UNIVERSITY OF NIŠ

Guidelines for Joint Degrees

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD **2**

INTRODUCTION **3**

CHAPTER 1: JOINT PROGRAMME TERMINOLOGY **4**

PROGRAMME: 4
DEGREE 4
JOINT PROGRAMME 5
JOINT DEGREE 6
DOUBLE DEGREE 7
MULTIPLE DEGREE 8

CHAPTER 2: JOINT PROGRAMMES IN GENERAL **9**

INTERNATIONALIZATION AND JOINT PROGRAMMES 10

CHAPTER 3: THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK **13**

CHAPTER 4: THE DEVELOPMENT OF JOINT PROGRAMMES **19**

CHAPTER 5: MOBILITY STRUCTURES **25**

CHAPTER 6: COOPERATION AGREEMENT **32**

CHAPTER 7: JOINT PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT **33**

CHAPTER 8: RECOGNITION AND AWARDING JOINT DEGREES **42**

JOINT DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES 45

CHAPTER 9: ACCREDITATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE **48**

APPENDICES **52**

FOREWORD

The document *Guidelines for Joint Degrees* is prepared within Tempus Project Strengthening of Internationalisation Policies at Universities in Serbia (SIPUS, 544538-TEMPUS-1-2013--1-RS-TEMPUS-SMGR), within the WP2 (Institutional Legislative for Internationalization). The Project addresses the process of internationalisation of Serbian Higher Education as the one that requires immediate national and institutional response and joint action. The Project's key target groups are Serbian academics, researchers, students and administrators who are participating or wish to participate in international collaboration.

In that sense, some of very important Project's outcomes are creating and implementing national legislative: accreditation standards for joint and double degrees, strategy of internationalization of higher education and research, strategy of academic mobility and recognition of degrees, etc.

In general, Serbia and its Higher Education do not have so much experience with joint programmes. The *Guidelines for Joint Degrees* considers joint degree and joint degree programmes in general (recommendations on how joint degree programmes should be created, their structure, good practices and challenges, etc.), focusing on the condition for the recognition of degrees awarded by these programmes, but also on the external quality assurance and accreditation of joint programmes (e.g. specific set of criteria for joint programmes' evaluation and accreditation).

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the introduction of joint programmes has generated several problems regarding the recognition of degrees awarded by joint programmes. First and foremost, it was indicated that some documents, such as the degree, the transcript and/or the diploma supplement, do not provide all the information they require. Therefore, for recognition purposes there is a need for clear and transparent information about the institutions involved in the joint programme, their role, the joint programme details and the awarded joint degree.

Generally speaking, Serbia is still less familiar with recognition of joint degrees and diploma supplements awarded by joint programmes. Even more, there are the problems of the definition and application of appropriate standards that set specific requirements the joint degrees should fulfil. Therefore, the main aim of these guidelines will be to define the concept of joint degree and facilitate and improve the full recognition of joint degrees.

Some important standards cannot be implemented because of regulations in the relevant national legal frameworks. Thus, the additional aim of these guidelines will be to raise awareness among national authorities about the problems joint programmes encounter when awarding joint degrees and diploma supplements.

The following guidelines are of course only applicable to joint programmes that award joint degrees.

CHAPTER 1: JOINT PROGRAMME TERMINOLOGY

Due to possible confusion regarding joint programmes and their degrees the concepts used should be clarified and a more or less common ground for terminology reached. In that sense, one needs to distinguish between a programme and a degree.

Programme:

The Lisbon Recognition Convention[1] has a clear and relevant definition of a programme:

> *A programme refers to a higher education curriculum leading to a degree. It has co-ordinated elements (courses). The completion of a programme provides the student with a higher education qualification.*

A detailed definition has been proposed by UNESCO's International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)[2]:

> *A coherent set or sequence of educational activities designed and organized to achieve pre-determined learning objectives or accomplish a specific set of educational tasks over a sustained period. Within an educational programme, educational activities may also be grouped into sub-components variously described in national contexts as 'courses', 'modules', 'units', and/or 'subjects'. A programme may have major components not normally characterized as courses, units, or modules – for example, play-based activities, periods of work experience, research projects and the preparation of dissertations.*

From both definitions a programme refers to teaching and learning activities.

Degree

One of the simple definitions of a degree would be[3] "*A higher education qualification,*" or a similar one "*A degree is a qualification at higher education level.*"

A more comprehensive definition of a degree would be UNESCO's ISCED definition[4]:

---

[1] **Council of Europe**. 1997. *Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region*, p. 4

[2] **UNESCO**. 2011. *International Standard Classification of Education*, p. 79. http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/international-standard-classification-of-education.aspx

[3] **Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education**. 2012. *Glossary*, http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AboutUs/glossary

[4] **UNESCO**. 2011. *Ibid*. p. 83.

Educational qualification awarded upon successful completion of specific educational programmes in tertiary education (traditionally by universities and equivalent institutions).

The most authoritative definition of a qualification is given in the Lisbon Recognition Convention[5]:

Any degree, diploma or other certificate issued by a competent authority attesting the successful completion of a higher education programme.

It should be noted that a qualification in the previous definition is a broader concept than degree since it also includes diplomas and certificates.

UNESCO's ISCED has also a similar definition[6]:

Qualifications can be obtained through:

a) successful completion of a full programme;

b) successful completion of a stage of a programme (intermediate qualifications);

c) validation of acquired knowledge, skills and competencies, independent of participation in such programmes.

General conclusion can be that a degree refers to the award, as the element that provides evidence of successful completion of a programme.

Joint programme

A joint programme is a programme offered jointly by several higher education institutions, where these institutions can be located either in the same country or in different countries. Both options will be of interest for this guide. Note that a joint programme does not necessarily lead to a joint degree, but the degree can be one of the possible awards. After completion of a joint programme a graduate may be awarded: a single national qualification, a double or other multiple qualification or even joint qualification.

The Bologna Process regulation clearly indicates that joint programmes have to have all or at least some of the following features:

- The programmes are jointly developed and/or approved by several institutions;
- Students from each participating institution study parts of the programme at other institutions;
- The students' stays at the participating institutions are of comparable length;

[5] **Council of Europe**. 1997. *Ibid.*, p. 4
[6] **UNESCO**. 2011. *Ibid*. p. 83.

- Periods of study and exams passed at the partner institution(s) are fully and automatically recognised;
- Professors of each participating institution also teach at the other institutions, jointly work out the curriculum, and form joint admission and examination commissions;
- After completion of the full programme, the student either obtains the national degrees of each participating institution or a degree awarded jointly by them.

Generally speaking, the joint programme as a term is widely used but there is some confusion in its definition.

Under the European University Association's definition joint programmes are[7]:

Programmes which are developed and implemented jointly by several institutions in different countries.

This definition focuses on who is responsible for development and implementation of joint programmes, but nothing about the programmes themselves. However, taking into account the Lisbon Recognition Convention, which emphasizes three important elements: a higher education curriculum and co-ordinated elements (courses) which lead to a degree, the main focus should be on the joint offering or delivery, while the development and implementation are of less relevance.

There is one more definition[8]:

A joint programme is a programme offered jointly by different higher education institutions irrespective of the degree awarded.

Since this definition is too simple to accurately define what joint programmes actually are, there is another better definition:

An integrated curriculum coordinated and offered jointly by different higher education institutions and leading to a (double/multiple or joint) degree.

It should be noted that in all its official publications, the Bologna Process consistently refers to *joint programmes* and not to joint degree programmes.

Joint degree

One of the definitions of the term joint degree could be[9]:

---

[7] **European University Association**. 2006. *EMNEM - Guidelines for quality enhancement in European joint master programmes.*

[8] **European Consortium for Accreditation in higher education**. 2007. *Principles for accreditation procedures regarding joint programmes*, p. 1.

A joint degree should, for the purposes of this Recommendation, be understood as referring to a higher education qualification issued jointly by at least two or more higher education institutions or jointly by one or more higher education institutions and other awarding bodies, on the basis of a study programme developed and/or provided jointly by the higher education institutions, possibly also in cooperation with other institutions.

A joint degree may be issued as

a) a joint diploma in addition to one or more national diplomas;

b) a joint diploma issued by the institutions offering the study programme in question without being accompanied by any national diploma;

c) one or more national diplomas issued officially as the only attestation of the joint qualification in question.

It seems that this definition captures all the types of documents awarded by joint programmes:

(a) The definition recognizes coexistence of two degrees per institution: a national degree and a joint degree, where both degrees would be acknowledged as the nationally recognised higher education qualifications. The joint award is now referred to as a cover certificate. The institutions award their own national degrees and in addition they award a cover certificate jointly.

(b) The definition refers to a joint degree.

(c) The definition is regarded as the award of a single or a multiple degree.

The next definition of a joint degree proposed by the Methodological Report of the TEEP II project:

A joint diploma issued by the institutions offering a joint programme in place of all the national diplomas, attesting the successful completion of this joint programme.

This definition indicates the current realities of joint qualifications or joint degrees across Europe. We can therefore conclude that a joint degree is defined as follows:

A single document awarded by higher education institutions offering the joint programme and nationally acknowledged as the recognised award of the joint programme.

Double degree

A double degree is defined as follows:

---

[9] **Committee of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications.** 2004. *Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees*.

Two degrees awarded by higher education institutions offering the joint programme attesting the successful completion of this programme.

Double degrees are understood to be two degrees awarded after successful completion of a joint programme. It is however recommended to refer to these two documents as a multiple degree.

Multiple degree

A multiple degree can be defined as follows:

Separate degrees awarded by higher education institutions offering the joint programme attesting the successful completion of this programme.

Under general definition the higher education institutions involved in the joint programme award after successful completion of a joint programme their own degree individually instead of awarding a degree jointly. One of these degrees can however be a joint degree. Thus, a multiple degree is a combination of a joint degree and national degree(s).

CHAPTER 2: JOINT PROGRAMMES IN GENERAL

The strategic importance of joint programmes is strong and increasing in a global context, both at international inter-governmental level, at national governmental level and at institutional level[10].

The inter-governmental Bologna Process, launched back in 1999 with the signing of the Bologna declaration, is most likely one of the main voluntary processes at European level, that is today being implemented in all 47 states that make up the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

Note that the Bologna "Process" means "a reform with rapidly changing conditions" and as such, it is an ongoing process whose exact completion can not be predicted. In an ever faster changing world the Bologna process is the only option for creating a competitive higher education system.

One of the basic prerequisites for the introduction of joint programmes were certainly the Bologna activities that have introduced two most important transparency instruments (to support primarily student mobility), such as the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and the Diploma Supplement (DS). The importance of joint programmes is best evidenced by the fact that joint programmes have been encouraged by the Bologna process and listed on the agenda of all the Bologna conferences since Prague 2001. Even more, during the Bologna conference in Berlin in 2003, ministers explicitly agreed on supporting the development of integrated curricula leading to joint degrees. References to recognition of joint degrees were included in 2005 and in 2007.

There is no accurate evidence of the number of joint programmes. In 2009 it was estimated that there are about 2500 joint programmes within EHEA. Country estimates of the percentage of higher education institutions awarding joint degrees and involved in joint programmes vary greatly in different countries. In five countries, the share of institutions involved in joint programmes and awarding joint degrees (2010/2011) is between 75 and 100 %[11]. At the other end of the scale are Albania, Andorra, Liechtenstein and Montenegro where there are no joint programmes at all.

It is interesting that in many countries participation in joint programmes is more widespread than the award of joint degrees. This tendency is observed even in countries where the percentage of higher education institutions involved in joint programmes is 50-75 %. Six countries report that there were no graduates from joint programmes in 2009/10. The

[10] Joint programmes from A to Z - A reference guide for practitioners, JDAZ project, Erasmus Mundus programme, 2015.
[11] The Bologna Process Implementation Report 2012 (p.43) http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/138EN.pdf

highest estimated shares of students in joint programmes and those graduating with a joint degree are in the United Kingdom (Scotland) and the Holy See – over 10 % – followed by Austria with 5-7.5 %, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Luxembourg, Kazakhstan and Spain, with 2.5-5 %.

