

Evaluation of the Professional Summer School and the Integration Week of the AMASE Programme in 2018

On behalf of the European School of Materials (EUSMAT)

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Abbreviations

| | |
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| AMASE | Advanced Material Science and Engineering |
| EUSMAT | European School of Materials |
| FGD | Focus Group Discussions |
| IW | Integration Week |
| PSS | Professional Summer School |

1. Introduction

In the focus of this evaluation is the AMASE master programme in the field of material sciences and engineering coordinated by the European School of Materials (EUSMAT) at Saarland University, Germany. The two-year programme is implemented jointly by four partner universities: Saarland University in Germany, Luleå University of Technology in Sweden, Université de Lorraine in France and Universidad Politecnica in Spain. AMASE Students can obtain a double degree and study at two of these four universities during the course of the programme. The programme is funded by European Union's Erasmus+ programme and students from Europe and outside Europe can participate in the programme.

The programme aims at providing multilingual and intercultural experience, as well as innovative and research-relevant education but also at preparing students for working in different environments and building networks within the EU and across the world.

First-year students stay at their entrance university for the first two semesters of their studies and change after the second semester to the second university. They can then either stay at the second university also for their master thesis or return for the thesis to their entrance university. In the first semester AMASE students at all four partner universities acquire general knowledge in material sciences and engineering but also in European languages and culture. Afterwards they have to decide on certain tracks specialising in diverse areas.

To support students further in this study programme and to enhance their coping capability with upcoming challenges, AMASE coordinators have organized the annual so-called Integration Week (IW) since 2012. This week takes place at Saarland University which is the coordinating institution of AMASE. On that occasion, all AMASE first-year students meet at Saarbruecken and attend various courses e.g. on intercultural competences, presentation techniques and time management.

In 2018, a second format has been introduced to support AMASE students during their studies: the Professional Summer School (PSS) at Saarland University which took place for the first time in 2018 for second year students. Its focus is on job application, career planning and networking with the industry.

EUSMAT decided to assign an accompanying evaluation of these two instruments in order to assess their effectiveness. The evaluation focuses on the fulfilment of students' expectations towards those instruments and on students' competence development through those two instruments. Furthermore, the evaluation is expected to deliver insights on how IW and PSS are contributing to students' performance in the AMASE programme, and how second year students assess their experience in the AMASE programme so far.

In the following of the report, first the evaluation approach and methodology will be outlined (see chapter 2). Afterwards the evaluation results for IW and PSS will be presented in detail (see chapter 3). In chapter 4, the evaluators then draw their conclusions from the findings and develop recommendations for the future.

2. Evaluation Approach and Methodology

The evaluation approach and methodology were developed in close discussion with EUSMAT staff and the CEval evaluation team. Therefore, a participatory approach was applied in the evaluation including also the students as main source of information. Even though the evaluation is limited in its scope, two different data collection methods were applied in order to be able to triangulate methods and validate information. Two online surveys as well as four focus group discussions (FGD) were the main sources of information. Whereas the online surveys were designed as full population surveys, the FGDs were held with a stratified random sample of students. While the former thus delivered quantitative information on the whole population, the FGDs generated in-depth information on the students' assessments.

29 students were registered for IW as well as PSS. Two self-paying students cancelled their coming to the IW at short notice, leading to 27 first year students participating. Furthermore, two second year students participated in the IW. However, given their advanced status in the AMASE programme they were not integrated into the study population. Therefore, the total population for this evaluation is 56 participants of IW and PSS together.

Figure 1: Participants of IW 2018

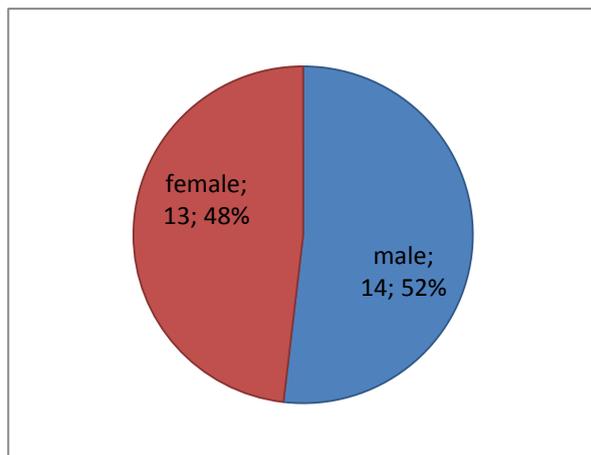
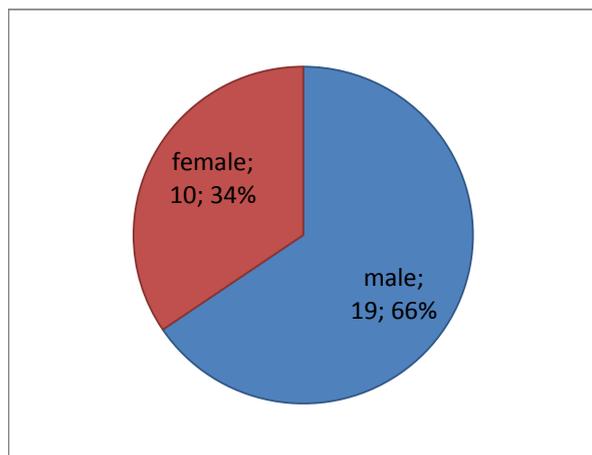


Figure 2: Participants of PSS 2018



Source: Students' list of EUSMAT office

Figure 1 and 2 show that this year's programme starters have an almost equal representation of female and male (48% vs. 52%, respectively). In turn second year students have a smaller share of female versus male students (34% vs. 66%, respectively). The majority of students of AMASE are scholarship holders of Erasmus Mundus. 9 students (31%) of the second year students are no scholarship holders and 11 of the first year students (38%) are no scholarship holders (+ two students not participating in the IW).

Two online surveys were developed and implemented in this evaluation and can also be used for further monitoring AMASE in the coming years. One survey was directed to the first year students participating in the IW and therefore represents a **baseline survey**. This survey was carried out in the beginning of the IW on 27th of August only. The survey of second year students participating in the PSS was in turn conducted between 28th of August and 14th of September, 2018 after the PSS was finished. Given that the students participating in the PSS have completed half of the AMASE programme, the second survey can be qualified as **midterm survey**.

Semi-standardised questionnaires were developed for both surveys (see annex.) The IW participants were mainly asked about their **expectations** with regard to the IW. PSS participants were questioned

about their experience with the PSS but additionally with the IW in the last year and their **impression of the whole AMASE programme** (see Annex 5.1 & 5.2). Both surveys have been programmed in an online software (SosciSurvey) which was usable on mobile devices. Invitations to the survey were distributed via the AMASE event app which was used to provide all relevant information on IW and PSS for the students.

For the IW participants the **response rate** is 26 of 27 (96%); the response rate for the PSS participants/second-year students of AMASE is slightly lower at 90% (26 of 29). Both surveys' response rates are very high so that all answers from the quantitative survey represent almost completely the perspective of IW and PSS participants as a whole.

Two **FGDs** were realised for IW and PSS participants each. The two IW FGDs took place on 28th of August before the actual start of the IW to capture the participants' expectations. The FGDs for the PSS took place on 26th and 27th of August, 2018 rather in the end of the PSS to reflect the final assessment of this week. Their implementation was structured by guidelines prepared beforehand (see annex 5.4 & 5.5). The selection of participants was determined on the basis of a random sample of the whole population taking into account the gender distribution. Between six and eight persons participated in each FGD. In total 15 students participated in the PSS FGDs and 14 students participated in the IW FGDs. Each discussion lasted approximately one hour and written and electronic transcripts were prepared.

The information collected in the FGDs and the online surveys is used over the course of the next chapters. Furthermore, the evaluation team prepared a final survey which will complement the baseline and midterm survey for AMASE students (see annex 5.3). This final survey can be applied by the EUSMAT team as monitoring tool after students finalised the programme.

