

Joint Degrees from A to Z: A practical guide

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1. Introduction

Aim of the JDAZ project

This guide is a result of the Joint Degrees from A to Z (JDAZ) project. Partially funded by the European Commission, the project ran from October 2012 to April 2015. The JDAZ consortium consists of six Erasmus Mundus National Structures (EMNS). The two core partners in the consortium include the EMNS of the Netherlands (located at Nuffic), functioning as project co-ordinator, and the ENMS of Finland (located at CIMO). The four advisory group partners in the consortium consist of the EMNS of Austria (located at OeAD), Norway (located at SIU), Lithuania (located at the Education Exchanges Support Foundation), and Poland (located at the Foundation of the Development of the Education System).

The JDAZ consortium benefited from the input and expertise of external experts in the field, representing the JOIMAN consortium, the European quality assurance network (ECA), the wider EMNS network and joint programme practitioners. This input and debate have strengthened this guide in the expectation that it will contribute to the sustainable development of joint programmes.

Aim of this guide

The aim of this guide is to provide a comprehensive, practical reference guide on all aspects that need to be taken into account when developing and managing joint programmes. The focus is on *international* joint programmes, offered between institutions in different countries.

The authors of this guide felt a need to bring together references to all major relevant work on joint programmes since there is a lot of information available in this area, but these data have so far not been available in a central place neither in an integrated form.

This guide is based on all major relevant work undertaken in this field. In doing so, this guide aims to support the development of sustainable joint programmes and the further development of the European Higher Education Area.

Target groups

This guide is aimed at four target groups:

1. The Erasmus+ -National Agencies – to support them in their advisory role;
2. Higher education institutions and co-ordinators – in Europe and more widely, – interested in setting up or maintaining joint programmes;
3. Current co-ordinators of already established joint programmes, who are working to improve their current practice. These include co-ordinators of joint programmes that have been developed under funding programmes such as Erasmus Mundus, Erasmus+, Atlantis, EU-Canada, ECP-ICI, Joint Nordic Masters programmes, and other initiatives;
4. The national research academies in their advisory role on joint doctoral programmes.

This guide is intended to be used as broadly as possible. The suggestions in this guide are generally applicable at bachelor, master and doctoral level. Doctoral-level data are often somewhat different from the bachelor and master levels due to the more unstructured format, the complex nature of research (and research topic), development and supervision. Therefore, the JDAZ guide presents a separate chapter on joint doctoral programmes.

We have also attempted to make this guide applicable worldwide: while taking into account that joint programmes are subject to different national and institutional regulations and contexts, many of the aspects mentioned in this guide are basic elements that need to be taken into account in the development of successful and sustainable joint programmes around the world.

Chapter organisation

This guide does not follow the logic of a ‘chronological’ approach to the development and management of joint programmes (as in what to think about in the development phase or later, during the implementation). Instead, this guide has adopted a more ‘organic’ approach. This deliberate decision is based on the fact that the JDAZ consortium is keen to stress to institutions wanting to set up a joint programme – that it is crucial to take into account quality assurance and other sustainability issues already at an early stage in the development process.

Chapter 2 explains the main definitions that are adopted in this guide. This guide focuses more on (the development and management of) joint programmes than on issuing joint diplomas that lead to a joint degree, since issuing a joint diploma is merely one of many aspects of joint programme development.

Chapter 3 offers a general background to the phenomenon of joint programmes and their increasingly important role in the internationalisation of higher education.

Chapter 4 raises awareness of issues relating to different legal frameworks that these programmes may be subject to.

Chapters 5 and 6 deal with all aspects relating to the development (chapter 5) and management (chapter 6) of joint programmes, including continuous consideration of sustainability issues.

Chapters 7 and 8 focus on all issues relating to quality assurance (chapter 7) and recognition (chapter 8) that need to be taken into account when developing and managing joint programmes.

Chapter 9 deals with joint doctoral programmes.

How to read this guide

This guide focuses on answering practical questions such as: How do you approach joint programme development? What are the crucial aspects that you need to take into account, and at what stages?

Based on the literature review and the experience and knowledge of the project consortium, external experts and extensive consultation of stakeholders, the guide presents “key messages for practitioners” at the beginning of each chapter (and in some cases, at the beginning of a paragraph). The text that follows elaborates on the key messages and related references. Links to relevant sources are included for those who would like to know more details.

Each chapter identifies ‘key sources’ and ‘other sources’. ‘Key sources’ are the core sources on the chapter theme, and include a broad range of useful and good-quality information. ‘Other sources’ include helpful, but fewer, details on the chapter theme. They may, for instance, only mention one aspect on joint programmes briefly.

The text is not meant to be prescriptive, but suggests guidelines for higher education staff along the different aspects that need to be taken into account when developing and managing joint programmes.

2. Definitions

This chapter gives an overview of the most relevant definitions that are adopted in this guide. It includes definitions on a **joint programme**, a **joint degree**, a **joint diploma**, **accreditation** and **recognition**.

2.1. Key messages for practitioners

1. There is confusion around terminology, as several national and international bodies have developed their own, contradicting definitions, which might differ from general conceptions within a specific region or country.
2. The message of the JDAZ guide is to start your cooperation by clarifying the definitions of joint programmes (and the joint or multiple degrees that these programmes may lead to) in your own contexts.
3. So far, the most officially recognised definition in Europe is made by the inter-governmental, regional UNESCO Lisbon Recognition Convention, in the Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees (2004). However, the text is already old and there is a current intention for clarification and updating.
4. Note also to follow developments during the Bologna Ministerial meeting in Yerevan in 2015, as a possible agreement might be reached on common definitions to use within the European Higher Education Area.

2.2. Joint programme

A joint programme is a programme offered jointly by several higher education institutions. A joint programme does not necessarily lead to a joint degree. It is only one of the possible awards. After the completion of a joint programme the graduate may be awarded: a single national qualification, a double or other multiple qualification, or a joint qualification.

The product of the intergovernmental Bologna Process, the [2012 Implementation Report](#) (p.185), indicates that joint programmes have all or at least some of the following characteristics:

- the programmes are developed and/or approved jointly by several institutions;
- students from each participating institution study parts of the programme at other institutions;
- the students' stays at the participating institutions are of comparable length;
- periods of study and exams passed at the partner institution(s) are recognised fully and automatically;
- professors of each participating institution also teach at the other institutions, work out the curriculum jointly, and form joint commissions for admission and examinations;
- after completion of the full programme, the student either obtains the national degrees of each participating institution or a degree awarded jointly by them.

2.3. Joint degree

According to the Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees, as part of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, a joint degree may be issued as:

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

ECA makes three remarks on these points a-c of the Recommendation, since the Recommendation has become slightly outdated by now. ECA (Aerden and Reczulska, 2010) explains that:

- a) It is unlikely that both the joint and the national degree are acknowledged as the national higher education qualification;
- b) Part b of the definition of the Recommendation is now commonly understood as a joint degree;
- c) Part c of the definition describes the situation that currently is considered as a multiple degree.

2.4. Joint diploma

In this guide, a joint diploma refers to a document issued on successful completion of the programme, indicating that the degree holder has obtained a joint degree.

2.5. Accreditation

In this guide, ‘accreditation’ is defined as “a formal and independent decision indicating that a programme and/or an institution meet certain predefined quality standards”.

2.6. Recognition

In order for the degree to be e.g. considered valid abroad it has to be recognised. In this guide, “recognition” is defined as “a formal acknowledgement by a competent authority of the value of a foreign educational qualification with a view to access to educational and/or employment activities.”

2.7. Sources

Key sources

Definitions of Joint Programmes

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Knight, J., Doubts and Dilemmas with Double Degree Programs, in: "Globalisation and Internationalisation of Higher Education" [online monograph]. Revista de Universidad y Sociedad del Conocimiento (RUSC). Vol. 8, No. 2, pp. 297-312. UOC., 2011, p.299.

Definitions on joint degrees

[Bologna Implementation Report 2012](#), p.185.

Committee of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education in the European Region, [Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees](#), p.4.

Aerden, A., H.Reczulska, The recognition of qualifications awarded by joint programmes, ECA, 2010, pp.32-33.

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European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), [Methodological report of the Transnational European Evaluation Project II \(TEEP II\)](#). Helsinki, ENQA, 2006, p.10.

Other sources

[ECAPedia](#)

(Joint degrees): ENQA, Methodological report of the Transnational European Evaluation Project II, 2006, p. 10; European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education, *How to Assess and Accredite joint programmes in Europe, 2010*, pp.58-59.

(Joint degree, Erasmus Mundus): European Parliament and Council, Decision No 1298/2008/EC, Official Journal of the European, p.97, Annex.(Qualification): Bologna Follow-Up Group, *Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area*, 2005, p.30.

(Accreditation): European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA), <http://www.grossroads.eu/glossary>.

(Recognition): The Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (The Lisbon Convention), p.4.

3. General background

This chapter provides a brief background on the development of joint programmes to describe the operational context: covering the influence of the Bologna Process, the internationally visible strategic interest, and financing instruments available.

3.1. Key messages for practitioners

1. The strategic importance of joint programmes is strong and increasing in a global context, both at international inter-governmental level, at national governmental and at institutional level.
2. There is continuity of funding available for higher education institutions both at national, regional and international level.

3.2. Joint programmes as part of the Bologna Process

The inter-governmental Bologna Process, launched in 1999, is one of the main voluntary processes at European level, as it is nowadays implemented in 47 states that make up the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The Bologna Process is meant to ensure more comparable, compatible and coherent higher education systems in Europe.

The Bologna activities have introduced transparency instruments to support student mobility, such as the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and the Diploma Supplement (DS).

Joint programmes have been encouraged by the Bologna Process and listed on the agenda of all the Bologna conferences since Prague 2001, and Ministers explicitly agreed on supporting the development and quality assurance of integrated curricula leading to joint degrees in Berlin in 2003. References to recognition of joint degrees were included in 2005 and in 2007. Joint programmes support various Bologna action lines, such as student mobility, joint curriculum development and joint quality assurance.

There is no accurate account of the numbers of joint programmes. However, the 2009 Bologna Stocktaking Working Group estimated that there are 2,500 joint programmes within the European Higher Education Area. Estimated percentages of higher education institutions involved in joint programmes and awarding joint degrees can be found in the [Bologna Process Implementation Report 2012](#) (p.43).

Activities supported by several EU-funded programmes have contributed to further development and international expansion of the Bologna Process. Joint curricula were initially supported in the Lifelong Learning Programme through Erasmus. Joint programme initiatives have later been financed through programmes as Erasmus Mundus, EU-USA Atlantis, EU-Canada, the ICI-ECP programme with industrialised countries, and Tempus.

3.3. International scope and strategic interest towards joint programme cooperation

The International Association of Universities (IAU) conducts regular surveys on institutional strategic priorities within internationalisation. In the 2010 IAU Survey on internationalisation, higher

education institutions ranked joint programmes as a slightly less important internationalisation activity than in 2005.

The conclusion of the [Bologna Process Implementation Report 2012](#) is that several of the 47 Bologna countries have reviewed their legislation to allow and encourage joint programmes, and that the number of students in these programmes is increasing. The EU is continuing its support for international joint programmes within the [Erasmus+](#) programme in the budget period 2014-2020, with an increased budget as compared to the previous Erasmus Mundus programme.

The concept of joint programmes as a means for internationalisation has spread globally, probably as a response to European developments. For instance, [the Institute of International Education transatlantic study](#) (2009) pointed out that US institutions are most likely to have joint programmes with European partners than with institutions in any other region. Another main finding of this report was that among transatlantic partnerships, joint programmes leading to the award of two or more diplomas are much more common than joint programme leading to one diploma, most probably due to legal and administrative challenges related to the award of a joint diploma.

For Latin America, the 2006 [Asturias declaration](#) stressed the development of joint programmes as a priority area for higher education collaboration with the EU countries, and as a way to facilitate academic staff, researcher and student mobility. However, in a global context, according to the 2010 International Association of Universities survey, Latin America is lagging behind in terms of numbers of joint and double degree programmes, behind Africa and slightly behind the Middle East. A strong Latin-American trend is bachelor-level joint programmes within private institutions and Master-level joint programmes with the public institutions.

In Japan and China, jointly developed collaborative degree programmes have witnessed significant growth during the last decade, as seen in the increase in numbers and government support for this kind of internationalisation activity. In 2009 the Campus Asia programme was launched, a regional initiative similar to the European Erasmus Mundus programme.

In Japan, a JICA Research Institute survey (2010) presents 260 double degree programmes at 85 Japanese Universities in 2008, and senior officers expect collaborative degree programmes to become more common in the future.

In 2009-2010, an Asian regional research project titled, "Cross-border Higher Education for Regional Integration and the Labor Market in East Asia" (ASEAN, China, Korea, Japan, Australia) found that:

- Improving the quality of education is perceived as a more important outcome of collaborative degree programmes than it is for traditional forms of simple student mobility.
- Most programmes are at Master level and within social science, business, law (as compared to business and engineering in Europe).
- The expectations are mainly in academic and political domains, not economic.
- The risks perceived are within administrative capacity, ensuring quality and regulation for credit transfer.

There is no global estimate on the numbers of joint programmes and very few statistical surveys have been implemented. However, the most extensive survey done by the Institute of International Education (IIE, 2013) reports that out of 245 higher education institutions in 28 countries, almost all have plans to develop more programmes. 95% of the respondents report that joint and double degree programmes are part of their institution's internationalisation strategy.

The development and implementation of joint programmes is mentioned in several European and national educational strategy papers, and also in the internationalisation strategies of individual higher education institutions (HEIs).

The [INTERUV](#) project has implemented a survey in 14 European countries, to trace the visibility of joint programmes in institutional strategies, results are available through their [website](#).

3.4. Regional and national initiatives financing joint programmes

Several regional and national initiatives highlight the strategic importance given to the joint programmes as instruments to increase the internationalisation of the higher education sector. Regional financing instruments include, among others, the [Nordic Masters programme](#) funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers, the [Mediterranean Office for Youth](#), and the [Pan-African University](#) by the African Union.

Examples of nationally funded bilateral initiatives are the [French-Italian University](#), the [Finnish-Russian Cross-Border University](#), and the German-Dutch [EUREGIO programme](#).