A new European approach for quality assurance of joint programmes was presented for adoption by ministers in Yerevan in 2015, and will commit governments to allow single programme accreditation procedures on that basis.

Internationalization and Joint programmes

Many activities supported by EU-funded programmes have contributed to the further development and international expansion of joint programmes. As a matter of fact, they were initially supported in the Lifelong Learning Programme through Erasmus, but later they were financed through programmes such as Erasmus Mundus, Tempus, etc. The EU is continuing their support within the Erasmus+ programme (2014-2020), with an increased budget as compared to the Erasmus Mundus programme.

Even more, the survey done by the Institute of International Education (IIE, 2013) reports that almost all of the participating 245 higher education institutions in 28 countries have plans to develop more and more programmes, with the aim that joint and double degree programmes would be part of their institution's internationalization strategy.

Several regional and national initiatives highlight the strategic importance given to the joint programmes as instruments to increase the internationalisation of the higher education sector. The development and implementation of joint programmes is mentioned in several European and national educational strategy papers, and also in the internationalisation strategies of individual higher education institutions (HEIs). In that sense, universities in Serbia are aware of the importance of introducing joint programmes and have already adopted at the institutional level (or are in the course of that process) corresponding strategic documents on academic mobility[12] and internationalization[13] of their education process.

Although development of a strategic approach towards the internationalization of initial and continuous education, as well as promotion of the mobility is being mentioned in Serbia throughout the text

[12] e.g. Strategija akademske mobilnosti Univerziteta u Nišu (translated into English: Strategy of academic mobility of the University of Niš) http://www.ni.ac.rs/dokumenti/send/163-broj-5-od-12052015-god/702-2-strategija-akademske-mobilnosti-univerziteta-u-nisu

[13] Strategija internacionalizacije Univerziteta u Nišu (translated into English: Strategy of internationalization of the University of Niš) http://www.ni.ac.rs/dokumenti/send/163-broj-5-od-12052015-god/703-1-strategija-internacionalizacije-univerziteta-u-nisu
Strategy for internationalisation of the University of Niš (Eng. version) http://www.gointernational.uns.ac.rs/index.php/documents/category/index?download=157

of *The Strategy for Development of Education in Serbia 2020*[14], the issue of HE internationalization has not been regulated by a separate strategy paper so far.

It should be also mentioned that two on-going Tempus projects - *Fostering University Support Services and Procedures for Full Participation in the European Higher Education Area*[15] (FUSE) and *Strengthening of Internationalisation Policies at Universities in Serbia*[16] (SIPUS) are expected to produce a number of important documents related to the topic of internationalization at the level of higher education.

Joint (both double and other degree) programmes are in general very important for the current landscape of higher education within EHEA and will be more numerous and influential in the coming years. As a main part of an internationalization strategy, they represent the main pillar of academia - the teaching/learning process and the production of new knowledge between and among countries. Although mentioned programmes can be markedly different in their structure, they are/will be built on the principle of deep academic collaboration and bring important benefits to individuals, as well as to HEIs, national and regional education systems.

There is no doubt that one of the main political aims of the Bologna process (with a new study structure based on three cycles as one of the core elements) is obviously increasing the number of mobile students in the EHEA. Studying abroad for a substantial period enhances the quality of learning. Thus the crucial point becomes implementation of mobility as an essential feature in all degree programmes. The only dilemma may be whether periods abroad should be shorter as some joint study programmes predict or longer (at least two or more semesters) taking into account higher quality of graduates. Longer mobility periods are an opportunity to improve the quality of the learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences). The MOCCA project[17] was designed to support HEIs in developing new curricula and in converting existing study programmes.

When considering the joint programmes within the framework of mobility, very important question is: if students go abroad to study more or less the same subject material (so called "substitute approach") they do not need to do that and can stay at home university. It seems that this approach still dominates within joint programmes. As a matter of fact, the real reason for development of joint programme should be the existence of complementary elements between partner institutions (e.g. different learning opportunities). Another reason can be that academic staff from partner institutions can work closely together to jointly develop new ideas

---

[14] http://erasmusplus.rs/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Strategy-for-Education-Development-in-Serbia-2020.pdf
[15] http://www.fuse.ni.ac.rs/
[16] http://www.gointernational.uns.ac.rs/
[17] Model for Core Curricula with Integrated Mobility Abroad

(so called "synergy potential") which can be implemented into new joint programme.

As a matter of fact, there are two options for developing new curricula:

- through reorganization of an existing curriculum, or
- by creating a totally new programme.

Both options can be realized with existing partner(s) or with totally new partner institutions. There is one option more, whereby joint programme students have the opportunity to freely choose a host university, even individually. In general, this methodology may be applicable for all types of curricula, but it is reserved for institutions that are ready for new organizational, structural and substantial challenges towards a new and more functional higher education system.

Bearing in mind the importance of financing instruments, it should be emphasized that in some countries (e.g. Norway), separate national government support is available to develop joint programmes, and in some cases the European structural funds can be used for this purpose. Note that this type of support is already used by some universities in Serbia[18] [19].

[18] The agreement for co-operation on doctoral degree education between the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) and University of Niš, Serbia.

[19] CONVENTION INDIVIDUELLE, DE COTUTELLE INTERNATIONALE DE THÈSE, ENTRE L'UNIVERSITÉ DE NIS ET L'UNIVERSITÉ LUMIÈRE LYON 2 (Aleksandra MIRIC, 2010).

CHAPTER 3: THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Within this chapter the European and national legal contexts will be considered including some details about the inter-governmental Bologna cooperation and agreements.

Generaly speaking, the legal power related to the implementation of international joint programmes and expressed through definition of standards and procedures that must be fulfilled lies at the level of national or sub-national authorities (ministries of education). In addition to the national legislative framework, the institutional guidelines and regulations important for planning, definition and realization of joint programme cooperation are the responsibility of HEIs institutions. Note that funding scheme rules on admission, selection, tuition fees, etc. are subordinated to national legislation.

Every HEI has its own procedures and tradition for implementing the (standard and/or joint) study programmes. Some universities allow more freedom to their faculties/departments making them fully responsible for programmes and directly involved in their realization, while universities offer only administrative framework and institutional support. There are other universities that require blind compliance to the established administrative structures. The former ones are typical for Serbian public universities as (still) non-integrated universities (with the exception of the State University of Novi Pazar). Although the aforementioned freedom may be an advantage in some areas of implementation or realization of the programmes (e.g. more innovative approaches), the second option offers some other benefits, such as more effective finding new partner institutions to develop and implement a programme. One should not ignore the fact that the joint programmes with integrated mobility require much more effort (financial and human resources) for their implementation. The last but not the least is that universities in Serbia have already started with the implementation of the internationalization process.

A few joint programmes of outstanding academic quality are already designed and implemented by a consortium of European universities from at least three different countries, where consortia may also include universities from other parts of the world. Programmes include obligatory study and research periods, in at least two universities, and award recognised double, multiple or joint degrees.

Taking into account the importance of introducing joint programmes, universities in Serbia have already adopted (or are in the course of that process) corresponding strategic documents on academic mobility and internationalization of their education process. Thus, designing and accreditation of joint programmes within three cycles of academic studies (the first cycle: undergraduate academic studies; the second cycle: master and specialist academic studies; the third cycle: doctoral academic

studies) for cooperation with universities abroad are becoming one of the primary tasks within the internationalization strategy[20].

During designing and implementation of joint programmes several important facts and documents have to be taken into account:

a) Recognition of qualifications[21], which primarily means both *Higher education qualification* (any degree, diploma or other certificate issued by a competent authority attesting the successful completion of a higher education programme) and *Qualification giving access to higher education* (Any diploma or other certificate issued by a competent authority attesting the successful completion of an education programme and giving the holder of the qualification the right to be considered for admission to higher education). Recognition implies a formal acknowledgement by a competent authority of the value of a foreign educational qualification with a view to access to educational and/or employment activities.

b) Awarding joint degrees to HEIs[22]: some universities in Serbia have already adopted (or are already in the course of that process) corresponding strategic documents on dual mentorship and joint doctorates[23].

c) Recognition of accreditation decisions[24].

Last but not least there are the next important terms:

- Access (to higher education): The right of qualified candidates to apply and to be considered for admission to higher education;
- Admission (to higher education institutions and programmes): The act of, or system for, allowing qualified applicants to pursue studies in higher education at a given institution and/or a given programme;

---

[20] e.g. Strategija internacionalizacije Univerziteta u Nišu (translated into English: Strategy of internationalisation of the University of Niš) http://www.ni.ac.rs/dokumenti/send/163-broj-5-od-12052015-god/703-1-strategija-internacionalizacije-univerziteta-u-nisu

[21] Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/165.htm
The European Area of Recognition (EAR) manual http://www.eurorecognition.eu/manual/ear_manual_v_1.0.pdf

[22] Guidelines for Good Practice for Awarding Joint Degrees http://www.dges.mctes.pt/NR/rdonlyres/BDBCE9CD-097A-4413-B77A-677DD3E9296E/7509/1370416747_guidelinesforgoodpracticeforawardingjoi.pdf

[23] e.g. Univerzitet u Nišu: Pravilnik o dvostrukom mentorstvu i zajedničkom doktoratu (translated into English: Book of Regulations governing joint mentorship and joint doctoral degrees) http://www.ni.ac.rs/dokumenti/send/162-broj-4-od-21042015-god/699-3-pravilnik-o-dvostrukom-mentorstvu-i-zajednickom-doktoratu

[24] Multilateral Agreement on the Mutual Recognition of Accreditation Results regarding Joint Programmes (MULTRA) http://ecahe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/MULTRA_agreement1.pdf

- Assessment (of institutions or programmes): The process for establishing the educational quality of a higher education institution or programme;
- Assessment (of individual qualifications): The written appraisal or evaluation of an individual's foreign qualifications by a competent body;

The following relevant information related to joint programmes may be of common interest (can be found elsewhere[25]):

- information on the legal status of the partner institution;
- the degree-awarding rights of the partner institution;
- advice on the future recognition of the jointly awarded degree;
- advice on modalities of joint issuing of diplomas, etc.

The European Union influences the higher education policy through political cooperation and the formulation of common targets and initiatives. Their realization is supported by a number of funding programmes (the Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-13, Erasmus Mundus 2009-13, the Erasmus+ programme that has replaced all the existing initiatives in 2014).

The European Qualifications Framework[26] (EQF) should be especially mentioned as very useful tool, which acts as a translation device to make national qualifications more readable across Europe. The EQF can be applied to all types of education, from school education to academic, professional and vocational education. The EQF recognizes levels ranging from basic (Level 1) to advanced (Level 8): the higher education bachelor-level cycle corresponds to the learning outcomes for EQF level 5-6; the master-level cycle corresponds to the learning outcomes for EQF level 7 and the doctoral-level cycle to EQF level 8.

It should be especially mentioned that a very important activity for Serbia and its educational system is the development of a National Qualifications Framework of Serbia (NQFS) which should be completed by the end of 2015. In addition to compatibility with the EHEA Qualifications Framework, NQFS should provide compatibility with the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF), which was adopted by the European Union in April 2008. EQF which covers all levels of education (primary, secondary and higher), will be applied to all EU Member States, candidate countries and all the countries of the European Economic Area. Note that among the qualifications framework of the EHEA and EQF there is no essential difference, but the differences are primarily in formulations.

Most HEIs offering a joint programme have adopted ECTS system, in which one year (two semesters) within the ECTS system equals 60 credits with one credit equalling 25-30 hours of work, including self-study.

---

[25] The ENIC-NARIC network.
[26] https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/content/descriptors-page

There can be some difficulties when using the ECTS grading scheme for the conversion of grades within a joint programme. The ECTS Users' Guide has recently been revised[27]. In joint programmes agreed mobility schemes are adopted by the partner institutions, which include the rules for the recognition of credits. Further, learning agreements are not necessary in joint programmes: the credits achieved in a partner institution are automatically recognised, if the rules agree upon are followed and all conditions are satisfied.