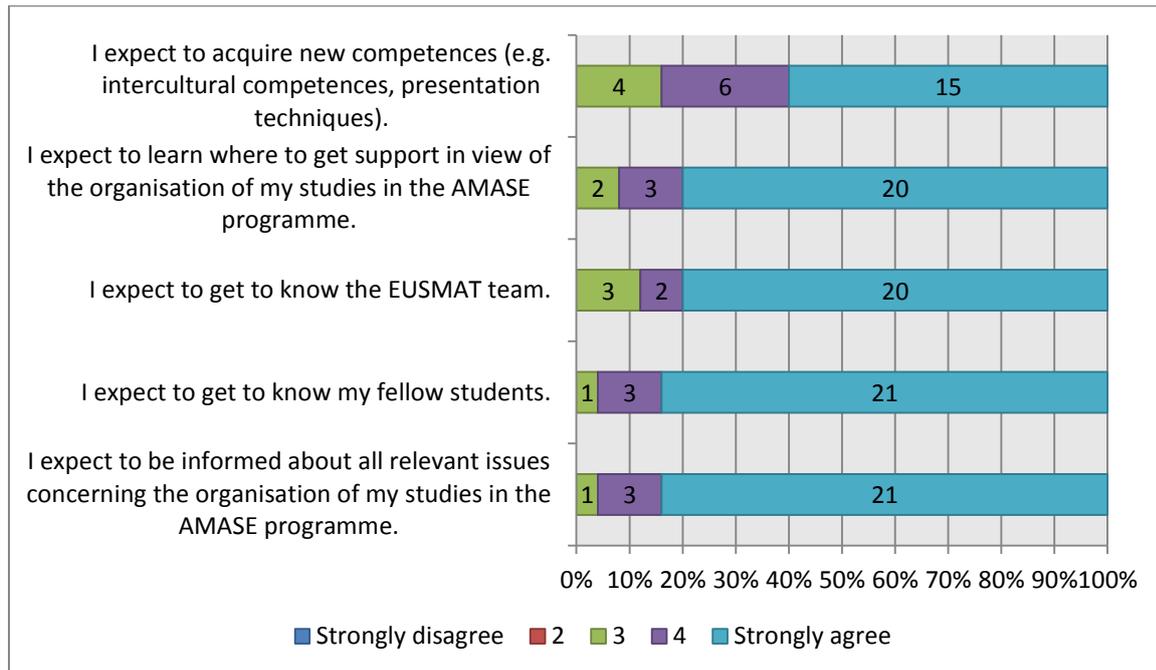
3. Results

3.1 Baseline survey: Assessment of Integration Week

3.1.1 Assessment of contents

This first part of the results chapter refers to the assessment of the IW and is based on information from first-year students collected via the online baseline survey and the FGDs. The online survey focussing on IW participants' **expectations** shows that students mainly expected the four aspects 'learn about support for the programme', 'get to know fellow students' and 'get to know the ESUMAT team' and 'be informed about relevant issues on the programme' to be in the focus of the IW (see Figure 3 **Fehler! Ungültiger Eigenverweis auf Textmarke.**). Students expected to a lesser extent 'to acquire new competences' with respect to intercultural knowledge, presentation etc. Furthermore, in an open specification option in the survey students specified that they expected information which relates to the programme either at the entrance university or at other universities, and also that the future professional opportunities would be discussed.

Figure 3: What do you expect from the EUSMAT Integration Week? (n=25)



Source: Online Survey with IW participants

When comparing the expectations before the start of the IW in the survey with the feedback from the FGDs participants after the IW, they were referring also to some negative expectations they had beforehand. Participants expected from the schedule that there would be long lectures and that the IW might be boring, but were then positively surprised. Some students described also that they had been scared before to meet a large amount of unknown international people, but that they felt much better after the integration week. Furthermore, the focus of the expectations was in the FGDs mostly on meeting and getting to know other students and less on the contents of the IW.

“I was expecting more focus on the program but they added the cultural part, [...] which was very important to us”

When asked for the fulfilment of the students’ expectations they explained that they have been surpassed:

“We had the schedule for a previous idea but it was so much better than expected.”

For the **relevance and the usefulness of the contents** only the FGDs of the IW can provide information as the survey was conducted before the realisation of the IW. In general, all agenda items have been qualified by at least some of the students as relevant and useful during the FGDs.

However, the **intercultural training** was clearly emphasised as the most important part of the IW. It helped the participants to develop personally, make friends and to feel prepared for their year abroad in another culture. Especially the part of the games was positively highlighted in that regard, as interesting contents were learned while having fun. The most relevant achievements for the students were the attenuation of their felt insecurity about the future which beforehand was characterised by so many unknown variables, and the contacts made to people facing the same challenges (e.g. content of study program, skills to learn, and, future after the study program, etc.).

“I felt very lonely when I arrived and sad. Now I understand. It is part of the process.”

“I am the only [...]. I also felt lonely but the training and games let me get closer and closer.”

The second most important aspect were the job market related agenda items (e.g. skills expected by job market, possible future work fields, etc.). Specifically, **‘how to make presentations’, ‘meet the expert’, intercultural training and the PhD-talk** but also the tour through the university and laboratories were mentioned as important.

“Before I did not know where to go. Now I am more confident”

“Now I know what I can do after finishing the master”

All lectures were assessed as interesting, even though some students had thought before that they might already know about a topic like, for example, with respect to the presentations.

According to the students, meeting a person from the industry and seeing the laboratories at Saarland University also increased their motivation for the programme. While the expectations in **‘Meet the expert’** were quite high, the students felt that the effectiveness of this session could have been higher if they had known whom they were going to meet beforehand. That way, they could have been able to prepare questions. Furthermore, seemingly not all experts were presented in the beginning, so the students did not know exactly who they were meeting. Furthermore, some students also considered the **lab visits** as less useful, for example, because the presentation of details in English was a problem or because the lab as such was not interesting to them.

Another critical feedback was given with regards to the **presentation about the European Union**. Students perceived that it contained too much information and was thus hard to follow and understand. Most participants did not understand what the main message of this presentation was. They would have appreciated some information in advance to prepare for this topic or a more interactive and dynamic design of the lecture.

Furthermore, students were also expecting coordinators from the partner universities to be present during the IW and to provide information. Although second-year students were available and appreciated, the students felt that it would have been nice to already meet official persons from their respective entrance universities. However, other students were referring to the upcoming introduction weeks at their entrance universities and did not see the necessity outlined before.

This is also connected to another suggestion made by students, that is, that the IW participants would have appreciated a formal meeting with the second-year AMASE students or some kind of **buddy-programme** to facilitate the opportunity to inquire information about life in another country on a personal level. Some students might be too shy to approach second-year students on informal events.

The provision of information on **visa requirements was also discussed**, commenting on visa problems between the different semesters because of a gap of visa coverage for some months related to different durations of visa by different universities/countries.

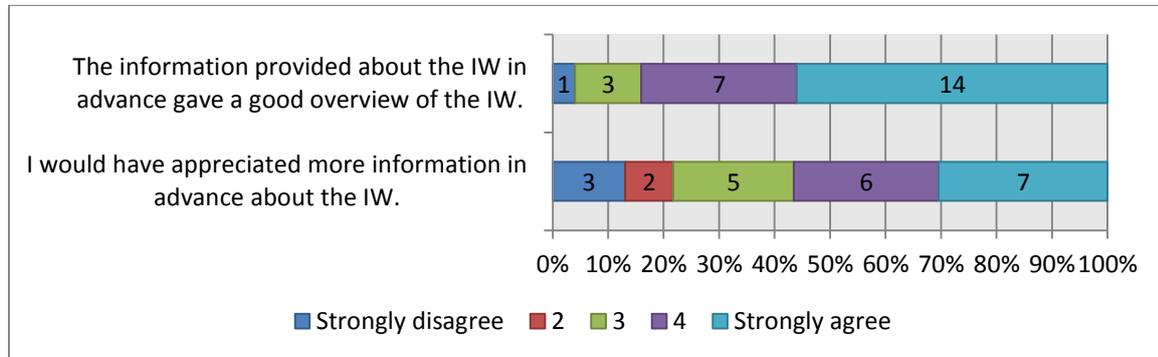
FGD participants mentioned also that some agenda items were **strongly related to Saarbruecken** or EU-citizens and not so relevant for persons going to other places and being from non-European countries.