In some countries (such as Norway), national government support is separately available for developing joint programmes, and in some cases the European structural funds can be used for this purpose.

3.5. Sources

Key sources

Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, European Commission, [EU programmes Executive Agency homepage](#).

Erasmus Mundus, [EMQA Erasmus Mundus Quality Assessment 2012, Handbook of Excellence Doctoral Programmes](#). Brussels, Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, 2012, p.66.

Eurydice. The European Higher Education Area in 2012: [The Bologna Process Implementation Report](#), 2012.

Knight, J., [Joint and Double Degree Programmes: Vexing Questions and Emerging Issues](#), OBHE, 2008.

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Kuroda, K. '[Cross-border higher education in ASEAN plus three: Results of JICA-RI surveys on leading universities and cross-border collaborative degree programs](#)', powerpoint presentation given at the International Asia-Europe Conference on Enhancing Balanced mobility, Bangkok, 5-6 March 2012.

4. The Legal Framework

This chapter describes the European and national legal contexts, and the initiated transparency processes. After taking a short look at the European Union, the national legislative power is considered in more detail, followed by the inter-governmental Bologna cooperation and agreements.

4.1. Key messages for practitioners

1. The legal power related to the implementation of international joint programmes lies at the level of national or subnational authorities (Ministries of Education).
2. In addition to the national legislative framework, the institutional guidelines and regulations of the partner HEIs have to be taken into account when planning joint programme cooperation.
3. There are several important transparency tools / projects / facilitating processes:
 - Recognition of qualifications:
 - Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC)
 - The European-Area-of-Recognition (EAR) manual
 - [Guidelines for Good Practice for Awarding Joint Degrees](#), to HEIs
 - Recognition of accreditation decisions:
 - Multilateral Agreement on the Mutual Recognition of Accreditation Results regarding Joint Programmes (MULTRA).
4. The following relevant information related to joint programmes can be found through the ENIC-NARIC network:
 - information on the legal status of the partner institution;
 - the degree-awarding rights of the partner institution;
 - advice on the future recognition of the jointly awarded degree;
 - advice on modalities of joint issuing of diplomas.

4.2. EU competences in higher education

The European Union influences higher education policy through political cooperation. Since the adoption of the Lisbon Strategy in 2000, political cooperation in education has been strengthened – first by the “Education and

Training 2010” work programme, followed by the strategy for European cooperation in education and training “ET 2020”. This cooperation has led to the formulation of common targets and initiatives, which are supported by a number of funding programmes, such as the Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-13 and Erasmus Mundus 2009-13 and the Erasmus+ programme that will replace all the existing initiatives as from 2014. Funding bodies, such as the European Commission, have no legislative power within the educational sector and funding scheme rules on admission, selection, tuition fees etc. are subordinated to national legislation. Among others, it is important to bear this in mind to guarantee the rights of the students of receiving a recognised degree after participating in joint programmes.

The European Commission provides information and a [database on regulated professions](#) within the EU internal market, as well as updates on current directives and harmonisation measures.

The European Qualifications Framework, EQF

[The European Qualifications Framework \(EQF\)](#) is an initiative of the EU and acts as a translation device to make national qualifications more readable across Europe. The EQF aims to relate different countries' national qualifications systems to a common European reference framework. The EQF applies to all types of education, training and qualifications, from school education to academic, professional and vocational. Levels of national qualifications will be placed at one of the central reference levels, ranging from basic (Level 1) to advanced (Level 8).

The higher education bachelor-level cycle corresponds to the learning outcomes for EQF level 5-6. The Master-level cycle corresponds to the learning outcomes for EQF level 7 and the doctoral level cycle to EQF level 8.

In 2005, the Bergen Ministerial Conference adopted the overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA, comprising three cycles, generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes and competences, and credit ranges in the first and second cycles. The first, bachelor-level cycle ranges from 180-240 ECTS credits and the second, Master-level cycle from 90-120 ECTS credits.

ECTS credit transfer and accumulation system

A number of institutions offering a joint programme have adopted the European Credit Transfer and accumulation System (ECTS). One year within the ECTS system stands for 60 credits and the ECTS systems calculates one ECTS credit as comparable to 25-30 hours of work, including self-study.

The ECTS User's Guide has recently been revised and is in the process of being discussed in the Bologna Follow Up Group and likely later approved by the Ministerial Meeting in Yerevan in 2015.

Some care must be taken when using the ECTS grading scheme for the conversion of grades within a joint programme, as difficulties may arise. One difficulty is that the ECTS scale has a statistical basis, and depends on the population of students to be considered. Unless all students are registered at all the participating consortium institutions (even at the universities they may never visit), the student population in the joint programme will be different at each partner university, and one student may end up with two conflicting final grades in two different institutions. The joint registration of all students at all the partner universities will solve this issue, but this may not be possible in all cases, e.g. where there are two universities in the same country, and/or when national legislation does not allow a student to be registered in more than one country.

Also interesting is the [EGRACONS project](#), an EU-co-funded project running from 2012 to 2015, that is developing a European Grade Conversion System. The project aims to develop a user-friendly web-based tool for grade conversion that will be made available to all European higher education institutions on a voluntary basis, enabling a transparent interpretation of students' accomplishments. The Egracons project aims to stay as closely as possible to the general instruction on how to prepare grading tables (based on frequency tables) of the [2009 ECTS Users' Guide](#).

4.3. National legislative power and institutional regulations

Even though joint programmes have an international character, it is important to bear in mind that the legal power related to higher education policy and the implementation of joint programmes lies within the national or subnational legislation and applies also to international cooperation activities. It is therefore important to carefully check national regulations, and not only European regulation.

The higher education policy is implemented by the relevant national Ministry of Education or Science.

Information on national higher education systems in Europe can be found through [Eurydice](#) and the [ENIC-NARICs](#). Eurydice covers 36 countries participating in the EU's Lifelong Learning programme (EU Member States, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland).

National Qualifications Frameworks

All countries of the European Higher Education Area had committed to developing [National Qualifications Frameworks](#) compatible with the overarching framework of the European Higher Education Area by 2010. This [commitment](#) was undertaken in 2005, and the stocktaking report 2012 indicated that this is an area where considerable work remains to be done.

Ensuring the legal status and the degree-awarding power of the partner HEIs

Before entering into joint programme cooperation, it should be established whether the institution is authorised to award qualifications that are accepted for academic and professional purposes in the home country, or, where applicable, also in other countries potentially relevant for future programme graduates.

The [European Area of Recognition Manual](#) presents guidelines on checking the status of the institution (p.21) and lists relevant information sources. If the requested information cannot be found in the available resources, HEIs should contact the competent authority in a given country, such as the [ENIC-NARIC centres](#).

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

Ensuring the legality of the programme offered / accreditation

Accreditation of individual study programmes is required in some countries, but for example not in all European countries. There are variations in accreditation procedures, in criteria, in the cost, in the length and the nature of the decision (conditional/unconditional). In 2010 some European countries (members of the European Consortium for Accreditation in higher education - ECA) launched the [Multilateral Agreement on the Mutual Recognition of Accreditation Results regarding Joint Programmes \(MULTRA\)](#). Refer to chapter 7 for more information about this topic.

In countries where individual programme accreditation is not required, the higher education institution is responsible for continuous quality monitoring of the programme and is usually reviewed by the national quality assurance agency.

Financing and tuition fees

There are great variations within and between countries as regards financing of higher education, and in tuition fee policies. Financing of higher education and tuition fee policy is guided by national

legislation and institutional rules. Information on tuition fees and student support systems in European countries can be found through Eurydice.

the [Eurydice Report 2012 on fees and support for higher education](#).

Quality assurance systems

The processes for ensuring quality within the higher education system vary from one country to another. One distinction is whether the main focus of quality assurance is on institutions, on programmes, or both. Another distinction is between internal and external quality assurance. Information on approaches within internal and external quality assurance within the 47 Bologna countries can be found in the [Bologna Process Implementation Report 2012](#). More details on quality assurance in joint programmes is available in [Chapter 7 of this guide](#).

ENQA Standards and Guidelines

The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) was established in 2004 with an aim to promote European cooperation in the field of quality assurance in higher education.

The ENQA Standards and Guidelines (ESG) were developed as part of the Bologna Process and adopted by European ministers of higher education in 2005. The ESG consist of three parts, covering internal quality assurance, external quality assurance, and external review of national quality assurance agencies.

The ENQA standards and guidelines are currently being revised and the new version is to be presented at the Bologna meeting in Yerevan in 2015. The full proposal for the revised ESG can be downloaded [here](#).

Legal situation on awarding joint degrees and issuing joint diplomas

Issuing one joint diploma after completion of the joint programme is legally possible in some countries, and according to institutional regulations of some higher education institutions. It is important to check national legislation on this point already during the planning phase of the joint programme cooperation, in order to ensure the legal status of the degree awarded, and to ensure degree recognition for future graduates. The most reliable information on the modalities of awarding degrees and issuing diplomas can be found through the Ministries of Education or the [ENIC-NARIC-centres](#) and in the institutional regulations of the partner institutions.

The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) responsible for implementing the Joint Masters Degree component of the Erasmus+ programme regularly updates the situation regarding awarding joint degrees and giving joint diplomas on its [Joint degree website](#).

Student admission

In joint programmes, even though there is mostly a joint body/consortium responsible for selection, the admission decision needs to comply with national and institutional guidelines unless exceptions exist for joint programmes. Adhering to national legal admission requirements is particularly important in order to guarantee the student's right to a recognised degree in the future. As a general rule, it is recommended that the joint admission criteria meet the requirements by the strictest partner as long as this does not conflict with national or institutional criteria.

Institutional guidelines

In addition to adhering to the national legislative framework, HEIs developing joint programmes should also take into consideration the institutional guidelines. Several HEIs have elaborated institutional guidelines on setting up international joint programmes, one example is the [Guide to developing and running joint degree programmes at Bachelor and Master's level at UiB](#) (2010).

Since HEIs enjoy institutional autonomy in many countries, it is vital to consult these guidelines in relation to student admission, assessments, credits and diplomas. Ask your (potential) partners for their guidelines, and distribute their guidelines and your own, to all (potential) consortium partners.

4.4. Inter-governmental cooperation and agreements

The Bologna Process

The inter-governmental Bologna Process, launched in 1999, is one of the main voluntary processes at European level, as it is nowadays implemented in 47 states that make up the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The Bologna Process is meant to ensure more comparable, compatible and coherent systems of higher education in Europe. Officially, the term Bologna Process has now been replaced by referring to 'the implementation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)'.

Joint programmes have been encouraged by the Bologna Process and listed on the agenda of all the Bologna conferences since Prague 2001, and Ministers explicitly agreed on supporting the development and quality assurance of integrated curricula leading to joint degrees in Berlin in 2003. References to recognition of joint degrees were included in 2005 and in 2007. Joint programmes support various Bologna action lines, such as student mobility, joint curriculum development and joint quality assurance.

The joint Diploma Supplement

The European Diploma Supplement is a document attached to a higher education diploma aiming at improving transparency and facilitating recognition. It provides a description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were successfully completed by the individual named on the original diploma to which this supplement is appended.

The tool was initiated by UNESCO and revised jointly by UNESCO, the European Commission and the Council of Europe. Graduates in all the countries taking part in the Bologna Process have the right to receive the Diploma Supplement automatically, free and in a 'major' European language.

The joint programme partnership is advised to issue a joint diploma supplement, including information on the jointness of the educational offer (see ECA's [Guidelines for Good Practice for Awarding Joint Degrees](#), 2014).

Recognition of degrees awarded by joint programmes

According to [The Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region \(The Lisbon Convention\)](#), adopted in 1997, recognition is "a formal acknowledgement by a competent authority of the value of a foreign educational qualification with a view to access to educational and/or employment activities".

Over 50 countries have already ratified the Convention, developed by the Council of Europe and UNESCO. In addition to European countries, it has been signed by e.g. Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States. The Convention covers academic recognition and promotes academic mobility by facilitating the recognition of qualifications: students' access to further studies and credit transfers between higher education institutions. The Convention stipulates that qualifications must be recognised unless substantial differences can be proved. There is a Committee to oversee the implementation of the Convention, among others this Committee has adopted a [Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees](#) in 2004.

In April 2012 the ministers of education of the European Higher Education Area ([EHEA](#)) recommend the use of the [European Area of Recognition manual](#), including information on recognition of qualifications awarded by joint programmes on p.66. This chapter is further elaborated in the Framework for Fair Recognition of Joint Degrees.

The Erasmus Mundus Cluster Workshop (2012) on recognition of joint degrees, presented a relevant overview of the landscape of [recognition of joint degrees](#) by Prof. Andrejs Rauhvargers, the Chair of the BFUG (Bologna Follow-Up Working Group) on Recognition.

For practical guidelines on recognition of joint degrees, see [Chapter 8 of this Guide](#).

4.5. Sources

Key sources

[The Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region \(The Lisbon Convention\)](#)

Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, European Commission. [Joint degree website](#).

[EGRACONS project](#) (European Grade Conversion System).

[Erasmus Mundus Cluster on recognition of joint degrees:](#)
http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/events/sustainability/erasmus_mundus_workshop_sustainability&recognition_rauhvargers.pdf

European Area of Recognition Manual:
http://www.eurorecognition.eu/manual/EAR_manual_v_1.0.pdf

European Consortium for Accreditation: <http://ecaconsortium.net/main/about-eca>

European Consortium for Accreditation: [Guidelines for Good Practice for awarding Joint Degrees](#), 2014.

European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA). [Multilateral Agreement on the Mutual Recognition of Accreditation Results regarding Joint Programmes \(MULTRA\)](#), 2013.

The European Qualifications Framework: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/eqf_en.htm

Eurydice. The European Higher Education Area in 2012: [The Bologna Process Implementation Report](#), 2012.

The Eurydice Network: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/index_en.php

Summaries of EU Legislation; Education and Training,
http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/general_framework/index_en.htm

Other sources

ENQA. [Full proposal for the revised ENQA Standards and Guidelines](#).

European Commission, [database on regulated professions](#).

European Communities. [ECTS User's Guide](#), Brussels, 2009. Please note that a revised version of the ECTS User's Guide will likely be adopted at the European Ministerial conference in Yerevan in 2015.