Having an independent external assessor to ensure compatibility of grading standards across courses and modules can be useful. Co-supervision of the master dissertation/thesis supports the common approach to assessment, as well as a joint, international jury for the dissertation/thesis defence.

Although joint programmes have an international character, it is important to point out that the legal power related to higher education policy and the implementation of joint programmes lies within the national or sub-national legislation and is connected to international cooperation activities. It is therefore more important to check national regulations and not only European regulations. Higher education policy is developed and implemented at the national level by the relevant ministry of education or science.

Ensuring the legal status and the degree-awarding power of the partner HEIs must be done before entering into joint programme cooperation. First of all it should be established whether the institution is authorized to award qualifications that are accepted for academic and professional purposes in the home country and in other countries potentially relevant for future programme graduates. Such data can be found in the guidelines[28] for checking the status of the institution.

From the institutional guidelines of all partner institutions one should also check related information to degree awarding, i.e. whether a certain minimum period of enrolment or physical stay at the degree-awarding institutions is required, and whether multiple enrolment (i.e. enrolment at more than one institution) is allowed in the national and institutional context.

It should be specially emphasized that accreditation of individual study programmes is required in some countries, but not in all European countries. There are also variations in accreditation procedures, in criteria, in the cost, in the length, the nature of the decision (conditional/unconditional), etc. Therefore, members of the European Consortium for Accreditation in higher education (ECA) have signed the *Multilateral Agreement on the Mutual Recognition of Accreditation Results*

[27] ECTS USERS' GUIDE 2015, Draft Version, January 2015.
[28] European Area of Recognition Manual for higher education institutions (EAR HEI), p.25.

regarding Joint Programmes (MULTRA)[29]. The purpose of this agreement was to simplify the accreditation and recognition of joint programmes and degrees awarded and to provide an efficient way to expand mutual recognition to more EHEA countries. However, for the countries where individual programme accreditation is not required, the higher education institution is responsible for continuous quality monitoring of the joint programme and is usually reviewed by the national quality assurance agency.

The fact is that there are great variations within and/or between countries regarding higher education funding and tuition fee policies[30]. As a rule, they are guided by national legislation and institutional rules.

The situation is similar with quality assurance processes and procedures. Namely, the mechanisms for ensuring quality within the higher education system vary from one country to another[31]. In particular there are two different aspects: (i) whether the main focus of quality assurance is on institutions, on programmes, or on both; (ii) another is between internal and external quality assurance.

In order to promote European cooperation in the field of quality assurance in higher education the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) was established in 2004. The European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) caver: (i) internal quality assurance, (ii) external quality assurance, and (iii) external reviews by quality assurance agencies, which were developed as part of the Bologna Process and adopted by European ministers of higher education in 2005. The revised version of the "*Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*"[32], has been adopted at the EHEA Ministerial Conference held in Yerevan (Armenia) on the 14th and 15th of May together with the Fourth Bologna Policy Forum.

Issuing a single joint diploma after the completion of the joint programme is legally possible in some countries, according to institutional regulations of their higher education institutions. Therefore, it is important to check national legislation on this point already during the planning of the joint programme cooperation. Only in this way both the legal status of the

---

[29] Multilateral Agreement on the Mutual Recognition of Accreditation Results regarding Joint Programmes (MULTRA)
http://nvao.com/mutual_recognition_of_accreditation_decisions

[30] The Eurydice Report 2012 on fees and support for higher education
http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/facts_and_figures/fees_and_support.pdf

[31] Bologna Process Implementation Report 2012
http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/138EN.pdf
Bologna Process Implementation Report 2015
http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/SubmitedFiles/5_2015/132824.pdf

[32] Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
https://revisionesg.files.wordpress.com/2015/05/revised_esg_2015_adopted.pdf

awarded degree and degree recognition for future graduates will be provided. For joint programmes some additional elements, such as information on the form of the diploma and diploma supplement (joint/double/multiple), and mobility structure of the programme are also recommended. The most reliable information on the modalities of awarding degrees and issuing diplomas can be found in the institutional regulations of the partner institutions.

In joint programmes the student admission decision needs to comply with national and institutional guidelines. Adhering to national legal admission requirements is particularly important in order to guarantee that the awarded degrees will be recognised.

During developing joint programmes, higher education institutions should take into consideration both the national legislative framework and institutional guidelines. In the case that HEIs have institutional autonomy, then it is just enough to consult their guidelines in relation to all important information, such as student admission, assessments, credits and diplomas, etc.

CHAPTER 4: THE DEVELOPMENT OF JOINT PROGRAMMES

There are some important issues that have to be taken into account before and during the development of joint programmes. Some of them are surely the reasons for entering into joint programmes, the importance of institutional strategic support, tools and resources which can be used for authorising the programmes. No less important are partnership, joint curriculum development, defining common learning outcomes and designing a relevant mobility track. Last but not least are issues important for a cooperation agreement.

HEIs have to consider real and acceptable their own reasons why they wish to develop joint programmes and maybe more important what the added value will be for their institutions. These activities must be compatible with long-term (not always) institutional development strategy. It is necessary to make a comparative analysis of the added value in the case of a joint degree programmes against double or other multiple degree programmes. Although joint degree programmes may take more effort to develop, they can for sure be a deeper form of internationalisation.

The important reasons for developing joint programmes can be classified as the reasons at the institutional level, such as:

- better international visibility and reputation of the institution,
- better distributed student recruitment,
- higher level of internationalisation followed by increasing foreign student enrolments,
- wider institutional cooperation and more sustainable strategic relationships,
- wider and strengthened international research collaboration,

and at the programme level, such as:

- to broaden or deepen education offering,
- to develop a more internationalised curricula, so that such courses cannot be delivered by one institution or institutions from one country,
- to strengthen strategic partnerships with other regions in the world;
- to improve the quality of the curriculum,
- to improve the quality of research elements in the case of joint doctoral programmes,
- to offer a specialist, innovative curriculum by combining the education and research strengths of individual institutions,
- to increase cross-cultural competencies of students and staff, not only through mobility, but also by enhancing internationalisation at home;

- to improve graduate employability through curricula that respond to labour-market demand,
- to attract new groups of target students, etc.

Some of evident direct or indirect benefits for academic staff involved in joint programmes, either through staff mobility or incoming student mobility, may be:

- opportunities to learn about other contexts and teaching and learning methods,
- student diversity in the classroom,
- academic networks for future teaching collaboration,
- new or strengthened existing research contacts,
- new professional development opportunities,
- intercultural competences.

At the same time, students can have also different benefits attending an international jointly developed curriculum, which combines academic expertise available in different countries. Taking into account that the joint programme was shaped by the expertise of more than one institution, one can conclude that a joint programme is of higher quality than a common single degree programme. Especially for doctoral and master candidates, joint programmes offer special environment with good opportunities to cooperate with high-quality researchers, to use high-quality equipment, to enter into new academic networks, etc.

Usually the sustainability of a joint programme throughout the development and implementation depends very much on institutional commitment. Although the personal commitment of individual academic staff may sometimes be the starting point for a joint programme, without institutional support at all levels most such initiatives will be short lived.

When a joint programme is developed on the basis of staff proposal it has to be properly assessed in regard to its implementation and sustainability. The US-based Rice University has developed a special screening and authorisation process[33] to help the university describe and evaluate a programme. This screening process focuses on 14 elements that need to be considered:

1. the rationale behind the joint programme;
2. the curriculum;
3. the partner institution(s);
4. students and academic standards;

[33] A Process for Screening and Authorizing Joint and Double Degree Programs, prepared by Arnaud Chevallier, Rice University, May 2013 http://www.iie.org/~/media/Files/Corporate/Publications/Briefing-Paper-Joint-Double-Degrees.ashx

5. learning;
6. faculty and courses;
7. resources;
8. financial support;
9. administration and programme governance;
10. degree requirements for the general announcements;
11. the launch of the programme;
12. academic support;
13. potential liabilities and other risks;
14. measures of progress and success.

So defined screening process can ensure all important factors to be considered, can increase the strategic alignment of individual initiatives with central university priorities, reduce unnecessary work in the proposal-writing stage and finally reduce the set-up time of the programme.

Selecting partners for joint programme is an important and not simple task. They should be chosen on the basis of a complementary, specific academic expertise that enriches the joint educational offer. A no less important aspect is to take into account mutual trust, commitment, open communication, administrative support and possible access to new student markets. In the implementation of the joint programme other than full partners may also include who can participate in some parts of the programme (e.g. external lecturing, offering internships or financing scholarships). However, more partners in a consortium means automatically more difficult coordination and collaboration and the need for a complex organisational structure.

The number and type of partners and their level of commitment are important factors. In that sense, there are many different reasons for partners to be in the consortium, such as previous good cooperation in education and/or research, good communication and mutual trust, available resources, reliability and administrative capacity, sometimes just familiarity with the partners, etc. Generally speaking, HEIs normally select their joint programme partners through existing exchange partnerships or academic contacts. There are, however, examples where institutions choose partners as part of a larger strategic decision to focus on a particular (new) area in the world or (new) field of study.

It is common to face that a larger partner network means more than ten HEIs and smaller one up to seven ones. As a rule, large consortia offering joint programmes often started off with a small number of partners. Very often a joint programme is implemented by no more than two partner HEIs.

When developing the joint curricula and programme, as mentioned above it is important to be fully aware of national legal frameworks and

institutional requirements on all aspects of running and implementing a study programme. In that sense, several aspects are especially important:

- the legal status of all partner institutions involved;
- the legal status of the degrees proposed as part of the joint programme;
- national and institutional regulations related to jointly awarding degrees;
- national and institutional regulations on the content of the programme, such as minimum length of the dissertation/thesis, requirements of labour-market related elements, and dissertation/thesis defence;
- appropriate national admission requirements (the impact of socio-economic conditions on the admission of students with equal opportunities);
- national tuition fee requirements.

Identifying and selecting a target group of students for a joint programme is a delicate and strategically important activity. A the same time, attracting students from all over the world requires well-defined marketing plans, as well as investments and fundraising activities in order to sustain the programme.

A common phenomenon is that EU HEIs often see joint programmes with non-European universities as a way to enhance their attractiveness and increase the number of non-EU students. Even more, this concept is (unfortunately) becoming part of their institutional strategies.