3.1.2 Assessment of organisation and support

Another topic covered by the evaluation was the students’ assessment of the way the IW was organised and of the support provided in that regard by the EUSMAT team.

Most of the students (84%) strongly agreed or agreed that the information provided in advance gave a good overview of the IW (see 4). Still, more than half of the students could have used also further information beforehand. Students referred in the survey to information on living in the new cities like banking or housing.

Figure 4: How do you assess the preparation of the Integration Week (IW)? (n=25)



Source: Online Survey with IW participants

When asking the FGD participants after the IW, no critique on the organisation came up and a very positive feedback was given. The whole organisation of the event was highly appreciated. Participants agreed that the coordination of the event itself was well-organised and the timing of breaks and activities was well distributed.

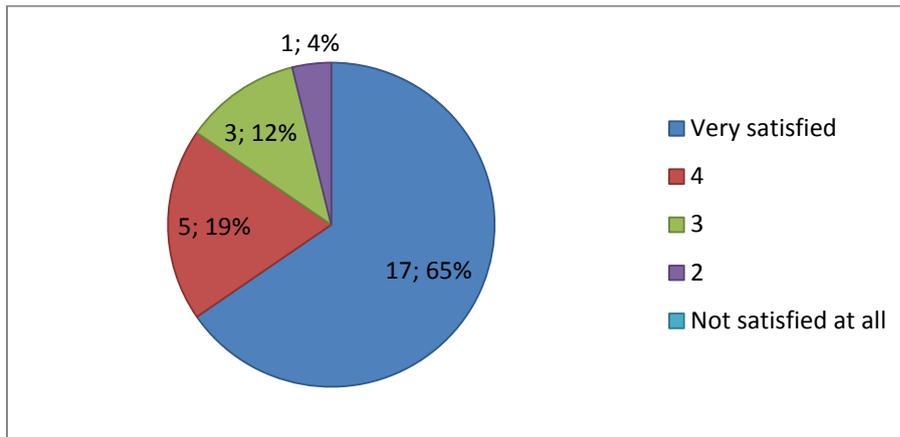
“They kept to the schedule. It was really good.”

Even though, mostly no negative aspects about the IW were mentioned in the FGDs the relatively dense/heavy schedule was found to be a small downturn of the IW. A discussion about an optimal length of the IW showed the different perspectives students had on this aspect and no majority opinion could be found. To make some parts of the week optional might be a solution for students who are working and thus cannot afford to spend a whole week.

While the information app for mobile devices of the IW has been mentioned as very useful, some problems were reported regarding its use, which was apparently hampered whenever no internet connection was available, which was particularly the case in the beginning of the week and especially affected non-European participants. Some analog information like a printed map of the campus of Saarland University would have been helpful. Most relevant information has been given in print in the beginning of the IW. One further small and rather personal than professional suggestion was to leave students a little more time for visiting Saarbruecken during business hours.

In the baseline survey the IW participants showed a high satisfaction with the **support provided by the EUSMAT team** in advance (see Figure 5). More than half of the participants were very satisfied (65%, 17) or satisfied (19%, 5). Only one person was rather not satisfied.

Figure 5: Overall, how satisfied are you with the support provided by the EUSMAT team in the period before the beginning of your studies in the AMASE programme? (n=26)



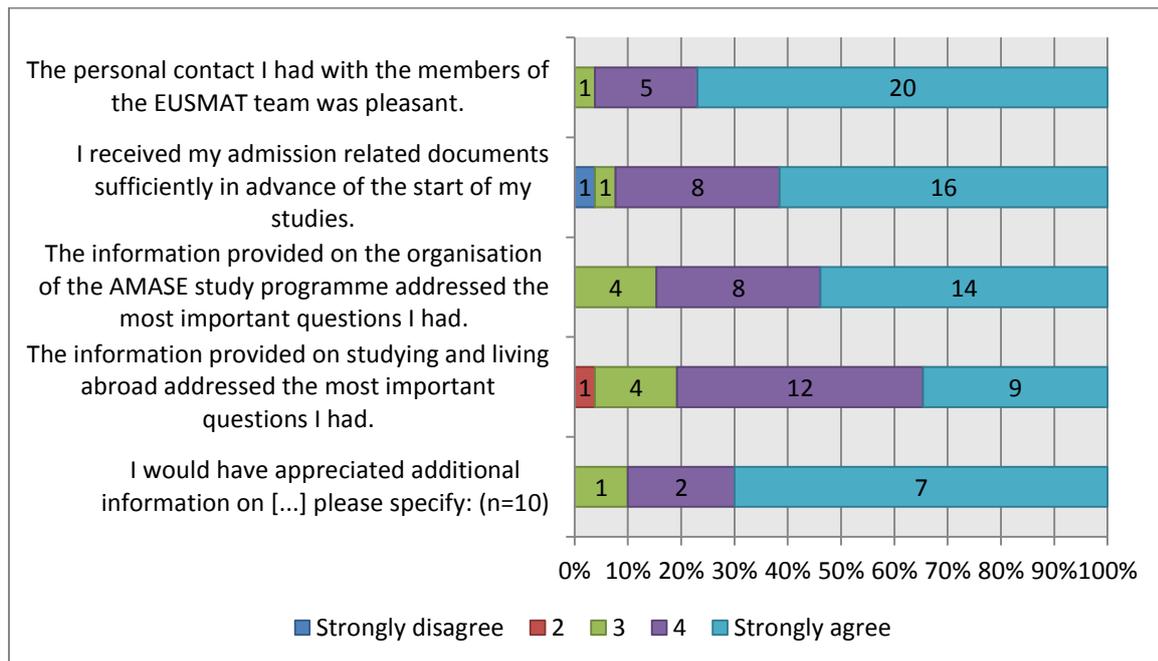
Source: Online Survey with IW participants

When asked for certain aspects of the support provided the personal contact with the EUSMAT team stands out positively (see Figure 6) which can also be confirmed by the information from the FGDs. For instance one participant expressed his content in this way:

“They were motivated and dedicated. We know that there is a team in the background we can rely on.”

Further, also the reception of the admission related documents was rated very positively by over 90% of the respondents. Slightly lower were the satisfaction rates for the information provided beforehand on the organisation of the AMASE study programme and the information provided for studying and living abroad. This is also reflected in the open specification possibility in the survey where some participants explained that they missed information on accommodation or banking but also on the start in the entrance university. Still, in general satisfaction rates on the support by EUSMAT are very high.

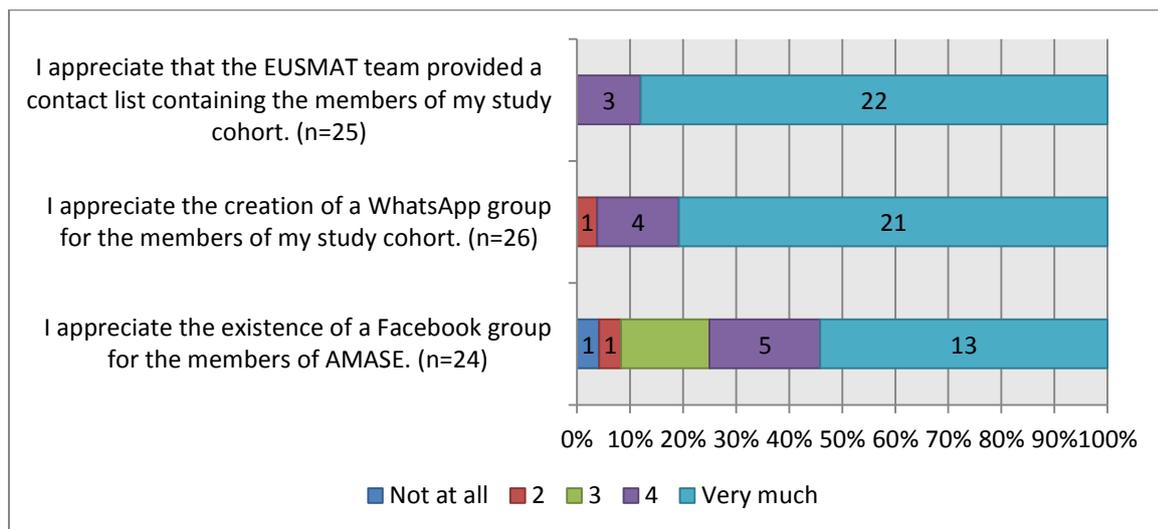
Figure 6: How do you assess the support provided by the EUSMAT team before the beginning of your studies with regards to the following issues? (n=26)



