

Draft Guidelines for Building Organized and Continuous Cooperation
Including Double and Joint Degree Programs between university in Japan
And university in foreign countries

Working Group on the Promotion of Globalizing Universities

1. Objective

These guidelines, based on the 2nd Report on the mid- to long-term policies to university education dated August 25, 2009, is elaborated by the working group in the University Council of Education, aiming to promote organized and continuous cooperation including double and joint degree programs between university in Japan and university in foreign countries, and to contribute to the enhancement of the quality of programs. These proposed guidelines are to be used by universities **for reference in implementing** these programs, with appropriate quality assurance **of the degrees conferred and programs offered, thereby contributing to the quality assurance and improvement of higher education in Japan and foreign countries** .

Note: The University Council of Education will continue discussing possible measures (including establishing a “clearing house” in order to (1) offer information service on projects both in Japan and foreign countries, (2) consult on various questions, and (3) certify them in terms of desirable international cooperation and quality assurance to be publicly announced).

2. Principle

Through establishing organized and continuous cooperation between Japanese and foreign universities, students can acquire several degrees from universities in a shorter period and with less cost, thereby facilitating their opportunities to concentrate on studying for more international experience, ultimately enhancing their mobility. Universities, too, can improve their degree programs through such cooperation, promoting exchange **with quality assurance** and international competitiveness through **educating students with broad and international perspective by** receiving foreign students while facilitating studies abroad.

On the other hand, there is no clear and detailed agreement on how universities locating in different countries should establish cooperative programs, and this fact partly explains why many universities hesitate on such programs. Also, there are no universally agreed-on definitions for “double degree,” “joint degree,” and “dual degree”.

Based on the above observation, these guidelines are intended to give general definitions on related terms and checkpoints for reference, in cases where a degree from a

foreign institution is issued in addition to a degree from a university in Japan, which should be definitely in accordance with the laws and regulations in Japan. Therefore, these guidelines make no change in Japanese laws and regulations in Japan, nor do they have any effect on related laws and regulations in foreign countries.

It is important that the programs under consideration in universities in Japan are not in conflict laws/regulations such as the Standards for Establishing University. This is critical for the reason that any trouble might degrade confidence in Japanese universities, as well as the validity of their degrees. It is also natural that universities should avoid situations where they cannot independently implement/administer programs that they offer.

3. Definitions

Definitions of the main terms used in these guidelines are below. It should be noted that, while different terms such as “dual degree”, or “multiple degree” can still be used, what these words stand for would be all included either in double degree or joint degree, therefore no more detailed demarcation will be presented here, and it is expected that universities will use the following checkpoints for reference in implementing these programs. (Note: As explained in the explanatory notes, the definitions of double and joint degrees may vary internationally)

DIPLOMA: A document, that is presented by only a single university when conferring a degree on a person under Japanese laws and regulations, and certifies that the person named therein has satisfactorily completed a course of study organized by the university under Japanese laws and regulations.

CERTIFICATE: A document other than a diploma that is given by a single university or jointly by more than one university, and certifies that the person named therein has been given one diploma from each university.

PROGRAM: A systematically planned and coordinated set of educational contents with specific educational objective that are offered by one or more universities, with the goal of conferring one or more degrees upon a student in proper recognition of the appropriate completion of such educational contents.

CURRICULUM: The aggregate of the courses and studies offered at one or more universities, in order to implement the program based on the educational objective.

CREDIT TRANSFER: The procedure through which universities recognize credits (within a certain limitations as prescribed by Japanese laws and regulations) issued by other universities, including foreign universities, as equivalent to those issued by themselves, in accordance with the consultation with

partner universities, if they deem such credit transfer to be effective from an educational standpoint (Cf. the Article 28 and related articles of the Standards for Establishing Universities, etc.)

DOUBLE DEGREE PROGRAM: A program in which a university in Japan and another in a foreign country discuss the curriculum offered by each university and the process of credit transfer, with the result that each university will confer a degree.