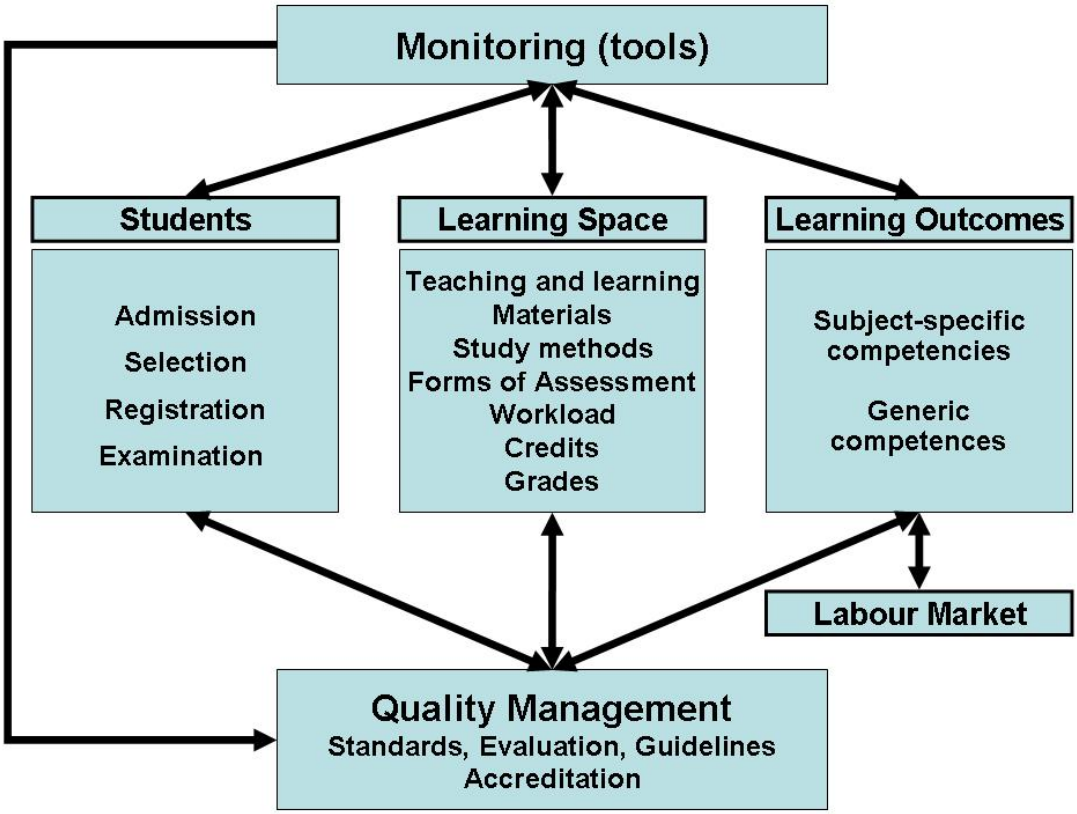
It should be mentioned that it is always advisable to look for, involve and consult non-academic stakeholders within the subject field during the joint curriculum development phase. In this way it can be ensured that the joint programme which is in the process of planning is relevant to the labour market, society or research. Unfortunately, in the 2009 EUA survey[34], when asked about employer involvement during the curriculum design stage, more than half of the surveyed institutions indicated that this had not been the case – although one of the major incentives to develop the courses was relevance to the labour market. Even more, only about ten percent had requested feedback from employers. Employers themselves are sometimes unaware of what higher education institutions have to offer. However, if enterprises are convinced that their participation in curriculum development is or can be of great interest to them, dialogues with institutions can flourish.

Taking into account the Erasmus Mundus graduate survey, Erasmus Mundus students based their success in finding employment on academic rather than practical experience gained during the programme, but they

[34] Survey of master degrees in Europe, EUA Publications 2009. http://www.eua.be/Libraries/Publications_homepage_list/EUA_Survey_Of_Master_Degrees_In_Europe_FINAL_www.sflb.ashx

might profit from a more balanced approach of practical as well as academic modules.

The development of a syllabus (why not a curriculum, too) is a very important activity. It must take into account the defined learning outcomes of the whole programme, but also the present needs of the labour market. As a matter of fact, employability must be translated into learning outcomes and vice versa. At the same time, academics have to reflect on possible future development, considering how labour markets will change or have to change.



Dublin Descriptors[35] outline what programme outcomes should be in terms of knowledge and understanding, applying knowledge and understanding, making judgments, communicating, etc. Discussion about learning outcomes translates into discussion about how they can be achieved within a given framework.

It should be stressed that the European approach to curriculum development is usually based on student-centred learning and identifying learning outcomes, instead on only listing teaching content and methodology, where the learning outcomes are introduced both through qualification framework (the Qualification Framework for the European

[35] http://www.eua.be/typo3conf/ext/bzb_securelink/pushFile.php?cuid=2556&file=fileadmin/user_upload/files/EUA1_documents/dublin_descriptors.pdf

Higher Education Area, QF EHEA, adopted in 2005)[36] and the thematic approach (TUNING Project)[37].

As mentioned above, the QF EHEA recognizes three cycles, including generic descriptors for each cycle, based on learning outcomes and competences, and credit ranges in the first (180-240 ECTS) and second (90-120 ECTS) cycles. The EHEA framework is based on the Dublin Descriptors (2004)[38]. The European Qualifications Framework (EQF)[39] has been adopted by the European Union (EU) in 2008, where qualifications framework consists of 8 levels comprising all education levels. The member countries have developed national qualifications frameworks that are compatible with the EQF. Serbia is in the course of developing national qualifications framework that will be most likely compatible with the EQF.

The Tuning methodology has a thematic, learning outcomes-based approach, works within nine subject areas (Business, Chemistry, Earth Sciences, Education, European Studies, History, Mathematics, Nursing and Physics) and the guidelines on identifying competences and setting learning outcomes can be very useful in joint programmes.

Note that for European fundings, such as the Erasmus Mundus programme or the current Erasmus+ programmes, a joint partnership has to define joint learning outcomes for the entire joint programme, and they have to be fulfilled regardless of where the students start their courses. It is interesting to also note that some survey analyses (e.g. the JOIMAN survey) show that over 80% of responding institutions define the learning outcomes of joint programmes as common for all partners at the consortium level.

---

[36] The framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/QF/050520_Framework_qualifications.pdf
[37] Tuning Educational Structures in Europe http://www.unideusto.org/tuningeu/
[38] Shared 'Dublin' descriptors for Short Cycle, First Cycle, Second Cycle and Third Cycle Awards http://www.eua.be/typo3conf/ext/bzb_securelink/pushFile.php?cuid=2556&file=fileadmin/user_upload/files/EUA1_documents/dublin_descriptors.pdf
[39] http://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk/european-qualifications-framework-eqf.html

CHAPTER 5: MOBILITY STRUCTURES

In general, mobility can be classified by the mode of organisation of the study period abroad:

- *Programme students* are mobile students taking part in an organised mobility programme; and
- *Free movers* are those ones not taking part in an organised mobility programme or benefiting from any kind of agreements between institutions.

Student mobility can also be classified by the length of the study period abroad:

- *Horizontal mobility* (or non-degree mobility) refers to studying abroad mainly for a short period as an exchange student, whereby students only complete some modules or courses, but not whole degrees.
- *Vertical mobility* (or degree mobility) means studying abroad for a full degree.

Talking about student mobility usually means talking about physical mobility. However, there is also virtual mobility as a supplement to the present models of international student mobility in higher education. It has its own profiles and legitimacy, being neither superior nor inferior to other mobility schemes, but complementing them. Even more, it extends the classical opportunities of physical mobility, which is well known and mainly promoted by the successful Erasmus Scheme of the European Commission, to new opportunities of virtual mobility. This mobility serves as a purposeful opportunity, a more flexible and cheaper mobility scheme, potentially fitting the needs of all students, including non-physical mobile students and lifelong learners.

Hereafter we will consider the physical student mobility, both horizontal and vertical, and the mobility of programme students only.

Academically relevant mobility tracks are required for both students and lecturers and are depending first and foremost on the learning outcomes of the programme, the academic relevance and added value of a particular path.

There are several different mobility models of international student mobility within joint programmes. They can be defined by some general rules for design and implementation of joint programmes, but modified or even defined as new ones taking into account legislative framework of partner countries and/or specific regulations of higher education institutions involved in design and implementation of these programmes.

One of them (a rather general one) is based on three submodels:

1. Students travel together as a group, starting in one location and transferring to another;

2. Students start their studies at different locations and then merge with the others at one or more participating institutions;

3. Students are individually mobile, collecting credits as they like at different universities that do not have exactly the same curriculum.

The mobility schemes can be also divided into three separate models[40]:

Exchange mobility model: Students themselves choose to have an experience abroad for a short or longer period of time, at a host institution, according to an individual mobility arrangement between the host and the home institution (e.g. mobility as funded by the Erasmus programme).

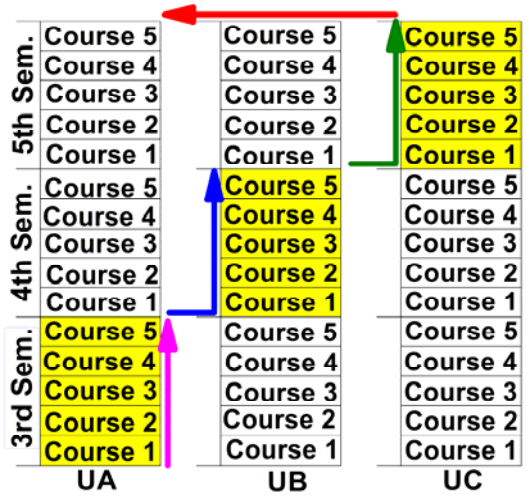
Networked mobility and curricula: One university, a faculty, department or a specific university programme forms a network with several partners. The "centre or demanding university" sends its students for a certain period of time to one or more partner institutions, to follow (part of) their curriculum abroad.

Embedded mobility and curricula: A limited number of partners (faculties, departments, programmes) engage in a consortium (e.g. "ring-shaped"), in which students then "rotate" and follow parts of their educational trajectory subsequently in two or more partner institutions, while students of those partner institutions do the same. Note that the curriculum is fully synchronised.

The following four mobility models (schemes) can be used to systematise international student mobility within joint programmes:

[40] Bart De Moor and Piet Henderikx, International curricula and student mobility, LERU, No.12, April 2013.

Model 1



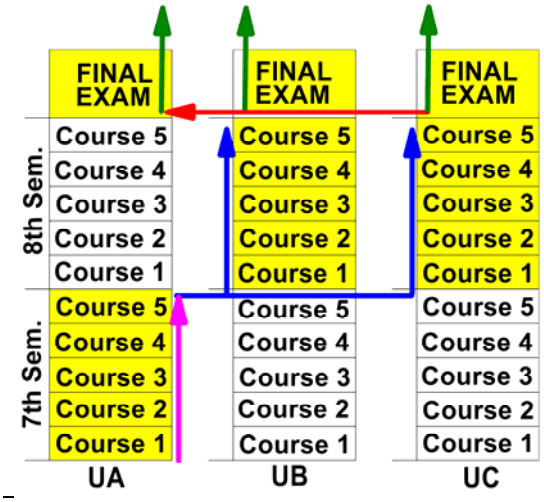
This is the most commonly used model of student mobility for undergraduate but for master students as well. Typical mobility pattern is displayed on the left side.

Students are moving (e.g. after 3rd semester, 5 courses per semester, 30 ECTS credits per semester, arrow colored magenta) together from partner university UA (starting or home university) to UB (host university for 4th semester, arrow colored blue), then to UC (host university for 5th semester, arrow colored olive), with common curricula for all. Students can go back to university UA.

Note that areas with the name of activities colored yellow indicate the implemented activities. Magenta-blue-olive-red colored arrows represent students' educational trajectory.

This model creates a feeling of togetherness among the students, but offers no specialisation.

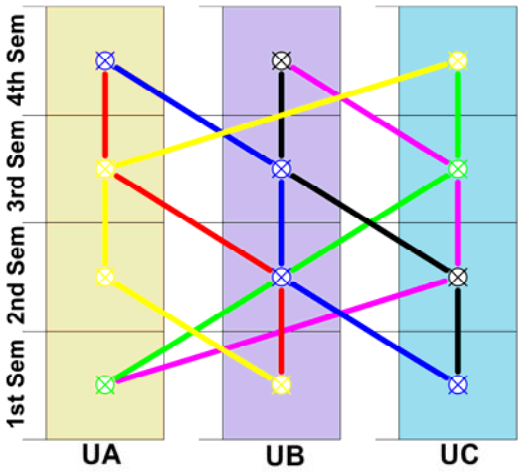
Model 2



This model shows several possible mobility paths, allowing specialisation tracks:

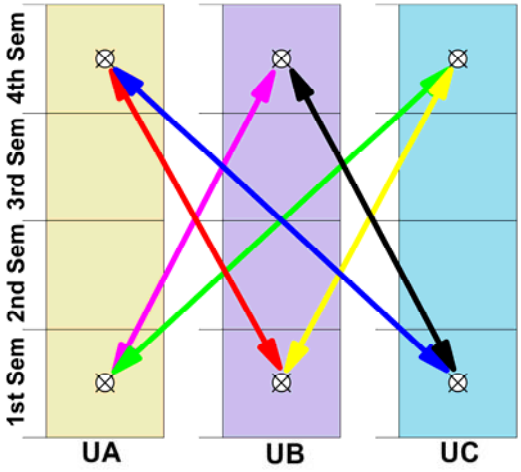
- Students start together (1st to 7th semester, 5 courses per semester, 30 ECTS credits per semester, arrow colored magenta) at partner university UA (starting or home university);
- Move to different locations (host universities UB or UC) for the second mobility (arrow colored blue)
  - either allowing specialisations (final exam), or
  - go back to partner university UA and allowing specialisations (arrow colored red),
- Go to finalise the dissertation/thesis at a third partner (arrow colored olive).

