



GLOSSARY OF RELEVANT DEFINITIONS ABOUT JOINT DEGREES

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ALLIANCE: see STRATEGIC ALLIANCES

COMBINED DEGREES: an educational sequence consisting of Bachelor's (1st cycle) degree *plus* a Master's (2nd cycle) degree in two different subject areas, usually not closely related (e.g. Business Studies *plus* Law *or* Languages). Enrollment to the 2nd cycle often requires conditions to be fulfilled (e.g. taking some extra examinations to pay off a recognized formative debt). See also DOUBLE DEGREES.

CONCURRENT DEGREES: a way for awarding the degrees in an “overlapping studies scheme”. See DOUBLE DEGREES for more details.

CONSECUTIVE DEGREES: a Consecutive Degree Program is a standard arrangement between two or more universities, according to which students obtain a regular degree at one university and then transfer to another university, with full recognition of the previous studies, as part of their studies for a second degree. As an example, Consecutive Degree Programs seem to be the most adequate and realistic answer to the need (and desire) for educating lawyers, who can work in different EU Member States, in a situation in which law is still mainly nationally-based. A Consecutive Degree Program is a kind of Double Degrees. See more at DOUBLE DEGREES.

COTUTELLE: it is a procedure adopted in doctoral studies, which ends up with two national doctoral degree diplomas or sometimes with a joint degree diploma. The procedure needs – as a first step – either a trans-national (e.g. intergovernmental or between national Conferences of rectors) or inter-institutional bilateral agreement. The second needed step is an agreement between the two involved institutions relating to the personalized plan of study/research of the moving doctoral student (i.e. an *ad personam* agreement).

DEGREE: it may be:

- (i) a REGULAR (or MAINSTREAM) degree;
- (ii) a NON-MAINSTREAM degree [i.e. a degree, issued after the completion of a course, which is offered outside of the regular educational sequence or track (e.g. a course *useful for / aimed at* Long Life Learning)].

See also DEGREE STRUCTURE.

DEGREE STRUCTURE:

the actual organization of the HE studies offered at a given institution.

There are a wide variety of structures in Europe at present. After the Bologna Declaration a broad classification scheme of the regular educational track/sequence (mainstream sequence) is based on an *undergraduate* phase (first degree or Bachelor's degree or...) plus a *postgraduate* phase (second degree or Master's degree or ...) plus a *doctoral* phase. These **phases** are also named **cycles** (1st, 2nd, 3rd or *doctoral cycle*) or correspond to **levels** (1st level, 2nd level and doctoral level).

In some countries a *long one-tier first degree* replaces the *two-tier degree scheme* (e.g. Bachelor's plus Master's degrees) described above. The British terminology refers to such one-tier degrees as “integrated master courses”. See also (as another example) GRADUATE SCHOOL.

The structure of the regular sequence/track is often complemented by a set of didactic offerings (which are out of the mainstream, mostly characterized as degree-courses, according to national or institutional regulations), which are designed for less traditional target groups, different from the student groups attending the regular (mainstream) track.

“DOUBLE-DEGREE” PROGRAMME or SCHEME:

it relies on an agreement between two institutions. The agreed study program foresees for the participating student a substantial period spent at the partner university, in addition to a main period spent at the home university. No change in the local didactic offers is required/envisaged. The student follows a single “distributed” curriculum and the total duration of studies is unaltered. The student will eventually get two national degree diplomas, according to one of the two following variants:

- *independent double degrees* (i.e. two independent pieces of paper, each one signed by one Rector/President/...). Some institutions oppose this scheme as unfair (“*you cannot catch two fishes with one hook*”, not ethical);
- *linked double degrees* also called “double half degrees”: each institution awards its regular degree, but the corresponding degree diploma explicitly states that it is awarded simultaneously with a degree of the other institution, for a single “distributed” curriculum.

The present scheme has an alternative in a scheme (see DOUBLE DEGREES), which aims at two degrees, but foresees extra work of the student in order to get the two degrees, e.g. two years at the host institution instead of one year at home.

DOUBLE DEGREES:

This scheme is different from the DOUBLE DEGREE SCHEME (see above). Indeed, even though it again aims at awarding two degrees and it relies on an agreement between two institutions, nevertheless the Double Degrees scheme requires two additional conditions:

- (i) it foresees an extension of the duration of studies of the moving student (generally by one year);
- (ii) it involves studies (at the two institutions), which usually pertain to different (even though related) areas.