JOINT DEGREE PROGRAM: A program in which a university in Japan and one/multiple university in foreign countries jointly organize a single curriculum using credit transfer, resulting each university conferring a degree (According to Japanese laws and regulations, it is not allowed to confer a single degree jointly by university in Japan and university in foreign countries, when these two universities jointly organized a single curriculum). It is expected that, while diploma will be issued by each university, these two universities can jointly organize a single curriculum and can jointly issue a special certificate, which publicly proves that the holder has completed the said single curriculum. It should be noted that this joint degree program is NOT the joint curriculum system of Japan in which two or more universities in Japan offer part of their department and equipment with the permission by the Council for Establishment-Approval System in MEXT in order to organize a single curriculum through which a single diploma will be issued.

Note: The definition of “double degree” and “joint degree” is not simple; on the one hand, it is assumed in some cases that “double degree” means two diplomas issued separately by universities, while “joint degree” is a single diploma issued by two or more institutions. On the other hand, it can be also conceived in some cases that “joint degree” means a “joint diploma” (here the legal status of the said “joint diploma” is not clear) issued by the institutions offering the program without being accompanied by any national diploma.

4. Checkpoints for Reference

<Issues to be examined at the outset>

It is recommended for universities to confirm that their intended partner universities are allowed to function as universities by the quality assurance framework in the country or

area where they operate, including the approval for establishment and accreditation by certified bodies. It might be also useful to confirm that partner universities are listed in the UNESCO Portal on Higher Education Institutions.

Next, it is recommended to clarify the policies and enhance mutual understanding between universities, as well as emphasize the importance of building organized, continuous cooperation with their partner universities, for estimates of student enrollment and arrangement for faculty. It is also recommended that universities clarify and confirm types of degrees that will be conferred upon completion of the courses offered by their partner universities (for example, regular diplomas, other kinds of certificates, etc.).

Also, it is recommended to confirm that programs under consideration in universities in Japan are not in conflict with laws and regulations such as the Standards for Establishing University.

<Agreements on joint implementation >

It is recommended for universities to make agreements in writing with each partner university (in the name of persons such as the president and the regent who are responsible for the management of the university) to assure the stable and continuous implementation of cooperation. Such agreements should include the number of students, faculty arrangements, the content of academic activities, program management, the allocation of expenses, responsibilities to students, tuition, procedures to be undertaken upon completion of the program, etc. Here it is important to understand what their partner universities are trying to develop through cooperation based on the agreements, so that the cooperation does not cause situations where it is difficult to appropriately fulfill their responsibilities, for example, in the case where one university issues degrees that other universities do not expect.

Also, it is recommended to establish the practice of periodically holding official meetings with their partner universities based on the agreements, consisting of the persons who are directly responsible or to whom authority has been delegated, in order to implement the necessary arrangement and discuss important issues. Similarly, it is recommended to specify specific offices in the university for information sharing, various reference and coordination with contact persons in their partner universities so that the program will be managed in an organized and continuous way.

<Organization of curriculums>

It is recommended for universities to verify the accreditations held by their partner universities that have been acquired and assured in terms of quality assurance framework, including those in a particular field or vocational framework.

Next, it is recommended to make sure of the kind of credit system (learning hours including classes, calculation for transferring credits, etc.) used by their partner universities, as well as any different timeframes for completing programs, the order of classes, the procedures for credit transfer, and the academic calendar, and the differentiation between the compulsory courses and selective courses, so that there will be no hindrance for students. It is also strongly recommended that universities should make efforts to organize curriculum with systematic coursework and course titles that properly reflect the contents, and that universities should always keep the credits substantial, in accordance with the credit system used by their partner universities. In terms of credit transfer, it might be that the existing international framework may be practically applied.

Also, it is recommended to offer attractive classes and courses, including those taught in English with their partner universities, to make programs more attractive and facilitate the smooth arrangement and exchange of curriculums. Similarly, it is recommended to make efforts to reduce any difficulty for students and enhance the quality of the programs, such as joint instruction approaches where professors in charge teach at each others' campuses.