Source: Online Survey with IW participants

Not only the organisational effort by the EUSMAT team was highly appreciated but also the networking opportunities they provided especially through the contact list and the WhatsApp group and through the Facebook group, although the appreciation for the latter was somewhat less strong. All students of the integration week articulated in the survey that they have already used one of these three options to get in contact with colleagues. Bearing in mind that the survey was conducted on the first day of the integration week, this is a very positive sign.

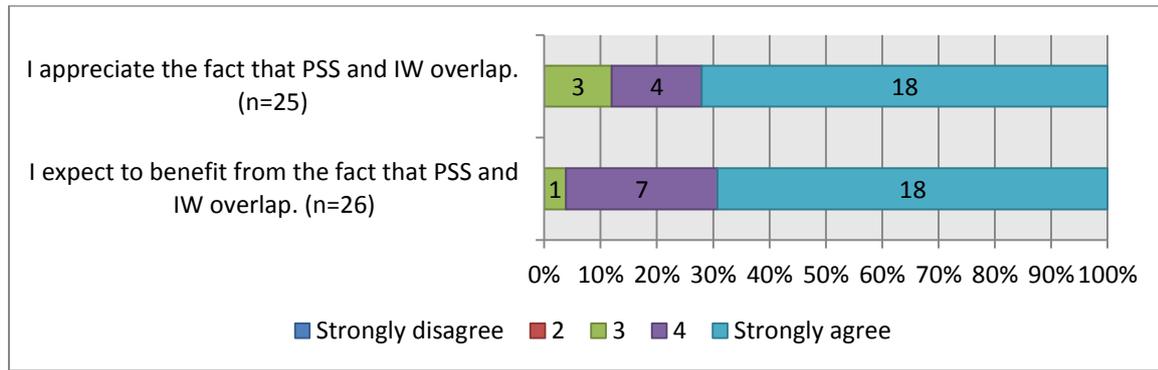
Figure 7: How do you assess the support provided by the EUSMAT team in terms to networking among the AMASE students?



Source: Online Survey with IW participants

The **overlap of the IW and the PSS** was assessed very positively by IW participants with no one assessing it negatively in the online survey (see Figure 8). Apart from one person all participants were also expecting to benefit from this overlap.

Figure 8: How do you assess the overlapping of PSS and IW?



Source: Online Survey with IW participants

This positive impression is also confirmed by the results of the FGDs. The experience to talk to older students was perceived as very useful and second year students were able to answer region specific questions that were not addressed by the event programme itself. The students would have liked a more formal exchange between the two groups, though, and not only on the excursions or at night.

3.2 Mid-term survey: Assessment of Professional Summer School

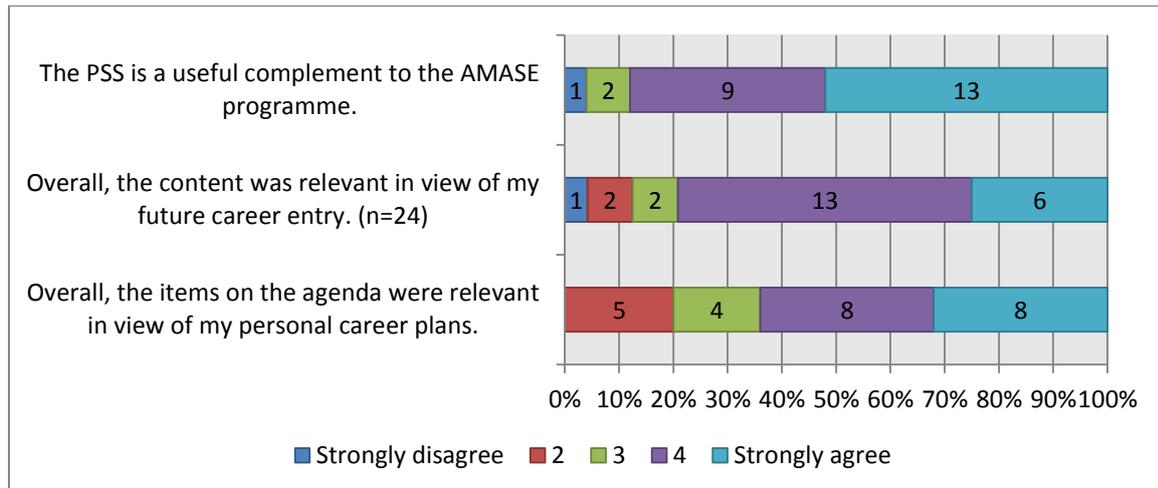
3.2.1 Assessment of contents

As with the baseline assessment of the IW, this chapter on the PSS will commence with the students’ assessment of the PSS contents, before the following section will elaborate on the assessment of its organisation.

In the FGDs, participants articulated that they expected to meet students they know, students from the country they are going to and further on the professional level to receive an orientation for their future. Most **expectations** were met. However, some lectures had not yet taken place at the time the FGDs were implemented, so that the students had not yet experienced the whole PSS programme (e.g. ‘Meet the expert’). While some persons explained they did not expect the PSS being part of the AMASE programme and they are quite happy that it exists now, others were slightly disappointed that a lot of information centred rather on Germany and Saarland University which was not relevant for most of them.

Overall, students saw the PSS as a useful complement to the AMASE programme, only three students do not agree with this (see Figure 9). But as the focus group discussions showed, this depends on personal experiences. Most students saw a high relevance of the PSS especially in terms of their future career and development. For the personal career plans the survey respondents scored a lower perceived relevance but still more than half of the students agreed that the PSS was relevant in this regard. Nevertheless, single students explained they were already well-informed on how to write applications or had already been working before, so that they did not perceive the content as relevant for them.

Figure 9: How do you assess the overall relevance of the contents of the PSS?