DRAFT

5. Joint programme development

This chapter deals with important issues that have to be taken into account at an early stage of the development phase. First, the reasons for entering into joint programmes, the importance of institutional strategic support and tools for authorising the programmes are presented. Secondly, the chapter deals with partnership, joint curriculum development, definition of common learning outcomes and designing a relevant mobility track. At the end, issues to include in the cooperation agreement are mentioned.

5.1. Key messages for practitioners

1. Institutions must clearly define their reasons for entering into joint programme cooperation, the academic added value and wider relevance of the intended learning outcomes. Start with the idea, find a niche, and be innovative.
2. To be successful, a joint programme must be anchored in the institutional strategies and internationalisation policy.
3. Institutional support (strategic and practical) and flexibility at all levels within the institution are crucial. This support must be in place at the start of the development phase.
4. Know the national and institutional regulations of your institution and partner institutions.
5. Select partners based on the academic expertise they bring to the cooperation, mutual trust (through open communication and a shared understanding), and institutional strategic commitment. Know your partner institutions' strengths and weaknesses, academically and administratively.
6. Develop a full-cost budgeting from the beginning, including running costs.
7. Jointly define the need for the programme, the learning outcomes and length of the programme. Jointly develop the joint curricula, consider recognition and access to further studies. Define the level of integration and anticipate degree awarding.
8. Develop a robust, clear and flexible cooperation agreement that delineates responsibilities, expected outcomes, and other relevant parameters.
9. Clear identification of the target students contributes to the overall quality of the programme, not only academically but also with regard to visa, marketing and admission procedures.
10. When developing new joint programmes, early contact with non-academic partners is important to (i) formulate learning outcomes in relation to employability, (ii) to include labour-market elements into the curricula, and (iii) to explore potential financial cooperation to ensure programme sustainability.

5.2. Reasons for developing joint programmes.

Reasons for institutions

Institutions considering to develop joint programmes must ask themselves *why* they wish to develop joint programmes, what the added value will be, and to which extent joint programmes help to realise the institutional strategy. The main reasons for higher education institutions to develop joint programmes are the following:

At institutional level:

- raising the international visibility and reputation of the institution;
- global student recruitment and increased internationalisation;
- raising institutional revenue by increasing foreign student enrolments;
- deepening and institutionalising cooperation with consortium partners, leading to more sustainable strategic relationships;
- building networks of excellence to strengthen (strategic) international research collaboration.

At programme level:

- broadening or deepening education offering;
- developing a more internationalised curriculum, realising that a truly international / European course cannot be delivered by one institution or institutions from one country;
- strengthening strategic partnerships with other regions in the world;
- quality improvement of the curriculum (and of research elements in the case of joint doctoral programmes);
- offering a specialist, innovative curriculum by combining the education and research strengths of individual institutions (so that the sum is more than the part);
- increasing cross-cultural competencies of students and staff, not only through mobility, but also by enhancing internationalisation at home;
- improving graduate employability through curricula that respond to labour-market demand (preparation for an increasingly global labour market, e.g. through cross-cultural competencies);
- raising the international visibility and prestige of the course programme;
- providing an important label of quality that strengthens an interdisciplinary case for funding from other sources;
- attracting new groups / nationalities of target students;
- gaining access to the expertise of a partner institution and its research networks, thus providing critical mass and a basis for strengthening research collaboration.

Benefits for academics and students

Reasons for academic staff to become involved in joint programmes are that these programmes – either through staff mobility or incoming student mobility – offer staff:

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

The main benefit for students is to take advantage of an internationally jointly developed curriculum, combining academic expertise available in different countries through a study programme guaranteeing automatic recognition of the period spent abroad.

Some students believe that a joint programme is of higher quality than a common single degree programme, given that the expertise of more than one institution has shaped the academic programme.

Others are interested in gaining ‘two degrees for the price of one’. And an advantage of a joint programme over a regular study abroad experience is that there is no loss of time or the risk of credits not being counted. There also is a sense of elitism attached to having academic degrees from universities in different countries. For doctoral (and some master) candidates, joint programmes offer good opportunities to co-operate with high-quality researchers with complementary knowledge and skills, to enter into new academic networks, and to work in a part of the world specific to their interests.

Region-specific reasons: some examples

The reasons for developing joint programmes can vary between regions, countries and institutions.

The institutional reasons for developing joint programmes are generally the same both for European institutions and for institutions in the United States. However, institutions in the United States would more often join the cooperation for revenue purposes, as compared to their European counterparts.

At European level, joint programmes are encouraged to enhance internal European higher education cooperation, to increase the attractiveness of the European region and to promote cooperation with other regions in the world. This is encouraged, for instance, through funding programmes such as the previous Erasmus Mundus, the current Joint Master Degrees under Erasmus+, and the joint programme initiatives with industrialised countries. For higher education institutions in Europe, improving graduate employability through joint programmes is an important rationale that is less often found in other regions.

For Latin American universities, the main reasons for developing joint programmes are internationalisation of the curriculum, increasing student mobility, raising student employability and enlarging educational offer.

Despite the short history of joint programmes in China, they have witnessed significant growth due to government support and public demand. The Chinese government in particular, has tried to attract high-quality educational programmes (including joint programme partners) to China in areas where there is a gap in domestic public higher education courses.

For institutions in developing countries, joint programmes contribute to capacity building. Joint programmes help improve the quality of teaching and research, and establish networks between North and South.

5.3. Institutional strategies and guidelines

Institutional strategies and guidelines regarding joint programmes greatly add to both their quality and the quantity. Although a top-down approach is not the only way fruitful cooperation can be developed, a central approach in almost all cases adds to the commitment of staff and finances, and contributes to the wellbeing of joint programmes in an organisation.

In 2013, The [INTERUV](#) project has implemented a survey in 14 European countries, to trace the visibility of joint programmes in institutional strategies, results are available through their [website](#).

The Joiman network has also done research to the state of affairs of institutional strategies in relation to the development of joint programmes. In its [guidelines](#), the network indicates that only half of the 36 institutions questioned have a strategic policy to develop joint programmes.

According to the 2011 [IIE international survey outcomes](#), a vast majority of the respondents say that joint and double degree programmes are part of the institutional strategy on internationalisation. Only half of them, however, have a clear policy on the development of joint programmes.

Importance of institutional commitment

Institutional commitment is one of the cornerstones of the sustainability of a joint programme, throughout the development and implementation phase. Personal commitment by individual academic staff is sometimes the starting point for a joint programme, but without institutional support at all levels, most such initiatives will be short lived. The University of Bergen (Norway), for instance, has anchored joint degrees in university legislation. In Bergen, the development of joint programmes is mainly a responsibility of departments and faculty, where the central offices assist in providing funding. Another example, from Graz University (Austria), indicates that in an early stage of the Bologna Process, the university made joint programmes one of the cornerstones of its internationalisation policy. By providing funding and clear regulations, and dedicatedly assigning members of staff to joint programmes, they are firmly anchored within the university.

In its [Guidelines for Quality Enhancement in European Joint Master Programmes](#), EUA (2006) underlines the importance of this institutional commitment. This starts already at the beginning of the development process of a new programme, resulting in a formal contract between the partners as proof. It is important to pave the path to a sound quality culture by creating a culture of joint commitment at all levels of all partners.

[The Erasmus Mundus quality assurance tool](#) presents good practice and examples on developing a realistic institutional strategy.

Screening and authorising joint programmes

At some point, most institutions will come across proposals from their staff to develop a joint programme. Being prepared to properly assess their merits is important and will support successful implementation and sustainability. US-based Rice University has developed a special [screening and authorisation process](#) to help the university to describe and evaluate the programme. The [description of this process](#), the [lessons learnt](#), and the [list of questions](#) addressed are useful examples for other institutions. Rice University's list of questions in the screening process focuses on 14 elements that need to be considered:

1. the rationale of the joint programme,
2. the curriculum,
3. the partner institution(s),
4. students and academic standards,
5. learning,
6. faculty and courses,
7. resources,
8. financial support,
9. administration and programme governance,

10. degree requirements for the general announcements,
11. the launch of the programme,
12. academic support,
13. potential liabilities and other risks, and
14. measures of progress and success.

Rice University's screening process was geared at meeting multiple objectives:

- i. ensuring that all important factors had been considered,
- ii. increasing the strategic alignment of individual initiatives with central university priorities,
- iii. maintaining shared governance,
- iv. reducing unnecessary work in the proposal-writing stage,
- v. increasing buy-in across campus, and
- vi. reducing set-up time of the programme.

EMQA checklist for creating a comprehensive course vision

The [Erasmus Mundus Quality Assurance](#) (EMQA) project describes the need for a comprehensive vision of both joint Master and Doctorate programmes. A comprehensive, seven-point overview is available in the guide. Here are the main points listed:

- Identify the unique selling proposition of running a joint programme, including the type of consortium and the academic content;
- Further develop the description of the rationale and the mobility paths;
- Work on a sustainability strategy;
- Develop a common vision on shared cultures, both academic and administrative;
- Work on a thorough employability strategy for candidates;
- Agree upon the examination process, taking into consideration transparency;
- Agree upon the degree awarded and maximise its recognition.

5.4. Partnership, legality of the programme, students

Selecting partners

Partners in a joint programme should first and foremost be chosen based on a complementing, specific academic expertise that enriches the joint educational offer. Other important aspects to consider are mutual trust, commitment, open communication, administrative support, and possible access to new student markets. Also remember that you can include partners as associated partners that only participate in parts of the programme, e.g. through external lecturing, providing internships, and financing scholarships. The more partners in a consortium, the harder it can be to co-ordinate collaboration and the higher the need is for formal organisational structures.

Large consortia offering joint programmes often started with a small number of partners and then expanded. There seems to be a trend among most existing joint degree programmes that they involve two, rather than multiple, institutions. The [EUA report](#) gives a brief overview of a couple of common features of joint master (degree) programmes that are developed by either larger (> 10 institutions) or smaller networks (up to 7 institutions).

It is also helpful to determine the nature of the partners in the consortium by naming key factors they should meet, such as familiarity with the partners, resources, reliability, and the administrative capacity.

The [JOI.CON guide](#) stresses the importance of knowing beforehand both the partners and the regulations of the countries involved. The JOICON Annex includes useful Comparison Table templates to help institutions explore all potential obstacles to joint programmes beforehand.

The EUA [Joint Masters report](#) describes partner selection as crucial for new joint masters programmes. Elements to take into consideration are communication and trust in each other, develop learning objectives, solve recognition issues. Also important are the number and type of partners and their level of commitment.

Matthias Kuder and Daniel Obst find that institutions normally select their joint programme partners through existing exchange partnerships or academic contacts. Sometimes, however, institutions choose partners as part of a larger strategic decision to focus on a particular area in the world, or field of study.

Ensuring the legality of the joint programme offered

When developing the joint curricula and the whole joint programme, it is important to be fully aware of national legal frameworks and institutional requirements on all aspects of running and implementing a study programme.

The process covers at least the following aspects:

- ensuring the legal status of all partner institutions involved;
- ensuring the legal status of the degrees proposed as part of the joint programme;
- checking national and institutional regulations related to jointly awarding degrees,
- checking national and institutional regulations on the content of the programme, such as minimum length of the dissertation/thesis, requirements of labour-market related elements, and dissertation/thesis defence;
- ensuring that appropriate national admission requirements are being adhered to;
- in terms of students rights, check that national tuition fee requirements are being followed.

For more detailed information, as well as references, please see Chapter 4 on the legal framework.

Identifying target students

Defining precisely what the target group of a joint programme should be generally seems to result in the distinction between EU and non-EU students. Sometimes, target students are identified based on social-economic aspects. Selecting the target group of students is a delicate and strategic exercise for a joint programme since it is closely connected to finances. Attracting students from all over the world requires well-defined marketing plans, investments and fundraising activities in order to sustain the programme.

Institutions often see joint programmes with non-European universities as a way to enhance their attractiveness, to increase the number of non-EU students. This concept is more and more becoming part of the institutional strategy.

The EUA [report on developing joint masters in Europe](#) addresses the impact of social-economic conditions on the admission of students to joint programmes: mechanisms are needed to facilitate greater equality of opportunity. Participation should depend upon students' potential to gain benefit from the opportunities joint programmes offer, not on their social-economic background. Joint programmes in Europe tend to be dominated by middle-class students as they require significant financial contributions from individual students.

5.5. Joint curriculum development

The [Erasmus Mundus Quality Assurance](#) EMQA tool provides a checklist of actions and good practice in relation to integrated learning outcomes, programme pedagogy, balancing learning and teaching, and assessment mechanisms.

Academic and labour market relevance of the joint educational offer

Even though the rationale and relevance of a joint programmes should be the guiding principle, the academic and labour market relevance seems to be a topic that is not often addressed explicitly in references in relation to the development of joint programmes.

Relevance is, however, an important theme within the EU funding schemes, where in the current Erasmus+ Joint Masters Degree selection (2014-2020), the relevance criteria are separately looked at during the first selection phase, before the proposals will even enter into the second evaluation phase. Partnerships applying for funding are asked to justify the cooperation in terms of academic relevance, employability, inter- or multidisciplinary emerging fields, and added value compared with existing programmes.

In many countries, the national accreditation decision is also strongly focusing on relevance and added value of the proposed, new joint programme.

It is useful to look for involving and consulting several non-academic stakeholders within your subject field already during the development phase, to guarantee labour market, societal or research relevance of the joint programme you are planning. [JOIMAN](#) stresses the importance of engaging contacts with business from the beginning of the development trajectory, in order to plan financial reserves or other means to sustain the programme.

An excellent practical site is that of the [European Commission Cluster on Employability](#), which contains practical guidelines with relevant examples of good practice on activities supporting the employability of Erasmus Mundus students and alumni.

The Erasmus Mundus graduate survey mentions that Erasmus Mundus students based their success in finding employment on academic rather than practical experience gained during the programme, and might profit from a more balanced approach of practical as well as academic modules.

