

Development and Management of Studies in Cooperation with Institutions Abroad

A preparation of cooperation with partners abroad is always a time-consuming activity that requires a lot of effort from all involved. So that misunderstandings and errors during a development and organization of the cooperation are avoided, it is necessary to foresee possible **obstacles that may threaten the cooperation**. It is also advisable to get familiar with different **stages of the cooperation** and to be equipped to advance their pitfalls. Finally, a preparation of a **programme outline** being prepared in cooperation with institutions abroad is a very important episode

Programme stages

A) Joint and Jointly Accredited Degree Programmes

Being familiar with stages of development and management of the Joint or Jointly Accredited Degree Programme greatly facilitates further steps of cooperating participants. **During each stage of the cooperation, it is necessary to ask a few questions and answer them thoughtfully.** Other procedures have to be adapted to the ascertained.

Assessment stage

- Why the cooperation with institutions abroad should arise?
- Do we know partner institutions that we choose for our cooperation?
- Do we have academic and administrative support?
- Will enough space be ensured to meet our partners and to discuss the individual challenges of our cooperation?
- How do we allocate and delegate responsibilities within a prepared programme?
- Are sources of funding secured?
- Are well defined programme goals developed?
- What students are we going to admit to our programme and how the student enrolment process will be organized?

Development stage

- Will we draw up and sign the Memorandum of Understanding?
- Are all the cooperating institutions accredited?
- Do we have a plan of meeting our partners to discuss the individual challenges?
- Have we applied for financing for the development phase? (if relevant)
- Have we drawn up a degree programme outline / course plan?
- Have we drawn up the criteria and procedures for student admissions, the appeal and escalation procedures for, have we approved the diploma and diploma supplement?
- Have we drawn up and signed the Contract / Cooperation Agreement?
- Is the degree programme approved (endorsed) by all the institutions?
- Do we pay attention to information transfer, marketing, and recruitment?
- Have we made contact with students and planned their arrival?

Administration stage

- Is the students' acceptance and enrolment planned?
- Is care taken of arrival and accommodation of the students?
- How the information is transferred and how marketing is organized?
- Is the programme quality assured?
- Have we applied for financing for the administration phase? (if relevant)
- Is issuing of diplomas and diploma supplements arranged?

Evaluation (audit)

- Who and how arranges for the evaluation and assures the quality of the programme and its (course) components?
- Does the Cooperation Agreement conduct internal reporting on programme status among the individual institutions and the whole consortium?
- Who will be entrusted with external evaluation of the programme?
- Are procedures on prospective audit review of the Cooperation Agreement / contract prepared?
- Should we continue the cooperation, or not?

Programme closedown

- Do suggested procedures lead to foreseeability of actions within the programme?
- Is responsibility to students set as a priority?
- Are students able to complete their studies successfully (even at another institution)?

B) Individual Contracts

Preparation of cooperation under individual contracts is significantly easier than in the case of development of entire programs. The following procedure summarizes the most important simple steps:

- 1) Student's enrolment to a standard degree programme at MU
(Where MU does not award the academic degree or issue the diploma to a student of other institution, the MU admissions procedure does not apply. The student can be logged in the MU IS under the Comprehensive Studies programme and the Multidisciplinary Studies specialty, or into a standard MU accredited programme.)
- 2) Planning for the cooperation
- 3) Drawing up of the Cooperation Agreement
- 4) Completion of studies in compliance with internal and legal regulations

Obstacles during development and management of a programme

During the preparation and management of the Joint or Jointly Accredited Degree Programme, it is more than probable to get together with a number of barriers, both at the level of cooperation between institutions and at the level of individual partners. If these challenges are known in advance and the cooperating institutions keep them in mind, the organization of degree programmes can be way easier. On the contrary, lack of preparation can mean a premature end to the cooperation.

Obstacles at interinstitutional level

Different study and examination regulations (grades, types of courses, university-specific terminology) and a different system of evaluation (how a classification "pass" should be used?)

Dissimilar requirements for admission procedures

Discrepancies in the academic year schedule

Distinct and inflexible university Information Systems

Programme language other than Czech

Financing

A long-winded process of recognition of prior education

Differences in education systems

Unlike legal systems

Diverse cultural environments

- The ratio of theoretical vs. practical courses; difference in the structure of levels of studies (Europe 3, respectively 4 + 2 years, and for example Ukraine 4 + 2), etc.

Obstacles at the university level

Lack of experience in the preparation of joint programmes

Insufficient understanding and / or willingness of all participating institutional bodies within the process of development of a joint programme (lack of coordination of administrative sectors and a deficient support system)

Insufficient knowledge of foreign languages

Lack of financial resources (expected expenses: necessary trips, organization of negotiations, overcoming of language barriers, project infrastructure: library, accommodation, etc., student and staff mobility...)

Programme outline

In preparing joint programmes the cooperating institutions should devote sufficient time to set up the requisites of the planned degree programme. First and foremost points to clarify are:

- 1) The name of the degree (for Jointly Accredited Degree Programmes: where several national diplomas are to be awarded the degree names may differ) and the name of the degree programme
- 2) Study course objectives
- 3) The significance of the programme (for society, employment etc.)
- 4) Content, language of communication
- 5) Expected level graduate erudition (knowledge, skills and general competencies) and qualification
- 6) The academic structure of the programme (courses/modules, study progression, specialty etc.)
- 7) Requirements for acceptance/enrolment and study development
- 8) Mandatory programme requirements (e.g. Master's thesis)
- 9) ECTS credits and study onerousness
- 10) Tutorial/pedagogical methods and syllabi
- 11) Assessment and marking scales used by the individual institutions
- 12) Programme evaluation
- 13) Place(s) of studies for the various courses
- 14) The mobility model (student and tutor mobility)
- 15) Competencies gained and their relationship to other/further studies, or

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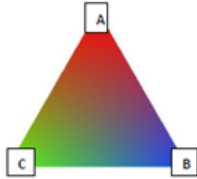
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Source: [Guide to Developing and Running Joint Programmes](#) (drawn up by the universities of Bergen and Lund under the JOIMAN project)

Examples of mobility structures

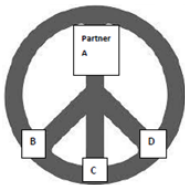
There can be a huge variety of ways of cooperation on joint programmes between different institutions. Let's have a look on four most common models as they are shown in the *Erasmus Mundus Joint Degrees from A to Z practical guide draft*.

Model 1



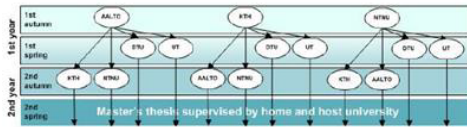
students moving together from partner A, B to C
common curricula for all
feeling of jointness among the students
specialization is not offered

Model 2



several possible mobility paths, allowing specialization tracks
start together at partner A
move to different locations (B, C or D) for the second mobility (allowing specialization)
finally either go back to partner A, or go to finalise the thesis/dissertation at a third partner

Model 3



- a model allowing several special mobility tracks
- start at different locations
- some common components
- a connection between the home/starting university and the final hosting institution through joint dissertation/thesis supervision

Model 4

	1st Semester	2nd Semester	Internship	3rd Semester	4th Semester
Partner A	X		X		X
Partner B		X	X		X
Partner C			X	X	
Partner D			X		X
Partner E			X		
Partner F			X		

- a tight mobility pattern
- students go to four or five destinations within two years