



# How to plan, build and implement Joint Degrees

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# Disclaimer

The European Higher Education Area is an area of 47 countries with converging higher education systems. It's not a unified higher education system!

## Definitions

**Joint programme:** An integrated curriculum coordinated and offered jointly by different HEIs and leading to double/multiple degrees or a joint degree.

**Joint degree:** A single document awarded by HEIs offering the joint programme and nationally acknowledged as the recognised award of the joint programme.

**Double/Multiple degree:** Separate degrees awarded by HEIs offering the joint programme attesting the successful completion of this programme.

## Definitions

**Joint degree:** A single document awarded by HEIs offering the joint programme and nationally acknowledged as the recognised award of the joint programme.

### Good practice

- The joint degree programme is offered jointly, involving all cooperating institutions in designing and delivering the programme, and in awarding the degree.

# How to plan Joint Degrees

The idea:

The agreement of teachers/researchers from HEIs from different countries to deepen international experience of students by collaboratively offering a learning experience is the easy part...

but...



# Think First!

<https://www.joiman.eu>

# How to plan Joint Degrees

Three questions need to be answered first:

- Why should students enrol?
- Why should I run a Joint Degree programme?
- Why should I do it with this partner?

# How to plan Joint Degrees

Collaborating HEI belong to different HE-systems

- Different legal frameworks
- Different cultural and educational/scientific traditions
- Different political agendas/priorities



# How to plan Joint Degrees

Differences apply to

- Nature of HEIs
- Nature of programmes
- Type of qualifications
  
- Regulations for approval/accreditation
- Regulations for access to HE, curricula (admission, content, workload, assessment, grading, degree awarding)

# How to plan Joint Degrees

Differences apply to

- Student life
  - Tuition fees
  - Social life (insurance, housing, extra curricular activities)

# How to plan Joint Degrees

Joint Degrees need additional resources/specific means in the partner institutions for coordination, support, information

Institutional support is key!

Good practice:

Binding guidelines/policy for implementing Joint Degree Programmes. They build trust on the side of (potential) partners and students

# How to plan Joint Degrees

## Recommendation 1

- Choose your partner carefully!
- Assure a deep (and joint!) understanding of the respective HE-systems/degree-systems!
- Clarify expectations of partners involved and purposes of the project!
- Define the specific added value of the programme! Why should students enrol?
- Talk to administrative staff, accreditation bodies, ministries from the beginning!

# How to build Joint Degrees

## 1<sup>st</sup> step

- Definition of the qualification objective (learning outcomes) and the profile of the programme. This needs to include the *additional dimension* of the Joint degree programme. (Is the programme about mobility or about a specific profile?)
- Definition of the level of the degree.
- Definition of the expected students' profile.

# How to build Joint Degrees

## 2<sup>nd</sup> step

- Definition of core elements of the curriculum. Different traditions (Legal obligations) might be taken into account by major/minor/electives – structures
- Definition of structure of the curriculum (Modules? Thesis?) incl. the mobility scheme/placement regulations.
- Definition of student assessment procedure and the grading system.

# How to build Joint Degrees

## 3<sup>rd</sup> step

Definition of quality assurance procedures.

## 4<sup>th</sup> step

Preparation of proper information for (prospective) students and of student support services

# How to build Joint Degrees

The terms and conditions of the joint programme should be laid down in a **cooperation agreement**. The agreement should in particular cover the following issues:

- Denomination of the degree awarded in the programme
- Coordination and responsibilities of the partners involved regarding management and financial organisation (including funding, sharing of costs and income etc.)
- Admission and selection procedures for students
- Mobility of students and teachers
- Examination regulations, student assessment methods, (recognition of credits), grading and degree awarding.



# How to build Joint Degrees

## Recommendation 2

- Make the added value transparent!
- Make sure that the programme is more than combining two parts of a programme!
- Talk to administrative staff, accreditation bodies, ministries from the beginning! Make them participate in the curriculum development!

# How to implement Joint Degrees

Setting up a structure for the collaboration of all partners involved is key!

- Definition and Division of responsibilities and tasks and procedures

## Good practice

- Consortium level: strategic planning/decisions; academic decisions (also admission, curriculum development, student monitoring)
- Institutional level: administration; coordinated student support

# How to implement Joint Degrees

## Good practice

- Student “handover note” on the academic performance. Provides transparency and consistency in monitoring student progress
- “Scholar handbook” on expectations and guidelines for teachers
- Get-together opportunities for all staff and all students (conferences, work shops etc)
- Induction weeks, specific student support services
- Staff meetings

# How to implement Joint Degrees

## Recommendation 3

- Ensure effective communication among partners!
- Ensure sustainable and effective governance structures and decision making procedures! (Who takes decisions? How? On which basis? When?)
- Ensure effective student support structures!
- Provide common experience opportunities!

<http://erasmusmundus.it/files/fileusers/BRIDGE%20HANDBOOK%20WEB.pdf>

<https://www.joiman.eu/default.aspx>

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