In the [2009 EUA survey](#), when asked about employer involvement during the curriculum design stage, more than half of the respondents indicated that this had not been the case – although one of the major incentives to develop the courses was relevance to the labour market. Only about ten percent had requested feedback from employers. If we look at the other side of this spectrum, to a certain level, employers are unaware of what higher education institutions can offer. Only if enterprises are convinced that their participation in curriculum development is of great interest to them, dialogues with institutions can flourish. The EUA survey did not find institutions where this participation did not exist.

Learning outcomes and the European Qualifications Framework

The European approach to developing curricula is soundly based in student-centered learning and identifying learning outcomes, instead of only listing teaching content and methodology. The

learning outcomes are introduced both through the general European Qualification Framework, EQF and the thematic approach through the [Tuning](#) project.

In the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), qualifications frameworks are found at two levels. An [overarching framework](#) has been adopted for the EHEA in 2005; and all member countries will develop [national qualifications frameworks](#) that are compatible with this overarching framework.

The overarching framework for qualifications in the EHEA comprises three cycles including generic descriptors for each cycle based on learning outcomes and competences, and credit ranges in the first and second cycles. The EHEA framework is based on the Dublin Descriptors from 2004, built on the following elements:

- knowledge and understanding,
- applying knowledge and understanding,
- making judgements,
- communications skills,
- learning skills.

In their [Guide to formulating degree programme profiles](#), Lokhoff et al. (2010) describe the concept 'degree profile' in the context of the Bologna Process, as an essential tool for communication and transparency of the degree, and for its recognition. Degree profiles consist of Programme Competences and Learning Outcomes, where a competence "is a quality, ability, capacity or skill that is developed by and that belongs to the student". A learning outcome is "a measurable result of a learning experience which allows us to ascertain to which extent / level / standard a competence has been formed or enhanced". The guide offers templates and manuals on how to formulate learning outcomes, interlaced with examples.

As for the recognition of the future degree of joint programme, the [manual of the EAR-project](#) contains a separate chapter on the matter. It describes how credential evaluators should evaluate the learning outcomes in the process of recognising the degree.

As a requirement of European funding such as the Erasmus Mundus or the current Erasmus+ programmes, the joint partnership has to define joint learning outcomes for the entire joint programme, to be fulfilled regardless of where the students start their courses. The JOIMAN survey showed that over 80% of responding institutions define the learning outcomes of joint programmes as a whole at consortium level.

Tuning

The [Tuning](#) methodology is a thematic, learning outcomes based approach, a platform for developing reference points at subject area level. Tuning worked with 9 subject areas (business, chemistry, earth sciences, education, european studies, history, mathematics, nursing and physics), and the guidelines on identifying competences and setting learning outcomes can be very useful in joint programmes.

The Tuning approach is as follows:

1. Description of the objectives of the programme and the learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities.
2. Identification of the generic and subject-specific competences that should be obtained in the programme.
3. Translation into the curriculum: content (topics to be covered) and structure (modules and credits).

4. Translation into educational units and activities to achieve the defined learning outcomes.
5. Deciding on the approaches to teaching and learning (types of methods, techniques and formats), as well as the methods of assessment (when required, the development of teaching materials).
6. Development of an evaluation system intended to enhance its quality continuously.

The Tuning project is embraced by Maierhofer and Kribernegg's 'Graz Model' (2009) as useful in curriculum modularisation. A 2009 [report](#) of the German-Dutch EUREGIO project (by Nickel et al.) also recommends using the Tuning methodology as one of the tools for developing a joint programme. In his [paper](#) about double and joint business degrees, Schüle mentions learning outcomes as the tool to smoothen the cooperation in a double degree programme when recognising credits from another institution, and gives examples.

Designing an academically relevant mobility track

The mobility track is depending first and foremost on the learning outcomes of the programme, the academic relevance and added value of a particular path, on which HEIs are degree-awarding, and on their institutional guidelines. The [Erasmus Mundus Quality Assurance](#) EMQA tool provides a checklist of actions and good practice in relation to how the mobility pathways can be developed to match intended learning outcomes.

Good practice is to define different mobility models and jointly discuss their positive and negative aspects. The mobility models can be based on student choice or be defined by the partner HEIs.

There are several models of international student mobility in joint programmes:

1. students can travel together as a group, starting in one location and transferring to another;
2. students can start their studies at different locations, and then merge with the others at one or more participating institutions;
3. students are individually mobile, collecting credits as they like at different universities that do not have exactly the same curriculum.

[JOIMAN](#) elaborates on this, and considers four models of mobility:

1. Programmes with common courses offered by some or all universities, where students can start the programme, plus one mobility period for specialising courses lasting one semester, with students returning to their home institutions for the research period.
2. "trip programmes", with fixed mobility and with all students starting at the same institution. Students are together from the beginning to the end of the programme.
3. 'bilateral mobility programmes', where students spend one year at the starting institution, and one year in the second institution, including dissertation / thesis research. The mobility options can be either fixed (depending on the starting institutions) or free.
4. Programmes with joint intensive modules: in this model, students can have mobility periods on the basis of the above models, and an intensive residential module, usually organised outside the lecture periods, in which all students are together.

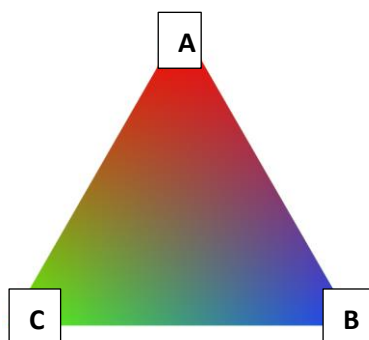
The 2013 [EACEA synthesis report](#) on experiences of the Erasmus Mundus courses, states that most programmes organised programme level events, such as Summer or Winter schools, or workshops, following a rotation principle so that each partner could benefit from networking through the mobility of teaching staff, visiting scholars and students. Those Erasmus Mundus courses that combine jointly developed academic provision with several mobility tracks and professional

internships, as well as activities bringing all students together, appear to achieve the highest European added value and successfully build on effective horizontal cooperation.

Examples of mobility structures

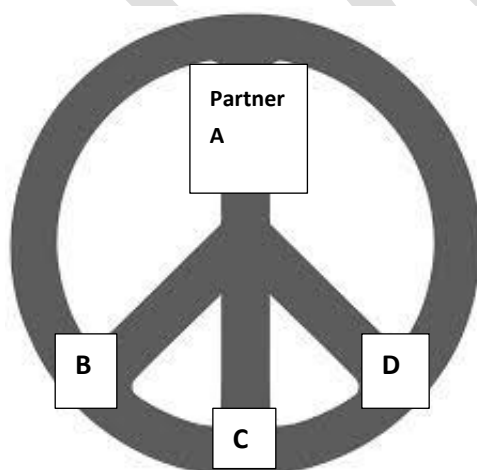
This section gives examples of four models of international student mobility within joint programmes.

Model 1. Students are moving together from partner A, B to C, with common curricula for all. Creates a feeling of jointness among the students, but specialisation is not offered.

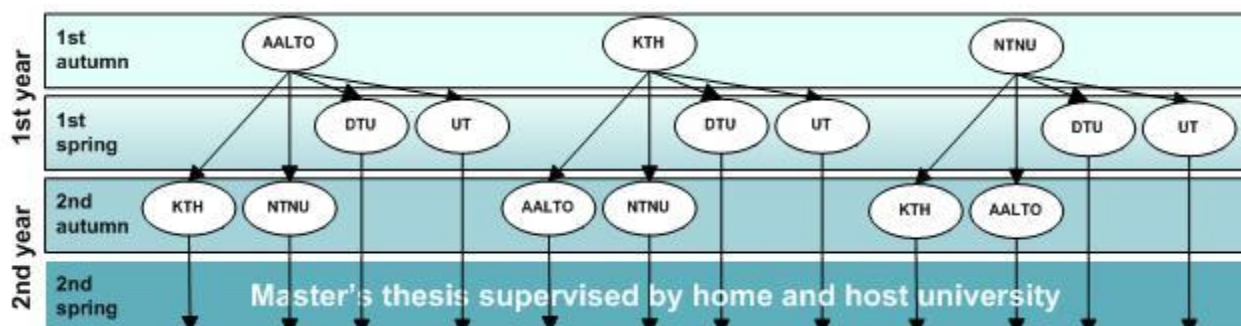


Model 2. This model shows several possible mobility paths, allowing specialisation tracks.

Students start together at partner A, move to different locations (B, C or D) for the second mobility (allowing specialisations), and finally either go back to partner A, or go to finalise the dissertation/thesis at a third partner.



Model 3. A more complicated model, allowing several special mobility tracks. In this model, students start at different locations but there are still common components, as well as a connection between the home/starting university and the final hosting university through joint dissertation/thesis supervision.



Model 4. The final model presents a tight mobility pattern, where students go to four or five destinations within two years:

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

Academic calendar

A different setup of academic years can present problems for student mobility. On the other hand, different academic calendars provide more opportunities for faculty exchange. Differences in academic calendars can be a real barrier for student mobility and solving mobility issues requires detailed working together between partners. [JOIMAN](#)'s survey shows that about twenty percent of the responding institutions find the period of enrollment an issue due to different academic calendars.

Flexible solutions are required when dealing with different academic calendars: sometimes Summer schools are organised, or distance learning is offered as an option. Others look at the course duration, by for instance lengthening or shortening the semester. A lot depends on the willingness of staff to leave their normal calendar behind them, and start for instance early, before the official start of the academic year.

Joint programmes with partners in the Southern part of the world are considered to have the advantage of being able to mix first and second semester students, since Summer and Winter are reversed.

Financial planning

As for financial planning, it is important to:

1. prepare a reliable budget plan already at the development stage;
2. look for different financial resources; and
3. prepare the plan and find agreement on the distribution of funds among the consortium members.

The [EMQA project](#) presents valuable information on setting up realistic financial strategies, with good practice and examples, both covering the master and doctoral levels.

Having continued funding is a crucial element to sustain the running of a joint programme in the long term. Without additional funding for a joint programme co-ordinator or assistant, some institutions find it difficult to meet the additional workload that joint programmes normally generate. The [JOIMAN report](#) indicates that half of 89 surveyed institutions had not reserved any revenues to ensure the sustainability of their joint programme. Most institutions surveyed indicated that they planned to re-apply to their funding source.

The JOI.CON training project has developed a useful [template](#) of a full cost calculation of a joint master (degree) programme.

For more detailed information on resources, please turn to section 6.4 on financial management in this Guide.

Quality assurance in programme development

A useful tool during the development phase, is the newly created [Joint Programme Checklist](#) – inspired by quality assurance, based on good practice found in several accreditation reports, by the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA).

In its recommendations and good practices for the development phase of joint programmes, [JOIMAN](#) mentions several suggestions for how to set up a quality assurance system. They range from adopting the ENQA standards to setting up a joint evaluation structure with a joint board, students and a quality assurance committee, to - for instance - the need to assure the flexibility of the curriculum.

For a more exhaustive list of tools for assuring quality, please turn to Chapter 7 of this Guide on Quality Assurance.

Recognition of the future degree

When setting up a joint programme, the consortium needs to identify various career options available for future graduates of the newly developed study programme. Already during the development phase, it is important to consider possible professional recognition processes (where the degree gives access to certain ‘regulated’ professions) and regulations on access to further studies required in the partner countries, and maybe also in countries outside of the consortium if

the programme offers internationally relevant learning outcomes. Recognition decisions are often also based on the bachelor-level education of the graduate. Hence, the consortium should have a holistic approach to curriculum development, considering admission requirements in relation to future recognition of the degree.

Quality assurance of the joint master programme will add to broad recognition of the degree awarded. The [EAR Manual](#) contains a chapter on recognition of joint qualifications, which contains information for credential evaluators on how to assess a joint qualification.

The [Erasmus Mundus Quality Assurance](#) EMQA tool provides a checklist of actions and good practice in relation to Degrees and Degree Recognition.

For further information and tools on recognition issues, please consult [Chapter 8 on Recognition](#).

5.6. Issues to include in the Cooperation Agreement

Draw up a cooperation agreement as early as possible, making it flexible, as there will be regular need of updates. One solution is a general, simple agreement with references to more detailed annexes. It is useful to include the following issues in the co-operation agreement:

1. Purpose and scope of the agreement
2. Legal framework and national qualifications – documentation in annex
3. Structure and organisation of the cooperation
4. Programme structure (learning outcomes, course units, methodology, mobility)
5. Degree and diploma – template in annex
6. Student admission, selection, registration and examination
7. Financial management (including tuition fees, annex)
8. Quality assurance (annex)
9. Intellectual property rights
10. Renewal, termination and amendment and resolution of disputes
11. Application of law and dispute resolution

You will find more information on cooperation agreements in section 6.3 of this Guide.

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6. Joint programme management

This chapter focuses on how to manage the implementation of joint programmes. Several aspects are discussed: governance and management, cooperation agreements, financial management, marketing and administration, as well as quality assurance and recognition.

6.1. Key messages for practitioners

1. There are no pre-defined management models; all joint programmes need to consider their specific context and develop their own suitable model. Identify all the partners (players) in the programme, identify their role and accommodate them in the management and governance structures of the programme (partners can include: degree or non-degree awarding HEIs, non-university partners, professional bodies, alumni, etc).
2. A joint programme should preferably be seen as main-stream, educational offer and the partner HEIs should avoid creating new bodies that are not necessarily needed. Establish the management structure based on the *set of tasks for which joint arrangements are needed* as compared to regular programme administration:
 - joint coordinating and representing the consortium externally
 - joint developing and monitoring of the academic content of the programme
 - joint quality assurance (academic and administrative; internal and external)
 - joint financial administration and decisions
 - joint student administration (joint selection and how to manage possible complaints, admission, registration, assessment, grading and examinations, transfer of credits, archiving of student records for future enquiries, etc.)
 - joint promotion of the programme, and joint student recruitment
3. Take into account the structure of the HEI (decentralised versus centralised), consider the pros and cons of different models in your cooperation. Examples of management models with organigrams are available through JOIMAN and JOI.CON (see section 6.2 in this guide).
4. Draw up a cooperation agreement as early as possible, making it flexible as there will be regular need of updates. A possible solution is a general and simple agreement with references to more detailed annexes regulating different issues in the cooperation.
5. Joint programmes impose extra costs and full-cost budgets must be calculated from the beginning. Arrangements for tuition fees, scholarships, cost-sharing and the financial sustainability of programmes need to be negotiated. In the case of tuition fees, different national regulations must be taken into account. Be aware of distinctions between home countries or nationalities in setting fee policy.
6. Develop a joint strategy on promotion and marketing, analysing relevant target audiences based on market research, review of relevant related 'feeding' study programmes (BA into MA), use alumni and partner networks, define your unique selling points.