Sometimes the present scheme is named OVERLAPPING STUDIES SCHEME. In the present scheme the degree awarding can occur in one of the following ways:

- *consecutive degrees*: typically the student leaves the home institution one year before the legal end of her/his studies, after having obtained (at least) the minimal set of credits, which are necessary for a degree in the given subject area. The student then goes to another institution, where s(he) spends two years of study in a second area. After the first year at the host institution, the student gets a first degree from the home institution. After completing the second year, the student gets a (new) degree at the host institution. In such a scheme, the student is registered in the host institution for her/his last year of study.
- *concurrent degrees*: similar to the consecutive degrees, but here the student gets two degrees simultaneously, when both curricula are completed. The student remains then registered in her/his home institution all the time. The distribution of studies in the two institutions can occur according to different time-schedules. A well-known scheme of “concurrent degrees” is the T.I.M.E. (Top Industrial Managers for Europe) double degrees scheme (more than 1000 double degrees already conferred on). Usually, the home University degree diploma is awarded at first, according to the local procedures; the host University degree diploma is awarded soon afterwards, on a simple administrative basis.

As an alternative to the present scheme, see “DOUBLE-DEGREE” PROGRAMME

GRADUATE SCHOOL

a British and US terminology indicating a one-tier program which encompasses both the Master’s and the Ph.D. degree courses. It is an example of “integrated degree courses” (see, as another example, the item INTEGRATED MASTER COURSE).

The Graduate School is a structure that incorporates an integrated approach to postgraduate studies and consists of advanced courses, research training and participation in research leading principally to a doctorate. Admission would normally be from a Bachelors 1st cycle degree but could also be from a 2nd cycle degree. A 2nd cycle degree (e.g. MSc) may be awarded in addition to or instead of a doctorate depending on the programme followed by the individual student.

INTEGRATED

a word often used in Higher Education matters: its meaning must be understood within the context. Apart from clearly defined uses (see the items INTEGRATED MASTER COURSE and GRADUATE SCHOOL), it is used to indicate jointly developed curricula (see e.g. the title of the Bologna Seminar to be held in April 2003, *Seminar on Integrated Programmes*). In this latter context the phrase “integrated curricula” focuses more on the product itself – the programme of studies – rather than on the formal outcome, i.e. the degree). An integrated curriculum can be developed through:

- (i) the individual plan of studies of a mobility student (once the needed recognition procedures have been carried out);

- (ii) the agreement between two institutions, which put together pieces of their (already existing) curricula, in the framework of general co-operation schemes aimed at favouring their own students (e.g. a double degree scheme);
- (iii) the joint effort of two or more institutions, aimed at planning since scratch and implementing a new curriculum.

INTEGRATED MASTER COURSE

a terminology indicating a long *one-tier first degree*, without intermediate exit, replacing the *two-tier degree scheme* of Bachelor's plus Master's degrees.

JOINT ADMINISTRATIVE ACTS

Administrative acts, which anchor the joint study degree-course in the partner universities.

- (a) **JOINT ENROLMENT**: the procedure, through which the students (who attend a Joint Degree-course offered by a network of universities) are enrolled at the same time in all the network universities, which *are willing to and are allowed to* confer a JOINT DEGREE DIPLOMA on those students, who successfully completed the course.
- (b) **JOINT DEGREE DIPLOMA¹**: a single act (usually a single piece of paper) jointly signed by the Rectors or by their *ad hoc* Delegates of the universities which belong to a network offering a Joint Degree-course and which *are willing to and are allowed to* confer on the participating students a JOINT DEGREE.
- (c) **JOINT RECOGNITION DIPLOMA**: a single act (usually a single piece of paper), jointly signed by the Rectors or by their *ad hoc* Delegates of the universities, which belong to a network offering a Joint Degree-course, in which each institution of the network officially recognizes the degree (for the joint Degree-Course) conferred on the students by a given university in the network.
- (d) **JOINT DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT**: the Diploma Supplement, which is jointly issued together with the Joint Degree Diploma in favour of those students, who – being jointly enrolled – successfully completed the corresponding Joint Degree Course.

JOINT “DEGREE DIPLOMA”:

It may be the final degree diploma conferred on the student at the end of a joint degree-course programme. It is a single piece of paper, signed by two (or more) Rectors. It is one among the possible existing options as to the final diploma awarding is concerned; see also under JOINT DEGREE-COURSE.