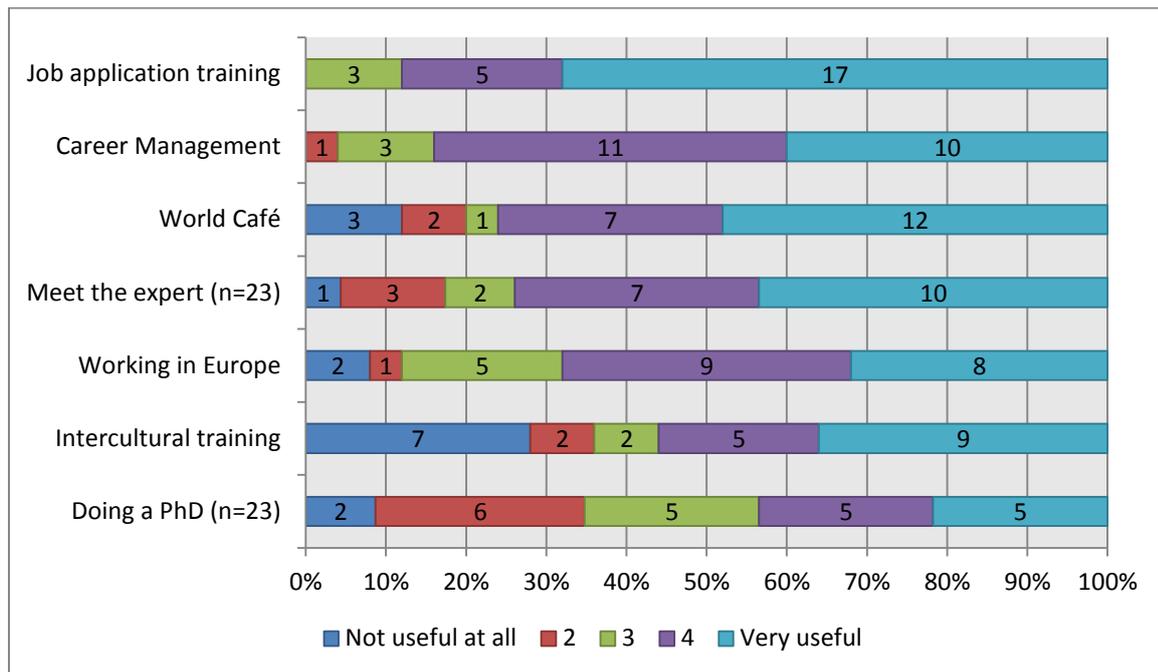


Source: Online survey with PSS participants

Participants of the PSS rated highest the job application training and the career management with over 80% of respondents giving the two highest satisfaction scores (see Figure 10). Also the World Café and the ‘Meet the Expert’ session were rated very high followed by the ‘Working in Europe’ item. Also the FGDs confirmed the higher relevance of the items relating to the professional career and not to intercultural communication. As became apparent in the FGDs, some students did not perceive an intercultural training very relevant at this point in time of their studies in AMASE since most of them have already lived for one year in another place, did the intercultural training in the IW and were interacting during the last year with all the other international students. Still, several other students highlighted the gained competence in conflict resolution and emotional regulation due to the simulation of real world professional problems. The critique on the intercultural training referred also to the long duration in a large group, which made it difficult for everyone to play an active role. Therefore, the recommendation by the students was to shorten the intercultural training and organise it around smaller groups.

Additionally, the session on ‘Doing a PhD’ was seen as useful by less than half of the participants. This can be traced back to a lack of aspiration to do a PhD as students explained in the FGDs. Also, from their point of view the information provided in that session was too general, included little concrete advice on what is necessary to apply for a PhD and furthermore, was only related to Germany or Saarland University.

Figure 10: How do you assess the relevance of the different agenda items of the PSS for your own professional development?



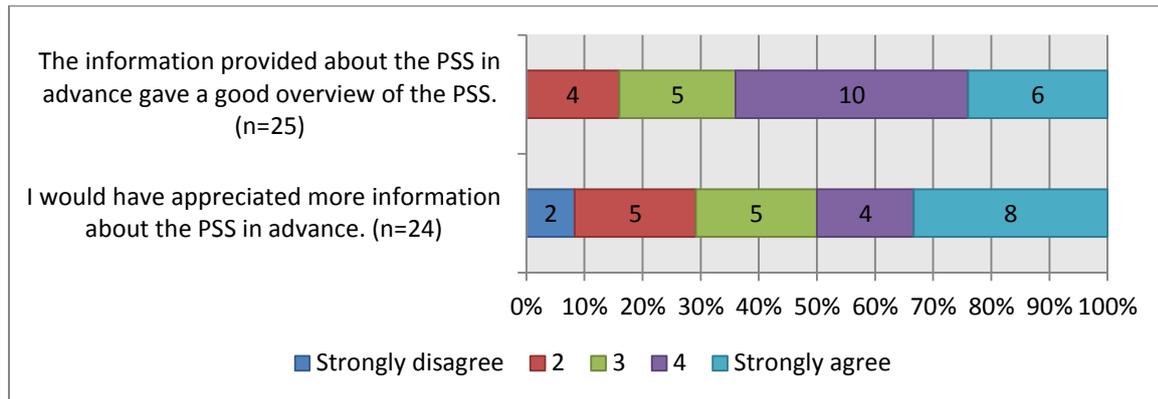
Source: Online survey with PSS participants

The quality of the different agenda items and the performance by trainers and experts was predominantly described as very high or high with more room for improvement with respect to the quality of the different agenda items. Some suggestions for improvement of agenda items were articulated in FGDs. For example, students would have preferred less focus on Germany and Saarland University (especially in ‘Working in Europe’) and more on the other countries/universities in the programme. Apart from that, more information important for Non-Europeans should be integrated in the lectures according to the focus group discussants. Furthermore, the students would have appreciated the presence of coordinators of the other partner universities to present their universities or to be available for Q&A.

3.2.2 Assessment of organisation and support

With respect to the **organisation** of the PSS, 64% of the survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the information provided in advance gave a good overview of the PSS (see Figure 11). While five respondents did neither agree nor disagree to this statement, four persons did not receive enough information on the PSS in advance from their perspective. Also, half of all the respondents would have liked to receive more information on the PSS in advance.

Figure 11: How do you assess the preparation of the PSS?

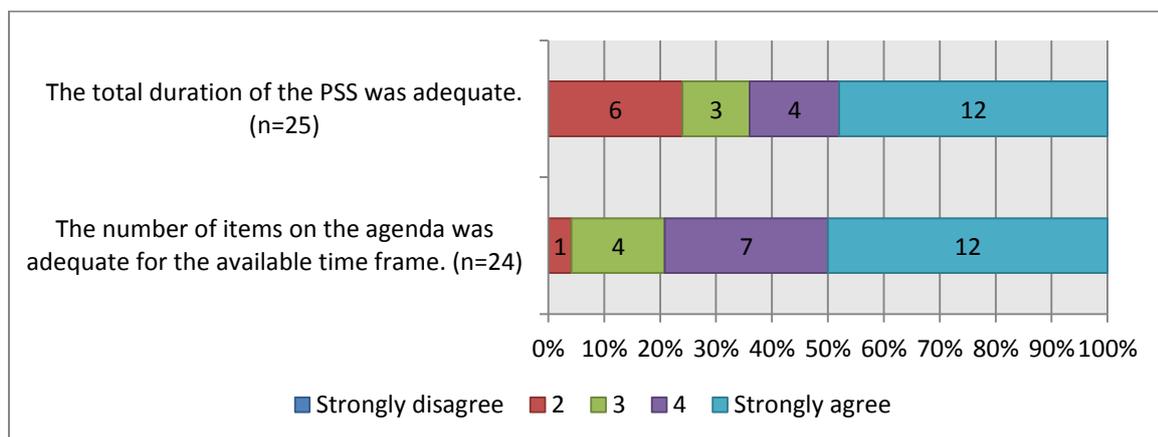


Source: Online survey with PSS participants

The **organisation of the PSS** was assessed very positively by the FGD participants. All participants favoured the organisation of the programme and event. They were very content with the number of breaks. Only few negative aspects were mentioned. Some parts were perceived as too theoretical and in others they would have preferred smaller groups for discussions. In general, students positively acknowledged that together with the IW participants it is quite a large group to be organised and the organisation was very well.

Information from the mid-term survey of PSS participants showed that the **number of items on the agenda** was mostly seen as adequate. Still, five students saw room for improvement in that regard. The critique is, however, more pronounced when it comes to the total duration of the PSS which is not seen as very adequate, but if participants perceived it as too short or too long cannot be determined. Neither in the FGDs nor in the open comments in the survey critique was raised on the duration of the PSS. Therefore, no clear interpretation is possible.

Figure 12: How do you assess the programme of the PSS?



Source: Online survey with PSS participants

Also in the PSS the **support by the EUSMAT team** was highlighted particularly positively. Special emphasis was put on the inter-personal relations between the programme coordinators and the students.