7. Awarding the degree is regulated by national legislation. Consulting the national ENIC-NARIC office is recommended when drafting the joint diploma and Diploma Supplement, to support future recognition of the degree.
8. Few information sources are available on employer attitudes towards joint programmes or about the jointly issues diploma; hence this is an area for future studies.
9. Global networking activities are essential to increase the awareness and visibility of the joint programme among future employers, to enhance employability.
10. It is important to involve non-academic, labour market actors in the planning and monitoring of the joint programme, and preferably also through involve them in internship provision.

6.2. Governance and management structures

It is important to consider how to form the governance and management structure of a joint programme because this structure determines how the roles, power and responsibilities are assigned, controlled and coordinated, and how information flows between the different management levels. The governance and management structure depends on the strategic aims of the joint programme. In a centralized structure, the top management has most of the decision-making power, with tight control over players in the joint programme consortium. In a decentralized structure, the decision-making power is distributed and the partners may have different degrees of independence.

Only a minority (41%) of responding institutions have implemented additional structures to manage joint programmes, according to an [IIE survey](#) of 92 EU and 81 U.S. institutions.

The [JOIMAN report](#), based on a survey of 45 institutions, offers a useful chapter on the management and organisation of joint programmes. The report provides an overview of the involvement of different administrative units in the management of joint programmes and of the division of responsibilities among partners.

The [JOIMAN report](#) observes that the coordinating institution is usually in charge of receiving the applications, sending letters of acceptance, financially monitoring the programme, and collecting and distributing fees. The consortium is then in charge of the screening of applications, deciding on admission, organising the mobility, and issuing the certificate. The partner institutions (at the central level) are in charge of enrolment, visas, accommodation, certification, delivery of the degree certificate and the diploma supplement; and (at faculty / departmental level) the partner institutions are in charge of the organisation of extra-curricular activities, examination, Master dissertation / thesis, transfer of marks, and transfer of records.

ECA's [Joint Programme Checklist](#) recommends that each partner identifies a person (or function) to act as a local coordinator taking responsibility for the joint programme within the partner institutions. This local coordinator also acts as the main contact person for the other consortium partners.

The EMAP project (Erasmus Mundus Active Participation) offers several [videos](#) of coordinator presentations on course management issues.

Examples of governance models

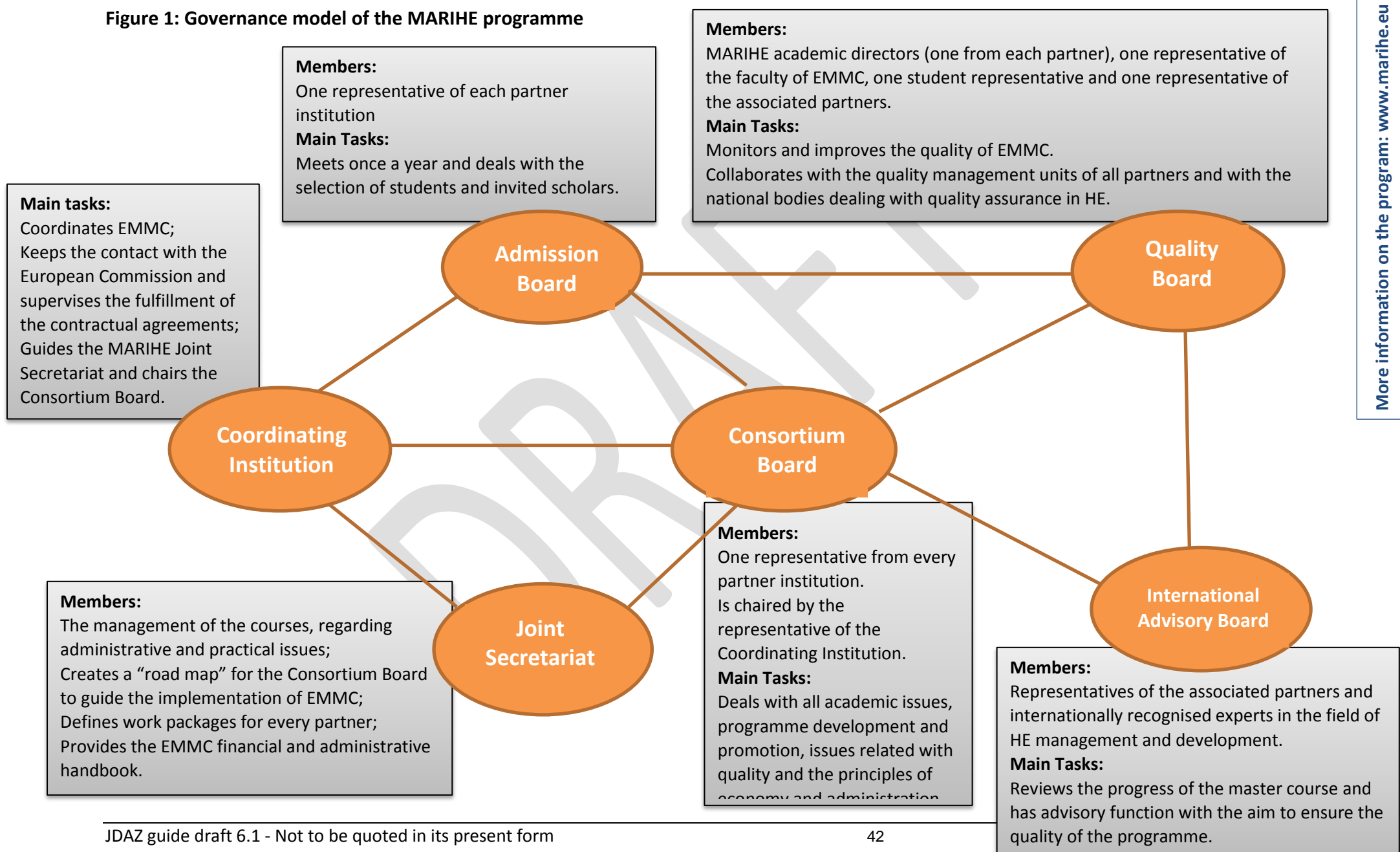
One example is the governance model of the Erasmus Mundus Master in Research and Innovation in Higher Education (MARIHE). The two-year joint programme is built on the expertise of four

consortium partners: Danube University Krems (Austria; the coordinating institution), the University of Tampere (Finland), the University of Applied Sciences Osnabrück (Germany), and Beijing Normal University (China).

Figure 1 illustrates the governance model of the MARIHE Erasmus Mundus Master Course (EMMC), with an explanation of members and main tasks of each board. Characteristic of the MARIHE governance model is that each board (except the international advisory board) includes a representative from each consortium partner institution.

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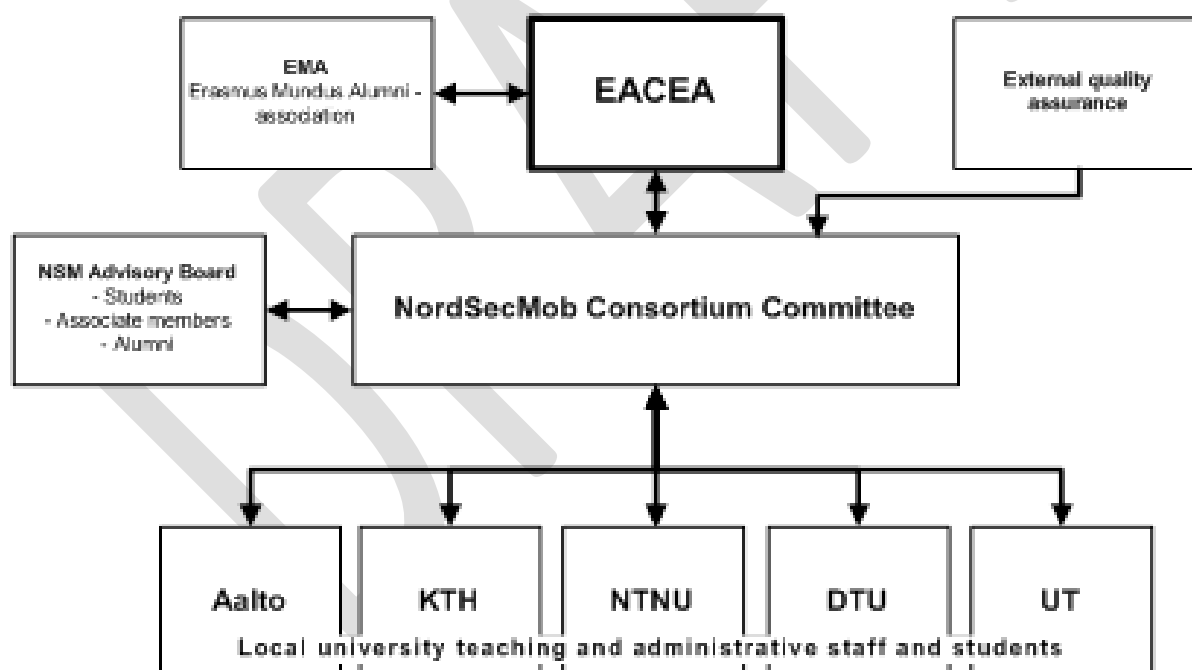
Figure 1: Governance model of the MARIHE programme



Another example is the governance model of the Erasmus Mundus Master in Security and Mobile Computing (NordSecMob). The joint programme is offered by the Aalto University School of Sciences (Aalto, Finland), KTH Royal Institute of Technology (KTH, Sweden), the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU, Norway), the Technical University of Denmark (DTU, Denmark), and the University of Tartu (UT, Estonia). The two-year programme leads to a double degree from two universities.

Figure 2 illustrates the NordSecMob governance model. The NordSecMob consortium agreement does not specify which type of members form the Consortium Committee, but in practice, the committee is formed by one academic and one administrative representative of each partner institution. The Consortium Committee meets twice a year and takes joint decisions on all issues relating to the joint programme, including the tuition fee level and distribution, quality assurance of the programme, adaptation of the joint curriculum, and student admission standards, procedures and selection. The Consortium Committee selects students, but this selection decision is only final after the relevant body of each partner university has approved the selection. This highlights the importance of having a common understanding within the consortium on who has the mandate to take certain decisions.

Figure 2: Governance model of the NordSecMob programme



N.B. EACEA stands for the European Commission's Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency.

6.3. Cooperation agreements: content and templates

Draw up a cooperation agreement as early as possible and make sure that it is signed by the competent authorities of the partner institutions. Make the cooperation agreement flexible as there will be regular need of updates. One solution is a general, simple agreement with references to more detailed annexes that can be revised without having to revise the main agreement.

It is useful to include the following aspects in the cooperation agreement:

1. Purpose and duration of the agreement;
2. Legal framework and national qualifications – documentation in annex;
3. Structure and organisation of the cooperation: coordinator, decision-making bodies with mandates and composition;
4. Programme structure (learning outcomes, course units, methodology, student and staff mobility, length, language);
5. Degree and diploma, related partner responsibilities – template in annex;
6. Student administration: admission, selection, registration, examination, appeal policy. student rights and obligations (student agreement);
7. Financial management with roles of each partner (including tuition fees in an annex);
8. Quality Assurance (annex);
9. Intellectual property rights;
10. Renewal, termination and amendment and resolution of disputes;
11. Application of law and dispute resolution.

The JOIMAN project has developed a useful [template](#) of cooperation agreements for joint programmes at master and doctoral level.

The [Erasmus Mundus Quality Assurance](#) EMQA tool provides a checklist of actions and good practice in relation to drafting consortium agreements.

The [EACEA website](#) for Erasmus Mundus Action 1 beneficiaries also provide useful templates for consortium agreements.

6.4. Financial management

Joint programmes impose extra running costs for aspects as joint curriculum development, marketing, mobility, assessments, administration, and relatively high costs of short-term accommodation. The implementation of a joint programme becomes complicated when multiple countries and partners with different tuition fee policies are involved. Arrangements for cost-sharing, tuition fees, scholarships and the sustainability of programmes need to be negotiated. In situations where revenue generation is possible, an agreement for income distribution is necessary.

Be aware of funding schemes that set rules and conditions for the joint programme, such as the distinction between programme and partner countries in Erasmus+, Science without Borders, national and bilateral funding schemes.

The [Erasmus Mundus Quality Assurance](#) EMQA tool provides a checklist of actions and good practice in relation to structuring human resources and setting up financial strategies.

It is important to set up a full cost budget for the joint programme, including all the running costs. The JOI.CON training project has developed a useful [template](#) of a full cost calculation of a joint master (degree) programme.

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

The Erasmus Mundus Thematic Cluster on Sustainability provides an excellent overview of how to achieve financial sustainability in its practical guidelines. It describes four routes: through alternative financing, through targeted dissemination, through strong relationships with other Erasmus Mundus Courses, and through keeping Erasmus Mundus as a brand.

Tuition fees

In some cases, the extra investment needed to offer joint programmes can be borne by increasing tuition fees. Reaching agreement with partner institutions on tuition fees can be difficult due to different national and/or institutional tuition fee policies. The EU funding schemes for joint programmes require a common tuition fee policy, causing an added challenge to the existing legal situation. Also, students' nationalities have to be taken into account - i.e. EU and non-EU students pay different fees. ECA's [Joint Programme checklist](#) includes useful tips on tuition fees.

JOI.CON suggests that, next to making a thorough inventory of the legal (im)possibilities regarding tuition fees in each participating country, institutions must work on raising the awareness of the actual costs of a joint programme. The [report](#) contains several interesting schemes for calculating fees (pp.21-25).