Model 3



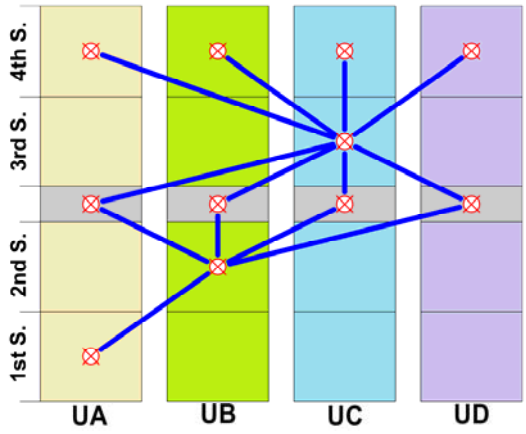
This a more complicated model, allowing several special mobility tracks for individual students or student groups. Mobility pattern shows an example for joint (two years, four semesters) master programme realized at three partner institutions UA, UB and UC. It was assumed that there are two student groups per partner institution.

Each university is home or starting institution usually for one or two semesters for some students or student groups, together with one or two other institutions as host institutions for one or two semesters.



In this model, students or student group start at different locations but there are still common components, as well as a connection between the home or starting university and the final hosting university through joint master thesis supervision, as it is shown in the mobility pattern.

Model 4



The last but not the least model presents a tight mobility pattern, where students go, e.g. to four destinations (partner universities UA, UB, UC and UD) within two years. Compared to previous models this one is with rather defined (fixed) mobility tracks.

In this mobility pattern, all students or a student group start at university UA (which can be home university for some students and host university for others) and then go together to university UB for the second semester, after which they are free to choose a university to do their internship (light gray colored in mobility pattern).

In the second year, they all start together at university UC and can choose from universities UA, UB, UC and UD to complete their last semester.

A very good example for proposed Model 4 is the mobility model for the Erasmus Mundus Master in Research and Innovation in Higher Education (MaRIHE)[41].

All students of MaRIHE (with four consortium partners) have the same mobility track in first three semesters:

1st Semester: Danube University Krems, Austria

2nd Semester: University of Tampere, Finland

Internship: between 2nd and 3rd semester

3rd Semester: Beijing Normal University, China

4th Semester: Two different specialization tracks:

The management track which focuses on the management of research and innovation in higher education. Students in this track will spend their 4th semester at Osnabrück University of Applied Sciences / Germany.

The research and analysis track which focuses on analyzing and conducting research on the topics of "research" and "innovation" in the higher education sector. Students in this track will spend their 4th

[41] http://www.marihe.eu/

semester at either Danube University Krems / Austria, or at University of Tampere / Finland.

For the internship between the 2nd and the 3rd semester, students will be with an institution related to research and innovation in higher education, (e.g. the MaRIHE associated partners).

Academic calendar, which can differ between partner countries, is connected to mobility schemes. Namely, a different setup of academic years can present problems for normal realization of student mobility. However, when there is a willingness to synchronize cooperation between partners, different academic calendars can also provide more opportunities for faculty exchange. There are other options (flexible solutions) such as adjustement of the course duration (i.e. lengthening or shortening the semester), normal calendar replacing the new one in which academic year starts earlier, but also organization of Summer schools or offering distance learning as an option, etc.

The motivation of students to use mobility is something we need to work on intensively. In general, the problem of motivating students is faced by both institutions and joint programmes. The latter ones with integrated mobility have to solve a double problem: how to motivate the students

- to choose the (the right) programme and/or

- to go to the right (appropriate) partner university abroad.

Another problem of motivating students may be that they do not see the attractivness of the partner institution or even of its country (e.g. unpopular destination). This problem is particularly pronounced in Serbia, given that the analysis of submitted applications and realized mobilites that are financed by the European Union funds shows that foreign students are reluctant to elect some institutions in Serbia against others that are more popular or more acceptable to them.

Therefore, it is necessary to provide true and complete information about the programmes, mobility and partner institutions abroad. In this sense, the facts that must be pointed out are:

- all partners instititions are academically eligiable to take part in realization of joint programme,
- all partner instititions are academically eligiable to take part as the home institution,
- which partners institutions will contribute best within a certain specialization field,
- which may be the adventages for students to go to a particular institution, such as language, student support services availalbe, special conditions for the students with disability, lower costs of stay, etc.

It is very important to provide feedback from students who have already visited (or studed at) the partner institutions. A friendly and very helpful solution could be web forums or web portals.

Note that one of the main documents that can help in guiding academic (teaching) staff in the implementation of mobility periods is the European Quality Charter for Mobility[42].

[42] http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:c11085

CHAPTER 6: COOPERATION AGREEMENT

The general rule should be:

> *Draw up a cooperation agreement as early as possible and make it flexible as it will require frequent updating. A possible solution is a general and simple agreement with references to more detailed annexes regulating different issues in the cooperation*.

In that sense, the following issues should be as very useful included in the cooperation agreement (general cooperation agreement template):

a) Purpose and scope of the agreement;

b) Legal framework and national qualifications (with necessary documentation in annexes);

c) Structure and organisation of the cooperation;

d) Programme structure (learning outcomes, course units, general and specific methodology, mobility models);

e) Degree and diploma (with templates in annex);

f) Student admission, selection, registration and examination;

g) Financial management (including tuition fees, annex);

h) Quality assurance (with detailed methodology in annex);

i) Intellectual property rights;

j) Renewal, termination, amendment(s) and resolution of disputes;

k) Application of law and dispute resolution.

As examples of good practice the following should also be mentioned:

- A template of cooperation agreements for joint programmes at master and doctoral level which was developed within the JOIMAN project[43].
- A checklist of actions and good practice in relation to drafting consortium agreements as one of the Erasmus Mundus Quality Assurance tools[44].
- Templates for consortium agreements provided for Erasmus Mundus Action 1 beneficiaries[45].

[43] Practical Approaches to the Management of Joint Programmes - Results from the JOI.CON Training Project, Leipzig University, December 2012 https://www.joiman.eu/default.aspx

[44] http://www.emqa.eu/

[45] The EACEA website http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/tools/good_practices_en.php

CHAPTER 7: JOINT PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

In general, there are no pre-defined management models. It is clear that different joint programmes have their specific contexts and need to develop their own suitable and appropriate models. In addition, it is necessary to have available other information such as identification of all the partners in the programme, their role in programme realization and posibility to accommodate them in the management and governance structures of the programme which depends of whether some partners are degree or non-degree awarding HEIs, non-university partners, professional bodies, alumni, etc.

In that sense, the implementation of joint programmes has to be discussed from several aspects, such as governance and management, cooperation agreements, financial management, marketing and administration, quality assurance and enhancement, recognition, etc.

The management structure should be in accordance with the set of tasks for which joint arrangements are needed:

- joint coordination and external representation of the consortium;
- joint development and monitoring of the academic content of the programme;
- joint quality assurance (including both academic and administrative, internal and external with appropriate standards and procedures);
- joint financial administration and decisions;
- joint student administration (first of all joint selection and complaints handling procedures);
- other procedures such as admission, registration, assessment, grading and examinations, transfer of credits, archiving of student records for future enquiries, etc.);
- joint promotion of the programme and joint student recruitment as last but not the least.

Since awarding the degree is regulated by national legislation it is useful and recommended to consult the national office when drafting the joint diploma and diploma supplement, due to better and simpler future recognition of the degree.

A very important step in joint programme management are surely networking activities to further increase the awareness and visibility of the joint programme among future employers and enhance employability too.

It should be noted that involvement of others such as non-academic, labour market actors in the planning and monitoring of the joint programme and especially in internship provision could be very important.

All mentioned aspects and activities are aimed at signing the cooperation agreement. In conclusion, draw up a cooperation agreement as early as possible and make it flexible as it will require frequent updating. Necessarily predict a general agreement with references to more detailed annexes regulating different issues in the cooperation.

The design of the management structure of a joint programme should be seriously implemented because it determines how the roles, power and responsibilities are assigned, controlled and coordinated, and how information flows between the different management levels.

The management structure depends on the strategic aims of the joint programme. In a centralised structure, the top management has most of the decision-making power, with tight control over players in the joint programme consortium, while in a decentralised structure, the decision-making power is distributed and the partners may have different degrees of independence.

It must be here taken into account that some partner HEIs of a joint programme have centralised (integrated) or decentralised (non-integrated) structure. It can partially (or fully) determine their role in and impact on the overall management of the joint programme.

The Serbian higher education area consists of public and private (fully integrated) universities. Public universities in their scientific, artistic and professional competences are affiliated to the leading national higher education institutions, and recognizable in the world for their many successful forms of cooperation with foreign universities. Although most of them are non-integrated (except the State University of Novi Pazar, which was established as an integrated university), they entered the 21 century faced with new challenges that will inevitably cause significant structural changes in the course of their further development. All of them have great expectations, with an awareness that in this environment universities must necessarily change and adapt, but continue the already started, and very important, process of integration. It is obvious that some components in a complex university organization and operation require rationalization and improvements as necessary preconditions for achieving an adequate level of competence in the international competition.

It should be noticed that Governance of higher education system in Serbia is not totally centralised. The autonomous province Vojvodina has significant jurisdiction over the higher education institutions located on its territory:

- founding of higher education institutions in Vojvodina;
- issuing work permits to higher education institutions located in Vojvodina;
- carrying out administrative supervision of the higher education institutions located in Vojvodina;

- allocating the financial resources provided through the budget of the province allocated for higher education institutions and monitoring their use;
- defining the number of students that can be enrolled into the first year of study, in accordance with the proposals of the National Council for Higher Education;
- nominating the members of councils of state founded colleges of applied sciences and of state founded universities located in Vojvodina.

In the analysis of the transformation of the non-integrated university to integrated university, public universities have in mind the realistic assumption that some functions of university are integrated by the law, some of them can be integreted under some conditions or with little effort, while some functions can be integrated only by changing the law. Since the adoption of the Law on Higher Education in 2005[46] (and amendments in 2008, 2010 and 2012), public universities realized all or almost all the proposed solutions of integration. For example, the University of Niš implemented some integration solutions important for taking part in the management of joint programmes[47]. The University Senate retained the role of the highest professional organ of the university for making the most important decisions in the academic domain of activities (teaching, research, appointments and promotions). The transfer of certain competences of the University Senate to the Scientific Expert Boards (e.g. considering regular study programs but also joint programmes, doctoral dissertations, elections, etc.) stabilized their (very successful) activities. At the same time the University Senate kept the statutory authority to make final decisions. Most important is that the University Council issued a number of key supporting documents in the domain of fulfilling its statutory obligations (regulations, rules, etc.). This has enabled efficient operation of the University of Niš and a remarkable level of integration within the existing legal framework.

For successful managing of joint programmes, responding HEIs have to implement additional structures. According to an IIE survey[48], among 92 institutions in the EU and 81 in the US, unfortunately, only a minority (about 41%) of responding institutions have implemented these structures.