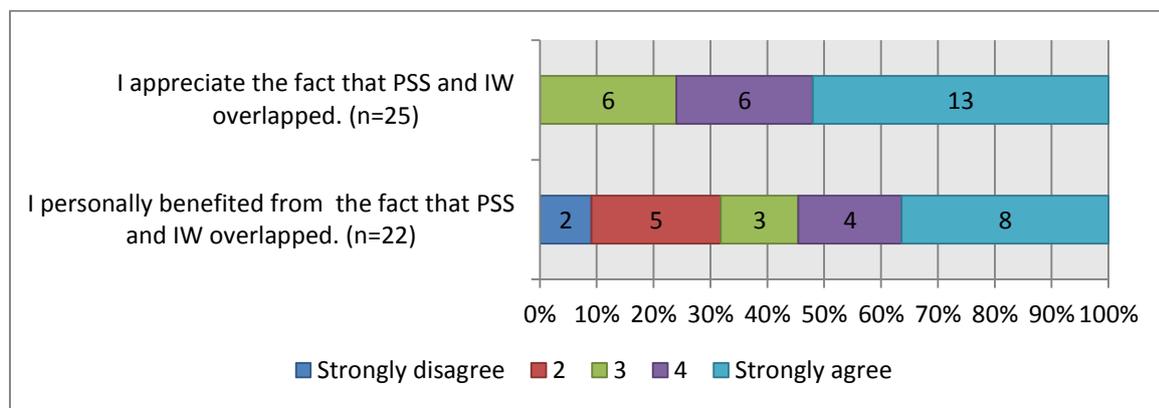
“They seem happy to see us.”

“They worried about us and what we are going to do.”

This appreciation was explained by an example where a student with a certain personality was needed and coordinators remembered last year’s students so well that they could recommend a certain student for the simulation in the intercultural training. They liked that organising staff also attended the lectures and saw how lectures were presented.

With respect to the **overlap of IW and the PSS**, for the second-year students the benefits they received from this are less clear. This can be found in the survey results (see Figure 13) and was confirmed in the FGDs. Nevertheless, there is no critique of this overlap. In fact, PSS participants acknowledged how important this overlap is for the IW (first-year students) and that they would have liked it also for their first-year meeting. Furthermore, they suggested to integrate also a meeting with recent alumni to learn from their experiences and be able to ask questions about the last year of study (e.g. Master thesis).

Figure 13: How do you assess the overlapping of PSS and IW?



Source: Online survey with PSS participants

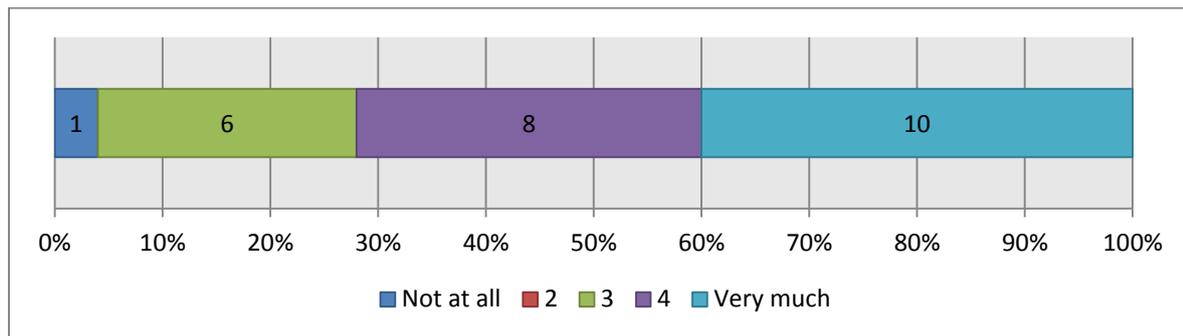
3.3 Mid-term assessment of AMASE & IW

3.3.1 Mid-term assessment of AMASE

Within the context of the online survey for PSS participants, the latter were not only asked to assess the PSS but also several aspects of their studies in AMASE in general as well as their experience with the IW from 2017.

With regard to the former, second-year students confirmed that they acquired new competences during the first year of study in the AMASE programme. While 40% (10) of the students said they acquired new competences to a very high extent, 32% (8) selected the second highest category and 24% (6) the third category (see Figure 14). One person stated to not have learned any new competence during the first year of study.

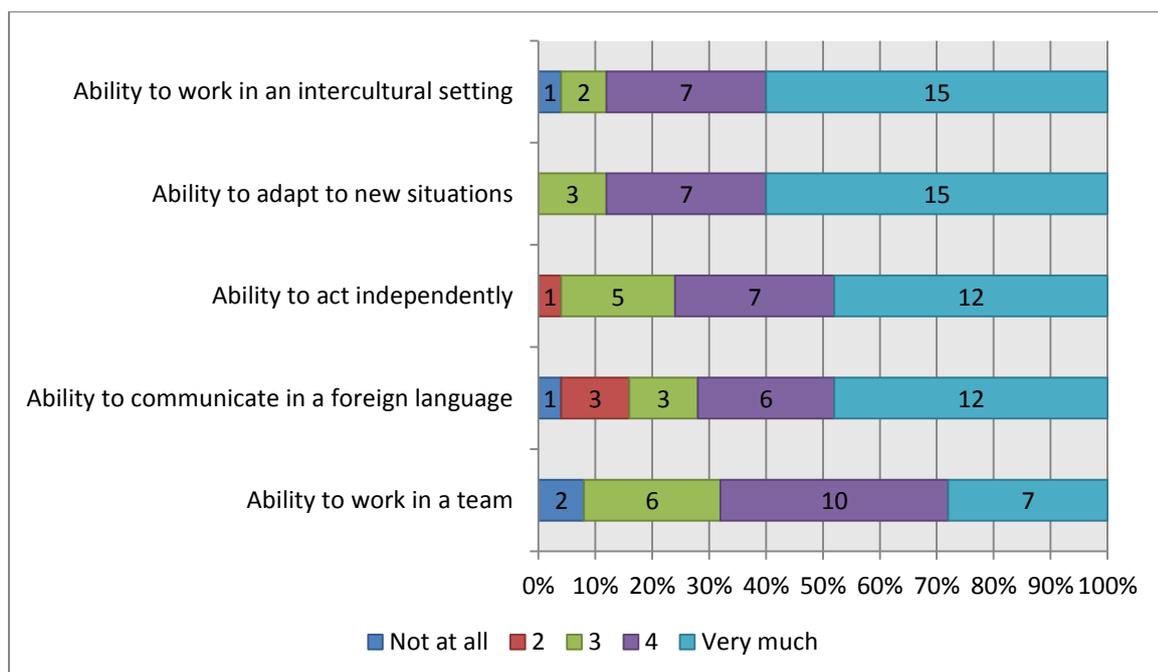
Figure 14: Overall, to what extent have you acquired new competences due to your first year of study in the AMASE programme? (n=25)



Source: Online survey with PSS participants

The second-year students saw their competences especially improved with respect to working in an intercultural setting and to adapt to new situations (see Figure 15). To a somewhat lesser extent they have developed their competence with regard to acting independently and the ability to communicate in a foreign language. The lowest rating in this regard received the ability to work in a team, a finding which is apparent especially from the comparatively small number of students who chose the highest rating in that respect.

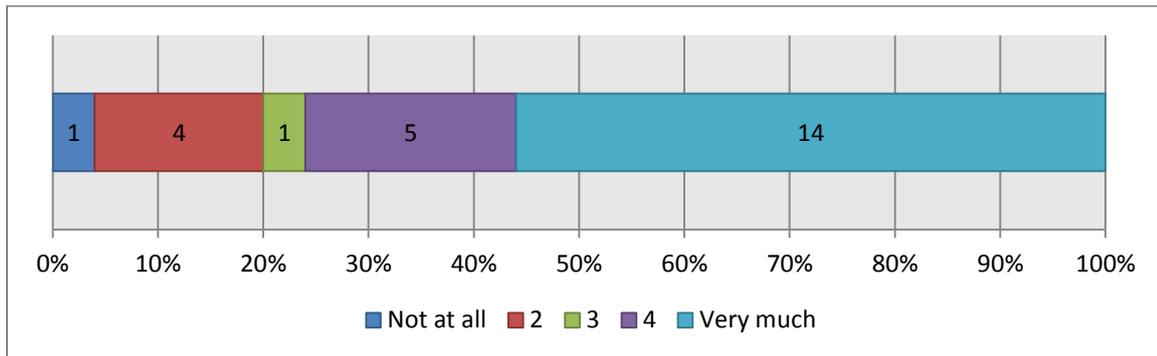
Figure 15: To what extent have you improved the following competences due to your first year in the AMASE programme? (n=25)



Source: Online survey with PSS participants

Over 70% of the respondents in the survey were very much or much satisfied with support services provided by the EUSMAT Office for the whole AMASE programme. That also means that some persons were not completely satisfied with the support services. This might refer to topics brought up in the FGDs and in the open comments in the survey with respect to the organisation of life in a foreign country (e.g. accommodation, visa, banking etc.). But as the questions during the evaluation were mostly rather directed to the opinion about IW and PSS there might also be other organisational issues not mentioned.

