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## Joint and Double/Multiple Degrees in Ireland

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## **Joint and Double/Multiple Degrees in Ireland**

**By Frank McMahon**

**December 2013**

## Abbreviations

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>DD(s)</b>  | <b>Double Degree(s)</b>                             |
| <b>EC</b>     | <b>European Commission</b>                          |
| <b>ECA</b>    | <b>European Consortium for Accreditation</b>        |
| <b>EHEA</b>   | <b>European Higher Education Area</b>               |
| <b>EQAR</b>   | <b>European Quality Assurance Register</b>          |
| <b>HEA</b>    | <b>Higher Education Authority</b>                   |
| <b>HETAC</b>  | <b>Higher Education Training and Awards Council</b> |
| <b>HEI(s)</b> | <b>Higher Education Institution(s)</b>              |
| <b>JD (s)</b> | <b>Joint Degree(s)</b>                              |
| <b>JDAZ</b>   | <b>Joint Degrees A to Z</b>                         |
| <b>JP(s)</b>  | <b>Joint Programme(s)</b>                           |
| <b>NUI</b>    | <b>National University of Ireland</b>               |
| <b>QA</b>     | <b>Quality Assurance</b>                            |
| <b>QQI</b>    | <b>Quality and Qualifications Ireland</b>           |

**This report was commissioned by the Higher Education Authority of Ireland as part of the Bologna Programme work plan (2011-2013) approved and funded by the European Commission.**

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## **Foreword**

This report derives from a project that was undertaken to document the current position in regard to the provision of Joint and Double/Multiple degrees in Ireland.

The back-drop to the project was the rapid growth in the provision of such degrees in Continental Europe and the arrangements being put in place to facilitate a further expansion of their number. Initially, it was the intention to explore the provision of joint and double degrees in Irish public sector institutions only but it became evident at an early stage that some private colleges were major providers of joint degrees and so data on their provision is included.

One of the factors driving the expansion in the number of Joint Degrees has been the support of the European Commission for such collaborations. In addition, the move towards greater internationalisation of HEIs has encouraged HEIs to become involved in international partnerships. There has been a rapid expansion of the joint degrees in some Irish HEIs while others have none or almost none. Private colleges have UK partners exclusively but public sector HEIs are involved in Joint Degrees with institutions in 26 countries, mainly European, but including China and the USA among the most popular.

The legal position in Ireland has allowed the development of joint degrees but the bureaucracy creates some difficulties for providers and indeed greater difficulties for some than for others. The recent creation of a single agency in Ireland to deal with matters of quality and qualifications (Quality and Qualifications Ireland) gives an opportunity to ensure that all HEIs are facilitated to develop programmes that lead to joint or double degrees with Irish or international partners. It provides an opportunity to ensure that Ireland is an active partner in the new arrangements being put in place in Europe to facilitate easier and less expensive validation of new joint degrees. In addition, QQI can facilitate the recognition of all Joint Degrees involving Irish partners.

**Dr Frank McMahon**  
**December 2013**

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## Chapter 1: The Development of Joint Degrees in Europe

In recent years there has been an increased tendency towards the development of joint degrees, double degrees and joint programmes. It is important to distinguish clearly between them, hence the following definitions:

- **Joint degree (JD):** a programme taught by two or more higher education institutions (HEIs) which results in the award of a single parchment bearing the logos of the participating HEIs (or their awarding bodies) to those who successfully complete the programme.
- **Double degree (DD):** a programme taught by two or more HEIs which results in the award of several parchments, perhaps one from each participating HEI (or their awarding body), to those who successfully complete the programme.
- **Multiple degree (MD):** a programme taught by three or more HEIs which results in the award of several parchments (at least three), perhaps one from each participating HEI (or its awarding body), to those who successfully complete the programme.
- **Joint programme (JP):** a programme offered jointly by two or more HEIs irrespective of the degree offered (Joint, Double or Multiple) to those who successfully complete the programme.

These are not universally agreed definitions (unfortunately there is no general agreement on definitions). The policy for collaborative programmes published in December 2008 by the Higher Education Training and Awards Council (HETAC) and which governed the activities of the Institutes of Technology and private colleges before the founding of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) referred to Joint Awards. This policy indicated that the preferred form for joint awards was a single joint parchment but recognised that the issue of multiple parchments may be necessary to guarantee recognition in some circumstances for example where different awarding bodies are required to use different award titles. At European level, there is a greater usage of the term joint degree and when the ministers for education for the 47 countries participating in the Bologna Process met in Bucharest in 2012, their communique referred to “joint and double degree programmes”. Hence, the preference in this report for use of the terminology “Joint Degrees” and “Double Degrees”.

One factor that has contributed to the growth in the number of JDs in Europe has undoubtedly been the Bologna Process. From the first communique issued by the ministers for Education of the 27 countries who met in June, 1999, reference was made to the desirability of enhancing the European Dimension in higher education throughout the countries that signed the Bologna Declaration. At subsequent meetings of ministers, the communiqués that issued made specific reference to their support for joint curricula, joint quality assurance and student & staff mobility. As the time approached for the 2009 meeting of ministers in Leuven/Louvain, the official website of the Bologna website carried

a leaflet setting out the achievements of the Bologna Process which included a section on Joint Degrees as follows:

“The Bologna Process has paved the way for increasingly innovative, cooperative, cross-border study programmes and a growing number of joint degree programmes are being developed across Europe.

The following key features are usually associated with qualifications described as joint degrees:

- the programmes leading to them are developed or approved jointly by several institutions;
- students spend significant periods of time at partner institutions;
- periods of study and exams passed at the partner institution(s) are recognised fully and automatically by all institutions involved;
- teaching staff from each participating institution devise the curriculum together, form joint admissions and examinations bodies and participate in mobility for teaching purposes; and
- Students who have completed the full programme should obtain a degree which is awarded jointly by the participating institutions, and is fully recognised in all countries” ([www.ehea.info](http://www.ehea.info)).

The extent to which countries participating in the Bologna Process had developed JPs and JDs was assessed in the report on the Bologna Process Implementation prepared by the Eurydice Network (2012). It concluded that the situation varied widely in different countries with Spain being the most active (more than 75% of HEIs were involved in JPs and more than 75% of HEIs awarded JDs). Ireland, France, Germany, Italy and Portugal all had between 50% and 75% of HEIs being involved in JPs with a lower percentage offering JDs. The information received from HEIs for this current study indicates that 64% of public sector HEIs (the universities, DIT, RCSI and the institutes of technology) are now offering JDs.

## **Conclusions**

Various factors are encouraging the development of Joint and Double/Multiple degrees and Joint Programmes in Europe. These factors include the encouragement given by the Ministers for Education meeting in the Bologna Process and the financial support given by the European Commission in the Erasmus Mundus programme. Whilst the rate of development varies from country to country, it has been estimated that approximately 3,500 such degree programmes have been developed in recent years.

## Chapter 2: Reasons for Developing Joint Degrees

The ideal of a European Dimension in higher education which was proposed by the ministers in the Bologna Declaration and supported in subsequent communiques would have had some effect on the encouragement of JDs. But it is unlikely to have resulted in such a dramatic growth unless other factors were at play. And there were indeed other factors at international, national and at institutional level which have been significant.

**International factors:** The European Commission has developed programmes which aim to support the development of joint and double degrees both within the EU (including the Erasmus Mundus programme) and between EU-based universities and those outside the EU. Apart from the EC, other major economic areas (e.g. USA, China and Japan) have also offered support for collaborative efforts. Details of support programmes are set out in Chapter 3 below.

In addition to the EC support programmes, there are various regional initiatives to encourage collaboration such as the Nordic Masters Programme.

The European Commission has encouraged student and staff mobility in its Erasmus and other programmes and this has also strengthened cooperation between countries in Europe.

**National factors:** There has been a growing realisation that higher education is a major player in the achievement of economic growth and secondly that economic growth depends on international cooperation. So it is in the economic interest of countries to encourage the development of cohorts of graduates who can contribute to economic cooperation between countries. One way of achieving the production of such graduates is to facilitate their participation in joint programmes and joint degrees.

In Ireland, the Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF) offered financial support to HEIs that collaborated in joint projects; this led to the formation of the Dublin Regional Higher Education Alliance formed by eight HEIs in the Dublin area and other alliances outside Dublin.

**Institutional factors:** There have been growing pressures on universities to perform well in various ranking tables that have been produced. One factor that frequently figures in the compilation of such tables is the extent of internationalisation. This is sometimes based on the number of international students or international staff so HEIs are encouraged to undertake joint programmes to enhance their international standing. A second factor under this heading is the desire to grow the earnings which come with international students but this may be over-stated as some European countries that are very active in the development of JDs do not charge any tuition fees, even for non-European students. However, in Ireland



and the UK international students from outside the EU pay significantly higher fees than EU students.

A third factor encouraging HEIs towards JDs is the desire to enhance the quality of programmes and the employability of its graduates. The new jobs being created in Europe often require foreign language skills and understanding of approaches in other countries.

## **Conclusions**

The reasons why HEIs are developing JDs and DDs include the international support (Erasmus Mundus and other international funding), national initiatives (for example the Strategic Funding Initiative in Ireland which made substantial funds for joint initiatives by HEIs in Ireland) and institutional factors (improved ranking, better employability prospects for graduates). All of these factors combine to encourage ever-increasing numbers of JPs and JDs in Europe.