There are several levels of managing joint programmes:

- The consortium (at the top level) subsequently screens applications, decides on admission, organises the mobility, and issues the certificate;

---

[46] http://www.minoritycentre.org/library/law-higher-education-republic-serbia

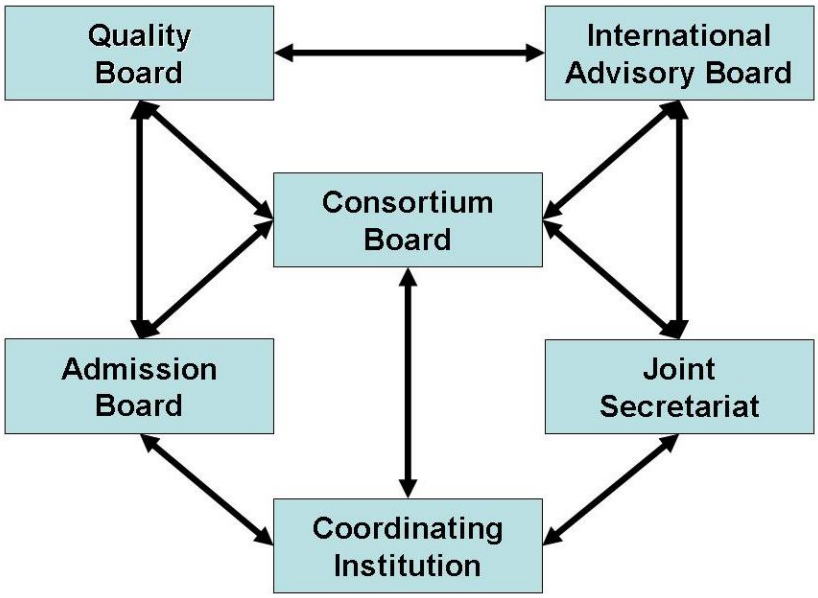
[47] Pravilnik o dvostrukom mentorstvu i zajedničkom doktoratu (translated into English: Book of Regulations governing joint mentorship and joint doctoral degrees) http://www.ni.ac.rs/dokumenti/send/162-broj-4-od-21042015-god/699-3-pravilnik-o-dvostrukom-mentorstvu-i-zajednickom-doktoratu

[48] Joint and Double Degree Programs in the Global Context - Report on an International Survey (2011) http://www.iie.org/en/Research-and-Publications/Publications-and-Reports/IIE-Bookstore/Joint-Degree-Survey-Report-2011

- The coordinating institution is usually in charge of receiving applications, sending letters of acceptance, financially monitoring the programme, and collecting and distributing fees;
- The partner institutions at the central level are in charge of enrolment, visas, accommodation, certification, delivery of the degree certificate and the diploma supplement;
- The partner institutions at faculty/departmental level are in charge of the organisation of extra-curricular activities, examination, Master dissertation/thesis, transfer of marks and of records.

According to general adopted recommendations[49], each partner identifies a person (or position) to act as the local coordinator and take responsibility for the joint programme within their own institution. At the same time this coordinator also acts as the main contact person for the other consortium partners.

Acceptable governance model for joint programme can be organized similar to the model for the Erasmus Mundus Master in Research and Innovation in Higher Education (MaRIHE)[50] for two-year joint programmes with four consortium partners. A characteristic of this model is that each board (except for the international advisory board) includes a representative from each consortium partner institution. An illustration of the members involved and the main tasks of each board can be represented as follows:



Consortium Board comprises one representative from every partner institution as a member. Board is chaired by the representative of the

[49] ECA's Joint Programme Checklist http://ecahe.eu/home/services/publications/joint-programme-checklist-inspired-by-quality-assurance/

[50] http://www.marihe.eu/

Coordinating Institution. Its main tasks are to deal with all academic issues, programme development and promotion, quality issues and the principles of economy and administration.

Coordinating Institution coordinates course realization, liaises with the European Commission and supervises the fulfillment of the contractual agreements, guides the Joint Secretariat and chairs the Consortium Board.

Joint Secretariat comprises the management of the courses, regarding administrative and practical issues. Secretariat creates a 'road map' for the Consortium Board to guide the implementation of joint programme, but is responsible for definition of work packages for every partner. It provides financial and administrative handbook.

Admission Board comprises one representative of each partner institution. Its main tasks are to meet once a year and deal with the selection of students and invited scholars.

International Advisory Board comprises representatives of the associated partners and internationally recognised experts in the field of higher education management and development. Its main task is to review the progress of the course and to have an advisory role aimed at ensuring the quality of the programme.

Quality Board comprises of academic directors (one from each partner institution), one representative of the faculty, one student representative and one representative of the associated partners. Its main tasks are to monitor and improve the quality of course, but also to collaborate with the quality management units of all partners and with the national bodies dealing with quality assurance in higher education.

There are other examples for the governance model, but they usually differ in some details only.

Realization of joint programmes imposes extra running costs for activities such as joint curriculum development, marketing, mobility, assessments, administration, and short-term accommodation. A particular problem arises when multiple countries and consortium partners have different tuition fee policies, which is why the implementation of a joint programme becomes complicated. It should be noted that arrangements for cost-sharing, tuition fees, scholarships and the sustainability of programmes need usually to be negotiated.

If the joint programme is funded by an external party (e.g. Erasmus+ program), specific rules and conditions come with the provided funding.

It is important to set up a full-cost budget for the joint programme, including all running costs. In that sense, it should be noted that the JOI.CON training project[51] has developed an example of a full-cost

[51] https://www.joiman.eu/

calculation of a joint master (degree) programme. It can be applied in the particular context of this master programme, but may not be fully transferable to another master programme context.

The EUA report (2008)[52] on developing joint masters in Europe underlines the importance of proper funding procedures and distribution of resources as a critical factor for sustainability. Funding should be managed at programme level, allowing staff with relevant knowledge and experience to carry direct responsibility for financing.

In some cases, due to the extra investment needed to offer joint programmes, tuition fees should be increased. Another problem that can be created is whether all students should pay the same amount or whether to differentiate between European and non-European students. Such and other similar situations must be followed by an appropriate agreement between partner institutions. However, due to different national and/or institutional tuition fee policies it can be difficult to realize. Therefore, it is essential to check the legal situation of potential partners before implementing a joint programme. Note that the EU funding schemes for joint programmes require a common tuition fee policy, which constitutes an added challenge to the existing legal situation. ECA's Joint Programme checklist[53] includes tips on how to deal with tuition fees.

Collection and distribution of tuition fees may be realized in different ways:

- fees are paid to the coordinating institution, which then divides tuition revenues among partner institutions (if it is legally allowed in all countries);
- at postgraduate level, students pay at each institution, whereas at the undergraduate level, students only pay at the home institution, etc.

Usually some higher education institutions offer some form of scholarship to some of their students. This scholarship funding mostly consists of a combination of EU and public or other sources. Thus in Erasmus Mundus master courses, scholarships generally cover tuition waivers, whereas in non-Erasmus Mundus master courses, scholarships are usually meant to partially cover travel, housing and living costs.

Development and implementation of a joint programme must be followed by developing an appropriate marketing plan with the content which depends on the institutional strategies and target groups of the joint programme. It is useful for HEIs to emphasise information on the learning outcomes of the programme, and maybe the level of employability that

---

[52] EUA -Annual Report 2008
http://www.eua.be/fileadmin/user_upload/files/Publications/EUA_Annual_Report_2008.pdf

[53] Joint Programme Checklist: inspired by quality assurance
http://ecahe.eu/home/services/publications/joint-programme-checklist-inspired-by-quality-assurance/

can be expected to strengthen students' position on the job market after completion of the programme.

It should be emphasized that additional structures are necessary to handle the student administration of joint programmes. Also all other procedures and tools which can be helpful to support the joint administration and communication must be finished before the joint programme implementation.

Student selection process requires the involvement of all partner institutions and clear assignment of all responsibilities in this process. Note that the joint programmes with integrated mobility require more from the student than just academic excellence and very good knowledge of a foreign (usually English) language. Also important is the motivation of students to choose a programmme and their willingness to embrace institutional, cultural and traditional differences in the countries in which they will implement mobility. Thus an interview must be an integral part of the selection process.

Institutions offering a joint programme must fulfill the most important conditions:

- to clarify the admission procedure:
  - which admission document requirements of all partner institutions of the consortium are needed,
  - application deadlines and appeal procedures,
- to adopt a common selection procedure,
- to set up a joint selection committee.

In some cases partners usually perform the pre-selection, with the final decision referred to a joint selection committee.

Some difficulties may arise in connection with formulating joint admission criteria due to the possiblity that some institutions may have stricter laws and less flexibility, and that it may be necessary to obtain special permissions or exemptions from their University Board to meet the requirements of participating institutions.

A joint programme consortium normally defines the obligations of the student and the consortium in a 'student agreement', which is signed by the student and the consortium at the start of the programme.

Monitoring student progress is a very important and indispensable activity. Therefore partner institutions must agree on who is responsible for it, including also procedures regarding lack of study progress, and rules for leaves of absence. In most cases, monitoring of academic progress is performed by the institution that delivers the course programme. It is also very important to inform participating institutions about the difference in institutional procedures. As a matter of fact, the best monitoring can be obtained if jointly formulated strategies, procedures and guidelines exist.

Usually the policy on assessment can differ between participating institutions according to the completion requirement framework which can be based on e.g. the number of obtained course credits, the student workload, or required learning outcomes. Therefore, institutions must have a clear and shared policy on assessment and grade calculation. A good solution is that each joint programme consortium develops their own grade conversion model (grade conversion table[54]). It is recommended that participating institutions clearly indicate their grade conversion model in the student handbook for the joint programme. Another important recommendation is that the student handbook must also clearly state

- whether the participating universities will take care of the transferring of credits between the universities,
- where (e.g. at each participating institution, at home university, etc.) students can order credit transcripts.

It goes without saying that there must be a shared web portal for a joint student recruitment process. Such a portal should offer all relevant information on the programme, including details on admission criteria and procedures, entry points, credit weighting and workloads (including information on the ECTS system for non-European students), learning outcomes, employability prospects, mobility options and requirements (e.g. how accommodation issues are addressed), target group, the qualification/degree that will be awarded, course structure and coordination, and accessibility of the programme for economically disadvantaged and physically disabled students, etc.

Thus, all relevant web portal information will be clearly presented to students and be easily accessible before their arrival. At the same time, appropriate published material in the form of booklets (e.g. The Ultimate Guidebook for Incoming Students published by University of Novi Sad[55]) should be distributed upon students' arrival. Due to the jointly developed, fixed curricula with integrated mobility, it is recommended to ensure proper student advice and guidance during the studies, preferably at departmental level. Students are subject to the academic policies of the institution where they are in residence. When students move back and forth, this rule should be clearly stated.

It is important if students can look at the visa and residence regulations at an early stage of the joint programme development and management. Therefore it is recommended that participating institutions in joint programmes try to develop close cooperation with embassies/consulates and local authorities on visa and permit issues.

The consortium should consider how and through which institutions students can be insured for the full length of their programme. An

---

[54] e.g. The Erasmus Mundus Master Course - Common score conversion table http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/tools/documents/good_practices/studentscore_conversiontable.pdf

[55] The Ultimate Guidebook for Incoming Students (University of Novi Sad, 2013) http://www.uns.ac.rs/en/medjunarodna/ultimateGuidebook.pdf

acceptable solution will be an insurance company that can provide global insurance cover. Some national health insurance schemes fully cover visiting students.

As a rule, participating institutions guarantee accommodation for students because most joint programmes have a fixed curriculum with an intense, preset mobility structure. Even more, housing support is normally offered as part of the general student services.

CHAPTER 8: RECOGNITION AND AWARDING JOINT DEGREES

For better understanding of the legal foundation of recognition, one needs to consider the legal framework, recognition structures and diversity in recognition procedures and education systems that should be taken into account.

There are two types of recognition procedures in the European area: *Academic* which refers to recognition sought for the purpose of further studies or the right to carry an academic title, and *Professional recognition* which concerns recognition sought for the purpose to enter the labour market.