In the case of non-Erasmus Mundus joint programmes, tuition fee levels and structures may vary for each programme. An [IIE survey](#) of 92 EU and 81 US institutions found that the majority of European respondents (64%) and 55% of US respondents indicated that students paid all fees for the entire programme to the home institution. US respondents were more likely to have programmes in which the student paid separate tuition fees at each participating institution (31%) than European respondents (16%). However, for the programme management, different fees may cause uneven numbers of enrolments, causing difficulties for future financing of the programme.

Sometimes, fees are paid to the coordinating institution, which then divides tuition revenues among partner institutions (but this is not legally allowed in all countries). Some institutions apply different approaches according to academic level: at postgraduate level, students pay at each institution, whereas at the undergraduate level, students only pay the home institution.

When implementing a joint programme, the following tuition fee-related issues must be borne in mind:

- If charging tuition fees, European partner institutions should discuss whether all students should pay the same amount or whether to differentiate between European and non-European students;
- Independent approval of the University Board may be required for charging separate tuition fees;
- It is essential to check the legal situation of potential partners before implementing a joint programme. Involving administrative and/or legal offices can be helpful at this stage.

An essential tool for information on different higher education funding schemes and tuition fee policies is the [Eurydice website](#), where tuition fee and financial support policies in European countries are updated regularly.

Scholarships

The [JOIMAN report](#) indicates that 90% of 89 surveyed institutions offer some form of scholarship to (some or all of their) students. This scholarship funding mostly consists of a combination of EU and public or other sources. In Erasmus Mundus master courses at the surveyed institutions, scholarships generally cover tuition waivers, whereas in non-Erasmus Mundus master courses, scholarships are usually meant to partially cover travel, housing and living costs. 30% of the surveyed institutions distribute scholarships on a performance-based system, followed by programmes using a mix of performance, need and other considerations.

The scholarship form partially depends on the particular national funding model. An [IIE survey](#) of 92 EU and 81 US institutions indicates, for instance, that EU respondents were more likely than US institutions to offer financial assistance from either tuition fee waivers or mobility scholarships.

6.5. Marketing

Key messages for practitioners

1. Develop a joint strategy with partner(s), involving all levels and the marketing departments.
2. Use a tailored approach to different audiences. Use alumni and partner networks as first channels. Do market research, make an inventory of appropriate bachelor programmes, target academics. Do not forget national marketing.
3. Be transparent about employability options in all communication (e.g. indicating whether there are particular restraints in terms of regulated professions due to the joint, international curricula).
4. Emphasise the competitiveness of the programme.
5. Your selling point is the added value of this joint programme vs. national programmes. Stress the complementarity of partner HEIs, the jointly developed curriculum, interdisciplinary, the integrated programme. Communicate the added value of 'soft skills'.
6. Implement a quality assurance cycle to all marketing activities (to evaluate and improve).

It is useful to develop a marketing plan involving all relevant institutional stakeholders: the management level, the marketing and communications department, and the programme level. The content of this plan will depend on the institutional strategies and target groups of the joint programme.

Marketing plans for joint programmes should clarify the added value of the joint programme to potential applicants. It is useful for institutions to emphasise information on the learning outcomes of the programme, and the level of employability that can be expected to strengthen candidates' position on the job market after completion of the programme. Emphasising the latter will also be an advantage in highlighting any collaboration with the business community and public bodies in connection with recruitment.

For more information, the EMAP project website includes a [slide presentation and short film](#) on the visibility and promotion of Erasmus Mundus joint Masters and doctoral programmes.

Another tool worth examining in this context is the [Erasmus Mundus Quality Assurance](#) (EMQA) website. It provides a practical tool for developing a comprehensive course vision, unique selling positions, tips on recruiting excellent students, engaging alumni, and setting up a marketing strategy. The tool is freely available and can be used for self-assessment by any practitioner involved in the development or implementation of a joint programme.

The [EM-ACE](#) project offers a valuable tool kit for promotion of Erasmus Mundus opportunities to European students.

The [TUBEMATES](#) project encouraged Erasmus Mundus alumni to develop video trailers on their study abroad experiences and can provide useful ideas and tips.

6.6. Joint student administration procedures

Additional structures will be necessary to handle the student administration of joint programmes. Before the implementation of the programme, administrative procedures must be in place. It is important to decide on how to communicate and which tools to use. Online tools can be helpful to support the joint communication and administration, such as [Moodle](#), [dokuWiki](#), and [videoconference Adobe Connect Pro \(ACP\)](#).

Joint student recruitment and application process

A common web portal for the joint student recruitment process is a useful tool in student recruitment. Such a portal should offer all relevant information on the programme, including learning outcomes, employability prospects, partner expertise, mobility options, target group, admission criteria, application process, and selection criteria. The aim is to centralise and unify admissions information and encourage applications by promoting transparency and consistency in the information provided. The [JOIMAN report](#) sketches a time-line of administrative processes relating to student recruitment and registration and gives an overview of issues leading to conflicts in the administration of joint programmes (pp.54-60).

The [Erasmus Mundus Quality Assurance](#) (EMQA) tool provides a checklist of actions and good practice for efficient student recruitment.

The [JOIMAN report](#) is one of the few sources on the practicalities of the application process. The report suggests:

- that online application procedures are essential to attract international students;
- verification of documents should be done only by the first institution, with second or third destination institutions trusting the screening of the first institution;
- involvement of registrar or admission offices to ensure that all selected students meet all general formal registration requirements.

Whether the student application process is centralised or decentralised (i.e. each partner organises its own procedure), it is important that all partners are informed of – or have access to – the application information (according to [ECA's joint programme checklist](#)).

The JOI.CON project has developed a useful [template](#) of an application form for a joint European master (and doctoral) degree.

Student selection and registration

Student selection acts as a gatekeeper to the joint programme and requires involvement of all partner institutions. Thus, it is essential that all responsibilities for (and in) the selection procedure are clearly assigned.

The two most important recommendations in the student selection process for institutions offering a joint programme are (1) to adopt common selection, and (2) to set up a joint selection committee

with harmonised selection procedures. Partners usually perform the pre-selection, with the final decision referred to a joint selection committee.

Concerning student registration, the idea is that, in a joint programme, all partner institutions are responsible for the students and the entire study programme, and all students are degree students at the institutions they spent time during their programme. Different approaches to registration are possible, but must comply with national laws and institutional guidelines on awarding a degree.

Other useful guidelines on admission procedures are the following::

- when formulating joint admission criteria, the partner institutions must be aware that some institutions may have stricter laws and fewer flexibility, and that it may be necessary to be granted an exemption to fit the requirements of participating institutions;
- institutions must clarify which admission document requirements the cooperating institutions want to have; and
- the partner institutions must agree on admission procedures, application deadlines, and appeal procedures.

See the [JOIMAN report](#) for an overview of the most common selection criteria and of different approaches between Erasmus Mundus and non-Erasmus Mundus joint programmes (pp.58-59).

The EMAP project (Erasmus Mundus Active Participation) offers several recorded [videos of coordinator presentations](#) on partnership and student selection.

Information to students

All relevant information must be clearly presented to students and be easily accessible before (and upon) arrival. Literature sources suggest the following guidelines:

- Ideally, partners must agree on who is responsible for answering questions from potential applicants. There should be only one focal information point (usually the coordinator).
- Appropriate information in English and the home language(s) of the partner institution(s) to potential students must be offered and kept up-to-date on relevant web and recruitment portals.
- Comparable information should be offered to students from all participating institutions.
- The information offered should include details on admission criteria and procedures, entry points, credit weighting and workloads (incl. information on the ECTS system for non-European students), learning outcomes, employability, mobility requirements (e.g. how accommodation issues are addressed), the qualification/degree that will be awarded, course structure and coordination, and accessibility of the programme for economically disadvantaged and physically disabled students.
- Students are subject to the academic policies of the institution where they are in residence. When students move back and forth, this rule should be clearly stated.

Monitoring student progress

Participating institutions must find agreement on who is responsible for the monitoring of students, procedures regarding lack of study progress, and rules for leaves of absence. Participating institutions must be informed about the different institutional procedures, so that they can all recognise the procedures at the respective institutions. If possible, strategies, procedures and guidelines should be jointly formulated in order to ensure the best monitoring.

The [JOIMAN report](#) observes that in the 36 institutions surveyed, in most cases, monitoring of academic progress is performed by the institution that delivers the course programme, since

academic monitoring can be performed more efficiently by the institutions that are in daily contact with the students. In most of the cases surveyed, students on joint programmes are assigned a local coordinator who is responsible for monitoring their academic progress. At the same time, all academic staff teaching in the programme are responsible for monitoring courses and examinations. Local coordinators generally report their observations to joint programme boards or quality assurance boards.

Student agreement templates

A joint programme consortium normally defines a student's and the consortium's obligations in a 'student agreement' that will be signed by both the student and the consortium at the start of the programme. Student agreement templates are available in the Annex to the [JOI.CON report](#), and through the EACEA Erasmus Mundus Action 1 [good practice site](#).

Assessment and grading

Participating institutions must have a clear and shared policy on assessment and grade calculation. This policy must state whether the completion requirement framework is based on e.g. the number of completed course credits, the student workload, or required learning outcomes. It is recommended to develop a grade conversion table, a template is available through the EACEA Erasmus Mundus Action 1 [good practice site](#).

One example of a grade conversion table is the table used by the Erasmus Mundus Master in Security and Mobile Computing (NordSecMob), a joint programme offered by five universities in northern Europe. Figure 3 illustrates the NordSecMob grade conversion model and table.

Figure 3: Example of a grade conversion model in a joint master programme offered by five universities

University 1 uses the credit system equal to ECTS credits. The grading scale is from 1 to 5. Also grades pass/fail are used.

University 2 uses higher education credits where 1 higher education credit equals 1 ECTS credit. The grading scale is: A-Excellent, B-Very Good, C-Good, D-Satisfactory, E-Sufficient, F-Fail.

University 3 uses a letter based credit system in correspondence with ECTS. Grades are on a scale from A-F (A is best, F-failed). The university also uses the scale Passed/Not Passed.

University 4 grades are given in a 7-grade scale, which is entirely comparable with the ECTS point scale. The university also uses the "passed/not passed" evaluation.

University 5 uses an ECTS credit system and a letter based grading system on a scale from A-F. The university also uses a passed/failed evaluation.

The following grade conversion table is used when transferring the credits:


ECTS	University 1	University 2	University 3	University 4	University 5
A, best 10%	5	A	A, 90-100	12	A-excellent
B, next 25%	4	B	B, 80-89	10	B-very good

C, next 30%	3	C	C, 60-79	7	C-good
D, next 25%	2	D	D, 50-59	4	D-satisfactory
E, next 10%	1	E	E, 40-49	02	E-sufficient
F, fail	0, failed	F	F, 0-39	00, -3	F-insufficient

Taken from: [NordSecMob Student Handbook](#), version 21-06-2012. Note: the NordSecMob programme is offered by five universities (the Aalto University School of Sciences, Finland; KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden; the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway; the Technical University of Denmark, Denmark; and the University of Tartu, Estonia).

Another example of a grade conversion model is that of the [ChIR programme](#), an Erasmus Mundus Master Course in Chemical Innovation and Research, offered by four full partner universities (Algarve University, Portugal; the University of Barcelona, Spain; the University of Bologna, Italy; and Heriot Watt University, U.K.). The participating universities have created a new grading scale for this particular joint programme with grade conversions to the ECTS scheme and the four institutional grading scales – see Figure 4.

Figure 4: Example of a grade conversion model in a joint master programme offered by four universities

 **M020506 – Table for Conversion of ChIR grades between national scales**

ChIR scale	ECTS	UAig	UB	UniBo	HWU
100	A	20	10,0	30 L	100
99	A	20	9,9	30 L	99
98	A	20	9,8	30 L	98
97	A	19	9,7	30 L	97
96	A	19	9,6	30 L	96
95	A	19	9,5	30 L	95
94	A	19	9,4	30 L	94
93	A	19	9,3	30 L	93
92	A	18	9,2	30 L	92
91	A	18	9,1	30 L	91
90	A	18	9,0	30 L	90
89	B	17	8,9	30	89
88	B	17	8,7	30	88
87	B	17	8,6	30	86
86	B	17	8,5	30	85
85	B	17	8,4	30	83
84	B	17	8,3	30	82
83	B	17	8,2	30	80
82	B	16	8,1	30	79
81	B	16	8,0	30	77
80	B	16	7,9	30	76
79	B	16	7,8	30	74
78	B	16	7,7	30	73
77	B	16	7,6	30	71
76	B	16	7,5	30	70
75	C	15	7,4	29	69
74	C	15	7,4	29	68
73	C	15	7,3	29	68
72	C	15	7,2	29	67
71	C	15	7,1	29	67
70	C	15	7,0	29	66
69	C	15	6,9	28	65
68	C	14	6,8	28	65
67	C	14	6,7	28	64
66	C	14	6,7	28	63
65	C	14	6,6	28	63
64	C	14	6,6	27	62
63	C	14	6,5	27	62
61	C	14	6,5	27	61
60	D	13	6,4	26	55
59	D	13	6,4	26	55
58	D	13	6,3	26	55
57	D	13	6,2	26	54
56	D	13	6,1	26	54
55	D	13	6,0	26	54
54	D	12	5,9	25	54
53	D	12	5,8	25	53
52	D	12	5,7	25	53
51	D	12	5,6	25	53
50	D	12	5,5	25	53
49	E	11	5,4	24	52
48	E	11	5,4	24	52
47	E	11	5,3	24	52
46	E	11	5,2	23	52
45	E	11	5,1	22	51
44	E	10	5,1	21	51
43	E	10	5,0	20	51
42	E	10	5,0	20	51
41	E	10	5,0	19	50
40	E	10	5,0	18	50
<40	F	0-9	0-4,9	<18	<50

Source Figure 4: the [ChIR programme](#), an Erasmus Mundus Master Course in Chemical Innovation and Research, offered by Algarve University, Portugal; the University of Barcelona, Spain; the University of Bologna, Italy; and Heriot Watt University, U.K..

To provide clarity for students, it is useful that the participating institutions clearly indicate their grade conversion model in the student handbook for the joint programme. The student handbook must also clearly state whether the participating universities will take care of the transferring of credits between the universities. The [NordSecMob Student Handbook](#), for instance, clearly indicates that the participating universities will transfer credits between the universities, and that credit will not be transferred upon student's request. The student handbook can also indicate where – at each participating institution – the student can order a credit transcript.