## Chapter 3: Support of EC for Joint Degrees

Whilst the Bologna Process involves 47 countries, well beyond the 28 countries that are EU member states, the European Commission has played an important role in the encouragement of the objectives set out by the Bologna Process. Support by the EC Commission has been vital for a family of projects:

The Erasmus programme for staff and student mobility was encouraging international mobility long before the Bologna Process started. Its operation encourages cooperation between universities and builds links that may lead on to joint or double degrees.

The addition of the Erasmus Mundus programme of Joint Master's and Joint Doctoral Programmes gave HEIs a real financial incentive for the development of JDs as funding per student is very generous. In Ireland, at least six of the joint degrees currently operating were commenced with the help of Erasmus Mundus funding.

The EU-USA Atlantis programme, jointly funded by the EU and USA, provides funding for transatlantic joint or double degree programmes between universities in EU member states and those in the USA. The funding is limited to consortia which include at least two EU HEIs and one US institution and they are required to create an integrated joint study programme with students spending a period of study both in the EU and in the US institutions and getting either a JD (issued jointly by two institutions) or DDs. Note that the international student mobility is mandatory which is not true for all joint and double degree programmes.

The EU-funded Tempus Programme supports collaboration between universities in EU member states and HEIs in neighbouring countries in Eastern Europe, Balkans, Middle East and North Africa. Its programme includes an action line of Joint Projects which is subdivided into National projects and Multi-country projects. The availability of this funding line further encourages cooperation in joint and double degree programmes.

There was a call for proposals by EACEA (Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency of the European Union) on 20<sup>th</sup> Dec 2013 for JDs or DDs between EU universities and those in Japan, Korea or Australia. The EU has allocated €2.2 m funds which will be matched by the Asian or Australian partner. This is indicative of the EU desire to encourage JDs and DDs with international partners. Currently there are no JDs or DDs involving Irish HEIs and Japan or Korea and only one with Australia. The HEA has circulated the call for proposals within Ireland so the funding line offers an opportunity for any Irish HEI which wishes to establish links with one of the three countries.

## **Conclusions**

The support of the European Commission for JPs and JDs has been highly significant and seems set to continue to be so in the future with the recent initiation of the Erasmus+ programme.

Apart from the internal EU programmes, there are also the EU-funded Tempus Programme which encourages interaction between EU and neighbouring countries (Eastern Europe, Middle East and Mediterranean countries in North Africa) and cooperation programmes with other advanced economies such as USA, Japan, Korea and Australia.

## Chapter 4: Collaborative Provision Involving Irish HEIs leading to Joint and Double Degrees

This chapter provides details of all known JDs and DDs currently operating and which involve at least one Irish higher education institution. HEIs may be separated into three groupings for the purpose of analysis of the level of activity in regard to JDs and DDs.

- (a) HEIs that are awarding bodies and thus have the advantage of being free to engage in collaborative arrangements as they wish. This category includes all the universities, DIT and the RCSI.
- (b) HEIs that have delegated awarding powers that derive from QQI but who must obtain the approval of QQI for any collaborative arrangement into which they wish to enter. All IoTs are in this category.
- (c) HEIs that do not have awarding powers and who therefore must get the agreement of QQI to enter into a JD where QQI will be the named party on any JD that issues. All private colleges are in this category.

The task of gathering this information was made necessary by the fact that there is no single database of JDs and DDs. And furthermore, it became evident that there is not a single list available of such degree programmes in single HEIs as faculties, schools or other sub-units of institutions are sometimes empowered to enter into collaborative arrangements without the approval of central authorities. So the information in the schedules that follow may not reflect the full extent of the provision by Irish HEIs.

### A: Provision of JD/DD degrees by HEIs with full awarding powers

#### Dublin City University (DCU)

| Partner(s)                        | Country                     | Programme   | Type of Award                     |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Reims, Reutlinger, Madrid, Boston | France, Germany, Spain, USA | BA Global Business                                    | DD                                |
| Colorado and Wollongong           | USA and Australia           | BSc Environmental Science and Health                  | JD                                |
| IPBS                              | France, Mexico, USA         | MSc International Business                            | Single degree plus Cert from IPBS |
| RCSI, NUIG                        | Ireland                     | MSc Organisational Change and Leadership Development. | JD                                |

**Note:** DCU has two other collaborative programmes with a Chinese university but they do not lead to either a JD or DD (they lead to an award of a Master's degree of DCU only).

## Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT)

| Partner(s)                                | Country                            | Programme   | Type of Award        |
|---|------------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| TCD                                       | Ireland                            | BSc Human Nutrition & Dietetics                             | JD                   |
| Malta, Oslo, Halle, Goteborg, Strathclyde | Malta, Norway, Germany, Sweden, UK | International Masters in Early Childhood Education and Care | JD                   |
| KAHO Sint-Lieven, Anhalt, Catolica Port.  | Belgium, Germany, Portugal         | European MSc in Food Science, Technology and Nutrition      | JD                   |
| AgroParisTech Naples, Lund                | France, Italy, Sweden              | MSc in Food Innovation and Product Design                   | DD but may become JD |
| Financial University, Moscow              | Russia                             | MSc International Banking & Finance                         | DD                   |
| TCD                                       | Ireland                            | Bachelor of Music Education                                 | DD                   |
| HIT Harbin,                               | China                              | MSc Advanced Software Development International             | DD                   |
| HIT Harbin                                | China                              | BSc Computer Science  | DD                   |
| Purdue Univ., Univ. of Catalunya          | USA<br>Spain                       | MSc Sustainability, Technology and Innovation               | DD                   |
| University of Limerick                    | Ireland                            | PhD   | JD                   |

## National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG)

| Partner(s)         | Country          | Programme  | Type of Award |
|--------------------|------------------|--|---------------|
| UL, UCC            | Ireland          | MSc Technology Management, PG Dip Innovation<br>PG Dip Tech. Commercialisation | JD            |
| UCC                | Ireland          | Bachelor of Medicine   | JD            |
| Queen's University | Northern Ireland | LLM in Human Rights Law  | JD            |
| Regis University   | USA              | MSc Software Engineering   | JD            |
| UL                 | Ireland          | MSc Sustainable Resource Management  | JD            |
| UL                 | Ireland          | MSc Finance  | JD            |
| UL                 | Ireland          | PhD New Media  | JD            |
| UL                 | Ireland          | BSc Science & Tech   | JD            |
| UL                 | Ireland          | Diploma courses (4)  | JD            |

### National University of Ireland Maynooth (NUIM)

| Partner(s)                       | Country            | Programme                    | Type of Award |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|---------------|
| St. Andrews,<br>Univ. de Loriane | Scotland<br>France | MSc Dependable<br>Software   | JD (plus DD)  |
| DCU                              | Ireland            | MA Humanitarian<br>Logistics | JD            |

### Royal College of Surgeon in Ireland (RCSI)

| Partner(s)       | Country | Programme  | Type of Award |
|------------------|---------|--|---------------|
| DCU              | Ireland | MSc Organisational Change &<br>Leadership Development. | JD            |
| Montpellier 1    | France  | PhD (Co-tutelle)                                       | JD            |
| Univ. of Sharjah | UAE     | MSc in Leadership in Health<br>Professions Education   | JD            |
| DCU<br>NUIM      | Ireland | MEng. In Healthcare<br>Technologies                    | JD            |

### Trinity College Dublin (TCD)

| Partner(s) | Country | Programme                                       | Type of Award |
|------------|---------|---|---------------|
| DIT        | Ireland | BSc Human Nutrition &<br>Dietetics              | JD            |
| UCD, NUI   | Ireland | Masters in Development<br>Practice              | JD            |
| UCD, NUI   | Ireland | Postgrad. Cert Innovation &<br>Entrepreneurship | JD            |

### University of Limerick (UL)

| Partner(s) | Country | Programme  | Type of Award |
|------------|---------|--|---------------|
| NUIG       | Ireland | MSc Sustainable<br>Resource<br>Management Policy | JD            |
| NUIG       | Ireland | MSc Finance and<br>Information Systems           | JD            |
| DIT        | Ireland | PhD  | JD            |

## University College Cork (UCC)

| <b>Partner(s)</b>              | <b>Country</b> | <b>Programme</b>                              | <b>Type of Award</b> |
|--------------------------------|----------------|---|----------------------|
| CIT                            | Ireland        | BSc Architecture                              | JD                   |
| CIT                            | Ireland        | BSc Biomedical Science                        | JD                   |
| Univ. of Montana               | USA            | BSc Int. Field Geosciences                    | JD                   |
| CIT                            | Ireland        | M. Architecture                               | JD                   |
| CIT                            | Ireland        | Prof Masters Art Education                    | JD                   |
| Mekelle Univ.<br>Hawassa Univ. | Ethiopia       | MSc Rural Development                         | JD                   |
| CIT                            | Ireland        | MSc Biomedical Science                        | JD                   |
| NUIG, UL                       | Ireland        | MSc Technology Management                     | JD                   |
| Free Univ. Brussels            | Belgium        | PhD Computer Sc.                              | JD                   |
| NUIG                           | Ireland        | PhD Biological Earth &<br>Environment Science | JD                   |
| EMBL Heidelberg                | Germany        | PhD Science, Eng. and Food<br>Science         | JD                   |
| DCU                            | Ireland        | PhD Music                                     | JD                   |

Note: UCC has other collaborative programmes at Master's and PhD level but which do not lead to a JD or DD (they lead to a UCC degree only).