Most students apply directly to the higher education institution of their choice and thus enter the institutional admissions process, which includes some form of recognition procedure. Academic recognition may be organized at various levels within a higher education institution. For instance, periods of study abroad may be recognized at the faculty or at the institutional level, while the recognition of degrees must be located in a central office. Therefore, the higher education institution, as usually the preferred structure of academic recognition in many countries, deals directly with the applicant and makes the final decision. The recognition of access qualifications may even be a separate procedure in itself.

When evaluating a qualification five elements of a qualification need to be considered: level, workload, quality, profile, and learning outcomes. All need to be considered especially in establishing whether there are substantial differences between the foreign qualification and the required one. Learning outcomes obviously are becoming the most important factor, the evaluation of which is aided by the other indicators.

Primarily due to differences in national legislations, jointly awarding a degree and particularly issuing one diploma and diploma supplement still remain the main challenges for joint degree programme coordinators. Thus, the national ministries of education or the national university organisation must be able to provide information to technical questions in relation to formulating and issuing the joint diploma and the diploma supplement.

The European Diploma Supplement is a document attached to a higher education diploma aimed to improve transparency and facilitate recognition. It describes other important data, such as the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were successfully completed by the individual named on the diploma to which this supplement is appended, etc. In contrast to the general diploma and its diploma supplement, joint diploma supplement has to include information on the jointness of the educational offer. The diploma supplement has to be written in a 'major' European language. Graduates in Serbia at most universities receive diploma and diploma supplements written in both Serbian and English (at some universities only, e.g. at University of Niš).

According to The Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC), recognition is '*a formal acknowledgement by a competent authority of the value of a foreign educational qualification*'. More than 50 European countries have already ratified the LRC. Further, it has been also signed by Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States. The LRC is a very important tool which covers academic recognition and promotes academic mobility by facilitating the recognition of qualifications, students' access to further studies and credit transfers between higher education institutions. Even more, the LRC is a binding international treaty and serves as the foundation of recognition in the European region.

Holders of joint degrees should have adequate access, upon request, to a fair assessment of their qualifications. The most relevant documents, in the context of recognition, are the Recommendations on Criteria and Procedures[56] (2001) and the Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees[57] (2004).

It should be noted that one of the fundamental principles of the LRC is: "*foreign qualifications shall be recognised unless there is a substantial difference between the foreign qualification for which recognition is sought and the corresponding qualification in the host country*", where substantial differences means differences considered so fundamental that they most likely will prevent students from succeeding in getting their qualifications recognised. Transparent procedures and information provision must be guaranteed to students and graduates.

The mentioned differences in recognition practices between participating countries and their institutions are the major obstacles for fair recognition of qualifications and, hence, for student mobility in the European region. The European Area of Recognition (EAR) project[58] provides a practical translation of the LRC principles through the EAR manual[59].

To facilitate and improve the full recognition of joint degrees, the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA) has developed Guidelines for good practice for awarding joint degrees[60]. The guidelines describe the procedures needed to evaluate a degree resulting from a joint programme.

---

[56] Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign qualifications (adopted by the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee at its second meeting, Riga, 6 June 2001)
http://www.cicic.ca/docs/lisboa/recommendation-foreign-qualifications.en.pdf

[57] The Committee of he Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region, Third Session, Strasbourg, 9 June 2004

[58] http://www.eurorecognition.eu/

[59] The European Recognition Manual for Higher Education Institutions
http://eurorecognition.eu/Manual/EAR%20HEI.pdf

[60] Aerden, A., Reczulska, H. (2013). Guidelines for Good Practice for Awarding Joint Degrees. ECA Occasional Paper. The Hague.
http://www.ecahe.eu/w/index.php/Guidelines_for_Good_Practice_for_Awarding_Joint_Degrees

The mentioned guidelines specify also the next requirements

For the consortium:

- all institutions in the consortium are recognised and/or accredited as higher education institutions in their (sub)national higher education systems;
- all higher education institutions in the consortium fully recognise the joint programme as a programme offered by their institution;
- each higher education institution in the consortium is entitled to legally offer this type of programme (level, orientation, discipline) as a joint programme, even if that institution is not involved in the awarding of the joint degree (that this programme may lead to).

For the joint programme:

- the joint programme is offered in accordance with the legal frameworks of the relevant (sub)national higher education systems;
- the joint programme is quality assured and/or accredited as a joint programme.

For joint programme (in case a joint programme leads to a joint degree):

- the degree is awarded within the legal framework and the relevant higher education systems;
- the diploma refers to all relevant (sub)national legal frameworks;
- HEI references and signatures must be limited to the degree-awarding institutions;
- the diploma includes the full name of the degree as recognised within all legal frameworks.

There are also detailed guidelines listing particular information to include in the diploma supplement of a joint programme. In cases the diploma supplement is not issued (e.g. for countries outside the EHEA), it is recommended to provide this information in a similar document to be issued alongside the degree.

Partner institutions must agree about design and content of the diploma, together with the procedure for delivering the joint diploma. All these things must be described in the cooperation agreement.

General guidelines for the diploma and the diploma supplement are:

- Participating partners must clarify whether the individual universities require students to stay at the institution in order for the name of the institution to be listed on the joint diploma.
- Regardless of the type of diploma that is issued, the diploma and the diploma supplement must state that the degree is a joint degree.
- If each collaborating institution chooses to issue a separate diploma, these diplomas should mention that they have been issued for the same joint degree and are only valid if presented together.

It should be noted that there are two networks of national recognition information centres that were established to facilitate recognition: the ENIC and NARIC networks. The ENIC-NARIC[61] centres are the national contact points for anyone with questions regarding the recognition of qualifications[62].

Joint doctoral programmes

There are big difference between joint bachelor and master programmes and joint doctoral programmes. The joint doctoral programmes are characterized by the unstructured format of the doctorate, the complex nature of research, development and supervision.

Good knowledge of future consortium partners and their national regulations are very important and a necessary condition at the beginning of the joint doctoral programme development.

The programme development can be realized through next activities:

- developing a comprehensive course vision and strategy for the joint doctoral programme;
- developing balanced supervision processes across the consortium;
- developing formal monitoring procedures to monitor candidates' research progress;
- signing agreement regulating each partner's responsibilities with regard to joint supervision (including joint research training), evaluation and doctoral thesis defence;
- creation a research and communication platform where doctoral candidates and staff can collaborate throughout the consortium;
- provide all doctoral candidates with relevant training and research tools and facilities;
- arrange some kind of employment contracts for the candidates (if legally allowed);
- Set up a consortium agreement regarding intellectual property and spin-off activities.

Under definition joint doctoral programmes are intensely research focused which is the main difference compared to master programmes. Further, they have three additional elements of added value:

- longstanding research collaborations between institutions in different countries,
- more attractive opportunities for international students and access to more funds,
- contribution to institutional research development and to improving research quality.

---

[61] www.enic-naric.net
[62] http://www.enic-naric.net/serbia.aspx

A seven point overview described in the Erasmus Mundus Quality Assurance EMQA handbook[63] explains the need for a comprehensive course vision on joint doctorate programmes:

- identify the unique proposition of running a joint programme, including the type of consortium and the academic content;
- further develop the description of the rationale and the mobility paths;
- work on a sustainability strategy;
- develop a common vision on shared cultures, both academic and administrative;
- a clear organisational and managerial structure as key for success;
- work on a thorough employability strategy for candidates;
- agree on the examination process, taking into consideration transparency;
- agree on the degree awarded and maximise its recognition.

According to previous mentined EMQA handbook, the following seven activities should be undertaken for student recruitment and selection process:

- recruit and select those candidates that are best equipped for the programme;
- look at the candidates' preparation, both academically and logistically;
- set up a supporting network for social, cultural and academic activities;
- share IT, library and other services between the consortium;
- get the best out of providing other learning opportunities such as language training and communication;
- prepare candidates to get the best out of their post-programme career by offering competences and skills training;
- work on establishing a good relation with alumni.

For selection of joint doctoral candidates a special body should be set up, where the selection committee should be generally composed of representatives of all partner institutions. The selection procedure usually consists of three segments: a formal interview in which candidates present their research project to professors, a language assessment and a motivation check. If there is also pre-selection process, CVs, draft research plans and reference letter(s) will be checked. The final selection, obviously, will be jointly done by all partner universities.

In joint doctoral programmes a personal agreement for each PhD candidate is always required. This agreement regulates the partners' responsibilities with regard to joint supervision, evaluation and doctoral thesis defence. Obviously, additional institutional, national or framework

[63] EMQA 2012 - Handbook of Excellence – Doctoral Programmes
http://www.emqa.eu/

agreements referring to general procedures and institutional higher education systems can be formulated, too. Other aspects such as quality assurance, admission, assessment and diplomas can be an integral part of the agreements. As a rule, a joint doctoral programme must contain joint supervision, as well as collaboration on joint research training. Several good examples of joint doctoral agreement templates are available, e.g. the Coimbra Group template for a joint doctoral supervision agreement[64], the JOI.CON examples[65]: (i) of a doctoral candidate agreement, and (ii) of a joint doctorate degree and of a diploma supplement of a joint doctorate.

[64] Agreement for joint supervision of doctoral studies leading to the award of a joint or a dual doctoral degree (Coimbra Group) http://www.coimbra-group.eu/DOCUMENTS/2010/Co-supervision-final.pdf

[65] JOI.CON Training Project - Practical Approaches to the Management of Joint Programmes, https://www.joiman.eu

CHAPTER 9: ACCREDITATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

The quality assurance issues must be taken into account when developing and managing joint programmes. In that sense, the European Standards and Guidelines including internal and external quality assurance aspects, some of the Erasmus Mundus Quality Assurance tools must be discussed, as well as national accreditation legislation in all the countries where parts of the joint programme are offered.

Compared to European Standards and Guidelines, EMQA is not a standard quality assurance process of judging or ranking courses against a fixed set of 'standards and procedures'. EMQA assumes that international programmes are constantly innovated and that their results need to be immediately available to the higher education institutions. Luckily the EMQA tool is available for free and can be used for self-assessment by any practitioner involved in the development or implementation of a joint programme. Hence, four practical guides, with checklists and guidelines, are available online, for both master and doctoral level[66]:

- comprehensive course vision;
- integrated learning & teaching, and staff development strategy;
- realistic management, financial, and institutional strategy;
- recruit excellent students, deliver value, engage alumni.

Tolking about internal and external QA measures, it is advisable to introduce the internal QA measures for a joint programme on the basis of existing internal QA measures. It would be a good solution if the participating institutions can mutually recognise the internal quality assurance schemes and include them in the public agreement between the institutions. In such a situation the joint programme consortium can develop additional criteria and questions that further and/or better investigate some (maybe non-typical) aspects of a joint programme, such as its accepted organisation or its added value compared to other programmes.

It is well known that quality assurance and accreditation are gaining more and more importance. Taking into account that joint programmes usually start on the basis of mutual trust, in order to secure international recognition it is recommended to develop a quality assurance policy, including administrative and academic procedures.

Under general definition the internal QA process assumes reviewing the curriculum, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the courses, modules and teaching units, monitoring student progress and achievements, increasing the transparency of teaching and study activities, and improving the study and examination processes.

[66] http://www.emqa.eu/

EUA's guidelines for quality enhancement[67] define quality-related questions that should be addressed by all those responsible for the QA (within all levels of implementation) of joint programmes, where teaching is especially related to the course structure and the learning context. Note that services are mentioned briefly as a point of interest when implementing mobility.

Talking about external QA it is recommended to find out from the list of available and acceptable QA systems which one is valid for the joint programme, and which aspects this system will cover.

The external quality assurance processes for higher education differ between countries, where the main distinction refers to the main focus of quality assurance: reviewing the entire institutions, programme-level accreditation, or (sometimes) a combination of both.

Commission for Accreditation and Quality Assurance of the Republic of Serbia recently (in 2013) adopted public guidelines for the preparation of documentations for accreditation of the joint study programmes[68]. Although higher education institutions in Serbia recently started with developing and implementing of joint degree programmes, more than twenty joint programmes[69] are already accredited and running at Serbian universities.