The EACEA Synthesis Report 2013 states that best results were achieved when academic staff met regularly at programme level events to discuss course content, teaching and joint supervision methods, and evaluation practices in view of achieving greater harmonisation in grading the learning outcomes.

The use of an independent external assessor to ensure compatibility of grading standards across courses and modules, has been found beneficial. Co-supervision of the master dissertation/thesis support the common approach to assessment, as well as a joint, international jury for the dissertation/thesis defence.

The grading policy must also clearly state what constitutes a failure. Course failure may vary between institutions and this must be clearly communicated among partners and students. Sufficient opportunities for re-sitting exams and re-taking courses must be available, as agreed by the partners. Partner institutions must agree on the rules for dismissal in case students perform well at one partner, but not at the other. In some programmes, a dismissal by one partner means a dismissal from the entire programme. The partners should also discuss re-admission policies.

Credit accumulation

The approach of double or triple counting the same student workload or learning outcomes can significantly jeopardise the academic integrity of the programme. An [IIE survey](#) of 92 EU and 81 US institutions found that 66% of the responding institutions had measures in place to regulate the double counting of credits.

For the use of the European Credit Transfer System, please note that the older [ECTS User's Guide](#) (2009) has recently been revised and is in the process of being discussed in the Bologna Follow Up Group and later approved by the Ministerial conference in Yerevan in 2015.

Student services

Welcoming and mobility

It is useful, at the start of their joint programmes, to send students the necessary academic, practical and social-cultural information. However, ideally, services provided for students on joint programmes are integrated in the general service provided to all students (avoiding 'special lanes'), according to the [JOIMAN report](#).

Since many joint programmes are supported by highly competitive scholarship schemes, it is necessary to provide welcoming information individually in a smooth and timely manner, otherwise the selected students might opt for another study programme.

According to the 2013 [EACEA Synthesis Report](#), mentioned as a good practice, many Erasmus Mundus courses initially welcomed all their students at the coordinating institution, in order to address administrative issues and give an opportunity for students to understand the integration challenges during the mobility scheme.

Housing

Since most joint programmes have a fixed curriculum with an intense, preset mobility structure, it is recommended to try to guarantee accommodation for students. The [JOIMAN report](#) observes that in the 36 institutions surveyed, housing support is normally offered as part of the general student services.

Student guidance

Due to the jointly developed, fixed curricula with integrated mobility, it is recommended to assure proper student advice and guidance during the studies, preferably at departmental level. Students could have junior academic tutors, but it is also advisable to arrange regular meetings with senior staff who monitor progress and offer support.

Career guidance is also important since students get few opportunities for local networking with employers due to the mobility scheme. According to the [EACEA Synthesis Report](#), some Erasmus Mundus courses developed a career guidance plan, combining individual guidance with programme-level events such as career fairs involving employers or alumni events. For suggestions on how to promote employability, see [paragraph 6.8](#).

Visa and residence permits

The [JOIMAN report](#) recommends that institutions offering joint programmes should try to develop close cooperation with embassies / consulates and local authorities on visa and permit issue.

The European Commission and Executive Agency have facilitated several initiatives on this issue (see source list).

Language support

Due to the strictly structured curriculum of a joint programme, it is advisable to screen language proficiency properly at admission stage to ensure smooth progression. Language support and courses on academic writing and methodology can be offered.

Few data are available on language support provided specifically to students on joint programmes. It is likely that language support is provided to these students as part of general language support services to international students. An IIE study of joint programmes found that nearly half of the 180 researched institutions included foreign language training at both the home and the partner institution.

Insurance

Joint programmes should consider how and through which institutions students will be insured for activities at the various partner universities, as sometimes the national health insurance schemes also give total insurance cover to visiting students.

Sometimes the partners will have to find an insurance company that can provide global insurance cover. However, this JDAZ Guide will not provide recommendations on companies, since HEI experience shows that the services provided by various globally active companies differ from country to country in terms of content and quality.

6.7. Awarding the degree and the diploma supplement

Jointly awarding a degree and particularly issuing one diploma remain the main challenges for joint degree programme coordinators. This is largely due to differences in national legislations. The main recommendation to keep in mind is to be know national legislation on this, and to consult the national ENIC-NARIC offices, the national Ministries of Education or the national university organisation on technical questions in relation to formulating and issuing the joint diploma and the Diploma Supplement.

The European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA) has developed useful [Guidelines for Good Practice for awarding Joint Degrees](#). These guidelines are not to be interpreted as setting standards; they provide the perspective of the recognition authorities, the ENIC-NARICs. The main aim of these guidelines is in fact to facilitate and improve the full recognition of joint degrees. It intends to do so by clarifying the expectations of ENIC-NARICs regarding the design and the content of the degree and the Diploma Supplement. These expectations of course also regard the consortium offering the joint programme and the joint programme itself. These guidelines are guidelines for good practice; even without implementing these, a joint degree can still be recognised.

The [Erasmus Mundus Quality Assurance](#) (EMQA) tool provides highlighting examples in relation to Degrees and Degree Recognition, under 'Comprehensive Course Vision', point 7.

The partner institutions must agree on the procedure, design and content of the diploma. The procedure to deliver the joint diploma must be written in the cooperation agreement. Useful guidelines on the diploma and the diploma supplement are the following:

- Partners must clarify whether the individual universities require the student to stay at the institution in order for the name of the institution to be listed on the joint diploma.
- Regardless of the type of diploma that is issued, the diploma and the Diploma Supplement must state that the degree is a joint degree.
- If the collaborating institutions choose to issue separate diplomas from each institution, the diplomas should include wording stating that the diplomas have been issued for the same joint degree and are only valid if presented together.

6.8. Promoting employability through links to non-academic actors

In concrete terms, ways of involving non-academic partners both in the planning and implementation phase are found in the [Practical Guidelines of the Erasmus Mundus Cluster on Employability](#). The results of the Employability Cluster are based on approximately 3600 Erasmus Mundus respondents (alumni and students), and on qualitative coordinator interviews. The practical guidelines present several good practice examples and 10 key recommendations.

Integration of labour-market elements can be done through:

- An advisory board from industry and other HEIs,
- Sponsors, disseminators and partners,

- Networking with industry and business, research institutes, professional and scientific associations,
- Visiting scholars, especially non-academic guest lecturers,
- Dissertation / thesis cooperation,
- Non-academic partners involved in kick-off / initial intensive course / Summer school,
- Company, employer visits,
- Practical, 'real-life' project-based learning and research projects,
- International thematic networking, social media networks,
- Alumni contacts, surveys, up-to-date employability statistics,
- Career development sessions by career services, personal discussions with academics, intercultural awareness,
- Employer fairs on campus to create a meeting forum,
- Integrated placements,
- Mentoring during the placements connects practical results to educational offer, feed-back from internship mentors.

Career orientation during the studies is important, to make the students able find employment after course completion. This can be done through asking students to find their own internships, arranging academic conferences, as confidence creates commitment.

Internships are highly appreciated in terms of employability, 84% of the Erasmus Mundus graduates assess the internship experience as highly profitable for their future career.

Given the integrated mobility and the international nature of joint programmes, students rarely have time to form stable relationships to the local labour market and employers. It is important to bear in mind when planning the course structure, that too much mobility can hinder career orientation and settlement ([Practical Guidelines of the Erasmus Mundus Cluster on Employability](#)) and appropriate strategies need to be adopted. Additionally, the learning outcomes of the graduates are often geared towards answering global social-economic needs of an internationalised working life. Consequently, *global networking* during the studies are essential for ensuring good employability perspectives, and for providing potential for future research cooperation and follow-up programmes.

Networking can be done through social media networks, tutoring by elder students, alumni networks and involvement of international external scholars, who can later facilitate professional advancement of the graduates. The importance of networking, as well as cases of best practice is found in the [Practical Guidelines of the Erasmus Mundus Cluster on Employability](#).

6.9. Useful templates and tools

The EACEA good practice for Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters [Erasmus Mundus good practice website](#).

EM-ACE Erasmus Mundus Action 3 project, [Erasmus Mundus promotion to European students](#).

The [Erasmus Mundus Quality Assurance](#) (EMQA) practical tool for supporting all aspects of joint programme development and administration.

[Practical approaches to the management of joint programmes: results from the JOI.CON Training Project.](#)

6.10. Sources

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- A slide presentation and short film on [management aspects](#) required in the Erasmus Mundus masters programme round 2.
- A slide presentation and short film on [course integration, partnership and organisation, student selection, student facilities and support](#) – an example of an Erasmus Mundus masters programme.
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[TUBEMATES](#) project.

7. Quality assurance (QA)

This chapter focuses on the quality assurance-related issues that need to be taken into account when developing and managing joint programmes. Discussed are the ENQA standards and guidelines, the Erasmus Mundus Quality Assurance tool, and internal and external quality assurance aspects, including the use of alumni.

7.1. Key messages for practitioners

1. Start your cooperation by discussing what you (and your university and department) mean by 'quality', how can it be jointly defined and measured within your joint programme.
2. Look for common reference points to monitor quality. One approach is to discuss jointly based on the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ENQA ESG) – see section 7.2.
3. The use of alumni in monitoring the quality of joint programmes is crucial, since they are the only ones having experienced the entire mobility path with diverse learning environments.
4. If programme-level accreditation is required in the partner countries, a single accreditation is recommended. Please contact the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA).
5. A useful tool to consult is ECA's [Joint Programme Checklist](#) – inspired by quality assurance and based on good practice in joint programmes.

7.2. ENQA Standards and Guidelines (ESG)

The European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education was established in 2000, and transformed into European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) in 2004. The aim of ENQA is to promote European cooperation in quality assurance in higher education.

The ENQA standards and guidelines (ESG) were developed as part of the Bologna Process and adopted by European ministers of higher education in 2005. There are three parts, covering:

1. Internal quality assurance,
2. External quality assurance,
3. External quality assurance agencies.

The ESG for internal quality assurance cover the following topics:

1. Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and award,
2. Assessment of students,
3. Quality assurance of teaching staff,
4. Learning resources and student support,
5. Information systems,

6. Public information.

The ENQA ESGs are currently being revised. The expectation is that the proposal will be adopted at the latest at the next EHEA Ministerial Meeting that will take place in Yerevan, Armenia in 2015. The full proposal for the revised ESG can be found on the [ENQA website](#).

7.3. Erasmus Mundus Quality Assurance practical tool

A tool worth examining is the Erasmus Mundus Quality Assurance website. It is a "participatory approach to quality assurance". EMQA is not a standard quality assurance process of judging or ranking courses against a fixed set of 'standards' – it assumes that international programmes are innovating constantly and that their results need to be available directly to the higher education sector. The tool is available for free and can be used for self-assessment by any practitioner involved in the development or implementation of a joint programme.

Four guides are available online, for both master and doctoral level:

- [Comprehensive course vision](#),
- [Integrated learning & teaching, and staff development strategy](#),
- [Realistic management, financial, and institutional strategy](#),
- [Recruit excellent students, deliver value, engage alumni](#).

The guides are very practical, with checklists and guidelines.

7.4. Internal quality assurance

As for all forms of higher education, for joint programmes it is vital to set principles for internal and external QA measures. It is advisable to base the internal QA measures for a joint programme on the internal QA measures that already exist. The challenges here lay in matters such as ownership of the procedures, who is responsible, and how do we cooperate with our partners without breaching security.

One option is to mutually recognise the internal quality assurance schemes of the participating institutions, and include this in the agreement between the institutions. The consortium can develop additional criteria and questions that further investigate typical aspects of a joint programme, such as its organisation or its added value compared to other programmes.

The [JOI.CON](#) project indicates that emphasis on quality assurance and accreditation are gaining more and more importance. Joint programmes usually start based upon mutual trust, but in order to secure international recognition, it is essential to develop a quality assurance policy, including both administrative and academic procedures.

[JOI.CON](#) describes additional goals for the internal QA process, such as reviewing the curriculum, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the courses, modules and teaching units, monitoring student progress and achievements, increasing the transparency of teaching and study activities, and improving the study and examination processes.

[EUA's guidelines for quality enhancement](#) show quality related questions that should be addressed by all responsible for the quality of joint programmes. Teaching is a recurring theme, especially related to the course structure and the learning context. Services are mentioned briefly as a point of interest when implementing mobility.

The EMAP project (Erasmus Mundus Active Participation) offers several recorded videos of joint programme coordinator [presentations on setting up internal quality assurance systems](#).

7.5. External quality assurance

When developing a joint programme, it is recommended to find out beforehand which external quality assurance system is valid, and which aspects this system covers (and does not cover).

The external quality assurance processes for higher education vary from one country to another. The distinction is whether the main focus of quality assurance is on reviewing the entire institutions and their own procedures, on programme-level accreditation, or a combination of both. Information on approaches within external quality assurance within the 47 Bologna countries can be found in the [Bologna Process Implementation Report 2012](#).

In relation to programme-level accreditation, there are also differences between national systems and the procedures of accreditation offices, making accreditation of joint programmes a challenge. Many agencies still have to get accustomed to developing accreditation procedures for joint programmes that cross the national border. To support transparent and flexible accreditation of joint programmes, the European Consortium for Accreditation ([ECA](#)) has developed a single accreditation process, as well as a mutual agreement of recognition of accreditation decisions ([MULTRA](#)) between several accreditation agencies. Their website is worth visiting, as all publications are freely available online.

At this moment, it is impossible to have a joint degree accredited by one accreditation organisation, as no accreditation organisation has the authorisation to do so. This can complicate the accreditation process. ECA is currently looking into the possibility to establish one coordination point.

Monitoring alumni career paths

To ensure long-term relevance and quality of the learning outcomes achieved through the joint curricula and the mobility structure, the individual joint programmes conduct alumni surveys (some as often as every 6 months). Alumni are invited to Programme Advisory Boards, and participate in university-industry networking and career guidance events, and function as tutors for younger students.

The Erasmus Mundus Alumni Organisation EMA implements an annual Graduate Impact Survey to monitor career perspectives and the development of skills acquired through the programme, and personal and social development. The survey might serve as guidance for setting up similar surveys in individual joint programmes.