## UCD

| <b>Partner(s)</b>   | <b>Country</b>   | <b>Programme</b>  | <b>Award</b>  |
|---|--|---|---|
| Miscellaneous   | France   | PhD (Co-tutelle Agreement)                                      | DD  |
| Pantheon-Assas Paris  | France   | BCL   | DD  |
| U. Vienna, Tallinn, Sorbonne, Humboldt, Free U Berlin, Rome (2) Vilnius           | Austria, Estonia, France, Germany Italy, Lithuania, Poland | MA European History   | JD  |
| Univ. of Oviedo   | Spain  | PhD Gender, Culture   | JD  |
| Beijing U of Technology   | China  | BComm Finance   | DD  |
| Beijing U of Technology   | China  | BE Internet of Things Engineering                               | DD  |
| Beijing U of Technology   | China  | BSc Software Eng.   | DD  |
| Beijing U of Technology   | China  | BSc Applied Statistics  | DD  |
| Harbin Institute of Tech Wuhan/Suzhou, Fudan                                      | China  | MSc Software Engineering  | JD  |
| EIUC (41 universities)  | Europe   | Master's degree Human Rights                                    | JD  |
| TCD   | Ireland  | MEng.Sc. Biopharmacy Engineering                                | JD  |
| TCD   | Ireland  | MSc Development Practice  | JD  |
| UCC, UU   | Ireland, Northern Ire.                                     | Grad Cert Veterinary. Public Health                             | JD  |
| UCC, UU   | Ireland, Northern Ire.                                     | MSc Food Regulatory Affairs                                     | JD  |
| U Louvain, Aix-Marseille, Ruhr-Bochum, De Deusto, Uppsala, Groningen              | Belgium, France, Germany, Spain, Sweden, Netherlands       | MSc Humanitarian Action   | JD  |
| Justus Liebig Giessen   | Germany  | MSc Global Change   | JD  |
| TCD   | Ireland  | MSc Palliative Care   | JD  |
| DCU, Czech TU, Aachen, Padua, Military U Poland, King's College (UK), Southampton | Ireland, Czech R, Germany, Italy, Poland, UK               | PhD (EUV and X-Ray)   | JD (where possible) but DD awards (where a partner cannot issue JD) |
| Ruhr-Bochum, de Deusto, Groningen, Western Cape (RSA)                             | Germany, Spain, Netherlands, South Africa                  | PhD Humanitarian Studies  | JD where possible but some DD                                       |
| U of Latvia, Osnabruek, Poitiers, Amsterdam, de Deusto                            | Latvia, Germany, France Netherlands, Spain                 | European Masters in International Migration and Social Cohesion | JD but DD (where a partner cannot issue JD)                         |



## B: Collaborative Provision by Institutes of Technology/Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)

### Summary of Provision

| Name of Institute | Current Joint Degrees  | Planning Joint Degrees |
|-------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Athlone           | No                     | Yes                    |
| Blanchardstown    | No                     | No                     |
| Carlow            | No                     | Yes                    |
| Cork              | Yes [7] See list below | Yes                    |
| Dundalk           | No                     | No                     |
| Dun Laoghaire     | No                     | Yes                    |
| Galway-Mayo       | No                     | Yes                    |
| Letterkenny       | Yes [2] See list below | Yes                    |
| Limerick          | Yes [8] See list below | Yes                    |
| Sligo             | No                     | Yes                    |
| Tallaght          | Yes [3] See list below | Yes                    |
| Tralee            | No                     | Yes                    |
| Waterford         | Yes [1] See list below | No                     |

Five IoTs are currently offering joint or double degree programmes

The total number of JDs or DDs offered by IoTs is 21.

All except three are planning new JDs.

### Cork Institute of Technology (CIT)

| Partner(s)           | Country | Programme                  | Type of Award              |
|----------------------|---------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| UCC                  | Ireland | BSc Architecture           | JD                         |
| UCC                  | Ireland | BSc Biomedical Sciences    | JD                         |
| UCC                  | Ireland | MSc Architecture           | JD                         |
| UCC                  | Ireland | MSc Biomedical Science     | JD (currently not running) |
| Hochschule Darmstadt | Germany | BA (Ord) Digital Media     | JD                         |
| Hochschule Darmstadt | Germany | BA (Hons) in Multimedia    | JD                         |
| Hochschule Darmstadt | Germany | MA in Media Design         | JD                         |
| Hochschule Darmstadt | Germany | BA (Hons) Media Production | JD                         |

### Letterkenny Institute of Technology (LYIT)

| Partner(s) | Country          | Programme                          | Type of Award |
|------------|------------------|------------------------------------|---------------|
| UU         | Northern Ireland | MSc Innovation Management          | JD            |
| UU         | Northern Ireland | Postgrad Dip Innovation Management | JD            |

### Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT)

| Partner(s)         | Country | Programme                          | Type of Award |
|--------------------|---------|------------------------------------|---------------|
| Yangtze U          | China   | H. Cert Civil Engineering          | DD            |
| Yangtze U          | China   | B.Eng Civil Engineering            | DD            |
| Yangtze U          | China   | BSc Civil Engineering              | DD            |
| U of Nicosia       | Cyprus  | B.Eng Civil Engineering            | DD            |
| U of Nicosia       | Cyprus  | Master's in Marketing & Management | DD            |
| Cromwell College   | UK      | BA Accounting & Finance            | DD            |
| Cromwell College   | UK      | Bachelor of Business               | DD            |
| Queensbury College | UK      | BA Accounting & Finance            | DD            |
| Queensbury College | UK      | Bachelor of Business               | DD            |

### Institute of Technology Tallaght Dublin (ITTD)

| Partner(s)             | Country | Programme                    | Type of Award    |
|------------------------|---------|------------------------------|------------------|
| Univ. of Rennes        | France  | PhD                          | JD (not running) |
| Nanjing Univ. of Tech. | China   | BSc(Hons) Pharmaceutical Sc. | DD               |
| Nanjing Univ. of Tech. | China   | BE (Hons) Electronic Eng     | DD               |
| Nanjing Univ. of Tech. | China   | BE (Hons) Mechanical Eng.    | DD               |

### Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT)

| Partner                | Country | Programme          | Type of Award |
|------------------------|---------|--------------------|---------------|
| Ecole Superieure Brest | France  | Master of Business | JD            |

## **C: Private Colleges: Joint Degrees Approved by QQI**

**Dublin Business School: 47 JD programmes: All with Liverpool John Moores University.**

| <b>Partner</b>           | <b>Country</b> | <b>Programme Domain/No.</b>        | <b>Type of Award</b> |
|--------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Liverpool John Moores U. | UK             | Bachelor in Business (15)          | JD                   |
| L JMU                    | UK             | Bachelor in Law (2)                | JD                   |
| L JMU                    | UK             | Bachelor in Computing (2)          | JD                   |
| L JMU                    | UK             | Postgrad Diploma in Business (8)   | JD                   |
| L JMU                    | UK             | Master's in Business (15)          | JD                   |
| L JMU                    | UK             | Master's in Info/Library (1)       | JD                   |
| L JMU                    | UK             | Master's in Project Management (1) | JD                   |
| L JMU                    | UK             | Master's in Computing (2)          | JD                   |
| L JMU                    | UK             | Postgrad Dip in Computing (1)      | JD                   |

**Griffith College (Dublin and Cork): 14 JD programmes all with Nottingham Trent University**

| <b>Partner</b>     | <b>Country</b> | <b>Programme</b>                   | <b>Type of Award</b> |
|--------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Nottingham Trent U | UK             | Bachelor in Irish Law              | JD                   |
| NTU                | UK             | Bachelor in Business & Law         | JD                   |
| NTU                | UK             | Master's in Business (2 progs.)    | JD                   |
| NTU                | UK             | Postgrad Dip in Business (1 prog.) | JD                   |
| NTU                | UK             | Master's in Law (6 progs.)         | JD                   |
| NTU                | UK             | Postgrad Dip. In Law (3 progs.)    | JD                   |

### **Conclusions**

1. The growing level of activity in the area of JD and DD points to the need for a single database of all such awards in Ireland. QQI is best placed to produce such a database as it receives annual returns from each of the providers.
2. The HEA has a vested interest in being informed on the provision of JDs and DDs since it is the funding agency for all public HEIs and where grants to HEIs are dependent on student numbers it must seek to avoid paying twice for a single cohort.
3. The provision of an authoritative database of JDs and DDs could enhance Ireland's standing among international HEIs and students seeking such degrees
4. An authoritative database would aid recognition of JDs and DDs.