Joint study programmes developed and implemented by more than one higher education institution can be accredited if they can award joint degrees, a double degree diploma or a diploma issued by a national institution or institutions having a specified agreement.

Joint programmes can be organized in one or more education areas (as Interdisciplinary, Multidisciplinary or Transdisciplinary joint programmes) at bachelor, master and doctoral levels. Joint study programmes can be

---

[67] Guidelines for Quality Enhancement in European Joint Master Programmes http://www.eua.be/eua/jsp/en/upload/EMNEM_report.1147364824803.pdf

[68] Akreditacija i spoljašnja provera kvaliteta u visokom obrazovanju (translated into English: The Accreditation and External Quality Control in Higher Education), Beograd, 2013. http://www.kapk.org/
Guidelines for preparation of the accreditation documents for joint study programs
http://www.kapk.org/images/stories/prijave/uputstvo_za_ZSP.doc

[69] e.g. Convention individuelle, de cotutelle internationale de thèse, entre l'Université de Nis et l'Université Lumière Lyon 2, 2010.
- Double Degree Master Program in Engineering Science (DDMPES), Agreement on cooperation between Technical University in Berlin, Germany (TUB) and University of Niš, Serbia, 2012 (two years - 120 ECTS).
- The agreement on cooperation on doctoral degree education between the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) and University of Niš, Serbia, 2012.
- The agreement on cooperation on master joint programme (ENERESE: Energy Efficiency, Renewable Energy Sources and Environmental Impacts) between State Universty of Novi Pazar, Serbia and University of Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2012.

realized by higher education institutions if they are individually or jointly accredited for the appropriate study programme. Materials for accreditation of joint programmes must be jointly submitted by all institutions taking part in the realization of these programmes.

Competition for admission of new students to the joint programmes must be jointly published by all participating higher education institutions.

In the case of a joint degree programme, a diploma and diploma supplement shall be signed by authorized persons of accredited higher education institutions participating in the implementation of the joint programme; otherwise by a person who is authorized to issue a double degree, or by a person authorized to issue a diploma under the agreement of the participating institutions of the joint programme.

Diplomas (given in the annexes 1, 2 and 3)[70] and diploma supplement are issued on a prescribed form in the Serbian language in the Cyrillic alphabet, in the language of the joint degree programme coordinator and in the English language.

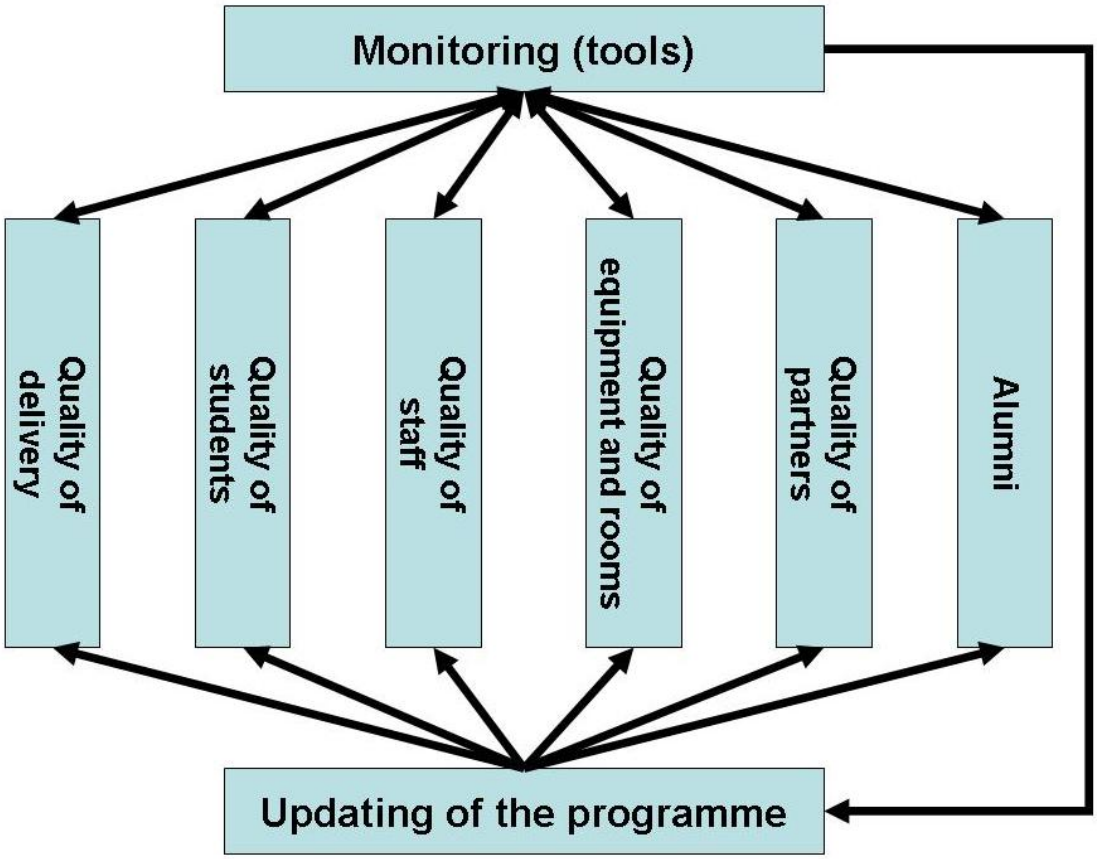
When the implementation of the joint programme is in the language of national minorities, or in one of the world languages, public documents are issued in the form printed bilingually in the Serbian Cyrillic script and in the language and script used in teaching.

Creating joint programmes and when required obtaining their accreditation is not a guarantee that such a programme will have success with the students. The right way for their success lies in their permanent monitoring and updating. This monitoring has a broader meaning because it requires also the monitoring of

- student performance abroad (as collection of student performances from each host institution during his/her mobility period),
- academic staff due to the need for students to have equal treatment and support at each partner institution (in measuring, evaluating, learning outcomes, etc.).

There is a special interest for monitoring the employability of the graduates. Most quality data can be obtained from the database of alumni, but also from the monitoring of graduates' satisfaction.

[70] "Official Gazette of Republic of Serbia", No. 40/2009 and 69/2011



Further, special attention should be paid to the programmes with integrated mobility due to the need to monitor their partner institutions ("partner monitoring"). It is very clear that successful implementation of mentioned programmes does not depend only on the institution offering it, but also on the partner institutions themselves, as well as on their wish to cooperate, their attitude, and of course their mobility culture.

During monitoring of a joint programme, academic staff can collect all data needed for preparing a time perspective of the programme. They also can incorporate external developments in society and the job market into update of programme's content and structure (design).

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: The template of joint degree diploma (in Serbian: the Cyrillic alphabet) awarded to student who completes academic studies of the first cycle: A single diploma issued jointly by two of the institutions that offer a joint undergraduate programme.

Appendix 2: The template of joint degree diploma (in Serbian: the Cyrillic alphabet) awarded to student who completes academic studies of the second cycle: A single diploma issued jointly by two of the institutions that offer a joint master programme or a joint integrated programme.

Appendix 3: The template of joint degree diploma (in Serbian: the Cyrillic alphabet) awarded to student who completes academic studies of the third cycle: A single diploma issued jointly by two of the institutions that offer a joint doctoral programme.

РЕПУБЛИКА СРБИЈА

.....
(назив и седиште самосталне високошколске установе)[1]

.....
(назив и седиште високошколске установе)[1]

Оснивач-и:[1] .....

Дозволу за рад*[1] ..... (број) **од** ..... **године**

је издао-ло .....
(назив надлежног органа и седиште)

.....
(назив и седиште самосталне високошколске установе)[2]

.....
(назив и седиште високошколске установе)[2]

Оснивач-и:[2] .....

Дозволу за рад*[2] ..... (број) **од** ..... **године**

је издао-ло .....
(назив надлежног органа и седиште)

Холограм

ДИПЛОМА

.....
(име, име једног родитеља, презиме)

рођен-а ..... **године у** ..... (место), ... (општина),

..... (држава), **уписан-а школске 20**..... **/ 20** ..... **. године,**

а дана..... **20**..... **. године завршио-ла је** ..... (врста студија)

студије првог/другог степена на студијском програму** .....

.....

обима ..... (словима) **) бодова ЕСПБ са просечном оценом** ..... (словима).

На основу тога издаје се ова диплома о стеченом високом образовању и стручном називу

.....

..... (број дипломе), ... (датум издавања) **године**

У ..... (седиште)

(суви жиг самосталне високошколске установе)[1]

Декан**[1]

.....

Ректор**[1]
Директор - Председник****

.....

Декан**[2]

.....

(суви жиг самосталне високошколске установе)[2]

Ректор**[2]
Директор - Председник****

.....

* Односи се на високошколску установу
** Непотребно изоставити

Серијски број

РЕПУБЛИКА СРБИЈА

.....
(назив и седиште самосталне високошколске установе)[1]

.....
(назив и седиште високошколске установе)[1]

Оснивач-и:[1] .....

Дозволу за рад[*1] ..... (број) **од** ..... **године**

је издао-ло .....
(назив надлежног органа и седиште)

.....
(назив и седиште самосталне високошколске установе)[2]

.....
(назив и седиште високошколске установе)[2]

Оснивач-и:[2] .....

Дозволу за рад[*2] ..... (број) **од** ..... **године**

је издао-ло .....
(назив надлежног органа и седиште)

Холограм

ДИПЛОМА

.....
(име, име једног родитеља, презиме)

рођен-а ..... **године у** ..... (место), ... (општина),

..... (држава), **уписан-а школске 20**..... **/ 20** ..... **. године,**

а дана ..... **20**..... **. године завршио-ла је** ..... (врста студија)

академске студије другог степена на студијском програму .....

.....

обима ..... **(** ..... **)** (словима) **бодова ЕСПБ са просечном оценом** ..... **(** ..... **)**. (словима)

На основу тога издаје се ова диплома о стеченом високом образовању и академском називу

.....

..... (број дипломе), ... (датум издавања) **године**

У ..... (седиште)

Декан[**1]

.....

Декан[**2]

.....

(суви жиг самосталне високошколске установе)[1]

(суви жиг самосталне високошколске установе)[2]

Ректор[**1]
Директор[**] - Председник**[**]

.....

Ректор[**2]
Директор[**] - Председник**[**]

.....

* Односи се на високошколску установу
** Непотребно изоставити

Серијски број

РЕПУБЛИКА СРБИЈА

.....
(назив и седиште самосталне високошколске установе)[1]

.....
(назив и седиште високошколске установе)[1]

Оснивач-и:[1] .....

Дозволу за рад*[1] ..... **од** ..... **године**
(број)

је издао-ло .....
(назив надлежног органа и седиште)

.....
(назив и седиште самосталне високошколске установе)[2]

.....
(назив и седиште високошколске установе)[2]

Оснивач-и:[2] .....

Дозволу за рад*[2] ..... **од** ..... **године**
(број)

је издао-ло .....
(назив надлежног органа и седиште)

Холограм

ДИПЛОМА

.....
(име, име једног родитеља, презиме)

рођен-а ..... **године у** ..... (место), ... (општина),

..... (држава), **уписан-а школске 20**..... **/ 20**..... **. године,**

а дана..... **20**..... **. године завршио-ла је докторске академске студије трећег степена на**

студијском програму .....

.....

обима ..... (словима) **) бодова ЕСПБ са просечном оценом** ..... (словима).

Наслов докторске дисертације/уметничког пројекта ** **је:** .....

.....

.....

.....

На основу тога издаје се ова диплома о стеченом научном називу

.....

..... (број дипломе), ... (датум издавања) **године**

У ..... (седиште)

(суви жиг самосталне високошколске установе)[1]

Декан[1]

.....

Ректор[1]

.....

(суви жиг самосталне високошколске установе)[2]

Декан[2]

.....

Ректор[2]

.....

* Односи се на високошколску установу
** Непотребно изоставити

Серијски број