Figure 16: Overall, how satisfied are you with the support services provided by the EUSMAT Office in terms of the organisation and implementation of your studies?

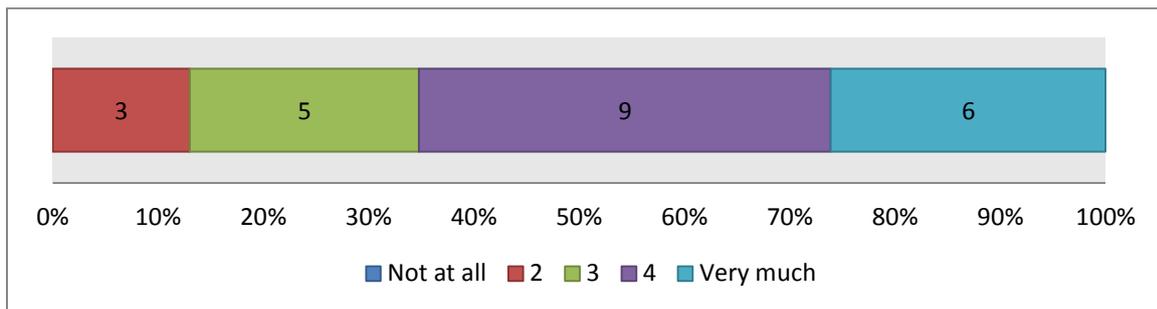


Source: Online survey with PSS participants

3.3.2 Mid-term assessment of IW

When second-year students looked back to the beginning of their studies in AMASE, 65% of the survey respondents saw the IW as very helpful or helpful (see Figure 17). The rest of the respondents saw it as less helpful but no one as not helpful at all.

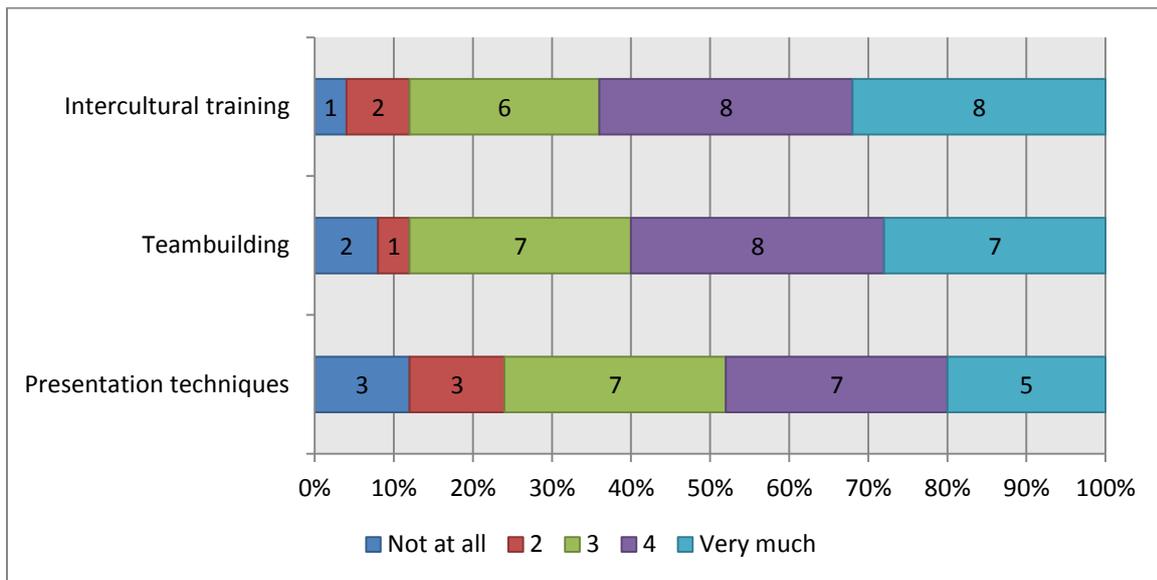
Figure 17: Overall, to what extent have the contents covered during the Integration Week in Saarbrücken in 2017 been helpful in view of your first year in the AMASE programme? (n=23)



Source: Online survey with PSS participants

When referring to the different agenda items of the IW, the topic assessed as contributing most positively to their performance in the AMASE programme is the intercultural training and slightly less the team building (see Figure 18). The presentation techniques were assessed by less than one half as very much or much contributing to their performance in AMASE.

Figure 18: To what extent have the following topics covered during the Integration Week contributed positively to your performance in the AMASE programme?



Source: Online survey with PSS participants

4. Conclusions & Recommendations

The evaluation of IW and PSS showed that students were **very satisfied with both summer programmes**. Especially, the whole set-up of the two weeks was well-received by the students. That means that in general the chosen topics, the length of the events and also their overlap were widely appreciated. Moreover, the organisation and the support by the EUSMAT team are highly praised. The IW was in general more positively assessed by the participants than the PSS. But as the IW is already taking place for several years and the PSS in 2018 for the first time, this assessment and the detected potential for improvement are easily explained.

Starting with a detailed discussion of the IW, expectations were high before especially with respect to meeting the other students, and they were fulfilled according to the participants. Therefore, the **intercultural training** with the group games and in-depth contact with the other students was seen as highly helpful for feeling integrated into the group of international students. While students were looking forward to all lectures, they saw potential for improvement with respect to some of them. They did not feel well-prepared for the **'Meet the expert'** session as they – in contrast to the second-year students – do not yet know many experts in the field and had not received sufficient information about the experts in advance to be able to prepare adequate questions. Thus, they felt they could have used this session much better with more information. Furthermore, the session about the **European Union** was too loaded with information and a pure front lecture.

While the IW was seen as an indispensable event in the beginning of the AMASE studies programme, the PSS was seen rather as an unexpected plus of AMASE. It was regarded as very helpful in terms of **career planning and students' professional development**. However, in the students' view the PSS did not refer sufficiently to their next and thus last year of studies. Furthermore, in contrast to the IW, participants of the PSS perceived the **intercultural training** as too long or even superfluous. They already felt experienced in that area given that they had already completed one year of studies in AMASE and been trained interculturally during the IW 2017. Furthermore, the **PhD Talk** was not of interest for many of the students as they are not planning to do a PhD.

With respect to lectures, there is in general the assessment that lectures with practical exercises and sessions in small groups were especially valuable and to the satisfaction of the students.

In both events students criticised a **high focus on Saarland University and Germany**. While some students will study in Germany, most students will not. Although students were aware that they are in Germany and that Saarland University is the main coordination institution, they would have wished more information on the other countries and universities. This critique goes hand in hand with the expressed surprise that **no coordinators from the other universities** were present. Even though, they know about the introductory events at their respective universities, several questions could already have been answered in advance, which would ease the planning for the students.

This is further emphasised by the expression of first-year students that interaction **between first-year and second-year students** was not completely to their satisfaction and that second-year students were also lacking information about the following semesters from a student's perspective.