## Chapter 5: Analysis of Collaborative Provisions in Ireland

This chapter analyses the provision of collaborative programmes in Ireland under three headings:

- (a) The popularity of countries as partners in Joint or Double Degrees
- (b) The level of the programme as between Bachelor degree (or lower), Master's (or other postgraduate award) or Doctorate.
- (c) The discipline of the joint programmes

### (a) Popularity of Countries as Partners in Joint or Double Degrees:

#### Countries with 4 or more JD or DD with an Irish Public Sector HEI

| Country          | Number of JD or DD |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Ireland only     | 32                 |
| Germany          | 14                 |
| China            | 13                 |
| France           | 11                 |
| UK (excl.NI)     | 7                  |
| USA              | 6                  |
| Spain            | 6                  |
| Northern Ireland | 4                  |

It is interesting that the most popular category of collaborative provision was between Irish HEIs only, with no foreign partners.

European partners plus Chinese and USA are the most important international partners. Apart from the countries listed in the table above which have four or more partnerships, there were 20 other countries with less than 4 partnerships, mainly in Europe but including Australia, Mexico, Ethiopia, South Africa and United Arab Emirates, all of whom were involved in one programme only.

Most EU member states are involved in at least one partnership but the following states are not named as partners in any partnership: Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Luxembourg, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia (though all these countries may be involved in the European Inter University Centre for Human Rights (EIUC) programme with UCD as EIUC involves 41 universities from all EU member states). Note that the table above covers partnerships with public sector HEIs only and so excludes partnerships with private colleges. If the private colleges are included then the UK jumps into first place as all 61 JD partnerships of DBS and GCD are with UK universities.

## **(b) Analysis by Level of Award**

There are Joint and Double/Multiple degrees at all major level of higher education including:

- Bachelor degree and some sub-degree programmes
- Master's degree and other postgraduate awards such as certificate and diploma
- PhD

The table below provides an analysis of the provision of JD and DD by level of award for three groupings: the universities plus DIT and RCSI (all of whom are awarding bodies), the institutes of technology (all of whom have delegated authority to make awards within Ireland but require the approval of QQI to award JDs) and the private colleges which do not have awarding powers and which also require approval of QQI to award JDs.

### **Analysis of awards by level**

| <b>HEI Grouping</b>      | <b>Bachelor or lower</b> | <b>Master's or other Postgraduate</b> | <b>PhD</b> |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Univs+ DIT + RCSI</b> | 17                       | 34                                    | 11         |
| <b>IoTs</b>              | 16                       | 5                                     | -          |
| <b>Private Colleges</b>  | 21                       | 40                                    | -          |
| <b>Total</b>             | 54                       | 79                                    | 11         |
| <b>%</b>                 | 37%                      | 55%                                   | 8%         |

*Note: Caution is needed in using this table as there is an element of double counting caused by the inclusion of some JDs which are awarded by both a university and an IoT e.g. UCC and CIT have three JDs*

The dominance of master's degrees in the current provision of JDs is partly explained by the promotion of Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's degree programmes funded by the European Commission. There is no equivalent scheme for joint bachelor degree programmes funded at European level, though there is a scheme for Joint Doctoral programmes.

It is evident the HEIs that are awarding bodies (universities, DIT and RCSI) are more inclined to offer JDs than IoTs who have extra hurdles to overcome.

## **(c) Analysis by Discipline**

There is a reasonable spread of programmes across the disciplines with almost equal numbers of programmes in Business & Law, Science, Engineering and Humanities. It is perhaps a little surprising that there were no joint programmes in languages (which should lend themselves to international collaboration) and relatively few in Medicine or Computer Science.

### Analysis of Joint Programmes by Discipline (Public Sector)

| Disciplines  | Number | %   |
|--|--------|-----|
| Business & Law                                       | 19     | 25% |
| Science (incl. Maths)                                | 18     | 23% |
| Engineering, Arch. & Tech                            | 15     | 20% |
| Medicine & Veterinary                                | 4      | 5%  |
| Computer Science                                     | 5      | 6%  |
| Humanities (incl. Social Science, Media & Education) | 16     | 21% |

The above table covers the programmes offered by public sector HEIs only. If private sector colleges were included it would tip the balance very much in favour of Business and Law as the vast majority of the JD programmes in the private sector are in the disciplines of Business and Law.

### Conclusions/Recommendations

1. The Irish higher education system might look at filling some of the gaps in regard to countries with whom there are currently no JDs or DDs. For example, Denmark and Finland are often cited as models of good practice in higher education but so far no Irish HEI has identified a partner in either of them for a JD or DD.
2. The surprising finding that there are no JDs in languages is made even more surprising when one takes into account the fact that in the Erasmus mobility programme language students are a major group. This would point to opportunities for JDs and DDs.
3. There are programmes of teacher mobility funded by the Erasmus mobility programme and this might yield some possibilities for JDs or DDs.

## Chapter 6: Legal Issues

Joint degrees have proved problematic in various European countries because the existing legislation made no provision for such degrees when they first emerged. In advance of the meeting in Bucharest in April, 2012 of ministers for education of countries participating in the Bologna Process, a report was prepared which addressed the issue of JDs inter alia. It identified countries where the legislation was problematic for JDs and Ireland was one of 8 countries where “legislation does not address joint programmes or joint degrees at all and this often leads to difficulties both in establishing joint programmes and awarding joint degrees in practice” (Eurydice network, 2012 p. 43).

The position in Ireland has been somewhat less problematic as legislation enabled various HEIs to enter into joint programme provision:

The Dublin Institute of Technology IT Act, 1992 included Section 5 (1) (c) which enabled the institute “to enter into arrangements with other institutions in or outside the state for the purposes of offering joint courses of study”

The Regional Technical Colleges Act 1992 included Section 5 (1) (b) which enabled colleges “to enter into arrangements with the NCEA ...for the purpose of having degrees, diplomas, certificates ... conferred. Section 5 (1) (d) enabled colleges to “to enter into arrangements with other institutions in or outside the state for the purposes of offering joint courses of study”. Institutes of Technology (the successors of the Regional Technical Colleges) currently offer JDs by arrangement with QQI (the successor of NCEA).

The Universities Act, 1997 made no direct reference to joint programmes but Section 13 (2) enabled universities to “collaborate with educational, business, professional ... interests both inside and outside the State, to further the objects of the university. Section 47 (5) dealt with the relationship between NUI and its constituent universities and determined that “the degrees and other qualifications awarded by a constituent university shall be the degrees and qualifications of the NUI and shall be so designated”. This latter section has proved to be a complicating factor for UCD when it is negotiating JDs as it must seek two Irish logos on each parchment (one for UCD, one for NUI).

While the above examples indicated the possibility of commencing joint programmes, they did not deal specifically with the awarding of joint degrees. This position was ratified by the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 as section 51 deals specifically with joint awarding arrangements and empowers the Authority to enter into a joint awarding arrangement with an awarding body, and the provider of the programme of education and training where the programme of education and training leading to the joint award is not provided by the awarding body. The 2012 Act does not specify how the JD is issued and QQI has not yet issued a new policy but is preparing one. In the meantime, QQI has worked on the basis of the HETAC policy published in 2008 and only slightly modified by

a decision of the QQI Board in September, 2013. Some IoTs have received delegated authority to make JD awards e.g. Cork and Waterford. Private colleges cannot be granted delegated authority to make awards under the existing legislation as DA can be conferred only on HEIs named in the legislation. So it would require a political decision to include private colleges within the ambit of the delegated authority provision.

This recognition of joint awards under the 2012 Act is useful for those HEIs whose degrees come from QQI – the Institutes of Technology and the private colleges but does not apply to the universities, DIT or RCSI all of whom make their own awards. It can be argued that those awarding bodies are not precluded from making awards in respect of joint programmes and do not need any specific power to do so. But it would make recognition simpler if the power to make awards clearly included joint awards and awards outside the State. It would also be useful if legislation made it clear that a joint degree in which a university is a partner has the same standing as other degrees of that university.

An opportunity to do so arises with the impending enactment of new legislation for Technological Universities, for which the heads of the bill were published in January, 2014. Consideration should be given to the inclusion of three additional clauses in the bill:

1. In Section 50 (1) (i) add the words “including joint and double degrees”
2. In Section 50 (3) (c) add a section to include the words “May collaborate with educational, professional and other interests both inside and outside the State for the development and implementation of joint degrees, double degrees and joint research programmes that may lead to joint or double degrees”
3. Add a clause to the effect that joint or double degrees made by the Technological University will have the same standing as other degrees of the university.

There is a need for a single database of JDs in Ireland. Until November 2012, HEIs were required to provide an annual report on their collaborative provision as follows:

- Universities reported to IUQB
- DIT reported to NQAI
- IoTs and private colleges reported to HETAC

With the amalgamation of IUQB, NQAI and HETAC (plus FETAC) into QQI, there is now an opportunity for QQI to create and publish a single database of all collaborative provision in the State. This opportunity should be taken as it would facilitate the QA and recognition of joint awards, nationally and internationally.

A second reason for clarity and certainty in regard to the number of JDs is the fact that the funding of HEIs is often based on the number of students. Hence, it is vital for funding bodies such as HEA to know which programmes are JPs and which partners are involved.



## **Conclusions/Recommendations**

1. Consideration should be given by the Department of Education and Skills to the provision of legislation which makes clear the power of awarding bodies to make JDs and DDs.
2. As a first step towards strengthening the legislation, consideration should be given to the inclusion of three additional clauses in the new legislation for Technological Universities to make it clear that such universities may award JDs and DDs and may enter into joint programmes that may lead to JDs or DDs.

