAS), Claudia Galli (ZHAW), Paul Boyle (UoB), Debbie Kramer-Roy (AUAS), Adriana Ávila Álvarez (Dean of Faculty of Health Sciences, UDC), Ann-Helen Patomella (KI), Ines Viana Moldes (UDC); not on the picture: Anders Kottorp (ZHAW).
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with some very renowned guest lecturers: Hanneke van Bruggen, Denise Gastaldo, Antía Pérez Caramés, Salvador Simó and Inda Zango.

Institutional cooperation

The rector of the University of A Coruña and other institutional authorities welcomed the programme at a meeting held with the directors and authors of this document with the aim of strengthening the institutional ties and mutual recognition.

International staff collaboration: five institutions – one team

While the students had lectures and worked on their PBL cases and scientific argumentations, staff from all the partner institutions met during two full days. In addition to the coordination of the teaching staff, these intensive meetings included workshops and meetings with students at the Faculty of Health Sciences of UDC. The overall aim of staff meetings (held in every module) is to ensure that all coordinators and teaching staff of the different modules work together as one team, sharing visions, values and objectives. In addition, the development and coherence of the programme is continuously addressed. Comments and suggestions from students, as well as international developments in occupational therapy or occupational science, are integrated into faculty discussions and topics such as changes in regulations, ethical approval processes or financial issues are addressed.

Building research capacity

Building research capacity is vital for the academic development of occupational therapy around the world. This applies to and has been achieved by both faculty and students. To achieve this, the programme offers 6 modules, all of them mandatory for the students. A unique feature of the curriculum design for the OT-EuroMaster is that each module combines theory of occupational therapy with scientific theory and method, developing both in synchrony.

Thus, from the beginning a parallel process takes place, where students develop competences in the study of occupation in every module, and step by step will develop research understanding and skills, to prepare the research plan for the final project.

The six modules of the OT-EuroMaster

Module 1	Module 2	Module 3	Module 4	Module 5	Module 6
University of Brighton in Eastbourne	Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences	Zurich University of Applied Sciences	Universidad de A Coruña	Karolinska Institutet	
United Kingdom	The Netherlands	Switzerland	Spain	Sweden	Own country
12 ECTS Week 35-46	12 ECTS Week 47-8	12 ECTS Week 9-20	12 ECTS Week 21-32	12 ECTS Week 35-46	30 ECTS Week 47-25
Wk 37/38 class	Wk 49 / 50 class	Wk 11 / 12 clases	Wk 23 / 24 class	Wk 45 exam/class	Wk 37 or 38 Graduation
September	December	March	June	November	September
Applying occupational therapy and occupational science research and theory to practice	Qualitative research in relation to human occupation - critical reflections on methods and your researcher positionality	Applying and reflecting on quantitative research methods in relation to human occupation	Socio-cultural perspectives of human occupation - Scientific and theoretical argumentation	Designing and planning a research project in relation to Human Occupation	Conducting a research project in relation to Human Occupation

The role of the new partner institution and its team is essential in this common strategy for the development of the profession at a European and international level. We hope that this new stage will generate opportunities for collaboration with the profession in Spain and beyond.

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