Based on these viewpoints, it is recommended to clarify the competency that should be achieved for completion through communication/dialogue with their partner universities, and conduct transparent, objective, and strict grading policies including grade point average and peer review of grading to make the curriculums more substantial and visible.

Also, it is recommended to provide appropriate supervision for master's and doctoral students, such as appointing professors from all participating universities to each student so that each student can receive instruction from all of them.

<Graduation approval >

It is recommended for universities to ensure that they conduct the examination for approving graduation appropriately among all responsible universities with quality assurance. The following issues especially should be discussed in the case of examining theses, while respecting the system and other conditions of the partner universities: the

number, contents, language and other requisite for submitting thesis, the schedule for examination, and how the examination and joint instruction by professors would be conducted. This consideration should be deliberately conducted, especially for joint degree programs in which the curriculum is jointly organized. It might be that other procedures such as submitting outcomes of intensive study in particular topics would be accepted for examination on graduation approval in place of submitting a thesis, as long as such is permitted by national law. It should be restrained to consider the program in which the student can obtain multiple degrees with one thesis, so that the conferred degree would be duly respected in terms of quality assurance. It is recommended to take appropriate measures to holding the committee meeting for the examination for approving graduation for master's and doctoral levels, such as the participation of professors from their partner universities (in this case, these participant professors should be appointed as joint examiners in accordance with Article 5 of the Ministerial Ordinance on Degrees in Japan).

Next, it is recommended to have prior discussions with their partner universities when considering joint degree programs as to whether they would like to jointly issue a special certificate other than a diploma that publicly certifies that the holder has completed a single curriculum (diploma must be issued independently). This certificate can be used as certification for those graduates who would like to play an active part internationally and is especially rewarding for those students who want to pursue joint degree programs. It is recommended that the diploma be supplemented with documents such as academic portfolio and diploma supplement, which state the outline of program and the competency acquired through completion.

And it is recommended to state information both in Japanese and the language used in their partner universities when issuing the above certificate, and it is also highly desirable to include this information in English. Information to be stated should be fully discussed with their partner universities, including the name of student, the type of degree with its major and discipline, the name, and the date of graduation. All rendering of the program name in foreign languages should be carefully deliberated.

<Evaluation and Accreditation>

It is recommended for universities to conduct proper program evaluations, which can be implemented as part of institutional processes including self-evaluation, accreditation, and other ongoing program evaluations that are currently conducted in professional schools only.

<Student Support>

It is recommended for universities to create concrete procedures for recruiting students, including selection criteria, and, in principle, publish all related materials. This can be applied to cases where such a program is only intended for new students or where students currently enrolled in various departments or graduate schools can apply. **Also, it is important to consult with their partner universities about what should be done when the number of applicants is unfilled to launch the program, so that applicants would not be given any disadvantage.**

Next, it is recommended to take necessary measures concerning the enrollment status of students participating in the program. While enrollment status may be either suspended or maintained while studying abroad, the responsibility for the well-being of each student's academic course should be made clear beforehand. **It is important to keep in mind that all concerned universities catch and share latest information about academic and everyday conditions of the students, and that these universities build continuous student support system including appropriate instruction on taking courses and receiving treatment for various welfare.** Also, it is recommended to make agreements concerning the tuition to be paid by participating students who might be concurrently enrolled in more than two universities, for the benefit of participating students and to respect fairness among students belonging to different universities. Assuring the educational environment of students should also be carefully discussed. Throughout these consideration, it is recommended to make every effort to relieve the costs borne by students for travelling between campuses so that students would have little difficulty in taking classes and participating in extracurricular activities.

Similarly, it is recommended to make necessary agreements with their partner universities on the measures and procedures where either one or more universities cannot continue to offer the program, in order to ensure that the program will be implemented in a stable and continual manner and students concerned can ask for advice to the authority. It should be noted that universities that fail to offer courses are responsible for fulfilling such measures.