## Chapter 7: Recognition of Joint Degrees

Joint degrees may experience problems of recognition in the countries in which they are issued or in other countries. Such problems may arise because the degree-awarding body is a group of HEIs rather than a single university or may be a mixture of universities and other bodies, either awarding bodies or non-awarding bodies. The problem of recognition has been recognised for approx. 10 years and it prompted the Committee of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region (popularly known as the Lisbon Convention) to adopt a recommendation on the recognition of Joint Degrees in 2004 (an extract from that recommendation is attached as Appendix A). The Lisbon Convention has been ratified by virtually all members of the Council of Europe (47 countries) and by other countries including Australia, Canada and New Zealand. The USA has signed but not ratified the convention.

The drive towards ensuring recognition of higher education qualifications in Europe was boosted by the signing of the Lisbon Convention in 1997 which countries were invited to adopt (Ireland did so in 2004). As part of this recognition process, the European Network of Information Centres (ENICs) was established by the Council of Europe and UNESCO (the bodies responsible for the development of the Lisbon Convention). ENICs provide information on the recognition of foreign qualifications, on education systems and on opportunities for study abroad. There are also NARICs (National Academic Recognition Information Centres), an initiative of the European Commission. Part of the impetus for ENICs and NARICs comes from the desire of Ministers for Education in the Bologna Process (47 countries) to promote a European Dimension to higher education, first mentioned in the Bologna Declaration in 1999.

Despite the efforts at official level to ensure recognition of JDs, there have been reports which highlighted problems of recognition. For example, Aerden and Reczulska (2010) mentioned the lack of adequate and transparent information about the joint programme itself and the qualification awarded. This issue had been raised with them by the ENIC-NARICs. When ENIC-NARICs are trying to decide on the recognition of a degree, they need information on the institutions involved and their role but often this is not forthcoming. One source of such information should be the Diploma Supplement (adopted as part of the Bologna Process at the ministerial meeting in Berlin in 2003) but the experience of the ENIC-NARICs was they were issued from a national perspective only and did not adequately cover the international nature of many JDs.

In 2012, Aerden and Reczulska returned to the topic of JD recognition when they co-authored Guidelines for Good Practice for Awarding Joint Degrees. These guidelines provide practical advice which will help to enhance recognition of the award. For example, the JD should only refer to the awarding institutions and not to all the institutions in the

consortium and secondly that the conferred qualification is the qualification recognised in all the relevant national frameworks. This latter advice may necessitate reference to qualifications in original languages on the parchment.

The Diploma Supplement is designed to aid recognition internationally so it is hardly surprising that the Guidelines produced by Aerden and Reczulska give detailed advice on how it should be completed. There are 24 guidelines for good practice which cover issues such as access requirements, the overall learning outcomes of the programme, details of the coordinating institution, the contact details of the relevant ENIC-NARIC of the coordinating institution and details of the responsible quality assurance and accreditation agency (if the programme was quality assured). The need for a Diploma Supplement to aid recognition of a JD is clear so it is imperative that all Irish HEIs awarding JDs are accompanying the award with a relevant Diploma Supplement. In addition, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is currently being revised (draft revised guidelines have been circulated) and the guidelines include detailed lists of what should be included in the Course Catalogue and other documents.

One recommendation by Aerden and Reczulska was that only the places where a graduate studied should be named on the parchment awarded. Thus, for a JD offered by a consortium of six universities, a graduate may receive a parchment naming two of the universities (the two attended by the graduate). This requirement adds an administrative burden since each parchment is potentially different.

A number of the Irish HEIs offering JDs and DDs have mentioned that Chinese partners are reluctant to become involved in JDs but prefer DDs. It is perceived that JDs are not acceptable to Chinese authorities/employers. It has also been noted that Chinese graduates, who obtain DDs tend to use their Chinese degree within China but use their Irish degree when seeking employment in Europe or with multi-national companies in China.

## **EAR Manual**

To assist the easier recognition of Joint Degrees, the European Commission funded a project, commencing in 2010, to develop a manual that would help to ensure fair and consistent recognition of JDs across Europe. The project was undertaken by a group of ENIC-NARICs coordinated by NARIC Netherlands and had UK, French and Polish NARICs in the primary project team and Czech Republic, Denmark, Flanders and Lithuania in the secondary team. The steering committee consisted of the President of ENIC Bureau and the President of the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee. The manual entitled, European Area of Recognition Manual, was published in 2012. It provides comprehensive guidance for credential evaluators but also for higher education institutions involved in JDs and should

provide a valuable support for HEIs contemplating new JDs. It may be accessed at [www.eurorecognition.eu](http://www.eurorecognition.eu).

### **Irish Higher Education Quality Network (IHEQN)**

The IHEQN has published Guidelines for the Approval, Monitoring and Review of Collaborative and Transnational Provision which cover all the aspects of collaborative provision from the initial formation of the partnership to the development of a joint programme and its subsequent approval. It offers detailed advice on what should be included in a collaborative agreement and there are over 30 key issues identified in that section of which details of the programme is but one (with many sub-headings). The document also deals extensively with issues of due diligence in relation to academic standards, legal requirements and financial and resource issues. Since the guidelines were produced in Ireland by a sub-committee of IHEQN chaired by Dr Roy Ferguson (UCD) with representatives of DIT, HEA, RCSI, USI, HECA, IoTI and QQI it will prove very useful for Irish HEIs developing or managing JDs. The guidelines are available at [www.iheqn.ie](http://www.iheqn.ie).

### **Joint Degrees from A to Z (JDAZ)**

The EC is currently funding a project being carried out by a consortium of six Erasmus Mundus National Structures led by Nuffic (Netherlands) which aims to provide a comprehensive guide to the development and implementation of joint degrees. The project commenced in September, 2012 and is scheduled for completion in 2015 and when completed should prove very useful. Pending its completion, one can participate in its activities by logging in to its website at [www.nuffic.nl/en/expertise/jdaz](http://www.nuffic.nl/en/expertise/jdaz).

### **Some Problems**

Most JDs involve teaching through the medium of English, even in countries where it is not the language normally spoken. Having to teach through English can create a difficulty for academics and accordingly Irish HEIs need to assess the ability of their partners in JDs to teach through English.

Secondly, many degree programmes offer graduates a pathway to a professional qualification awarded by a professional body. This is often important for gaining employment. It may not be automatic that a JD enjoys the same recognition by professional bodies as other degrees. HEIs need to negotiate recognition by professional bodies and this may prove difficult or expensive or both.

## **Conclusions/Recommendations**

The Diploma Supplement is vital in ensuring recognition for JDs and DDs and needs to fully document the nature of such degrees. Recognition of JDs and DDs may need separate negotiation between HEIs and professional bodies to ensure recognition.

## Chapter 8: Making Accreditation/Validation Easier

Notwithstanding earlier reports on joint programmes and JDs, it was the experience of many that the quality assurance of joint programmes (particularly transnational ones), proved complicated because of differences in the legal frameworks in different countries. The difficulties prompted the establishment of a project entitled Joint Programmes: Quality Assurance and Recognition (JOQAR) which was undertaken by ten QA agencies and four recognition bodies. One of the solutions championed by JOQAR is the establishment of a Coordination Point which will provide definitive information on the QA of joint programmes and the recognition of the awards from such programmes. It was advocated that the Coordination Point could coordinate the accreditation of joint programmes on the basis of a single cross-border accreditation procedure. An interim Coordination Point was established by the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA) and four pilot single accreditation procedures were undertaken. The four programmes selected for these pilots were all Erasmus Mundus Master's degree programmes each of which had at least six partners, mainly European universities but the participants included one Chinese, one Indian, one Israeli and three African partner institutions. An interim report on the project by Blanc de la Carrere and Frederiks (2013) was published in June 2013 and is available on-line at [www.eaconsortium.net](http://www.eaconsortium.net).

The project came to some conclusions as regards QA of joint programmes and recognition of joint awards. It advocated a single accreditation procedure with one shared European framework with the following characteristics:

- Agreed standards and criteria
- One assessment procedure comprising an international panel
- One self-assessment procedure written by the joint programme according to the European framework
- A site visit at one location of the joint programme but with representation of the other locations in the interviews
- One assessment report written by the panel
- National decisions by all agencies in the countries where the joint programme is offered on the basis of this assessment report

The project highlighted some difficulties including the differing duration of national accreditation periods and recommended an agreed period of 6 years. There were other difficulties around the specific national criteria on top of the shared European standards and the project looked to the ministers for education to remove such obstacles to harmonisation.

At least partly, the ministers for education of the 47 countries participating in the Bologna Process gave their commitment to addressing the problem when they met in Bucharest in

April 2012. Their communique included: “We will strive for more coherence between our policies... and the enhancement of quality assurance ... We will revise the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) to improve their clarity and usefulness ...In particular, we will aim to recognise quality assurance decisions of EQAR-registered agencies on joint and double degrees programmes” (Bologna Communiques, Bucharest 2012). That revision of ESG is now well underway and it remains to be seen if the quality assurance of joint programmes becomes easier under the new procedures.