Alumni networks of joint programme schemes

The OCEANS Network is a network for students and alumni of specific bi-lateral exchange programmes between the European Union on the one side and the industrialised countries (Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea and the USA) on the other side. The student exchanges aim at promoting better relations between participants, improving intercultural understanding and knowledge transfer.

The [Erasmus Mundus students and alumni network EMA](#) includes more than 10 regional networks (called 'chapters') in all parts of the world, as well as thematic networks.

Thematic and geographic clustering of joint programmes

Linked to the Erasmus Mundus programmes, the EU has supported the thematic clustering of joint programme stakeholders. These thematic and geographic clusters can be used as a form of external quality assurance. The objectives have been to further disseminate the results and experiences of the Erasmus Mundus beneficiaries, coordinators, students, alumni and other relevant stakeholders. The clusters exploit the synergies between the different Erasmus Mundus Joint Programmes and Attractiveness Projects.

The clusters focus on five themes: [sustainability](#), [recognition of joint degrees](#), [employability](#), [a regional cluster on Asia](#), and [a thematic cluster on climate change](#).

The Cluster on climate change presents in its [Practical Guidelines](#) a list of possible thematically relevant networking activities for enhancing networking between various joint programmes.

7.6. Sources

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8. Recognition

When joint programme students obtain their degree, their qualifications will need to be recognised in the countries where they want to pursue further studies or find employment. There are three main aspects: recognition by future employers, professional accreditation to pursue specific professions (e.g. in medical sciences and nursing) and recognition of the degree by official authorities in another country (ENIC-NARIC network).

8.1. Key messages for practitioners

1. Consulting the national ENIC-NARIC office or National Ministries of Education is strongly recommended when drafting the joint diploma and Diploma Supplement, in order to guarantee the students rights to a recognised degree. Multidisciplinarity can cause challenges for national recognition.
2. HEIs are also recommended to consult the Guidelines on Good Practice on awarding Joint Degrees by ECA, mentioned below.

8.2. The Lisbon Convention

The Lisbon Recognition Convention – in full: the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region – came into existence in 1997, and is an convention of the Council of Europe and UNESCO. It has been ratified by 47 member states of the Council of Europe, except for Greece and Monaco. The LRC is an international binding treaty and serves as the foundation of recognition in the European region.

Several subsidiary texts were adopted since. The most relevant in the context of this publication are:

- the '[Recommendations on Criteria and Procedures](#)' (2001), and
- the '[Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees](#)' (2004).

One of the fundamental principles of the LRC is that 'foreign qualifications shall be recognized unless there is a substantial difference between the foreign qualification for which recognition is sought and the corresponding qualification in the host country'. In short, substantial differences are considered differences that are considered so severe that they most likely will prevent the student from succeeding from the goal recognition is sought for. The burden of proof to determine a substantial difference lies with the competent recognition authority. Transparent procedures and information provision are guaranteed to students and graduates.

8.3. The European Area of Recognition (EAR)

The Lisbon Convention and the accompanying recommendations (see above) are legally binding for the states that ratified the treaty, but its principles leave room for interpretation. This has led to differences in recognition practices between countries, which is one of the major obstacles for fair recognition of qualifications and thus for the mobility of students in the European region.

The [European Area of Recognition \(EAR\) project](#) has worked on harmonising recognition procedures. It contributes to a European Higher Education Area for Recognition in which all European countries practice a methodology of recognition that is based on similar standards. To this extent, a manual has been published, containing standards, examples of good practice, and practical guidelines for

recognition. The [EAR Manual](#) was launched early 2012 and has been recommended by the ministers of Education in the Bucharest Communiqué in 2012.

8.4. Guidelines for good practice on awarding joint degrees

The [Guidelines on good practice on awarding joint degrees](#), published by the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA), provides higher education institutions that award joint degrees with guidelines for good practices. These guidelines are not to be interpreted as setting standards; they provide the perspective of ENIC-NARICs. The main aim of these guidelines is to facilitate and improve the full recognition of joint degrees. It intends to do so by clarifying the expectations of ENIC-NARICs regarding the design and the content of the degree and the Diploma Supplement. These expectations of course also regard the consortium offering the joint programme and the joint programme itself.

The Consortium

The following guidelines specify the 'requirements' the consortium needs to fulfil.

ECA Guidelines for Good Practice:

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

The Joint Programme

The guidelines below specify the 'requirements' for the joint programme.

ECA Guidelines for Good Practice:

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

The Joint Degree

In case a joint programme leads to a joint degree, [the ECA guidelines](#) recommend for instance that:

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

The Diploma Supplement

There are detailed guidelines listing particular information to include in the Diploma Supplement (DS) of a joint programme, indicating the exact section of the DS. In cases the Diploma Supplement is not issued (for example for countries outside the EHEA), it is recommended to provide this information in a similar document to be issued alongside the degree.

8.5. Sources

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9. Joint doctoral programmes

This chapter deals with aspects that need to be taken into account when developing and managing joint doctoral programmes. The focus is particularly on those aspects where joint doctoral programmes differ from joint Master programmes (that were discussed in earlier chapters).

9.1. Key messages for practitioners

1. Know your consortium partners and their national regulations well, before you start developing the joint doctoral programme.
2. Jointly develop a comprehensive course vision and strategy of the joint doctoral programme.
3. Develop balanced supervision processes across the consortium, and formal monitoring procedures to monitor candidates' research progress.
4. A personal cotutelle agreement is required, regulating each partner's responsibilities with regard to joint supervision, evaluation and doctoral thesis defence. A joint doctoral programme must include joint supervision, but it can also entail collaboration on joint research training.
5. Create a research and communication platform where doctoral candidates and staff can collaborate throughout the consortium.
6. Provide doctoral candidates with relevant training and research tools and facilities.
7. Where legally allowed, arrange employment contracts for the candidates.
8. Set up a consortium agreement regarding intellectual property and spin-off activities.
9. Apoint an ombudsman as a go-between between management and doctoral candidates, and a committee to deal with ethical questions.

9.2. Character and added value of joint doctoral programmes

Doctoral programmes are intensely research focused, and therefore have different characteristics compared to master programmes, for instance in the closer relationship between doctoral candidates and academic staff. Doctoral programmes are more focused on research creation and the advancement of new thinking, and are at the edge of the relationship between higher education and the 'knowledge triangle'.

As compared to the reasons stated for Masters programmes (see section 5.2), joint doctoral programmes have three additional elements of added value:

- they are seen as giving a stable structure to longstanding research collaborations between institutions in different countries (taking the cotutelle experience a step further);
- they are better visible to international candidates, offering more attractive opportunities, and usually, more funds;

- joint doctoral programmes contribute to institutional research development and may contribute to improvement of research quality.

9.3. Development, partners, learning outcomes, mobility path

The need for a comprehensive course vision of joint doctorate programmes is described in the [Erasmus Mundus Quality Assurance EMQA handbook](#). It offers a comprehensive, seven point overview with the following main points:

- Identify the unique selling proposition of running a joint programme, including the type of consortium and the academic content;
- Further develop the description of the rationale and the mobility paths;
- Work on a sustainability strategy;
- Develop a common vision on shared cultures, both academic and administrative;
- Work on a thorough employability strategy for candidates;
- Agree on the examination process, taking into consideration transparency;
- Agree on the degree awarded and maximise its recognition.

[JOIMAN](#) gives good recommendations on aspects relating to doctoral programme partners (pp.171-173).

The [JOI.CON guide](#) stresses the importance of knowing beforehand both the partners and the regulations of the countries involved. The JOI.CON Annex includes useful Comparison Table templates to help institutions explore all potential obstacles to joint doctoral programmes beforehand (pp.81-139).

The [Erasmus Mundus Quality Assurance](#) (EMQA) website provides a checklist of actions and good practice in relation to integrated learning outcomes, programme pedagogy, balancing learning and teaching, as well as assessment mechanisms.

The [Erasmus Mundus Quality Assurance](#) (EMQA) website also provides a checklist of actions and good practice on how the mobility pathways can be developed to match intended learning outcomes.

Ways to provide an integrated academic strategy, including staff development, training and research components, were developed in the EMQA project. The [EMQA Handbook of Excellence](#) provides a comprehensive overview of issues a consortium should address:

- Develop balanced supervision processes across the consortium;
- Make sure to have a research and communication platform where students and staff can collaborate throughout the consortium;
- Look after the assessment mechanisms for the work of candidates, and make sure that they are coherent and balanced throughout the consortium;
- Provide candidates with training, research tools and facilities;
- Set up a formal procedure to monitor the candidates' research progress;
- Pay attention to effective cultural awareness in the course and research trajectory, and the consortium – and make sure staff mobility effectively contributes to that.

The Erasmus Mundus Quality Assurance (EMQA) website offers four guides on the following issues in developing and managing joint doctoral programmes:

- [Comprehensive course vision](#),
- [Integrated learning & teaching, and staff development strategy](#),
- [Realistic management, financial, and institutional strategy](#),

- [Recruit excellent students, deliver value, engage alumni.](#)

9.4. Management

In the case of joint doctorates, the [JOIMAN report](#) notes that a clear organisational and managerial structure is crucial for success of programmes, and that the management structure of Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctorates differs from non-Erasmus Mundus-funded programmes.

An example of the organisational structure and partner responsibilities of a joint Erasmus Mundus doctoral programme with 4 institutions, is given on the Erasmus Mundus Active Participation [EMAP project website](#). The website also includes a [slide presentation and short film](#) on the course management, visibility and sustainability of Erasmus Mundus joint doctorates.

A comprehensive overview of seven practical activities to be undertaken in the development and management of joint doctoral programmes, is given in the [EMQA Handbook of Excellence – Doctoral Programmes](#). The guide gives the following guidelines:

- Define which administrative bodies are responsible for the candidates;
- Plan the finances taking into account contingencies;
- Set up a consortium agreement regarding intellectual property and spin-off activities;
- Arrange employment contracts for the candidates;
- Set up and implement a quality assurance system for the programme;
- Develop a consistent internationalisation strategy;
- Develop and implement a marketing strategy.

The [EMQA project](#) presents valuable information on setting up realistic financial strategies, with good practice and examples at doctoral (and masters) levels.

In the case of managing joint doctoral programmes, the [JOIMAN report](#) suggests that it is good practice to appoint an ‘ombudsman’ as go-between between management and doctoral candidates. A committee to deal with ethical questions is also useful.

Student recruitment and selection

EMQA’s [Handbook of Excellence – Doctoral Programmes](#) describes (in its fourth ‘high level action’) the need to focus on the doctoral candidates: how to recruit the best, provide value, and keep them linked to the programme once they are alumni. Not only the academic point of view must be considered, but also practical issues such as housing and visa. The [Handbook](#) suggests the following seven activities to undertake:

- Recruit and select those candidates that are best equipped for the programme;
- Look at the candidates’ preparation, both academically and logistically;
- Set up a supporting network for social, cultural and academic activities;
- Combine the IT-, library- and other services among the consortium;
- Get the best out of providing other learning opportunities such as language training and communication;
- Prepare the candidate to get the best out of the post-programme career by offering competences and skills training;
- Work on establishing a good relation with alumni.

To select joint doctoral candidates, the [JOIMAN report](#) observed that in some cases, a special body was set up to select applicants, and that the selection committee was generally composed of representatives of all partner institutions. The report noted that selection of joint doctoral

candidates may consist of two processes by two separate groups of persons. The selection procedure may include a formal interview where the candidate presents his/her research project to two professors, and a language ability and motivation check. Some institutions undertake a pre-selection based on CVs, a draft research plan and reference letter(s). The final selection, however, is made jointly by all partner universities.

The JOI.CON training project has developed a useful [template](#) of an application form for a joint European doctoral degree.

Taxation

Taxation is often a difficult issue, and those involved in developing and managing joint programmes must be aware of the fact that taxation regulations are set at the national level. [Euraxess](#) offers useful details on taxation issues for doctoral mobility.

Agreements

In joint doctoral programmes, a cotutelle agreement is individual. This means that a personal agreement for each PhD candidate is always required. The cotutelle contract regulates the partners' responsibilities with regard to joint supervision, evaluation and doctoral thesis defence. Additional institutional, national or framework agreements can still be formulated, referring to general procedures and systems. Quality assurance, admission, assessment and diplomas are aspects such agreements could cover. A joint doctoral programme must contain joint supervision, but it can also entail collaboration on joint research training.

The [French-Dutch Academy](#) has also dedicated some seminars to the theme joint PhD and the cotutelle (its website information is only available in French and Dutch).

9.5. Useful templates

Useful agreement templates are:

- The Coimbra Group [template for a joint doctoral supervision agreement](#).
- The JOI.CON [template](#) of a doctoral candidate agreement.

The JOI.CON training project also offers:

- a [template](#) of a joint doctorate degree and of a Diploma Supplement of a joint doctorate.
- a [template](#) of an application form for a joint European master and doctoral degree.

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[The French-Dutch Academy](#)

10. List of useful templates

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Master-level Cooperation Agreement	JOI.CON, Practical approaches to the management of joint programmes: results from the JOI.CON Training Project , Leipzig University, 2012. Annex, page 43.
	EACEA Executive Agency, Brussels, http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/tools/good_practices_en.php
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Master-level joint application form	JOI.CON, Practical approaches to the management of joint programmes: results from the JOI.CON Training Project , Leipzig University, 2012. Annex, page 53.
Calculation of Joint Master full cost budget	JOI.CON, Practical approaches to the management of joint programmes: results from the JOI.CON Training Project , Leipzig University, 2012. Annex, page 79.
Student agreement, Joint Master	EACEA Executive Agency, Brussels, http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/tools/good_practices_en.php
Joint Degree Diploma, Master	EACEA Executive Agency, Brussels http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus_mundus/tools/good_practices_en.php
JOICON Joint Doctorate Comparison Table (to benchmark processes between partners)	JOI.CON, Practical approaches to the management of joint programmes: results from the JOI.CON Training Project , Leipzig University, 2012. Annex, page 81.
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Doctoral-level joint application form	JOI.CON, Practical approaches to the management of joint programmes: results from the JOI.CON Training Project , Leipzig University, 2012. Annex, page 93.
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