When it comes to an **overall assessment** of AMASE, students describe high competence gains with respect to working in intercultural settings and adapting to new situations after one year of studies. Many students describe that the IW, although it was only one week in the beginning of their studies, had an important influence on their performance in AMASE. This further confirms the relevance these weeks have for the students to feel well-received in the study programme and to connect well

with their colleagues. The PSS as a newly introduced event might additionally contribute to their performance in the second year of AMASE and to their success in their professional future. These aspects will be analysed in the **final survey** which was developed within this evaluation and handed to the EUSMAT team to complete their monitoring tools.

Recommendations:

- (1) Provide IW participants with more information on the persons present in 'Meet the expert' in advance.
- (2) Rethink the design of the 'European Union' lecture in the IW and involve more dynamic elements.
- (3) Re-design and reduce the extent of the intercultural training in the PSS.
- (4) Integrate more information on the second year of studies in the PSS e.g. planning and organisation of the Master thesis.
- (5) Revise the format of the PhD Talk in the PSS to make it more attractive to all students.
- (6) With regards to all lectures, check if further practical parts can be integrated and how group work with smaller groups could be realised more often.
- (7) Develop further opportunities for exchange with coordinators from other universities and/or a more formal exchange between students including AMASE graduates. A virtual session with the coordinators from the partner universities could be a cost-efficient option.
- (8) Use the baseline, mid-term and final surveys provided in this evaluation to monitor IW, PSS and the AMASE programme and to receive a feedback on the quality which can then be used to update and adapt the events and programme regularly according to the needs of the students.

| How do you assess the support provided by the EUSMAT team in terms to networking among the AMASE students? | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Not at all 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very much 5 | No answer |
| I appreciate the existence of a Facebook group for the members of AMASE. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I appreciate the creation of a WhatsApp group for the members of my study cohort. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I appreciate that the EUSMAT team provided a contact list containing the members of my study cohort. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Have you already used one of those instruments (Facebook group, WhatsApp group, contact list) to get in touch with the members of your study cohort?

Yes

No

Personal details

Do you hold an **Erasmus Mundus scholarship** for your studies in the AMASE programme?

Yes

No

Final remarks/ comments

Would you like to make any further comments or suggestions in addition to this survey?

Thanks for your participation!

Overall, how satisfied are you with the **support services provided by the EUSMAT Office** in terms of the organisation and implementation of your studies?

| Not at all 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very much 5 | No answer |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> |

Personal details

Do you hold an **Erasmus Mundus scholarship** for your studies in the AMASE programme?

Yes

No

Final remarks/ comments

Would you like to make any **further comments or suggestions** in addition to this survey?

Thanks for your participation!

2.3 To what extent have the following topics covered during the Integration Week contributed **positively to your performance** in the AMASE programme?*

Please assess the following elements of the **Integration Week** by using the given scale.

| | Not at all 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very much 5 | No answer |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Teambuilding | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Intercultural Training | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Presentation techniques | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**@EUSMAT, please adapt item battery in case of programme changes.*

2.4 Did you participate in the **Professional Summer School** of the AMASE programme?

Yes

No

If YES, ask 2.5 and 2.6, if no continue with 3.

2.5 Overall, to what extent have the **contents covered during the Professional Summer School** in Saarbruecken been helpful in view of the AMASE programme?

| Not at all 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very much 5 | No answer |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> |

2.6 To what extent have the following topics covered during the Professional Summer School contributed **positively to your performance** in the AMASE programme?*

Please assess the following elements of the **Professional Summer School** by using the given scale.

| | Not at all 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Very much 5 | No answer |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Intercultural training | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Working in Europe | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Doing a PhD | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Career Management | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Job application training | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Meeting professionals | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**@ EUSMAT please adapt item battery in case of programme changes.*

3. Your professional future

3.1 Thinking about your professional future, to what extent do you agree to the following statements?

Please assess the following statements by using the given scale.

| | Strongly disagree | | | | Strongly agree | No answer |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| I am confident I graduated with the knowledge and skills I need to be successful in the job market. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I am confident I graduated with the knowledge and skills I need to be successful in the workplace. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I am confident the focus in Material Science and Engineering and my specialisation in studies will lead to a good job. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

3.2 Would you recommend the AMASE study programme to a friend?

Yes

No

4. Personal details

Do you hold an **Erasmus Mundus scholarship** for your studies in the AMASE programme?

Yes

No

5. Final remarks/ comments

Would you like to make any **further comments or suggestions** in addition to this survey?

Thanks for your participation!

5.4 Guideline for Focus Group Discussions: 'Integration Week'

EUSMAT Integration Week 2018 – Focus Group Discussion

Introduction (5-10 minutes)

- Welcome, brief presentation of CEval evaluator, Thanks for participating
- Background: Purpose of evaluation and FGD, overview of FGD contents
- Remarks: anonymity, written notes, data protection, no right-wrong, all perceptions matter
- Brief personal introduction: name, country of origin, entrance university (AMASE)

Opening question (10 minutes): Expectations

What have been your expectations in relation to the IW?

- To what extent have those expectations been met? Please explain.
- For example, in relation to the agenda items team building, intercultural training, presentation techniques, "Amase in detail" (information on study programme)

Question 1 (10 minutes): Usefulness and relevance

How useful do you consider the IW for your studies in the AMASE programme?

- Which part of the IW (agenda items) do you consider most useful? Why?
- Are there any topics not covered during the IW that you would have liked to be included in the agenda? Why?
- What do you think about the fact that PSS and Integration Week overlap? To what extent do you consider that useful? Please explain.

Question 2 (5-10 minutes): Satisfaction with organisation of the IW

How satisfied are you with the IW in terms of its organisation?

- Are there any aspects you particularly appreciated about the organisation of the event?
- Are there any aspects that should be further improved?

Closing question (5-10 minutes)

Against the backdrop of everything we discussed so far, I would like to ask each of you for a final assessment of the usefulness of the IW for you personally.

You have each been given a green and a red card.

- The **green card** represents what you take from the IW for your personal and/or professional development, and what you therefore want to put in your suitcase when you go home.
- The **red card** represents what was least useful for you about the IW and therefore what you want to leave here in Saarbrücken.

Please choose a **single word** for each of the two cards, write them down and lay the cards on the ground of the circle we are sitting in. *[Interviewer: synthesize; invite participants to discuss]*

5.5 Guideline for Focus Group Discussions: 'Professional Summer School'

EUSMAT Professional Summer School 2018 – Focus Group Discussion

Introduction (5-10 minutes)

- Welcome, brief presentation of CEval evaluator, Thanks for participating
- Background: Purpose of evaluation and FGD, overview of FGD contents
- Remarks: anonymity, written notes, data protection, no right-wrong, all perceptions matter
- Brief personal introduction: name, country of origin, entrance university (AMASE)

Opening question (5-10 Minutes): Expectations

What have been your expectations in relation to the PSS?

- To what extent have those expectations been met? Please explain.

Question 1 (15 Minutes): Usefulness and relevance

How useful do you consider the PSS for your personal or professional development? Stated differently, in your view what is the value the PSS adds to the AMASE study programme?

- Which part of the PSS (agenda items) do you consider most useful? Why?
- Are there any topics not covered during the PSS that you would have liked to be included in the agenda? Why?
- What do you think about the fact that PSS and Integration Week overlap? To what extent do you consider that useful? Please explain.

Question 2 (5-10 Minutes): Satisfaction with organisation of the PSS

How satisfied are you with the PSS in terms of its organisation?

- Are there any aspects you particularly appreciated about the organisation of the event?
- Are there any aspects that should be further improved?
- For example, number of items on the agenda, overall duration of the PSS

Closing question (5-10 Minutes)

Against the backdrop of everything we discussed so far, I would like to ask each of you for a final assessment of the usefulness of the PSS for you personally.

You have each been given a green and a red card.

- The **green card** represents what you take from the PSS for your personal and/or professional development, and what you therefore want to put in your suitcase when you go home.
- The **red card** represents what was least useful for you about the PSS and therefore what you want to leave here in Saarbrücken.

Please choose a **single word** for each of the two cards, write them down and lay the cards on the ground of the circle we are sitting in. *[Interviewer: synthesize; invite participants to discuss]*