## **MULTRA**

While some progress was being made on agreement on Europe-wide single accreditation procedures, there were other more dramatic moves afoot. In December, 2010 a Multilateral Agreement on the Mutual Recognition of Accreditation Results (MULTRA) was signed by six agencies. This was an initiative of the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA) and at its core was agreement that

“the signing accreditation organisations agree to apply the ECA principles for accreditation procedures regarding joint programmes and confirm that within their competences they accept the results of the accreditation procedures of the other signing accreditation organisations when accrediting joint programmes” (Blanc de la Carrere and Frederiks, 2013 p.10). MULTRA has sought to attract new members and according to its website it now has twelve agencies as members (two from Austria, one from Denmark, one from France, three from Germany, one from Netherlands, one from Poland, two from Spain, and one from Columbia, their first non-European member). One might conclude that the growth in membership is not very impressive but if it were to gather pace it would be prudent for Ireland to keep a watching brief. The time may arrive when institutions seeking partners for joint degrees will favour institutions which have easier routes to accreditation i.e. via MULTRA or a similar agreement.

## **Conclusions/Recommendations**

1. THE EC has funded several initiatives that seek to make validation and accreditation of JDs and DDs as easy as possible.
2. One result of the EC initiatives has been the emergence of MULTRA, a consortium to provide mutual recognition of accreditation processes across international boundaries.
3. It will be necessary for Ireland to keep abreast of such developments and to join in where it is appropriate.

## **Chapter 9: Case Studies of Irish HEIs**

### **Case Study 1: University College, Dublin (UCD)**

**Based on discussions with Michael Kennedy (Academic Secretariat) and Roy Ferguson (Director of Quality)**

#### **Why the rapid growth of JDs and DDs?**

A key objective of the strategic plan of UCD was internationalisation and collaboration with international partners was part of this. Collaboration arrangements go beyond joint programmes but JPs are part of it. Each college of the university was allowed appoint an internationalisation manager whose duties included organising international conferences, recruiting international students, and other collaborative links. The staffing of the central international office was also increased.

Three Erasmus Mundus programmes were funded by EC.

While some support for JDs and DDs is provided centrally [they have developed a check list for proposals, timelines, etc.] the main impetus for their development comes from the bottom up.

#### **QA arrangements**

QQI is currently involving universities in discussions on JDs and DDs. The Q and QA Act, 2012 makes it explicit that colleges /awarding bodies have responsibility for their own JDs and DDs. New programmes are developed within colleges or schools and go through the normal internal QA procedures. There is a Standard Collaboration Document which programme developers are asked to follow but sometimes asking developers about the planned design of the parchment seems unduly bureaucratic to academics. All programmes go the University Programme Board (a sub-committee of Academic Council) for approval.

UCD is re-visiting its procedures for collaborative agreements in line with the QQI discussions mentioned above for which there is a meeting next week. HETAC had very detailed regulations but IoTs found them to be somewhat restrictive. UCD operates more JDs/DDs than all IoTs combined.

QA procedures may involve an assessment of the partner HEI but this is a sensitive issue. There is a need for an evaluation of the partner that is proportionate to the standing of the partner and the risk involved.

When there is a large consortium (there is one with 41 partners) UCD accepts that it is not possible to evaluate the contribution of all partners. One must accept local decisions as otherwise the cost of QA is prohibitive.



They have identified nine key areas for consideration in proposals and provide detailed advice on each of the areas to staff contemplating collaborative arrangement. The nine areas are:

1. Collaborative Award Types
2. Programme structures
3. Admissions
4. Financial arrangements
5. Student registration and services
6. External reporting
7. Assessment (modules)
8. Degree award classification
9. Transcripts/Diploma Supplement, Parchments, Conferring

There is also a template for collaborative agreements which guides the UCD academics to consider all relevant aspects. The nine areas and the template may be accessed on the UCD website at [www.ucd.ie/registry/academicsecretariat/progsn.htm](http://www.ucd.ie/registry/academicsecretariat/progsn.htm).

### **Plans for more JDs or DDs?**

There are no clear plans for more but collaboration is still on the agenda as part of the strategic plan. UCD has decided to end its DD with Fudan as it feels the programme has run its course.

### **Some recognition problems**

Chinese partners are not keen on JDs so they have DDs with them. The position with NUI (which has to have its logo on any UCD JDs) is a complication which is difficult to explain to partners so sometimes DDs are simpler.

JDs with Spanish partners are also difficult because every Spanish degree should have the signature of the king. So it is easier to have a DD supplemented with a certificate bearing the logos of the partners.

PhDs developed as part of the French co-tutelle programme face the problem that French authorities require a French degree so therefore they award DD rather than JD.

The wording of parchments is a problem in several partnerships because of the UCD requirements including Latin language which cannot always be easily accommodated by partner HEIs.

### **Student satisfaction**

Generally students are happy about JDs as they appreciate getting a parchment which bears the logo of a prestigious partner.

Chinese students are happy to get both a European parchment and a Chinese one. Within China they tend to use their Chinese parchment but when applying to multi-national companies they use the European parchment.

No UCD students go to China on DDs (but some go on placement from other programmes).

### **Possible changes to QA**

RF feels there should be a minimum number of credits earned in UCD to qualify for an award from UCD

He also questions the practice of awarding DDs for a single piece of work and therefore prefers JDs apart from the twin problems with the NUI connection and Chinese opposition.

They believe there needs to be more due diligence and that there is a need to be careful about partners. UCD has tightened up and now requires more robust procedures. But there is a danger of frustrating academics to the point that they are turned off.

## **Case Study 2: Dublin Business School (DBS)**

**Based on discussions with Dr. Eileen Buckley-Dhoot, Director of Academic Affairs, DBS**

Dublin Business School operates 47 programmes leading to JDs, all in partnership with Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU). The relationship with LJMU started with franchise programmes of the university being offered in Dublin. At a later stage, Dublin Business School (DBS) became an accredited college of LJMU which allowed them to develop their own degrees (which had to be approved by LJMU). While all of the DBS Joint Degrees are currently with LJMU, it did previously operate some degrees with a Welsh partner which it inherited from Portobello College with which DBS had merged. The Welsh partnership has been phased out.

In 2008 it was decided that there would be an advantage in combining its HETAC (now QQI) accredited degrees with the LJMU degrees to form Joint Degrees. They took the opportunity to rationalise the number of degrees as there was some overlap between the LJMU degrees and the HETAC degrees. The formation of the JDs was legally a partnership between HETAC and LJMU but in effect DBS took the initiative and was the driving force seeking the successful completion of the arrangement. As part of the process of initiating JDs, HETAC recognised the standards of the programmes previously recognised by LJMU so that it was not necessary to re-validate the programmes or to align UK standards and HETAC standards. The parchments received by students who successfully complete the JDs bear the logos of LJMU and HETAC/QQI and the signatures of the Vice Chancellor of LJMU and of the Chief Executive of HETAC/QQI.

There are 47 DBS programmes approved by HETAC/QQI to operate as JDs with LJMU. Of these, 19 are Honours Bachelor Degrees (Level 8 on NFQ) and 28 postgraduate programmes (Level 9 on NFQ) which are either Masters Degrees (26) or Postgraduate Diplomas (2). The disciplines involved are Business related, Law and Computing.

For the most part, the external examiners on the JDs have been Irish on the Bachelor degree programmes and British on the Master's Degree programmes but no issue of comparative standards has arisen.

### **Recognition/legal Issues**

There were very few problems of recognition (perhaps one or two with China in regard to the "out of country award") and generally Bachelor degree graduates of the JDs have had no difficulty getting access to Master's programmes.

There were no legal issues at any stage.

## **Future of JDs**

DBS has sought recognition of its procedures for collaborative programmes (a requirement of HETAC/QQI) and has gained the necessary approval. But DBS is not planning to introduce any new JDs in the near future.

The decision has been taken to phase out all existing JDs over the next three years (see details below).

## **Double Degrees and Joint Programmes**

DBS does not currently operate any Double Degree programmes (it used to operate an LLB programme which it inherited from Portobello College with which it merged but no longer operates that programme).

Neither does DBS operate any Joint Programmes with any other higher education institution. The nearest it comes to a Joint Programme is an arrangement with a Chinese college whereby students who complete an agreed one year may gain entry to DBS. But when the students come to DBS they enter year 1 of the DBS programme.

DBS also has articulation agreements with approx. 100 European colleges for direct entry to DBS but students who pursue that route get one parchment only.

## **Attitude of students and graduates to JDs**

During all the years that the JD has been in operation, it has been the policy of DBS to tell all students that they were enrolling on a JD and the literature the students received included a letter of welcome to LJMU from the Vice-Chancellor of the university. But in practice students had no further contact with the university and made no call upon the resources of the university.

The graduation ceremony took place in Dublin.

After graduation, the attitude of graduates is to refer to themselves as graduates of DBS.

## **Phasing out JDs**

In 2012 DBS reviewed its policy on JDs and decided there was no longer any advantage in having JDs. There was one notable disadvantage, namely that some countries including China looked unfavourably on degree programmes that gained their accreditation from another country ("out of country degrees"). There were also concerns caused by the situation in Wales where the University of Wales decided in October 2011 to cease all validation of programmes in other colleges after a critical report to the Welsh Assembly and a BBC expose of corrupt practices in validation processes for programmes outside the university.