<Information Publication>

It is recommended for universities to publish information about the policies, procedures and output in view of the above guidelines, and request their partner universities to take the necessary actions for ensuring that the quality of the program is assured and accountable, so that students can make sense of the program and thereby make suitable choices as necessary.

Also, it is recommended to make every effort to create opportunities to publicize the effects of organized and continual cooperation, including double and joint degree programs, so that efforts by the universities concerned and outcomes of students' activities will be understood by society.

Examples on the definition of double and joint degrees

1. Joint and Double Degrees within the European Higher Education Area (Ulrich Schule, CIDD Papers on International Business Education No.1, 2006)

“Joint degree: a single diploma issued by two or more institutions offering an integrated study programme. The single diploma (Bachelor, Master, Doctor) is signed by the rectors of all participating universities and recognised as substitute of the national diplomas.

Double degree: two nationally-recognised diplomas issued separately by the universities involved in the integrated study programme.”

2. Joint and Double Degree Programs in the Transatlantic Context: A Survey Report (Matthias Kuder, Freie Universität Berlin, Daniel Obst, Institute of International Education, 2009)

“A joint degree program: students study at (at least) two higher education institutions and receive upon completion of the study program a single degree certificate issued and signed by all the participating institutions jointly.

A dual or double degree program: students study at (at least) two higher education institutions and receive upon completion of the study program a separate degree certificate from each of the participating institutions.”

3. Definition of “joint degree” in the Bologna Process Template for National Reports: 2007-2009. p.26.

“A joint degree is a single degree certificate awarded by two or more institutions, where the single degree certificate is valid without being supplemented by any additional national degree certificate”

4. Definition of joint degree in the Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees (The Committee of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region, Adopted on 9 June 2004)

“A joint degree should, for the purposes of this Recommendation, be understood as referring to a higher education qualification issued jointly by at least two or more higher education institutions or jointly by one or more higher education institutions and other awarding bodies, on the basis of a study programme

developed and/or provided jointly by the higher education institutions, possibly also in cooperation with other institutions.

A joint degree may be issued as

- a. 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.

5. Programs in China

There can be seen between a university in Japan and another in China where each university confers a degree. Also, it is found that some of the double degree program is conducted by conferring a degree from a university in Japan and a “double degree” (an original diploma, different from normal minor system) from a university in China.

6. Programs in Korea

A regulation on joint curriculum between university in Korea and university in foreign countries is formulated, according to the Higher Education Law in Korea, and this regulation includes a definition on joint degree.

Based on this regulation, it is allowed in Korea to build joint curriculum in principle, as long as the partner university in a foreign country is accredited by the government or the agencies certified by the government in that country, except credits acquired by e-learning.

Certificate Format Example
(Bachelor's Degree)

Certificate

(Name)

(Date of Birth: DD/MM/YY)

This is to certify that the above named has been conferred with:

1) The degree of Bachelor of Arts with a Major in ○○(Discipline) by A University (in Japan);

2) The degree of Bachelor of Arts with a Major in ○○(Discipline) by C University (in B Country)

as s/he has completed the curriculum jointly organized by A University and C University.

It is also noted that A University and C University will each issue a diploma, in accordance with the laws and regulations in their country of operations.

(Date of Issue: DD/MM/YY)

(Signature of President of A University)

(Signature of President of C University)

Certificate Format Example
(Master's and Doctoral Degree)

Certificate

(Name)

(Date of Birth: DD/MM/YY)

This is to certify that the above named has been conferred with:

1) The degree of Master of Arts (Doctor of Philosophy), with a Major in
○○(Discipline) by A University (in Japan);

2) The degree of Master of Arts (Doctor of Philosophy), with a Major in
○○(Discipline) by C University (in B country).

as s/he has completed the curriculum jointly organized by A University and C University.

It is also noted that A University and C University will each issue a diploma, in accordance with the laws and regulations in their country of operations.

(Date of Issue: DD/MM/YY)

(Signature of President of A University)

(Signature of President of C University)