JOINT DEGREE-COURSE or JOINT PROGRAMME:

A degree-course in any of the three “regular” cycles or even a degree-course “out of the mainstream” (see DEGREE STRUCTURE above), which is jointly:

- (a) developed/designed,
- (b) organized/implemented

by two (or sometimes more) institutions. The student spends a substantial period at the partner institution.

As to the final diploma award, it may or may not follow a joint *final approval* event. Moreover, depending on the national constraints and on the signed agreement, the diploma can be one among several options, i.e.:

- a single national diploma (from one of the partner universities),

¹ This model is implemented in the European Master in Human Rights and Democratisation

- a single national diploma, usually holding all *crests/coats of arms/logos* of the partner institutions, issued by that university of the partnership, which either co-ordinates the partnership or was chosen by the student as the degree-awarding institution.
- a single national diploma, which automatically (i.e. as foreseen within the signed agreement) entails an “*ad personam*” recognition procedure at the other partner institution(s);
- a single joint diploma, i.e. a single piece of paper signed by two (or more) Rectors (see also JOINT “DEGREE DIPLOMA”).

NB - The “double degree” option, i.e. the awarding of two national degrees, even though it is in principle possible within the framework of a joint programme, it should be reserved for historical reasons to the “Double-Degree” Programmes or to the Double Degrees. In these latter schemes no change in the existing curricula occurs. See there for more details.

JOINT DIPLOMA:

It is one of the possible options actually used as the final award in a joint degree-course programme (see JOINT DEGREE-COURSE or JOINT PROGRAMME).

MAINSTREAM DEGREES: see REGULAR DEGREES

ONE-YEAR POSTGRADUATE DEGREE-COURSE:

Usually a degree-course at a postgraduate level, *at least* one year long (60 ECTS credits or more) dealing with a rather specific subject, related to advanced education and/or to vocational training. It can be useful in a Life Long Learning perspective too.

This type of degree-course may very well coincide with a variety of existing official courses such as MSc (the UK MSc normally being credited with 90 ECTS units), D.E.A., DESS, ..., but it can also be offered “out of the mainstream sequence”, i.e. aside or in addition to the regular 3-cycles degree structure, e.g. see many of the so-called European Master’s degree courses, as developed under the early Socrates-Erasmus CDA action. In these latter cases (degree courses offered outside of the regular 3-cycles track) many different operational models have been developed and the fees may be quite high.

OVERLAPPING STUDIES SCHEME: see DOUBLE DEGREES.

NON-MAINSTREAM DEGREE:

A degree, issued after the completion of a course, which is offered outside of the regular educational sequence or track (e.g. a course *useful for / aimed at* Life Long Learning). The admission to the degree-course may require a previously gained regular degree.

NON-MAINSTREAM JOINT DEGREE-COURSE:

The joint degree course is organized by two (or more) institutions and it leads to the degree conferring, according to one of the options described at the item JOINT DEGREE-COURSE.

QUALIFICATION: It is a much more general word than “degree” (see DEGREE). There are many qualifications which are not (and should not) be described as degrees.

REGULAR (or MAINSTREAM) DEGREES:

- **FIRST CYCLE DEGREE (or UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE or BACHELOR'S DEGREE).** First university qualification taken by student. According to the Bologna Declaration, it is awarded after the successful completion of first cycle studies lasting a minimum of three years.
- **SECOND CYCLE DEGREE (or GRADUATE DEGREE or MASTER'S DEGREE).** Second university qualification taken by student. According to the Bologna Declaration, it is awarded after the successful completion of second cycle studies. It is usually taken after the FIRST CYCLE DEGREE and before or as an alternative to a DOCTORAL DEGREE. It may involve some research work but not at a doctoral level. *Many long one-tier first degrees with no intermediate qualification exhibit a level, which is equivalent to a second cycle degree; these latter degrees are sometimes named INTEGRATED MASTER'S DEGREES.*
- **DOCTORAL DEGREE.** A high level qualification, which is internationally recognized as qualifying someone for research or academic work. It will include a substantial amount of original research work, which is usually presented in a written thesis (doctoral thesis or dissertation).
- **SPECIALIZATION DEGREE.** A high level qualification, which qualifies someone for vocational / professional activity in a specialized field, e.g. medical specialization.

STRATEGIC ALLIANCE (or CONSORTIUM or NETWORK):

a formal agreement between two or more universities, *based* on their respective educational/research competence and resources and *aimed* at fulfilling strategic aims of the involved institutions (e.g. offering the students with a richer set of specialties, granting mutual degree recognition, sharing financial risks and profits, preserving or raising the level of competitiveness, etc). The agreement may be at institutional and/or departmental level.