Perhaps as a result of the Welsh situation, DBS found HETAC to be less favourably inclined towards collaborative provision and DBS decided that all its degrees would be those of HETAC/QQI only. So currently, DBS is running out its JDs: all students who enrolled originally on JDs with LJMU will receive those JDs but no new students are being enrolled on JDs.

DBS, reflecting on their experiences of operating JDs, stressed the necessity of having all processes agreed and written down as otherwise misunderstandings can occur.

### **Case Study 3: Dublin Institute of Technology**

**Based on meetings with Nicole O'Neill (QA Officer), Mary Hunt (Head of School of Biological Sciences), Roisin Burke (Assistant Head of School of Culinary Arts and Food Technology)**

#### **QA processes**

Currently DIT operates five JD programmes and five Double/Multiple degree programmes (though one of the JD programmes may switch to become a DD programme). Generally, there are not great difficulties in the validation of a JD or DD programme because DIT is an awarding body and therefore is master of its own destiny. It has had, however, to report on all JD and DD programmes in its annual report to the NQAI and will have to report to QQI henceforth.

One difference in the QA processes (compared with other programmes) is the necessity for cooperation with at least one other awarding body. This cooperation involves agreement on the methodology to be adopted in the evaluation of the programme and usually the outcome of the evaluation has to be approved by at least two Academic Councils or Senates.

The grading of awards needs attention. For example, a 70% mark is regarded as a first class honours mark in Ireland but in China would be regarded as a poor mark. Sometimes the compromises agreed between partner HEIs may require a derogation from the General Assessment Regulations of the DIT academic council, which cover the Irish situation only.

In one instance of an Erasmus Mundus Master's degree, there was agreement on a JD but subsequently difficulties arose with the French law in regard to higher education and accordingly it has been decided to change the awards to Double/Multiple degrees.

There is need for an active Joint Programme Committee to ensure the different groups of academics talk to each other frequently. In the case of a JD with a Russian university, there is a webinar each month.

The mechanism by which examination results are to be approved needs to be agreed and documented.

The different approaches to the commencement of new programmes in different countries causes some problems; in some countries a new programme may not commence until it has been evaluated and approved but in other countries new programmes are granted permission to start and are evaluated after some years of operation.

Agreement on the details of the joint parchment also causes some difficulties and extra expense; in the case of one joint PhD, it is estimated that the printing of a single parchment cost €200. Arrangements for the signing of parchments are also problematic where the

partner HEIs are in different countries and where some partners insist on a signing of each parchment. The timing between the final examination board meeting and the graduation ceremony is elongated because of the necessity to have parchments signed by each institution president/rector.

## **Operation of an Erasmus Mundus Joint Master's Degree**

The programme is the European MSc in Food Science, Technology and Nutrition which is provided by KAHO University College, Sint-Lieven (Belgium), Anhalt University (Germany), Catholic University of Portugal and the Dublin Institute of Technology. KAHO acts as the coordinator of the programme and the students must take the core modules there and the optional modules in Anhalt, Portugal or Dublin. The recruitment of students is centralised in KAHO.

On successful completion of the programme, graduates receive a Joint Degree bearing the logos and signatures of the four partner institutions, even if they have studied in just two or three of the four. Approx. 20 students are recruited each year of whom 6 get Erasmus Mundus scholarships while the remainder are self-financing. The consortium running the programme has other partners in Mexico and Italy who provide placements.

The current EU funding has two years left to run. Recently, programme organisers were invited to apply for a 3-year extension and this will be done.

**Validation:** The programme was validated before it commenced and a re-validation took place in KAHO in the past three years, organised by the Belgium Flemish QA agency (VLUHR). This was a validation of the total programme so that each partner had to contribute written submissions and a senior staff member (the Assistant Head of School in the case of DIT) had to attend the validation event in Belgium and answer questions. The validating panel did not visit the partners outside Belgium. There was also a review of the programme as part of the review of the School of Biological Sciences under DIT QA regulations. This review looked at the programme as a whole but staff members of the Belgian, German and Portuguese partners were not required to attend.

**Problems:** Visas for students can be a problem, especially as Ireland is outside the Schengen Agreement. Differences in QA rules in the different countries can pose a problem; for example, the rules regarding making changes to modules or the assessment of modules. In some QA systems such changes can be made locally without much fuss but in other systems all such changes must be approved by the Academic Council or similar body.

Students can elect to graduate in any partner country and there are radically different approaches to graduation ceremony (in some cases it is a very informal ceremony that takes place immediately after the final examination board meeting and does not involve the presentation of the parchment).

Less funding of places by Erasmus Mundus is causing less students on the programme so its future is in doubt when funding ends. It may continue with fewer partners. The key to success in JDs is “the choice of partners”!

## **Operation of an Erasmus Mundus Joint Programme No.2**

The MSc in Food Innovation and Product Design commenced in 2011, after it was awarded Erasmus Mundus funding. There are four partner HEIs involved in the provision of the programme, namely AgroParisTech, University of Naples, Lund University and DIT. It operates as a Joint Programme but has not led to the award of a Joint Degree but rather to the award of Double/Multiple degrees. The programme is coordinated by the French partner and recently it has sought the agreement of the other partners to create a JD.

All students are selected by the French partner and spend the first semester at AgroParisTech. The second semester is spent at DIT while the third and fourth semesters are spent at Paris, Lund or Naples (student choice). The language of instruction is English in all centres. On successful completion of the programme students have received double/multiple degrees from Paris and Dublin and possibly also from Lund or Naples if they attended there.

The initial validation of the programme was very difficult because none of the partners had experience of joint or double/multiple degrees. The programme went through a validation process within DIT but the panel looked at the DIT modules only. There was also a validation of the whole programme in Paris for which DIT and the other partners provided module descriptors for the modules for which they were responsible. The programme was validated and has run very successfully to date. Approx. 25 students are recruited annually of whom 8 are self-funding while the others enjoy Erasmus Mundus scholarships. Students who are self-funding must pay fees of €4,000 per annum (EU students) or €8,000 per annum (non-EU).

**Problems:** The initial validation was difficult because of the lack of experience with such programmes. The management team in DIT would have welcomed the existence of a Coordination Point to provide definitive information (this idea is now being trialled by ECA).

Semester dates do not coincide with other semester dates in DIT; students arrive a week later and this has led to difficulties with the central registration service in DIT.

Some regulations e.g. in regard to exemptions for some students apply in the local HEI and not generally.

There have been some problems with visas for non-EU students.

**Outcome:** The fee income is shared according to the fees normally charged and this has resulted in DIT getting the lion’s share.



The consortium is planning to run a summer school in Dublin in 2014 with which DIT is very pleased. It will be funded by EC money from Brussels.

The mix of students on the programme (some with a food science background, some with a culinary skills background) has made for a very interesting learning experience for all concerned. Overall, DIT is very pleased with the programme despite the teething problems.

## **Case Study 4: Griffith College Dublin (GCD)**

### **Based on meeting with Diarmuid Hegarty (President of GCD)**

Griffith College currently operates 14 programmes leading to JDs, all with Nottingham Trent University (NTU). The history of the development of the programmes is that they were developed and validated by NTU. Subsequently, GCD became involved and sought to have the programmes offered as joint programmes of NTU and GCD. HETAC was amenable to the idea and agreed to accept the NTU validation without repeating the validation process.

On successful completion of a programme, the graduate receives a single parchment which bears the logos of HETAC/QQI and NTU.

It is the belief of GCD that if it wished to establish new JDs with NTU today, there would have to be a joint validation event. It would be necessary to ensure that the regulations are not in conflict with HETAC/QQI regulations.

### **Recognition/Legal Issues**

There were no recognition issues within Ireland or UK. There was a recognition issue in China because the Chinese looked unfavourably on degree programmes that gained their accreditation from another country (“out of country degrees”). This caused GCD to look for Double Degrees in the case of collaborative arrangements with Chinese universities.

In regard to marketability of JDs, the experience of GCD is that the word “university” in the title of the awarding body is helpful in Ireland and the UK. There were no negative aspects to the marketing of the JDs.

There were no legal issues in regard to the programmes or their awards.

### **Double Degrees and Joint Programmes**

GCD offers Double Degree (DD) programmes with partner universities in China. While the number of such programmes was not mentioned, it was termed “a lot”. This meets the objections which are raised in China to the recognition of JDs which are “out of country” awards.

GCD believes that there will be many more Joint Programmes (JPs) in the future in which partners will come from different countries. It also believes that current HETAC/QQI policy favours JPs which will be jointly taught by the partner HEIs.

### **Attitude of students and graduates to JDs**

Students generally complete their programme within Ireland and would regard themselves as GCD students. But it is believed likely that after graduation they may be selective on whether they refer to themselves as GCD graduates or NTU graduates. For example, a

graduate seeking a job in the UK would be likely to stress the fact that he/she is an NTU graduate. Their choice of which partner institution to stress may also depend on the job for which they are applying.

### **Future of JDs for GCD**

In the immediate future, GCD is likely to reduce the number of JDs it operates. The main reason given for this is the high cost involved including the expense of two validations. To facilitate foreign students who want to join GCD in year three of programmes, there will be strong systems for the Recognition and Accreditation of their Prior Learning in years one and two of their studies abroad.

Despite the likelihood of a drop in the number of JDs in the immediate future, it is the belief of GCD that in the longer term there are likely to be more JDs and JPs as the international aspect of such programmes becomes much sought after. In any event, GCD expects that in future there will be a high proportion of programmes that are jointly taught, even where there is not a JD.

### **Improvements to accreditation of JDs**

There is scope for simplification of the current validation/accreditation process. One thing that would help is a standardised collaborative agreement which would apply to all JDs, both in Ireland and internationally.

## Case Study 5: Student and Staff Perspectives on a JD between TCD and DIT

Based on meetings with Fiachra Duffy (former student of a JD) and Mary Hunt (Head of School of Biological Sciences)

### (a) Perspective of a Head of School responsible for a Joint Bachelor's Degree [TCD + DIT]

**History of the programme and current arrangements:** The Human Nutrition and Dietetics programme has been offered for approx. 60 years, initially in DIT and then as a joint programme between DIT and TCD from the late 1970s. The joint programme led to awards of both DIT and TCD (a “Double Degree” programme) for about 30 years. In 2008 it was re-validated as a Joint Degree which commenced in 2009 and which has seen the first graduates emerge in 2013.

**Allocation of responsibilities:** The programme operates as a JP with responsibilities agreed between the partners: DIT is responsible for the recruitment of the students and for the conduct of the examinations in year 1 and year 2; TCD is responsible for the conduct of the examinations in years 3 and 4 and for the placement of students in hospitals, etc. Most of the teaching on the programme is provided by DIT (about 80% overall) whereas the placements are provided by TCD. Students must register each year in both DIT and TCD which involves a small extra cost of approx. €80 per annum for which they enjoy the use of facilities of both HEIs including library and sports facilities. The Head of School believes that students enjoy being able to use both sets of facilities.

Practice placements are a key part of the programme for which there is a coordinator who is based in TCD.

On successful completion of the programme, students receive a parchment bearing the logos of Dublin University and Dublin Institute of Technology.

**Problems:** No problems have arisen in the operation of the joint programme as the responsibilities are agreed and clearly set out. For example, TCD rules apply to the examinations for years 3 and 4 while DIT rules apply for the examinations in years 1 and 2.

The programme is due to be re-validated in 2014 and it is expected it will continue as a JD. The profession of Dietician has been designated as one to which State Registration rules will apply soon. It is expected that the rules for registration will be issued next year and that competency to practise will be a key consideration. So it is likely that the programme will have to undergo an accreditation process in 2014 or 2015.

## Perspective of a student who completed a JD between TCD and DIT

In 2008 it was agreed to initiate a JD in Human Nutrition & Dietetics and the first graduates from that programme received their parchments in 2013.

A student who was a member of the first cohort of students to complete the JD programme offered the following perspective:

**Entry arrangements:** It was clear to the students on entry that they were registering on a JD. Student recruitment was handled by DIT through the CAO system. If one sought information of the programme within the TCD website, one was referred to the DIT website. After acceptance onto the programme one registered in DIT but also had to complete a registration in TCD. A small fee (€81) had to be paid as part of the TCD registration to cover access to the gym and other sports facilities in TCD.

- 1. Teaching arrangements:** In the student's view, the teaching was well coordinated. Most of the first year teaching was provided by DIT on its premises but some of this teaching was provided by a TCD academic on DIT premises (the distance between the two campuses is about 2 kms). The second year was also mainly in DIT but in year 3 much of the teaching took place in St James's Hospital (by TCD staff) or in TCD itself.
- 2. Placement/internship:** In each of the first 3 years there are placements starting in the summer after year 1 with a four-week placement in hospital catering or similar. In year 2 there are 10 weeks of placement between Community Placement and Hospital placement. Finally, there is a 12 week placement in a large teaching hospital in year 3. All these placements are coordinated by a DIT employee who is based in TCD
- 3. Graduation:** The presentation of parchments is organised by DIT to coincide with the graduation of other programmes in its College of Science & Health. The parchment bears the logos of Dublin University (TCD) and Dublin Institute of Technology and bears the signatures of the Registrar of TCD and the President of DIT.
- 4. Examination rules:** students feel they face a double jeopardy if they fail some examinations as they will have to remain behind (in other DIT programmes students can repeat the examination(s) failed and pass in time to continue with their classmates).

In some other aspects students feel that TCD has rules that are more benign (in regards to fees to be paid).

- 5. Overall:** It was a very positive experience for students as they felt they got the best of both institutions.

## Conclusions

1. Ireland is developing JDs and DDs in line with developments in Europe. Currently, all universities, DIT, RCSI and five of the thirteen institutes of technology award JDs.
2. Some HEIs are more active than others in the development of JDs
  - Universities are more active than institutes of technology
  - Private colleges are more active than all other HEIs but with a single partner each (and are planning to reduce the number of JDs)
3. Current procedures make it more difficult for IoTs and for private colleges than for HEIs that are awarding bodies i.e. universities, DIT and RCSI.
4. Current legislation on JDs is not satisfactory and needs to be strengthened. The imminent enactment of a Technological Universities Act provides an opportunity for improving the legislative base upon which JDs are implemented.
5. There should be a single database of JDs in Ireland and QQI is uniquely placed to develop such a database. The database should be made freely available to potential students and employers on the QQI website.
6. Funding bodies such as the HEA need to have information about JDs to avoid double counting of students, both for purposes of decisions about funding and for planning purposes.
7. The Diploma Supplement is crucial for graduates of JDs and should be issued automatically and free of charge. The information to be included in the Diploma Supplement needs to be more extensive than for degrees issued by a single university.
8. Quality Assurance arrangements for JDs can be very bureaucratic, time-consuming and expensive. The adoption of single validation arrangements has the potential to reduce the expenses involved.
9. Recognition by professional bodies may be difficult to arrange.
10. The extensive use of English on JDs may cause a problem with the standard of teaching by academics who are forced to teach in a language which is not their native language.
11. JDs involve a risk of serious reputational damage which must be addressed. Those offering JDs need to have regular evaluations of their operation.
12. Ireland should carefully monitor arrangements being put in place in Continental Europe to facilitate easier accreditation of JDs as there is a risk that Ireland will be left behind by such developments. Currently, the most advanced initiative is the MULTRA consortium of 12 agencies but it is seeking new members.

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## Appendix A

### Council of Europe and UNESCO

#### APPENDIX TO THE RECOMMENDATION ON THE RECOGNITION OF JOINT DEGREES 2004

##### General considerations

1. The present Recommendation is adopted within the framework of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and applies to the Parties to this Convention. The principles and practices described in this Recommendation can, however, equally well be applied to the recognition of qualifications in countries other than those party to the Lisbon Recognition Convention or to qualifications issued between or among national education systems.

2. The purpose of the present Recommendation is to improve the recognition of joint degrees. While degrees that are considered as belonging to the education system of a Party to the Lisbon Recognition Convention even where parts of the degree have been earned in other education systems fall under the provisions of the Convention, the present Recommendation concerns joint degrees.

3. While the scope of the Lisbon Recognition Convention as well as of subsidiary texts adopted under the provisions of Article X.2.5 of the Convention concern the recognition of qualifications in countries other than that in which they have been earned, the provisions of the present recommendation may equally well be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to joint degrees issued by two or more institutions belonging to the same national higher education system.

##### Definitions

4. Terms defined in the Lisbon Recognition Convention are used in the same sense in the present Recommendation, and reference is made to the definition of these terms in Section I of the convention.

5. 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 joint diploma in addition to one or more national diplomas,
- a joint diploma issued by the institutions offering the study programme in question without being accompanied by any national diploma
- one or more national diplomas issued officially as the only attestation of the joint qualification in question.



## **General principles**

6. Holders of joint degrees should have adequate access, upon request, to a fair assessment of their qualifications

7. Competent recognition authorities should recognize foreign joint degrees unless they can demonstrate that there is a substantial difference between the joint degree for which recognition is sought and the comparable qualification within their own national higher education system. Competent recognition authorities of Parties whose higher education institutions confer joint degrees should recognize these degrees with the greatest flexibility possible.

## **Legislation**

8. Governments of States party to the Lisbon Recognition Convention should, where appropriate, therefore review their legislation with a view to removing any legal obstacles to the recognition of joint degrees and introduce legal provisions that would facilitate such recognition.

## **Quality assurance and institutional recognition**

9. Competent recognition authorities may make the recognition of joint degrees conditional on all parts of the study programme leading to the degree and/or the institutions providing the programme being subject to transparent quality assessment or being considered as belonging to the education system of one or more Parties to the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

10. Where the joint degree is issued on the basis of a curriculum developed by a group or consortium consisting of a number of recognized higher education institutions, recognition of the degree may be made contingent on all member institutions or programmes of the group or consortium being subject to transparent quality assessment, or being considered as belonging to the education system of one or more Parties to the Lisbon Recognition Convention, even if only some of these institutions provide courses for any given degree.

## **Information**

11. Institutions providing joint degrees should be encouraged to inform the competent recognition authorities of programmes giving rise to such degrees.

12. As appropriate, in order to facilitate recognition, candidates earning joint degrees should be provided with a Diploma Supplement, and study programmes leading to joint degrees should make use of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

13. The Diploma Supplement issued with a joint degree should clearly describe all parts of the degree, and it should clearly indicate the institutions and/or study programmes at which the different parts of the degree have been earned.